

BOOK REVIEWS

Anarchist Economics. Building Successful Social Alternatives, by Roger Hallam A4 80 pages.

HAVING spent a good deal of energy trying to encourage more discussion around economics, I was delighted to come across this substantial private publication on Freedom Bookshop's shelves. However, it's a pity that its physical weight is not matched by the economics, for alas the latter is very slight indeed, and indeed, the subtitle is much more descriptive of the contents.

Roger has a lot of experience working with Housing Co-ops, and it is in that context that he writes best, giving an interesting account of Radical Routes, where successful co-ops have been indirectly financed through housing benefit! He goes on to discuss DIY co-operative banking and the Mondragon group of Spanish co-ops. Unfortunately these sections fill only pages 51-65.

Much of what remains are rambling discourses on the problems of small anarchist ventures like cafes. These parts properly edited and structured around the Radical Routes material could have made a much more lively read. The economics, where you can find it, is at best simplistic, and at worst tediously banal, and the use of terminology is sloppy: "wages" and "profits" for example are both used in relation to the remuneration of co-op members.

Roger links his practical experience with Mondragon and the future free society, on an ongoing practical approach which I like, but it was a mistake to try to extend to economic content beyond the financing of Radical Routes, without much more ground work, and a lot of editing.

John Griffin

BUFE GOOF Reviewed by Bob Black

A Future Worth Living: Thoughts on Getting There. By Chaz Bufe. Tucson, AZ: See Sharp Press, 1998.

This pamphlet purports to explain why the revolutionary left isn't running the country. For Bufe, this is cause for regret; for most of us, it is cause for thanks. Although he claims to be an anarchist, Bufe makes clear that he is a leftist first and foremost; his anarchism is an afterthought. It never occurs to him that for anarchists, the "disarray" of the left might be an opportunity, not a misfortune. Why anarchists, so few in numbers and so limited in resources, should waste themselves on the thankless and probably futile chore of re-animating the left, Bufe never explains. Should they succeed, history teaches that they can

expect no gratitude from the authoritarian left and no better climate in which to advance their distinctive project. Russian anarchists enjoyed far more freedom of action under the Czars than under the commissars.

After a perfunctory review of some economic statistics, Bufe moves on to identify the mechanism of social control as fundamentally psychological. It is the authoritarian conditioning imposed above all in the "patriarchal" family which reduces the masses to servitude, primarily through sexual repression. "Patriarchal" religion reinforces familial repression. The everyday authoritarian conditioning imposed by state functionaries (including schoolteachers) is slighted, and that imposed by wage-labour is mostly ignored. Bufe has not only vulgarized Wilhelm Reich, he has severed the link which Reich strove to sustain between society and psyche. If he understood the logic of his own position, Bufe would have to concede that what most people (who, he reports, don't "think very well") need is not revolution but therapy. Whereas I think revolution is the best therapy there is.

The main message of Bufe's essay is that "any realistic movement toward real social change *must* address sexual issues." Bufe identifies no such issues, except for implying that teenagers should be allowed to fuck. Most American teenagers do fuck, but that doesn't seem to have revolutionized their thinking or stripped them of character-armor. They don't need leftist organizations to tell them that what they're doing is okay. The kids are alright, it's neurotic grown-ups like Bufe who have sexual hang-ups.

Bufe has a serious preoccupation with "violence," with "coercion." "You can't achieve a non-coercive society through the use of coercion," he says. Since we have never achieved a non-coercive society at all, through coercion or otherwise, there's no way to verify or falsify this sweeping generalization. Violence is a natural and normal dimension of social life. It occurs in all forms of society, including anarchist band and tribal societies. Most anarchists hope and expect that in the anarchist society they strive for, violence would be drastically reduced. I share their hope and their expectation. But "getting there," in Bufe's phrase, is something else again. Without glorifying armed struggle, it's possible to point out that there has rarely if ever been an entirely bloodless social revolution. The authorities are violent through and through, so there will be violence whether or not the anarchists refrain from initiating it. I really don't see why the anarchists should swear off violence altogether - does anybody think the cops and courts will give them any credit for their forbearance? The Wobblies were

almost always nonviolent but they got long terms of imprisonment anyway.

