Post-Citizenship, the New Left and the Democratic Commons.

The age of austerity, the war on terror and the broader ecological crisis are enough to suggest that existing ideas of citizenship need to be radically revised in the early 21st century. Within recent debates there has been an increased recognition of the extent to which more critical understandings of capitalism need to be developed moving away from the exclusive focus on identity politics. Here I aim to return to the critique of citizenship offered by the British 'humanist' New Left focusing upon the contributions of E.P.Thompson and Raymond Williams. By examining their 'humanistic' ideas of socialism and the commons I aim to demonstrate that their perspectives have much to offer the present. Their work offers a critique of more established understandings of social democratic citizenship and suggests a vision of the democratic commons that has been revived by the alter globalisation movement. In the age of the global 1% per cent the work of the 'humanist' New Left should be revisited to as it helpfully offers a critique of the limitations of more mainstream models of citizenship as well as some versions of Marxism and anarchism that have recently gained attention. Further while I focus on the British 'humanist' New Left I also look at how this strand of thinking has been reinvented in the context of more recent writing on the need to struggle for a democratic commons. Indeed, despite the growing interest in protest movements in the age of austerity there is a concern that our current age is characterised by a form of post-citizenship. Moreover, that social democracy (upon which many claims in respect of citizenship has been historically based) is in decline, increasingly dominated by neoliberal practices and ideas. These claims are of course not without substance, but as we shall see tend towards a sociological pessimism that assumes more authentic periods of social democracy are behind us and fails to engage with some of the new more critical movements and possibilities of the present. The revival of what I shall call the democratic commons is evident in the re-emergence of emancipatory social movements who are critical of political passivity and the limiting of ideas of 'democracy' to representative democracy. This is not to argue that the 21st century is going to be any less violent, unjust or exploitative than the preceding period, but it is to argue that current times contain radical possibilities.

New Left, Citizenship and the Commons

Our collective ability to address these questions may partially depend upon the revival and reinvention of the New Left of the late 1950s and 1960s. The New Left was an attempt to recover a radical politics that was both critical of authoritarian Marxism and liberal or democratic socialism (Stevenson 1995, Kenny 1995). The aim of the New Left was to establish a radically democraticised society that had both socialised capital and placed power in the hands of ordinary citizens. However with the rise of the New Right in the 1980s and the arrival of so called 'third way' socialism the New Left has been progressively erased from memory. The third way period that ushered in a number of political regimes that sought to combine public

sector reform with a positive attitude towards market driven globalisation now looks to have ended (Giddens 1998). While the 'third way' was preferable and distinct from neoliberalism in that it is a contribution to the history of social democracy it has been widely criticised as being unable to offer a critique of the dominant logic and rationality of capitalism (Mouffe 2000). If the idea of the 'third way' was always problematic there are now urgent calls being issued to rethink social democratic politics and the emergence of new modes of political activism. Currently within Left orientated political circles and activist communities more generally there is a search for new ideas to give expression to the citizenship yet to come. This is urgently needed not only to challenge the common sense of austerity and neoliberalism, but also the rise of right wing anti-immigration parties who have more broadly speaking been the real winners of the financial crash of 2008.

My claim however is that by seeking to resurrect some of the ideas associated with the New Left we will be able to better appreciate the more innovative and critical developments in the context of the present. Here my argument is not that the New Left can be unproblematically returned to as a quite different set of historical and cultural co-ordinates now dominate. Rather I emphasise the 'humanism' of the New Left given the stress that was placed upon different understandings of human potential, capacities and sociality all of which were restricted by capitalism. The anti-humanist critique usually suggests that these views are misleading as they depend upon an 'essential' human nature (Stevenson 1995). This view is misleading as both Thompson and Williams were keen to explore different human possibilities and resist an atomistic understanding of human existence. Here I would agree with Charles Taylor (1989) who argues that any social movement based upon ideas of emancipation and freedom will need to emphasise a moral critique that addresses the possibility of different ways of being human.

Many of the original writers associated with the New Left fully recognise that democratic politics could not be handed down by intellectuals, but rather was produced outside the closed circles of elites. E.P. Thompson (2014a) commenting on the New Left carefully argued that while it was rooted in the labour movement it was a rebellion against the hierarchically organised affluent society of the 1950s and 1960s. Especially significant was the rejection of the 'economism' of the mainstream political parties and of certain versions of Marxism. The New Left sought to explore more 'cultural' questions and develop grass roots politics that was located in a diversity of arenas and struggles like feminism, youth culture, workplace trade unionism and anti-militarism. Most crucially perhaps was the argument that the New Left was a place of ideas and cultural discussion rather than an organised attempt to gain state power. This opened up many avenues of critique beyond questions related to the usual contours of citizenship of social, political and civil rights. There was a sense amongst many writers of this period that a number of counter-cultural movements from feminism to the beats and from anti-nuclear activists to trade unions were beginning to ask questions about 'the drive for "normality" and security' within post-war society' (Thompson 2014a:121). These dimensions, as we shall see, decisively open up a number of issues related to the struggle for a more autonomous and democratic society. Thompson (2014b) argues that capitalistic domination was primarily grounded within a society based on the private ownership of the means of production and the profit motive, which gives the class structure a centrality that

