

Still taking Democracy Seriously*

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Do we not all take democracy seriously? It is, after all, the badge we pin on ourselves, the status symbol that we take to elevate our country above others that don't manage it so well. And the last decades have been a successful time for democracy. We have witnessed the fall of communism, the defeat of apartheid and the end of the military régimes in South America. The key-statement for the initial phase of self-congratulation was Francis Fukuyama's *The End of History and the Last Man*^[1]

Takis Fotopoulos's very first sentence puts Fukuyama in his place: 'The collapse of "actually existing socialism" does not reflect the "triumph of capitalism", as celebrated by its ideologues.'(ix) However, the democracy that 'we' celebrate can more precisely be designated as liberal democracy, that is democracy within a capitalist framework. Here, with one person one vote, we are all equal on our occasional visits to the polling -booth but in no other respect.

To defenders of liberal democracy this is adequate. Hayek was keen to point out that democracy refers only to a type of government and so has no application to other organisations. This is in contrast to the designation given by Alexis de Tocqueville just over a century and a half ago. For Tocqueville political democracy was merely one aspect of a wider phenomenon. Democracy as a whole was the leveling process that had, over centuries, worn down the hierarchical aristocratic gradations so enjoyed by his own forebears. Tocqueville described this process as inevitable, yet simultaneously warned of the emergence of an aristocracy of manufacturers, a class that might acquire powers equal to those of the displaced landed aristocracy but was unlikely to match their sense of social responsibility. Do we not, in this sub-theme, find a presentiment of our current situation?

What we have reached might be described as the paradox of liberal democracy - that the parts are in contradiction, for how can we be equal politically when we are so unequal economically? Consider the case of the current British Labour government, swept to power in 1997 by a wave of popular enthusiasm. Do those of you who voted for it have the same degree of influence on it as Bernie Ecclestone of Formula One fame, or of Rupert Murdoch, the Australian-American newspaper magnate? These cases remind one of James Mill's dictum 'that the business of government is properly the business of the rich; and that they will always obtain it, either by bad means, or good.'^[2]

Of course, it was precisely this situation that socialism emerged to overcome. However, to cut a long story short, the current tendency is to regard socialism as discredited. Its communist variant has fallen in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Its remaining outposts in China and East Asia are unlikely to be extended. The notion that communism might introduce or deepen democracy proved an illusion of their initial phase of power.

The Leninist idea of the soviet as a higher form of democracy disintegrated into the Stalinist one-party state.

Western Social Democracy, however, never sought to challenge parliamentary democracy. When in power the rights of other parties and the freedoms of association and of the press were never threatened. Social Democracy has to its credit a significant democratic achievement for through its impetus the class disqualification to political participation was overcome and, in its best phase, it sought to obtain both full employment and adequate welfare provision.

However, beyond that the democratic thrust of Social Democracy was thwarted, both by its Fabian managerialism and by the society's capitalist framework. Throughout the 1970s those on the left subjected social democracy to a withering critique^[3] that may, partially and ironically, have led to a loss of self-confidence that, in combination with other factors, facilitated its downfall and replacement by the New Right. However, as Bob Dylan so memorably put it 'the wheel's still in spin' and Social Democracy re-emerged in the late 1990s into a brief period of unparalleled dominance in European governments. However, although it still bears the label, it was not the Social Democracy that we knew before. Fotopoulos reminds us that as 'these parties...bear almost no relation at all to the traditional social-democratic parties of the 1950-75 period, they should more accurately be called "social liberal" rather than social-democratic parties.' (p.86)

Social Democracy's opportunity has come both through a withdrawal of support from the full New Right doctrine and from the fact that it can no longer be feared as an agent of Soviet power. However, liberation from that context has been countered by at least two disadvantages. Firstly, the reduced preponderance of the industrial working class has increased Social Democracy's need to appeal to the middle classes. Secondly, the power of the state has been reduced by further globalization and so governments now have less control of economic management.

