

SPEECHES DELIVERED AT THE FIRST CONVENTION OF THE
PROPERTY AND FREEDOM SOCIETY, BODRUM, TURKEY, MAY 2006

[Notes compiled by **Robert Grözinger**]

Christian Michel presented a lecture on the current trend of globalization and communities:

Beliefs come from deep within, are pre rational. We are owners of our beliefs, but we are also possessed by them. Belief in reason means that a few good men - supposedly the most reasonable - could lead everyone else. However, there are many decisions where reason cannot give you a lead. In these cases, tradition and culture take over. Culture does not restrict freedom, but sets a frame within which one can be free. Empires, as opposed to nations, can be conducive to freedom. In the Ottoman Empire, Beirut was a truly cosmopolitan city, and the city of Smirna was a multiethnic society. But when Turkey turned into a republic, the country was ethnically cleansed. Ethnic cleansing is not just an expression of tribalism; a homogenous society increases its capacity for mobilization.

The new, global empire is bringing back diversity, and is thereby working against republics and nations. Military intervention by the US primarily serves not the US, but Globalization. The book "Empire", by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, has been hailed by the NYT as the "rewritten communist manifesto". Their vision of a globalization however is one of an "empire", represented by the usual villains (IMF, WTO, multinationals, etc) and "multitude", i.e., all of us who are subjected to the power of empire. Multitude is just made up of networks of individuals; it is never an organized social class, or a community. An amorphous multitude leaves too much room for the state. Crime is lowest where the sense of community is strongest.

Hardt's and Negri's observation does not answer question of how to restore community. Their vision is the Greek agora plus women and minus slaves. This romantic ideal will not happen. Post 9/11 communities are communities of memories, not of place. If you add religion, we have demons hounding our political activities. Countries have become narratives. Maybe this opens a channel for libertarians. "Community" can become the emotional dimension of libertarianism, which is often regarded as relying too much on the intellect. A community however does not need boundaries, communities can intermingle. Therefore, there would be nothing terrible about some communities imposing the sharia, as long as people were able to move to other communities if they so wish.