could never be fully tamed by social democracy or more conventional accounts of citizenship. This did not of course mean that important and historical advances had not been won, but that more substantial ideas of equality could not be satisfied within a competitive and unequal capitalist dominated society. There were however other important voices on the fringes of the New Left more influenced by anarchism. Murray Bookchin (2004) and Andre Gorz (1982) were important critical voices suggested that the working class movement had become integrated into capitalism and that the defeat of capitalism depended upon the desire for less hierarchical and centralised life-styles and an ecological politics critical of consumerism. The idea of an autonomous and democratic society was less concerned with work-place politics than the exploration of less ordered life-styles and more convivial patterns of living. However neither Thompson nor Williams found these arguments acceptable. While similarly attracted to the need to develop more ecological accounts of socialism neither believed that the labour movement (despite the constant threat of incorporation) could ever be fully integrated into the structures of capitalism. In this respect both Thompson (2014b, 2014c, 2014d) and Williams (1983) issued warnings that the critical ambitions of the labour movement were being blunted by being too accommodating to the structures and logic of capitalism.

Thompson's (1976) humanistic Marxism owed more to the influence of William Morris than what he saw as being more 'scientific' or 'postivistic' currents. Morris was a significant figure within the Marxist tradition due to his ability to link a critique of utilitarianism with the importance of the class struggle. Thompson's (1976:95) early work identified Morris as a 'utopian communist'. This is especially apparent within Morris's (2003) utopian novel 'News From Nowhere'. Morris offers a utopian vision of a future communist society where the population lived in small communities in harmony with nature. This is a vision of an 'uncorrupted' society that returns the citizens to a life similar to that before the rise of capitalism. It was however the 'open, speculative, quality' of Morris's writing that attracted Thompson's (1976:97) attention. Morris (1973, 1994) was drawn upon by Thompson as he recognised the importance of utilising poetic visions so that we might begin the process of desiring to live in ways that are quite different from the present. This was a post-capitalist society where working hours had been radically reduced, workers were involved in artisan production and factories were places of sociability, music and play. Revolutionaries need to encourage citizens to dream beyond the confines of the present. As Jacqueline Rose (2014) recognises the unsettling of desire is as central to psychoanalysis as it is to more revolutionary forms of politics. If the psychic trouble caused by the giving up of certain versions of the world is underestimated by more rationalist currents on the Left, Thompson grasped that the need for a poetic imagination was poorly understood. If Thompson (1994a:66) valued Morris as 'a great moral teacher' it was because of his ability to provide a vision beyond Fabianism and the equality of opportunity. The future humanistic community would need to break with 'the innate moral baseness of the acquisitive ethic, and the exploitative rather than co-operative social relationships' (Thompson 1994a75-76). Within this struggle for a democratic commons beyond the rule of capital the poets found common cause with the labour movement as they sought to resist the instrumentality and hierarchical nature of capitalism (Thompson 1994b:357).

Thompson's (1980, 2014e) historical work sought to defend the revolutionary traditions of the English commoner against fellow historian's both Left and Right who argued that the working class had mostly failed to produce transformative political ideologies. The neglect of these traditions and the presumption that the working-class were dependent upon the scientific insights of Marxist theory partially explains Thompson's (1981) bitter dispute with Althusser. Despite the appearance of more conciliatory voices, Thompson (1981:402) was critical of the Left turn to theory at a time when 'libertarian values' were under threat within capitalist and socialist societies. Thompson's history from below and concern for the principles embodied within the law meant that his defence of the commons was both poetic and principled. If, as fellow historian Peter Linebaugh (2014) argues, the commons is understood as all that we share then under capitalism this is continually threatened by the politics of enclosure and privatisation from above. Similarly Vandana Shiva (2013) argues that the commons is what we depend upon both culturally and ecologically which is essential to our well-being.

The commons was also evident in the preindustrial collective customs of the people. Thompson (1991:9) claims that the English commoner exhibits 'a rebellious traditional culture'. In other words, it is custom more often than not that provides the break on the imposition of enclosure, privatisation and the disciplinary work regimes of capitalism. Thompson (1991:9) argues that the English have access to a 'plebian culture' that is 'rebellious, but rebellious in defence of custom'. The common morality of the people could, under certain circumstances, put a brake on attempts to impose the logic of capitalism upon the people from above. Similarly the anarchist Peter Kropotkin (2002) argues the common sentiments of solidarity, mutuality and co-operation and not comandments from above make up an ordinary everyday morality. There is then a morality of the commons that is already being practised and does not depend upon abstract arguments about human goodness. Instead, as Thompson well recognised, the preindustrial commons that was a source of livelihood, play and pleasure was maintained through a spirit of co-operation and mutuality. Ivan Illich (1992) similarly identifies the preindustrial commons as a place of sustenance which, after the practice of enclosure, created poverty and dispossession. This helped push the commoners into a life of wage slavery given that they had lost any means to provide for themselves other than through the market. Equally the commons is as much a matter of law as it is of custom. Thompson (1980) was dismissive of anarchist currents that did not recognise the way that law was built upon ideas of equality and that it can be used to restrain the actions of the powerful. The point in any complex society was not to abolish the law but to democratise its practice. As Peter Linebaugh (2008) points out, the idea that law can curtail the power of the sovereign or state goes back to Magna Carta. For Thompson (1983:2) the defence of freedom and liberty is mostly done from below by 'law and pamphlet and sermon and the formation of democratic organisation'.