Bufe is big on vague foggy generalities but weak on particulars - a serious default in an essay about "getting there." Repeatedly he holds up ZEGG, apparently a German commune, as an exemplar but he never tells us a damned thing about what ZEGG is (or even what the initials stand for). Bufe thinks that "model communities" are the way to go, but he has nothing to say about the history of the hundreds of anarchist or utopian socialist intentional communities which were set up in America in and after the 1840's. Anybody thinking of starting up such a community should, at the very least, become acquainted with the experiences of its predecessors. Some risks are inherent, but others are avoidable. If the point of an anarchist intentional community is to set a good example, then everything possible should be done to ensure that the example is good. Bufe doesn't do this.

Letter

Dear Editor

In her article *Wherein does Wrongness Lie?* Wendy McElroy makes the all-too-common mistake (as did Tucker) of thinking that Stirner's *The Ego And His Own* is an anarchist work. It is not. Not only does Stirner not claim to be an anarchist, one of his main targets is the anarchist theoretician Pierre Joseph Proudhon.

Certainly there are parallels between some of his views and those of anarchists, but at bottom they do not meet. Anarchism is essentially a creed of *renunciation*: domination of man by man is an *evil* and for true relations between humans such a *sin* cannot be allowed. In a nutshell: Dominating People Is wrong. Stirner's philosophy, however, has nothing against my dominating another individual, or group of individuals, if this is in my interest and within my capacity. Indeed he explicitly states that "I do not want the liberty of men, nor their equality; I want only my power over them."

To properly understand *The Ego And His Own* it needs to be read without the preconceptions that ideologies such as anarchism provide.

Yours sincerely
S. E. Parker

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CONTENTS

Page 1 Editorial

Page 2 Thoughts on Co-operative Anarchist Economics by Ed Stamm

Page 4 Individualism, Anarchy and Compassion by the Boston Anarchist Drinking Brigade

Page 5 Human Rights? Not Likely! by Jean Pollard

Page 6 Pragmatic 'Anarchism' or Anarchism: a response to John Griffin by Takis Fotopoulos

Page 8 Individualist Anarchism or Free Communism? by Richard Garner

Page 9 Evolution versus Revolution by Richard Griffin

Page 10 Communism and Deconstructionism by John Griffin

Page 12 Book Reviews, Letters & Subscription details.

EDITORIAL

Seattle 1999: a signpost to beyond 2000?

THE December newspapers and TV reports were full of news stories regarding the WTO meeting and accompanying protests in Seattle.

As is now so often the case the event was marked by organised and systematic violence from the forces of the state, particularly the Seattle Police and prison personnel. The street TV reports saw images of Police tear-gassing protestors, pepper-spraying protestors and firing plastic baton rounds at peaceful environmentalists, Anarchists and other protestors. Many

of these violent acts were often at virtually point blank range resulting in serious injury. The conduct of the prison authorities in their treatment of around 500 arrested protestors is also open to condemnation. American civil liberties personnel carried out interviews with those arrested as they were released and this revealed many violent and oppressive acts and assaults had been carried out on a large percentage of the protestors held in custody.

There was some minor violence against property, particularly banks, from a relatively small number of Anarchist protestors. These latter images have been used by authoritarian politicians and police to justify their own violent actions. The state authorities do not condemn the violence of their own police and prison personnel, nor do the politicians point out the overwhelmingly peaceful conduct of the protestors, Anarchists included. Clearly the violence of the police and state forces was unjustified and the response of the State's forces was disproportionate to the actions of this minority of protestors. A few broken windows do not justify the planned, systematic and violent attempt to suppress free speech and freedom of protest against the actions of global corporate capitalist corporations and the state.

However, Anarchists and others calling for change would do well to avoid giving the excuse for violence to police and politicians who in fact welcome it. They welcome it because it deflects criticism from themselves, it

also confuses the issues at stake. The real issues: opposition to environmental and ecological destruction, the growing global opposition to the unrestrained power of globalised corporate capitalists, the global reach of the state, risk being lost amid the broken glass and the tear gas.

However, it is a moot point that some issues are not being thought through by certain opponents of the WTO. The elites who control the corporate capitalist organisations and the State political structures and Governments are clear about their own agenda, which is to set the rules of international trade and relations to operate in their interest at the expense of the poor and powerless everywhere, but especially in the undeveloped areas of the world. However, the opposition organisations and groups at events such as Seattle and the J18 events in 1999 are at times inconsistent in their means and ends. The broad opposition agenda is to reduce injustice and ecological damage and to restore local control and local democracy. Many Anarchists among them call for the ending of this *abuse* and the banning of *that*. But how can supporting change via State actions and legislation be an acceptable means for Anarchists?