This is the logical starting-point of Fotopoulos's book. In one sense it belongs to the genre of pre-Thatcherite critiques of Social Democracy in that it seeks to analyse its failings and find a way of overcoming them. It is, then, an updating of that debate for it commences with a thorough analysis of the significantly changed current situation. Its point of continuity with earlier debate is that it takes the bold and currently unpopular view that the socialist project is still a plausible one. Fotopoulos, then, is not among those on the left who have collapsed into the individualist paradise of post-modernism. Nor is he among those who call on Social Democracy to return to its traditional path. 'Social democracy ...is dead', he tells us in the book's very first paragraph (ix. Also see pp.74, 85-100,102). It has been undermined by globalization and the consequent decline of the state, which was the prime site of Social Democratic activity (see pp.29,32,42). At one time the United States of America was considered exceptional amongst modern industrial societies in that the land without socialism was simultaneously, or one might say consequently, the land with poor welfare provision, weak trade unions and a particularly deep divide between rich and poor. What should have been a warning to other countries seems instead to have become a model. Fotopoulos notes 'the "Americanization" of the political process all over the advanced capitalist world'(p.39 and see p.95). We thus join the USA in, if not 'The End of Ideology', then the end of ideological competition. If the loss of old Social Democracy and the decline of state welfarism produces, among other things, a narrowing of the political spectrum, then we simultaneously impoverish both the needy and our liberal democratic

system. Old Social Democracy, as should now be clear, is no longer a plausible option. It emerged at a time when ecological concerns had no impact. However much might divide capitalism from socialism both shared a 'growth ideology' as their 'ultimate ideological foundation' (p.66). Furthermore, global capital now dominates global labour. The state is caught in the middle between international economic power on the one side and, on the other, the real communities where people live and work. Fotopoulos's project is to recommend that the latter reclaim the power that has been usurped by the former.

The project

Fukuyama thought that we were there. For him there was no further project. This is it. Not, as sometimes assumed, that there would be no further changes, but rather that they would all be within the mind-set of liberal democracy, which apparently fulfills mankind's psychological needs. Fukuyama, of course, was writing in the immediate aftermath of the fall of communism and his book bears witness to the widespread complacency of that phase. Since then the dominant mood has altered. The New World Order seems less under control than its proponents imagined. Parts of the globe have been resistant to American political hegemony (and a war on this issue is underway as I write) and the international economic structure has suffered embarrassing instabilities. An influential American statement of this phase is the far less optimistic *The Clash of Civilization and the Remaking of World Order* by Samuel P. Huntington.^[4] In Britain recently one of the most publicized accounts of the current situation has been John Gray's *False Dawn. The Delusions of Global Capitalism*.^[5] Gray provides a powerful account of the depredations of global capitalism, yet his solution seems too slight. For him capitalism remains but should be controlled and stabilized by better regulation. This is largely a recommendation to carry on as before but within a more safeguarded structure. For Fotopoulos carrying on as before is what got us where we are now. It would involve a failure to learn from previous errors. Only a new structure of life based on different principles would meet the needs of justice and survival. So, where Gray looks for global regulation, Fotopoulos proposes the local community as the prime agency of a renewed and deepened democracy.

For Fotopoulos, as we shall see, a whole change of direction is necessary. Gray's answer, difficult though it might be to achieve, seems unlikely to remedy the condition it describes, particularly as he wants it based on the support of the United States of America. As he tells us: 'A vital condition of reform of the international economy is that it be supported by the world's single most important power. Without active and continuing American endorsement there can be no workable institutions of global governance.'^[6]

Fotopoulos, in contrast, doesn't want us to carry on with a modified version of what we had before; indeed, he doesn't think it possible to do so. Fundamental change is necessary, but precisely for that reason it is bound to be much harder to achieve. Fotopoulos could have set himself a more limited, easier and less controversial task; that of delineating our current condition. That would have been a service in itself and the part of the book that deals with it (Part 1) is clear and enlightening. However, our author has a political project, that of fulfilling the democratic ideal that the west nominally professes.