Williams's (1989a) view of the commons was similar to that of Thompson but was more explicitly focused upon the relationships between the country and the city. Williams (1958) recognised the importance of the Romantic tradition for raising questions around the quality of life in relation to ideas of culture. However Williams (1989a) remained critical of the legacy bequeathed by the work of William Morris as it offered an overly simplified view of the socialist future. In this

respect, once the rule of capitalist hierarchy became broken different forms of ownership and models of control would begin to emerge. This meant that the post-capitalist commons would be considerably more complex than the present and quite sharply different to the simplistic images of rural tranquillity provided by Morris. Indeed Raymond Williams (1989b:289) noted the historical irony in the situation whereby socialism had become identified with hierarchy and central control given that to the contrary, its aim was to distribute power, control and resources into the hands of ordinary people. Williams argued that such a situation could only be challenged through the revival of the self-management tradition that would confront the rule of capital and authority. Williams (1989c:282) warns about the prospect of giving into a 'dark language' suggesting a dystopian future of ecological break-down and technological war. More hopeful versions of the future need to have at their centre not only a diversity of ownership patterns, but the value of sharing (Williams 1989c:284). If this was the central socialist principle it is also the central value of the idea of the commons. If the commons is continually threatened by the practices of enclosure and privatisation then expressions of solidarity can found within ordinary practices like sharing resources, knowledge or food. In Williams's (1962a) novel Border Country, he explores the ways in which the common life of the village and family –and not just more formal political movements-provides the basis for resisting the more hierarchical and capitalist ethos. Indeed the idea of a shared commons is endangered by capitalist modernisation, that through images of progress and backwardness (associated with ideas of the country and city), seek to impress their logic into everyday life. The rapid urbanisation of the globe by capitalism ensures that specific sets of social relationships and patterns of development are pressed to exclude other more humane alternatives. This logic of capitalist modernisation not only distorts relations between the county and the city with associated understandings of progress and backwardness, but has also historically distorted Marxism. Williams (1985a:303) describes this as 'a major distortion in the history of communism'. The recovery of the commons would need to break with the 'insane overconfidence in the specialised powers of metropolitan industrialism' that threatens 'human survival' (Williams 1989a: 84). Here Williams predicted a future politics around food and ecological security was unlikely to be adequately solved by the dominance of capitalism. The cultural revolution that Williams (1980a:269) wished to see would need to challenge the priorities of the capitalist order. This would inevitably mean that socialists would devise alternative plans that not only sought to redistribute wealth, but decentralised power and control. Within this process what became pressing was developing an increasingly 'materialist' analysis of the ecological and human cost of capitalism. This would mean addressing the central logic of consumerism that sought to suggest that products have 'magic' qualities. Instead a genuine democracy of the commons 'is not a system of government but of self-government' that was 'rooted in the satisfaction of human needs and the development of human capacities' (Williams 1980:185). The 'humanistic' New Left as represented by Thompson and Williams sought to develop a more critical analysis of capitalism with the idea of what a humane future might look like (Stevenson 2014). Within this both Williams and Thompson resisted more accommodating versions of the politics of citizenship, and pointed to a world of the commons beyond the dominance of capitalism. While this tradition came under

assault during the structuralist and post-structuralist turn it continues to offer many ethical and political resources (Stevenson 1995). In addition, many of these 'humanist' features were also shared by other New Left authors like Erich Fromm (1965) and C.Wright Mills who commented that he shared a 'marxism of the heart' with figures like Thompson (Thompson 1985:273). Here my argument is not for a simple return to the perspectives of Thompson and Williams but to probe some of their insights for a radical culture of the commons.

Post-Citizenship, Social Democracy and Neoliberalism

If the New Left looked beyond social democracy to a more participatory future then much contemporary work has begun to point to the defeat of social democratic citizenship by neoliberalism. Can the liberal social democratic moment that informed the work of T.H.Marshall (1992) and others now be said to be over (Turner 2001, Crouch 2011)? Colin Crouch (2004) has argued in this respect that democracies across the world are beginning to resemble post-democracies in as far as policy is now dictated by ruling elites. As Alain Supiot (2012) argues the rise of neoliberalism that began in the 1980s has progressively sought to delegitimise the historical advances of the post-war era. The development of social citizenship, the signing of the 1948 declaration of human rights and the ending of armed conflict all promised the development of European societies that were peaceful and prosperous. Further the development of the European Union sought to bind states together through shared agreements on human rights, the use of force and trade. The idea of a peaceful and prosperous Europe was to be built through both national and post-national citizenship as a means of holding in check the totalitarian nightmare of the past (Habermas 2001).

As a liberal Marshall understood questions of freedom through ideas of rights. In terms of the New Left and other critics this was limited by their dependence upon a bureaucratic state and the presumption that these rights were historically secure once they had gained a foothold in the present (Roche 1992, Marston and Mitchell 2004, Stevenson 2002). However it is now widely recognised that liberal views of freedom, of citizens as rights holders, is now being threatened by neoliberalism. If the doctrine of neoliberalism places a permanent pressure on social welfare, is hostile to trade unions, seeks to privatise public institutions, lower taxes, actively promote entrepreneurialism and demonise the poor it can not be assimilated to more social understandings of freedom (Harvey 2000). This view however suggests that neoliberalism is simply an attack on the social state by the market. As Wacquant (2010:198) argues this fails to recognise the extent to which the neoliberal state focuses not only upon the development of more positive attitudes towards the market but also the increasing moral regulation of the poor. By this Wacquant means that the growth of the prison population, the use of workfare and other punitive mechanisms have grown as a means of regulating human agency under the economic conditions of neoliberalism. The hyper-masculinised state seeks to distance itself from the role of caring for the bodies of the vulnerable into a much more punitive and penalising legal system. The aim is to push poor citizens into low paid and insecure jobs by threatening to terminate benefits, while using prison as the ultimate social sanction for those who do not conform to these new

requirements. The more aggressive state is partially masked by consumer freedoms for the majority, talk of upwards mobility (or 'aspiration') and the so-called individualisation of responsibility. The emergence of a much harsher state regime represents a war against more liberal versions of citizenship evident in the social democratic era. Similarly Zygmunt Bauman (2006) claims the state in the neoliberal era is able to legitimate itself less through its social role and more through its ability to provide security in the face of crime, disorder, terrorism and unwanted migrants.

There have been a number of proposals by those on the political Left seeking to address the current crisis. Most of these proposals have something to offer and yet fall someway short of seeking to press for the kinds of democratic and participatory practice through a politics of the commons discussed by the 'humanist' New Left. Here I aim to - albeit briefly - investigate a number of critics and intellectuals who have sought to revive a meaningful Left project in the face of neoliberalism and austerity in the broader European context. These might be broadly understood as working within a Left paradigm that seeks to address the current crisis after the financial collapse of 2011. Their different perspectives point to the continuation of the 'Left hemisphere', resisting the claim that there are no alternatives to neoliberalism in a context of post-citizenship (Keucheyan 2013).

The first is the argument that European societies should seek to historically recover the previous social democratic era. This would be achieved by focusing upon national forms of citizenship. For historian Tony Judt (2010a) the European social democracy of the post war period was built upon the idea that the state and citizens had a responsibility for each other and that this could be demonstrated through access to common services, public provision and inclusive notions of community. The welfare state required relatively high rates of taxation, but became legitimate the extent to which it delivered a more equal society and bound members of society together in a common community. However, since the 1980s the idea of there being a common good has come under pressure as notions of the public became devalued. The rise of gated communities, the privatisation of space, consumerism and the down grading of welfare have all pushed society in a more market-driven direction. For Judt the Left needs to reject radicalism for a progressive conservatism that becomes focused on questions of security, prudence and stability. Elsewhere Tony Judt (2010b) goes as far as to argue that the that the dominance of market driven solutions currently grips the common sense of elites and intellectuals in a similar way that Marxism dominated the minds of many intellectuals of the 1930s. Doctrinaire Marxism offered an anti-Enlightenment culture as it was driven by a desire to regulate and control thought. The contemporary market, like authoritarian Marxism, has a circle of true believers, is dogmatic and produces a certain blindness to its short comings.

Much of Judt's (2006) conservativism can be located in his dismissal of New Left experiments with broader forms of democracy beyond the ballot box in the 1960s. Especially evident is Judt's rejection of attempts to develop a different relationship to Marxism and other radical traditions in ways that would have been critical of so-called 'actually existed socialism'. The political conservatism of Judt's analysis is also evident within some sections of the social democratically orientated Left. Jonathan Rutherford (2012) argues along similar lines that the 'third way' abandoned citizens to the market and failed to recognise that most Europeans are

culturally conservative and value the local, the national and family life. The problem is that neoliberal economics is at odds with the stability necessary to raise a family and feel a connection to the locality. Social democratic politics during the 'third way' era was overly positive about the effects of markets and tended to ignore their more destructive features, which has led to the increased popularity of cultural movements on the Right. It is Right wing nationalism rather than the political Left that is articulating the values of security and patriotism. However what is not clear if we follow these arguments is how a purely nationalist-orientated politics deals with the challenge of living within an increasingly pluralistic and globally interconnected world. The retreat back into a conservative social democracy has too little to say about the need to readdress questions of power and democracy within a new global context.

A different source of criticism concerning the current European crisis has emerged through the desire to develop more cosmopolitan forms of identity and citizenship. Unlike the social democratic conservativism outlined above the cosmopolitan critique seeks to address some of the challenges in living within a more genuinely globally interconnected age. In this respect, Ulrich Beck (2006) describes cosmopolitanism as being different from globalism. If globalism describes the dominant neoliberal order and the power of capitalism then cosmopolitanism is more concerned with the world of multiple citizenships and intersecting loyalties. One of the reasons it is not possible to simply go back to the social democratic order of the past is the erasure of national borders and increasingly intermixed cultural identities. In the European setting this means a political project that stands in opposition to violent nationalist rhetoric for a Europe that is more receptive to cultural difference and human rights. Of course Beck realises that such a view is currently opposed by many nationalists of the Right as well of the Left who seek to return to what they perceive to be a more secure era beyond the uncertainties of the present. More recently Beck (2014:5) has revisited the idea of cosmopolitan Europe where the key challenge is to revive European citizenship in the context of the economic crisis without falling into the politics of fear and racism of the past. This can only be achieved through a transnational social democratic European project. Such a project will need to guard against a misplaced nostalgia for exclusively national welfare states and more neoliberal solutions.