For Fotopoulos 'today's "politics" and "democracy" represent a flagrant distortion of the real meaning of these terms'(p.54 and see pp.175-6). He wants a return to the ancient Greek understanding of the concept, which is fair enough in the sense that the word does

derive from them, though he does not sufficiently integrate his awareness that the Greeks left out of their democracy those not qualifying for citizenship, 'women, slaves, immigrants'. (p.185) He takes to task A.H.Birch, the author of a recent textbook on the subject, who, as he realises, is representative of a wide body of current opinion. For most academics in the social sciences, your reviewer included, 'democracy' is regarded as an 'essentially contested concept', whose meaning has altered over time, often according to the wider political purposes being proposed. Greek democracy was a form of rule by the largest class of citizens in a society based on slavery. Since then direct democracy of the citizens has, after a very long interval in which democracy in all its possible forms was totally denigrated, given way to modern representative democracy, with distinct variations between western liberal democracy, third world democracy and even the claims once made by Soviet democracy.^[7] The western orthodoxy is that parliamentary liberal democracy is the real thing and that those countries that possess it can enjoy the satisfaction of having fulfilled the democratic ideal. However, Fotopoulos wants a genuine democracy that extends beyond equal voting rights and into the economic sphere. This is a more extended notion of democracy than currently prevails, but one cannot say precisely which definition is right and which is wrong. The contest over the use of political and social words is in itself a political one and so Fotopolous's claim to his sense of the term cannot be accepted as replacing a wrong usage by a right one but merely of stipulating the sense that he will use and the claims that can be made on its behalf.^[8] This approach has been strongly challenged in his response to the original version of this review.^[9] Fotopoulos asserts that his 'criterion is derived from the Greek etymology of the word' and on that basis concludes 'that any definition that does not involve *direct* self-government of the people is not a proper definition'. He seems to regard all the current understandings of the term as an 'abuse of the word.'^[10] On this point I would reply that the English language is full of words whose current meanings have departed from their etymology. Anyone now using current concepts in accord with their supposed original meaning would be incomprehensible to almost everyone else. Consequently, in order to communicate effectively, it is advisable to use words in accord with current usage. Words have their own histories, which are, like all histories, chronologies of change.^[11] Here we have a clear clash of approaches, but it is worth stating that this disagreement concerns the philosophy of language rather than the analysis of current politics and society. In conclusion on this issue, I am in full agreement with Fotopoulos when he notes that the contestability of the concept 'is not the real issue. The real issue is which is our primary choice of social paradigm.'^[12]

It should be noted that Fotopoulos's definition of democracy is not fully identical with the ancient Greek one. He shares their basic assumption of the 'incompatibility of democracy with any form of concentration of power' and, on that basis, seeks 'a *new* conception of inclusive democracy' (p.171, emphasis added). This involves 'the extension of the classical conception of democracy to the social, economic and ecological realms'(p.176), a demand which, interestingly, had already been made by Pericles (see p.192). To note that Fotopoulos wants democracy extended should not be taken to imply that he finds it satisfactory in the spheres where it now operates. He seems to have scant regard for liberal democracy. In his 'Response' to me, he declared it 'not difficult to show...that liberal democracy does not secure human liberation and it is therefore "wrong"'.^[13] This is a rather summary dismissal. I would prefer to say that, as against its predecessors, feudalism and absolute monarchy, liberal democracy represented a major step in a liberatory

direction. Indeed, there are vast portions of the globe where it would still do so. This, however, is not Fotopoulos's prime concern. He, rightly, wants to move onward from where we are now. The core of his rejection of liberal democracy is expressed in his quotation from Bhikhu Parekh:

Representatives were to be elected by the people, but once elected they were to remain free to manage public affairs as they saw fit. This highly effective way of insulating the government against the full impact of universal franchise lies at the heart of liberal democracy. Strictly speaking liberal democracy is not representative democracy but representative government (p.184).^[14]