The new social contract for Europeans envisaged by Beck is similar to some of the more recent proposals by fellow 'third way' sociologist Anthony Giddens. Giddens (2013:8) argues that due to the scale of the economic crisis the European Union has emerged as a 'community of fate'. That is the interdependent nature of Europe's economies has become increasingly apparent, meaning the radical political project of the present is the enhancement of transnational European solidarity. Both Beck and Giddens in this respect seek to defend a transnational Keynesianism whereby Europe is reindustrialised (but not at the cost of the environment) and a social investment state is charged with the difficult process of welfare reform and reskilling while introducing the prospect of meaningful life-long education. These proposals are clearly preferable to a neoliberal Europe based upon tax havens, low wages and racist forms of exclusion against 'foreigners'. The key question left mostly unaddressed in the accounts of Beck and Giddens is the structural power of capitalism to remake society in a more market-friendly way. Indeed 'third way' style

attempts to revive social democracy depend upon elite version of citizenship whereby power is held by professional politicians and think tanks, and often leave unquestioned the dominant society that promotes consumer identities and erodes more civic form of involvement (Finlayson 2003, Foucher-King and Le Gale 2010). In other words, after the decline of the working-class movement during the first phase of neoliberalism in the 1980s power has increasingly been shifted out of the hands of ordinary citizens. If part of the cosmopolitan project is to offer a new vision to Europe's citizens it needs to become a democratising vision. It is not currently clear how the cosmopolitan vision reimagined by Beck and Giddens would connect to a vision for a people's Europe that would challenge the rule of neoliberalism from below (Bourdieu 2000). However the main failing of both of these attempts to revive the Left is that neither take seriously enough the problems that can be associated with the capitalist model of economic growth. Any alternative politics is going to need to place the ecological commons at the heart of any concern for a future society. The main problem with existing debates on the Left is that they either fail to recognise the extent to which old style social democracy was built upon capitalistic expansion or that 'third way' cosmopolitanism fails to adequately address the failure of the existing economic system. Here my argument is that more recent writing on the commons links back to the humanistic New Left writing by Williams and Thompson and offers a more hopeful and democratic vision of the future.

The Radical Democratic Project and the Commons

As we have seen, the New Left were concerned to debate the possible emergence of a self-managed society rooted in the commons. Notably these ideas have more recently been taken up and developed by the alter globalisation movement (Pleyers 2010). The struggle for alternative forms of globalisation has found expression at protests at a number of global summits and within activism that has developed a critique of neoliberalism beyond the state. The alter globalisation movement seeks to resist the world of 'endless enclosure' as the basic elements of the ecological and cultural commons have been converted into private ownership (Boal et al, 2005: 193). Hardt and Negri (2005) have argued that the global society has witnessed the emergence of the 'multitide'. The multitude are 'those who work under the rule of capital and thus potentially as the class of those who refuse capital' (Hardt and Negri 2005:106). The multitude are those who could be mobilised within a global anti-capitalist struggle against unemployment, zero hours contracts and job insecurity across geographical and national boundaries. Rather like E.P.Thompson's (2014d, 2014e) definition of class in the New Left 'the multitude' becomes formed through the process of struggle against global capitalism. The global spread of the Occupy movement, protests against war and militarism, austerity and ecological degradation point to more interconnected and less space specific campaigns. These movements are also notable through their organisational forms that are often leaderless and relatively horizontal in practice (Graeber 2014). Not surprisingly this has led to a revival of interest in anarchistic movements that have historically been more critical of the state than the New Left (Ward 1973, Sheehan 2003). There is then a tension

9

within the alter globalisation Left who reject state politics altogether and those who think it is necessary to sometimes work within its contours.

John Holloway (2002, 2010) argues in this respect that the goal of a more autonomous and self-managed society can no longer emerge through the state. Alter globalisation, 'the multitude', or as Holloway (2002:18) calls it 'anti-power', aims to create a dignified society for everyone while rejecting the call to capture the repressive apparatus of the state. This struggle rejects both the power of capital to commodify our lives and that of the state to instrumentalise our identities. Crucially the struggle of the alter-globalisation movement is a struggle for common space without capturing or seizing the power of the state. If neoliberalism seeks to progressively enclose areas of social and cultural life and subject it to the law of profit and loss then anti-power seeks to resist the logic of exploitation and control from above. Here the aim is not to replace one system with another but to develop 'the anti-politics of dignity' (Holloway 2002:39). Rather than the pursuit of hierarchy and efficiency the aim is to produce multiple spaces of participation and more direct forms of control and self-management.

David Harvey (2012) links these questions as to who has the right to the city in terms of whether urban space is mostly a place of accumulation for capitalism (the packaging of cities for tourism or increasing amounts of space used by shopping malls) or whether it can become subject to more democratic forms of control. These perspectives are interconnected by a radical humanism. David Harvey (2014) argues that such a view is both critical of how humanistic ideas have historically been perverted by domination and hierarchy while offering a vision of a more hopeful future beyond the violence of capitalism. Hardt and Negri (2009:191) similarly argue that the question is less what human-beings are but what they have the potential to become. This inevitably leads us into more complex issues to do with human capabilities like co-operation, love and sharing that are often denied public expression by neoliberal capitalism.

The Occupy protests were indeed examples of attempts to win back public space outside the control of capital and the state. The protests demonstrated the capacity of ordinary citizens without formal hierarchies to manage public space without the control of capital or the state. Hardt and Negri (2012:106) argue that within this space is emerging a new kind of democratic citizen they call 'the commoner'. Commoners aim to produce networked identities, thereby creating alliances with others, exchanging ideas and symbols, resisting processes of privatisation and defending common resources. As David Bollier (20014) points out the emergence of 'the commoner' points to the transformation of the practice of citizenship. Rejecting the neoliberal assumptions of competitive individualism, the commoner seeks to create spaces for sharing, co-operation and of building 'positive' alternatives in a world governed by markets and often cruel states. If the alter-globalisation has a big idea it can be found in notions of the commons that can be closely associated with ideas of non-violence and co-operation without hierarchy (Scott 2012).

However while Williams and Thompson would have been excited by the appearance of the alter globalisation movement they would have cautioned against a strategy that simply withdrew from electoral politics. Williams (1983) continued to stress the importance of Left governments in the long transition to more

autonomous and self-managed societies and while Thompson (2014f:98) disliked the social democratic practice of 'patching up capitalist society' he was practical enough to offer critical support to progressive governments. Indeed alter globalisation activist Noami Klein's (2014) recent intervention into the climate change debate not only identifies the main enemy as capitalism threatening to destroy the planet in pursuit of profit, but that in order to construct a liberation movement from below it is necessary to build global social movements of resistance and use public planning to develop a sustainable future. The idea of the commons defended by Klein depends not only upon the local development of renewable energy and the long transition to a more sustainable future, but can not afford the luxury of being anti-statist. The politics of the commons emerges out of a global social movement built from below not only to resist capital, but also provide the basic services and security through the state necessary for a 'dignified life' (Klein 2014:258). Similarly Juliet B.Schor (2011) argues that the market crash of 2008 offers the possibility for many on the Left to re-think questions related to quality of life. A new politics where time at work, consumption and our carbon footprints are all reduced becomes possible as long as a social state is able to meet the basic needs of citizens. The new politics of the commoner then would need to disconnect from hyper-consumption life-styles built upon unsustainable levels of growth for more small scale and diverse entrepreneurial activity built on sustainable goods. Indeed these perspectives can also be linked to more radical views on the commons that have emerged through eco-feminist arguments around the subsistence perspective (Bennholat-Thomsen and Mies 1999). Such views aim to produce a radical alternative to capitalist forms of development through more ecologically sensitive forms of production that are local and co-operative and break the stranglehold of 'more is never enough'. Such views challenge the more gender neutral versions of the commons as they explicitly seek to empower women as economic actors who are often excluded from waged work. Our needs for belonging and recognition would need to be met less by consumerism and work, and more by more currently 'feminine' preoccupations like care and community.

The idea of 'the commoner' also points back to some of the debates within the New Left. Historically the commoner had in this respect faced the first wave of enclosure when they were forcibly removed from the land through the imposition of private property to become enclosed in factories imposing the discipline of work from above. The rebelliousness of the commoner sought to defend traditional rights to leisure, bread, religious festivals and the like, all of which had been threatened by capitalistic control from above and the imposition of the logic of the market (Thompson 1991). Arguably the alter globalisation movement's occupation of parks, town squares and other campaigns to save public health, school systems and libraries offer similar forms of resistance against the enclosing logic of capitalism. While many of those involved in the alter globalisation movement are critical of so-called mainstream electoral politics the idea of the commoner can also be utilised to defend public goods often defended by social democrats such as access to public libraries, education and health systems. However the radical side of the argument in respect of the commons would ask more searching questions about how these domains are organised and controlled criticising bureaucratic structures which limit the expression of more democratic forms of citizenship. In this respect, 'the

commoner' can be said to have links to the New Left, social democracy and the politics of alter-globalisation. This is less the conservative social democracy of security, but a more experimental social democracy that would defend the commons while offering citizens the possibility of experimenting with new ownership patterns. Returning to Raymond Williams, if the self-managed socialism he sought to defend was likely to herald a more complex society than the past then this would also be true for how we understand the relationship between revolutionary and reformist perspectives. Williams (1980c) argued that our analysis needs to move beyond simply opposing these different traditions, implying they might all have a role to play in shaping a common future.

This offers a vision of the future where social democracy and more libertarian traditions, while still in tension, might learn to work alongside one another. If in the past anarchists and libertarian socialists have sought to abolish the state and social democrats have sought to safeguard liberty through rights then perhaps in the twenty-first century the idea of the commons offers the possibility of a more blurred relationship between these perspectives. The activist David Bollier (2014:171) has argued that the idea of the commons needs to become part of our shared culture. If the vision of the commons is a bottom-up movement seeking to preserve and reinvent what we share through more democratic ownership patterns then it is likely that this process will require laws to enable this process. It will also require a much more imaginative politics beyond visions of catastrophe or what Williams (1985b:267) called 'militant empiricism' which simply presumes that problems like climate change and war be solved through quick fixes. Instead a politics of the commons would need to insist upon the imagination of the community rather than a few specialised professionals and suggest that a world of sharing, co-operation and mutuality is possible. This process would also seem to require poetic and utopian visions of the future. Notably both Thompson and Williams were fascinated by science fiction. Thompson (1988) produced a little read if impressive novel in this genre, while Williams (1980d) wrote an important essay on the subject. There was no future more emancipated society of the commons without a critical role being played by the imagination, resisting defeatist or accommodating voices. Morris's utopia (whatever Williams's misgivings in other respects) was vital as it had demonstrated the possibility of a more co-operative and creative world (Williams 1980d:211, Thompson 1994a). However more contemporary utopias are required not simply within fiction or to be found within the past, but within the here and now, demonstrating that the present is alive with alternatives to capitalist hierarchy and rationality.