For this reason, even under liberal democracy the political structure is as élite dominated as the economic one (see p.135). Consequently there is apathy and low turnout, especially among the poor (see p.171).^[15]

In outlining his model of inclusive democracy Fotopoulos combines and builds on the lessons of ancient Greek democracy and the radical critiques of Murray Bookchin and Cornelius Castoriadis. He also works through the radical democratic proposals of Norbert Bobbio, Jürgen Habermas, Chantal Mouffe, Paul Hirst, David Miller and David Held. Fotopolous points out that economic democracy is necessary but not sufficient. Democracy must also extend into the social and the ecological realm; a democracy that centres not so much on the workplace as on the community as a whole. In his plan there are 'no institutionalized political *structures* embodying unequal power relations' for 'the delegation is assigned, on principle, by *lot* [emphasis added], on a rotation basis, and it is always recallable by the citizen body' (p.207).

This idea of selection by lot rather than election is, of course, historically prior to selection by election and is, again, part of the model of ancient Greek democracy. It is in many ways a surprise to see it resurrected in modern (or post-modern?) times. However, Fotopolous is here not alone amongst current thinkers. Professor Bernard Manin has recently outlined the contrasts between ancient and modern democracy. Manin compared selection by lot with election by representation. He pointed out that lot is in many ways more democratic. 'Pre-modern republicans valued above all... the possibility of holding office.' Lot gave them all an equal chance. Now with representative government we are all equal as choosers but have quite unequal chances to be chosen. Just compare the social composition of parliament with that of the society as a whole to realise how over-represented lawyers and teachers, and under-represented women and the working class, are. Thus, though our age congratulates itself on its democratic ethos, it actually has a narrower concept of citizenship than did the republicans of pre-modern times.^[16] This rejection of a democracy of the chosen, rather than of the choosers, is not merely un lamented; it is now scarcely noticed although the idea of selection by lot lasted as a matter of serious concern for far longer than commonly assumed, through to Harrington, Montesquieu and Rousseau. However, powerful élites preferred election, not just because it was a means of adapting democracy to large countries, but rather because it served to filter the democratic input. Thus a political form now regarded as the essence of democracy was actually introduced to counter it. Manin also deals with how western parliaments shook off the idea of 'imperative mandates' (i.e. binding instructions from the electorate to their representatives). The ideological ploy here, as in a famous speech from Edmund Burke, was to claim ultimate responsibility to the nation as a whole rather than to the constituency in particular.

Fotopoulos rejects what he calls the 'myth of the "experts" ' (p.207) and imagines that a modern industrial state can operate without them and that even economic decisions can be 'taken by the citizen body collectively and without representation'(p.211). Concerning this question it might be helpful to recall the experiences of three twentieth-century thinkers, all of whom claimed to wish democracy well. In 1911 Robert Michels produced what has become a classic of Political Sociology, *Political Parties*, revealingly sub-titled *A Sociological Examination of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy*. Here, to be cryptic, he concluded that organisation produces oligarchy. Any organisation pursuing particular ends would elevate administrators who gain or claim expertise in their particular niche and so become indispensable to the organisation. In that way they become separated from the mass they were originally meant to serve and so develop an interest apart and different from them. Secondly we can turn to Lenin who, in *State and Revolution*, foresaw political representation in the manner suggested by the 1871 Paris Commune, that is without parliamentarism 'as a special system, as the division of labour between the legislative and the executive, as a privileged position for the deputies.'^[17] The combination of proletarian rule and modern scientific developments was assumed to facilitate the gradual withering away of the state through the performance of necessary administrative tasks devolving to the community as a whole. A few months later Lenin abandoned *State and Revolution* for the tasks of actual revolution. He soon found that economic understanding and administrative ability were less widespread than he had assumed. Large sections of the Czarist bureaucracy had to be retained although the attempt was made to control them through a system of 'workers' and peasants' inspectors'.

Let's leave backward Russia and move forward to the United States of the 1960s and 1970s. Theodor Roszak was one of the spokesmen of the counter-culture in that radical phase. In *Where the Wasteland Ends* he pondered the intellectual demands of contemporary political involvement:

Nothing is any longer simply and straightforwardly accessible to the layman. Everything - economics, foreign policy, war and peace, city planning, education, environmental design, business administration, human psychology - now requires the benefit of professional training to be comprehensible... Does our democracy not continue to be a spectator sport in which the general public chooses up sides among contending groups of experts, looking on stupidly as the specialists exchange the facts and figures, debate the esoteric details, challenge one another's statistics, and question one another's prognostications?^[18]

All of this should serve as a warning to later opponents of hierarchy, but Fotopoulos does not seem to regard this warning as appropriate. In his 'Response' to my points he regrets the extent to which I rely 'on generalisations derived from sociological or historical studies' and declares that 'any attempt to generalise about the relationship of organisation to oligarchy, which emanates from present experience, is irrelevant.'^[19] As I see it, present and past experience is relevant and important because it is all we have to go on. My historical examples were intended as reminders that egalitarian projects have been attempted before and that there is much to learn from them. If I generalised it was simply because, whereas he had written a full-length book, I was merely contributing a review article. I am very definitely not saying that the attempt at reform should be abandoned but rather that we should be aware of what we are up against, given the uneven distribution of intelligence, aptitude, ambition and position. The ambitious nature of Fotopolous's project

extends to 'the workplace, the household, the educational institution and indeed any economic or cultural institution which constitutes an element of this realm.' (pp.211-2). The proposed confederation of communities would be stateless and, in the economic sphere, would dispense with both money and the market. This is what Marx and Lenin also wanted, but, in contrast to them, Fotopolous assumes that scarcity will continue. He rejects the Marxist notion that there are material pre-conditions for inclusive democracy. In an implicit farewell to the Euro, money is replaced by vouchers of either a basic or non-basic designation. Each community would be fairly self-reliant and would collectively decide what tasks should be done and how work should be distributed and remunerated.

This confederal, inclusive democracy is only outlined in very general terms. We have no precise blueprint for the new order but only the principles and mentality required. One can have two contradictory responses to this. On the one hand it seems slightly inadequate. If we are to replace our present order we need a closer vision of what we are to put in its place. If, on the other hand, we engage in detailed planning, as did Owen, Fourier, Saint-Simon and other nineteenth-century radicals, we are open to ridicule in the way that they were, and also to charges of authoritarian élitism in that we try to pre-empt decisions that should be taken democratically at the time by the communities involved.

Problems of transition

Having a plan or a vision is one thing. Outlining the means of implementing it is quite another. The policy of transition is usually the weakest part of projects for social reform, for the simple reason that it is the hardest one. In the words of Machiavelli, 'there is nothing more difficult to carry out, nor more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to handle, than to initiate a new order of things.'^[20] It was precisely on this issue that Marx and Engels ridiculed the thinkers they chose to term 'Utopian Socialists.' Owen, Fourier, Saint-Simon and others of their kind were accused of naivety in believing that transformation required no socio-economic pre-conditions and that prejudice would fall before rational persuasion. Marx and Engels tried to improve upon their 'utopian' predecessors by insisting that history had a definite logic of development. No new order could emerge before its predecessor had laid down the necessary socio-economic basis. Furthermore each transition required a plausible social agency; a class that had to have both the will to carry out a revolution and the key location in the production process that provided the necessary power. On all these counts they judged the modern proletariat as becoming willing and able to replace capitalism with communism.

We can now say that even with their thorough consideration of the necessary means of transformation, Marx and Engels got it wrong, and for the following reasons:

1. That capitalism replaced feudalism throughout Europe did not imply that communism was bound to replace it. The analogy did not work.
2. Capitalism had instabilities, as Marx and Engels were pleased to point out, but they were not fatal to it.
3. The most developed capitalist industrial states were not those in which the system was overthrown in the name of Marxism.
4. The working class did not come to form overwhelming majorities in the way that Marx and Engels expected nor, even more detrimental to the project, did they develop the requisite class consciousness.