The democratic commons is threatened by neoliberalism and authoritarian states across the world (Williams 1989d) . These are indeed dark times where neoliberals, the far right, communitarians and statists of different kinds are all seeking to argue that the age of democratic expression and experimentation is over. If the war on terror, austerity economics and the development of the security state are considerable threats to our freedom the struggle for more emancipatory versions of citizenship are far from over. European history from Ancient Greece to the Enlightenment and from the 1960s to the fall of the Berlin Wall is full of tales of hope and human resilience where the democratic imagination becomes reinvented in new times and places. The partial demise of social democracy and the rise of

neoliberalism have raised questions of post-citizenship where political parties are increasingly in control of elites as they privatise public space and empty out the social state. The idea of 'the commons' and the commoner could yet find a diversity of expression from social democratic to more anarchistic ideas. However we will need to see the continuation of social movements from below that seek to articulate the 'right to the commons'. The 'commons' within this perspective has less to do with state derived 'communism' that has now run its course, but remains related to the more participatory ideas of citizenship discussed by the 'humanist' New Left. We should remember, along with E.P Thompson (1991:15), that if the history of social movements from below is often one of defeat they continue to be required to remind us of the limitations of the privatised lives of modern citizens and the possibility of more ethical lives lived in common.

Bibliography

Bauman, Z. (2006) Liquid Fear, Cambridge, Polity Press.
Beck, U. (2006) Cosmopolitan Vision, Cambridge, Polity Press.
Beck, U. (2014) German Europe, Cambridge, Polity Press.
Bennholat-Thomsen, V. and Mies, M. (2014) The Subsistence Perspective, London, Zed Books.
Boal, I. et al (2005) Afflicted Powers: Capital and Spectacle in an Age of War, London, Verso.
Bookchin, M. (2004) Post-Scarcity Anarchism, Edinburgh, AK Press.
Bollier, D. (2014) Think Like A Commoner, Canada, New Society Publishers.
Bourdieu, P. (2000) Acts of Resistance, Cambridge, Polity Press.
Bronner, S. (2004) Reclaiming the Enlightenment, New York, Columbia University.
Crouch, C. (2004) Post-democracy, Cambridge, Polity Press.
Crouch, C. (2011) The Strange Non-Death of Neoliberalism, Cambridge, Polity Press.
Faucher-King, F. and Le Gale, P. (2010) The New Labour Experiment, Stanford, Stanford University Press.
Finlayson, A. (2003) Making Sense of New Labour, London, Lawrence and Wishart.
Fromm, E. (1965)'Introduction', in Fromm, E. (ed) Socialist Humanism, London, Penguin ppix-xiv.
Giddens, A. (1998) The Third Way, Cambridge, Polity Press.
Giddens, A. (2013) Turbulent and Mighty Continent: What Future for Europe, Cambridge, Polity Press.
Gorz, A. (1982) Farewell to the Working Class, London, Pluto.
Graeber, D. (2014) The Democracy Project, London, Penguin.
Habermas, J. (2001) The Postnational Constellation: Political Essays, Cambridge, Polity Press.
Hardt, M. and Negri, A. (2005) Multitude, London, Penguin Books.
Hardt, M. and Negri, A, (2009) Commonwealth, Cambridge, Harvard University Press.
Hardt, M. and Negri, A. (2012) declarations, New York, Argo Navis.
Harvey, D. (2000) The New Imperialism, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Harvey, D. (2012) Rebel Cities, London, Verso.

Harvey, D. (2014) Seventeen Contradictions and the End of Capitalism, London, Profile Books.

Holloway, J. (2002) Change the World Without Taking Power, London, Pluto Press.

Holloway, J. (2010) Crack Capitalism, London, Pluto Press.

Illich, I. (1992) 'Silence is a Commons', In the Mirror of the Past: Lectures and Addresses 1978-1990, New York, Marian Boyars pp47-54.

Judt, T. (2006) 'Goodbye to All That', The New York Review of Books, 53, 14, 21/06/06.

Judt, T. (2010a) Ill Fares the Land, London, Allen Lane.

Judt, T. (2010b) The Memory Chalet, London, William Heinemann.

Keucheyan, R. (2013) The Left Hemisphere, London, Verso.

Klein, N. (2014) This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs the Climate, London, Allen Lane.

Kenny, M. (1995) The First New Left: British Intellectuals After Stalin, London, Lawerence and Wishart.

Kropotkin, P. (2002) 'Anarchist Morality', Anarchism: A Collection of Revolutionary Writings, New York, Dover pp80-113.

Linebaugh, P. (2008) The Magna Carta Manifesto, Berkely, University of California Press.

Linebaugh, P. (2014) Stop Thief! The Commons, Enclosures and Resistance, Oakland, PM Press.

Marshall, T.H. and Bottomore, T. (1992) Citizenship and Social Class, London, Pluto Press.

Marston,S. and Mitchell, K. (2004) 'Citizenship and the State: Citizenship Formations in Space and Time', in Barnett, C. and Low, M. (eds) Spaces of Democracy, London, Sage pp 93-112.

Morris, W. (1973) Political Writings of William Morris, ed Morton, A.L. London, Lawerence and Wishart.

Morris, W. (1994) 'A factory as it might be', Nottingham, Mushroom books.

Morris, W. (2003) News From Nowhere, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Mouffe, C. (2000) The Democratic Paradox, London, Verso.

Pleyers, G. (2010) Alter-Globalization, Cambridge, Polity Press.