With that thorough but flawed analysis in mind, let us ask on what basis Fotopoulos thinks that he has found a way forward.

Firstly, Fotopoulos regards the *present order as unsustainable*. 'Old politics is doomed' (p.276). In the era of globalization even the democratic states cannot meet the demands that their electorate make. There is a 'huge "objective" crisis' in 'that the present economic system cannot meet even the basic needs of at least one-fifth of the world's population' (p.143). Since the book was written nothing has occurred to upset that analysis. We have seen the collapse of some of the Asian 'tiger' economies and witnessed the loss of faith suffered by international financier George Soros. In *The Crisis of Global Capitalism* he declared that 'market fundamentalism' might be 'a greater threat to open society than totalitarian government today.'^[21]

For Fotopoulos the opportunity of transformation occurs because the system is in crisis. However we must note that a crisis does not always lead to a desirable solution. Russia could be said to have been in crisis a few times during the 1990s but it did not lead to an obviously favourable outcome?^[22] Nor were their crises unprecedented. Russia was in crisis in 1917. A re-reading of *State and Revolution* will remind us that what Lenin planned was a higher form of democracy in which the centralised state would wither away, class distinctions would disappear and all would live cooperatively in equality and harmony; instead of which Russia got Stalin and the gulag. Fotopoulos himself notes that all forms of socialism 'failed to change the world, at least in accordance with their proclaimed declarations and expectations'(p.74). This, obviously, is a warning to all who attempt to change the world, not that they should despair but merely be soberly aware of what they are up against.

One of Marxism's disadvantages was that communists presumed to know the 'real will' of the proletariat and so underestimated the importance of their actual outlook and beliefs. Fotopoulos clearly does not repeat this error. He acknowledges that 'the world market economy is not widely questioned '(143) and, as a second basis for reform, sees a big *educational task* as a pre-requisite. He mentions the need for 'a new moral code' (p.233) in which the right 'community spirit' (p.297) prevails. Not for the first time the Greek tradition shows the way. 'A crucial role in the education of citizens is played by *paedeia*. *Paedeia* is not just education but character development and a well-rounded education in knowledge and skills, i.e. the education of the individual citizen which can only give give valuable, substantive content to the public space' (p.209).

Fotopoulos wants 'the development of a similar mass consciousness about the failure of "actually existing capitalism" to the one that led to the collapse of "actually existing socialism" '(p.165). The problem here is that the collapse of socialism occurred in the context of a real alternative. Of course, opposition in eastern Europe was not only anti-communist. It included nationalism, anti-imperialism, anti-atheism as well as anti-Stalinism. Also, horrific and bizarre though it might sound, Margaret Thatcher was one of the most popular names in eastern Europe during the 1980s.^[23] East Europeans had a gilded image of the West as a real alternative, not that far away, and visible in its self-presentation on film and television screens. Nothing so visible now exists as an alternative to prevailing capitalism.

Fotopoulos notes that a 'power base is needed to destroy power'(p.277). For this reason, as we have noted, Marx chose the large and strategically located industrial proletariat as his agency of transformation. Herbert Marcuse was one of those within the Marxist tradition who sought an alternative to a working class clearly not sufficiently willing to perform its scripted task. For Fotopoulos the third basis of transformation is the core agency of radicals, greens, libertarians, and feminists, in short the members of what are called the 'new social movements'. They are to provide a base of local activism from which a majority might eventually grow. In time Fotopoulos believes that inclusive democracy might appeal 'to all those alienated by the present statecraft which passes as "politics"; workers who are alienated by the hierarchical structures at the workplace; women who are alienated by the hierarchical structures both at home and the workplace; ethnic or racial minorities who are alienated by a discriminatory "statist" democracy, and so on'(pp.286-7).

In direct contradiction to normal current tendencies this new movement will contest local elections but not national ones. Thus they will fortify the sense of local community and simultaneously hope to diminish the role and power of the state. What should occur is 'the gradual involvement of increasing numbers of people in a new kind of politics, and the parallel shifting of economic resources (labour, capital, land) away from the market economy' (p.282).

Once again we can say that we have been here before. At the demise of communism in East Germany some of the category of people that Fotopoulos favours were at the forefront of opposition: radical democrats, democratic socialists, and environmentalists. Their moment came... and went. They were swept aside by those with more economic power.

This brings us to the issue of the opposition that any radical proposals are bound to produce. The 'utopian socialists' gave scant attention to this theme. To an extent they thought that appeals to superior rationality would be enough. Otherwise for them the problem was reduced to the extent that they planned only small communities of believers and so did not challenge the might of the prevailing political and economic order. For Marx and Engels opposition was sociologically determined. Those who were to be dispossessed, those who had an interest in the prevailing order, would do all in their power to resist, and that was precisely why only a revolution could bring about the required changes.

It is a measure of the realism with which Fotopolous examines this question that he is clearly aware of the opposition his proposals will produce. He has, after all, declared war on 'statism and the market economy' (p.287), threatened the 'penalization of anti-ecological activities' (p.291) and declared that hierarchical economic structures will be 'eliminated' (p.242). The Inclusive Democracy movement takes on might opponents and one wonders how a policy of statelessness will find the means of controlling them. We have seen in the United Kingdom the kind of scurrilous press campaigns that over the years have been waged against the likes of Michael Foot, Tony Benn, Arthur Scargill and Ken Livingstone. On this basis we can begin to imagine the media backlash that would lampoon and vilify the Inclusive Democracy movement should it begin to make serious inroads into popular beliefs. What, for example, would be the reaction to the attempt to 'expropriate' such 'privately owned big enterprises' (p.298) as MacDonalds, Coca-Cola and Shell? And how would the state react to the gradual taking over of its fiscal powers? (See p.299) I found nothing in this book on the consequences of breaching our international obligations. Would, for example, ecologically inclined communities still be prepared to allow 40 ton

lorries along their streets? If not, we would have broken European Union regulations. Even if the Inclusive Democracy movement is able to 'eventually capture the imagination of the majority of the population'(p.284) and achieve sanity in one country, how would the insane world react? Insanely but powerfully, I expect, as the United States once did against Allende's Chile. Fotopoulos is aware of the difficulty, and in a crucial passage notes that

at some stage, the ruling elites and their supporters (who will surely object to the idea of their privileges being gradually eroded) after they have exhausted subtler means of control (mass media, economic violence, etc.), may be tempted to use physical violence to protect their privileges, as they have always done in the past. But, by then, an alternative social paradigm will have become hegemonic and the break in the socialization process...will have occurred (p.285).

Thus where Fotopoulos imagines an intervening 'period of tension' (p.282), I would envisage civil war.

Does that mean, then, that nothing will happen; that society is frozen into its current structures? One thing that is clear about history is that it moves. The Roman Empire fell, as did apartheid and the British and the Communist empires. All must at one time have appeared solid and impregnable. Henry Miller, no less, was once bold enough to suggest that even the American empire would one day crumble into dust.^[24] Even George Soros, that brilliant arch-manipulator of global markets regards the whole system as unstable. Indeed, as compared with the Fukuyama-led complacency at the beginning of the 1990s, the mood now is more one of disquiet concerning global political and economic tendencies. The dominant tone from the United States is now, after the New York trade towers massacres, more assertive and, simultaneously, less secure and self-confident. The most obvious force challenging the West is in the name of Islam. This cannot be seen as emancipatory, even though one branch of its proponents appeal to western intellectuals in the name of anti-capitalism.^[25] An alternative and much more positive movement against the current world order has been the anti-globalisation movement and, in 2003, the massive anti-war demonstrations that have emerged in all western countries. I think it clear that a significant shift in sensibilities is occurring; a shift consonant, in broad terms, with the mentality of the Inclusive Democracy project. Where this shift will lead cannot, of course, be definitively predicted. However, we can be sure that, *contra* Fukuyama, there is no 'end to history.' Furthermore, I doubt if we will get any improvement unless we dare to think of it, dare to outline its principles and purpose, dare to consider how we might move towards it. The attempt made by Fotopoulos is bold and brave, for it can provoke ridicule from those who too easily dismiss anything different as utopian; anyway perhaps a touch of utopianism is precisely what we need at the moment.