Roche, M. (1992) Rethinking Citizenship, Cambridge, Polity Press.

Rose, J. (2014) Women In Dark Times, London, Bloomsbury Publishing.

Ranciere, J. (2006) Hatred of Democracy, London, Verso.

Rutherford, J. (2012) 'Dispossession', in Meyer, H. and Rutherford, J. (eds) The Future of European Social Democracy, London, Palgrave MacMillan pp137-151.

Schor, J.B. (2011) True Wealth, London, Penguin Books.

Scott,J.C. (2012) Two Cheers for Anarchism, Princeton, Princeton University Press.

Sheehan, S.M. (2003) Anarchism, London, Reakion Books.

Shiva, V. (2013) 'The Commons: The Grounds of Democracy and Sustenance' (foreward) in Ricoveri, G. Nature For Sale: The Commons Versus Commodities, London, Pluto Press ppvii-xii.

Stevenson, N. (1995) Culture, Ideology and Socialism, Aldershot, Avebury.

Stevenson, N. (2002) Cultural Citizenship, Maidenhead, Open University Press.

Stevenson, N. (2014) 'The Socialist Blues? Citizenship, Class and Civil Society', The Sociological Review 62(1) pp189-205.

Supiot, A. (2012) The Spirit of Philadelphia, London, Verso.

Taylor, C. (1989) 'Marxism and Socialist Humanism', in (ed) Archer, R. et al. Out of Apathy: Voices of the New Left 30 Years on, London, Verso pp61-78.

Thompson, E.P. (1976) 'Romanticism, Moralism and Utopianism: the Case of William Morris', New Left Review pp83-111.

Thompson, E.P.(1980) Whigs and Hunters, London, Penguin.

Thompson, E.P. (1981) 'The Politics of Theory', in Samuel, R. (ed) Peoples History and Socialist Theory, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul pp396-408.

Thompson, E.P. (1983) 'The Defence of Britain' (Pamphlet), London, Merlin Press.

Thompson, E.P. (1985) 'Remembering C.Wright Mills', The Heavy Dancers, London, Merlin Press pp261-274.

Thompson, E. P. (1988) The Sykaos Papers, London, Bloomsbury.

Thompson, E.P. (1991) Customs in Common, London, The Merlin Press.

Thompson, E.P. (1994a) 'William Morris', in Making History: Writings on History and Culture, New York,   New Press pp66-76.

Thompson, E.P. (1994b) 'Commitment in Poetry', in in Making History: Writings on History and Culture, New York, The New Press pp330-339.

Thompson, E.P. (1991) Customs in Common, London, The Merlin Press.

Thompson, E.P. (2014a) 'The New Left', in Winslow, C (ed) E.P.Thompson and the Making of the New Left, New York and London, Monthly Review pp119-134.

Thompson, E.P. (2014b) 'Revolution', in Winslow, C (ed) E.P.Thompson and the Making of the New Left, New York and London, Monthly Review pp147-159.

Thompson, E.P. (2014c) 'Socialist Humanism', in Winslow, C (ed) E.P.Thompson and the Making of the New Left, New York and London, Monthly Review pp89-102.

Thompson, E.P. (2014d) 'Revolution Again! or Shut Your Ears and Run', in Winslow, C. (ed) E.P.Thompson and the Making of the New Left, New York and London, Monthly Review pp161-185.

Thompson, E.P. (2014e) 'The Free-born Englishman', in Winslow, C. (ed) E.P.Thompson and the Making of the New Left, New York and London, Monthly Review pp291-306.

Thompson, E.P. (2014f) 'Socialism and the Intellectuals', , in Winslow, C. (ed) E.P.Thompson and the Making of the New Left, New York and London, Monthly Review pp89-102.

Turner, B.S. (2001) 'The erosion of citizenship' The British Journal of Sociology 52(2) pp189-209.

Wacquant, L. (2010) 'Crafting the Neoliberal State: Workfare, Prisonfare, and Social Insecurity', Sociological Forum 25(2) pp197-220.

Ward, C. (1973) Anarchism in Action, London, Freedom Press.

Williams, R. (1958) Culture and Society 1780-1950, London, Penguin.

Williams, R. (1962a) The Long Revolution, London, Penguin.

Williams, R. (1962b) Border Country, London, Chatto and Windus.

Williams, R. (1980a) 'Beyond Actually Existing Socialism', Culture and Materialism, London, Verso pp252-274.

Williams, R. (1980b) 'Notes on Marxism in Britain Since 1945', Culture and Materialism, London, Verso pp252-274.

Williams, R. (1980c) 'Advertising the Magic System', in Culture and Materialism, London, Verso pp170-195.

Williams, R. (1980d) 'Utopia and Science Fiction', Culture and Materialism, London, Verso pp196-212.

Williams, R. (1983) Towards 2000, London, Pelican.

Williams, R. (1985a) The Country and the City, London, Hogarth Press.

Williams, R. (1985b) Writing In Society, London, Verso.

Williams, R. (1989a) 'Socialism and Ecology', in Resources of Hope, London, Verso pp210-226.

Williams, R. (1989b) 'Hesitations before Socialism', in Resources of Hope, London, Verso pp288-294.

Williams, R. (1989c) 'Walking backwards in the Future', in Resources of Hope, London, Verso pp281-287.

Williams, R. (1989d) 'The City and the World', in What I Came to Say, London, Hutchinson Radius pp75-89.