This book is remarkable for the clarity of its exposition and for its sophisticated grasp of economics, sociology, politics and philosophy. It can be strongly recommended to anyone who wants to know what is going on in the world. It is, hopefully, clear that the criticisms offered are made from within the spirit of the enterprise, with which your reviewer is very much in agreement.

* This is an expanded version of a review of *Towards an Inclusive Democracy*, published in [Anarchist Studies, Vol. 5, No. 2 \(October 1997\)](#).

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- [1] F. Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (Harmondsworth, 1992).
- [2] From J. Mill, 'The Ballot' (1830) in T. Ball (ed.) *James Mill. Political Writings* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 265.
- [3] See, for example, David Coates, *The Labour Party and the Struggle for Socialism* (London, 1975).
- [4] (London, 1998). First published 1996.
- [5] First published in London, 1988.
- [6] *Ibid.*, p.200. For a contrary view, see W. Hutton, *The World We're In* (London, 2002).
- [7] See C.B. Macpherson, *The Real World of Democracy* (Oxford, 1966)
- [8] See M. Cranston, *Freedom. A New Analysis* (London, 1954) ch.4 for the distinction between stipulative and lexicographical definitions.
- [9] See T. Fotopoulos 'A Response to Michael Levin's Review Article', *Democracy and Nature*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (1999), pp. 396-8.
- [10] Fotopoulos, 'Response', pp. 397,398.
- [11] See R. Williams, *Keywords. A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (Glasgow,1976).
- [12] Fotopoulos, 'Response', p. 398.
- [13] Fotopoulos, 'Response', p. 399.
- [14] It is worth drawing attention to the full article. See B.Parekh, 'The Cultural Particularity of Liberal Democracy' in D.Held (ed.), *Prospects for Democracy* (Oxford,1992).
- [15] *The Principles of Representative Government* (Cambridge, 1997),p.135. See also the discussion on 'Election by lot' in B.Barber, *Strong Democracy. Participatory Politics for a New Age*, (Berkeley, Ca.,1984),pp.290-3. Barber's book can be recommended as sharing the spirit of that by Fotopoulos, though it lacks the economic basis.
- [16] Compare also Q. Skinner, *Liberty before Liberalism* (Cambridge, 1998).
- [17] *Selected Works* (London, 1950), 2 volumes, Vol. 2, p.173.
- [18] T.Roszak, *Where the Wasteland Ends. Politics and Transcendence in Postindustrial Society* (London,1973), pp. 50-54-5.
- [19] Fotopoulos, 'Response', pp. 399,400.
- [20] N. Machiavelli, *The Prince* (New York, 1952), p. 49.
- [21] Quoted in George Soros and Jeff Madrick, 'The International Crisis: An Interview', *The New York Review of Books* (January 14,1999), p. 36.
- [22] See Soros and Madrick, 'The International Crisis: An Interview', p.40.
- [23] Isaiah Berlin once asked Andre Sakharov: ' "Who are the people you most admire in the West?" He and his wife both said "No difficulty about that, - Reagan and Mrs. Thatcher".' From 'Isaiah Berlin. Between Philosophy and the History of Ideas. A Conversation with Steven Lukes'. Berlin Archive, Wolfson College, p. 59.
- [24] 'Everything American will disappear one day, more completely than that which was Greek, or Roman, or Egyptian.' H.Miller, *Tropic of Capricorn* (London, 1966), p.52.
- [25] See *The West's Weapons of Mass Destruction and Colonialist Foreign Policy. The Assessment of the Muslim Community in Britain*, published for Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain by Khilafah Publications (London, 2002).