We are for the ending of Governments and the State. We are for their replacement by a society based on individual freedom and voluntary co-operation. Using State structures as a means to achieve ends is contradictory, it legitimises the authority and actions of the state. A more consistent approach is to use peaceful and non-

violent direct action. Anarchists can draw on the best ideas of a number of Anarchist traditions: Individualist, Social and Green, to build the outline of a new society within the shell of the old. We can build alternatives such as worker co-ops, housing co-ops, local economies, small scale private firms, small family firms and community businesses. We can promote self employment, Credit Unions, Alternative Currencies, LETS schemes,

voluntary organisation, and by developing such we can work to erode and ultimately end the power of the State and Corporate elites by peaceful and evolutionary methods. The authoritarian communist regimes of Eastern Europe were not brought down by violence but ultimately by the peaceful non co-operation of millions of their citizens. Peaceful and evolutionary means of achieving change are the way forward for the new

century and beyond. It is then, quite relevant, that this issue of *Total Liberty*, includes a number of articles on different aspects of economics. Anarchism is still short of serious thought in this area, and if we are to progress from criticism to positive constructive actions we need to establish a firm basis of first principles.

Jonathan Simcock



Thoughts on Co-operative Anarchist Economics

Ed Stamm

MOST essays on the possible forms that an anarchist economic arrangement might take seem to focus on the macro-economic level, or the level of society as a whole. The 'big picture' which appeals to me is an arrangement where money circulates, but where most economic activity takes place between co-operatives, which barter goods and services among themselves whenever possible, and only use hard currency to purchase goods and services from outside the co-operative confederation. These autonomous but economically linked co-operatives would supply their members needs without using currency within their network. Within each member co-operative, each person would be expected to put in an agreed upon number of hours of economically productive labour. Ideally, everyone would agree on the same number of hours, and in return they would have equal access to whatever goods and services the co-operative is able to produce or provide through barter or hard currency exchanges. A more complex variation would be one in

which members were allowed to work fewer hours in exchange for consuming less, or be given credits for hours work. In either case, shirkers would be looked down upon by other members of the community and could be expelled if they were unwilling to put in their share of productive labour. The co-operative would try to find some type of productive work that is agreeable to unproductive members, or for those with physical, mental or psychological limitations. The more productive co-operatives, or those who produce superior products or services, and therefore have lots of barter partners, will enjoy a higher standard of living than less productive co-operatives, or those whose output is of lower quality. But it would not be a competitive game anymore, and the struggling co-operatives could ask for help from the better organized or more efficient groups, who would have an incentive to help, since the goal is meeting consumer demand, not cornering the market. If they can increase or improve production at other co-operatives, it means more and better goods and

services will be available to members of the co-operative confederation. A confederal credit union could be set up to make loans for purchasing supplies and equipment to member co-operatives. One thorny question is how would member co-operatives be prevented from selling their goods and services on the open market for hard currency when there is still unmet demand within the confederation? If there is excess production, outside sales would not be a problem, quite the contrary, hard currency would be needed to purchase goods and services not available within the confederation. But outside sales, while there is unmet demand within the confederation, means a member co-operative would have less to barter with within the confederation, and while it would be less efficient for other members of the confederation to make outside purchases with hard currency for the very goods a member co-operative is selling on the market, I guess that would be each member co-operative's choice to make. The result could be hard currency exchanges between

member co-operatives, but I guess that's ok, if not ideal.

While a doctor's skills are more highly valued than a plumber's, both workers are doing what they know, have an interest in, and were trained for and by the community. Both provide a vital service to the community. In an anarchist economy, a doctor should not deserve a better lifestyle just because they are talented and able to acquire a valuable skill from those willing to pass on their knowledge, a skill which the community could have trained any interested and intelligent member to perform. Despite the absence of a purely economic incentive to go through the difficult training required to become a doctor, there would probably be no shortage of volunteers, since doctors enjoy prestige for being especially valuable members of the community and because some people are attracted to this vocation by their interest in the subject. Ironically, it could be argued that plumbers prevent as much illness as doctors cure, by providing a safe and environmentally responsible water and wastewater system! There should be equal access to goods and services for all members of the confederation in good standing, regardless of the type of productive labour they perform. But would-be authors, artists, athletes, etc. would probably not be able to "do their thing" as their contribution to the community, unless of course there is an actual market for their skill. If they are able to successfully barter their skills, or sell them on the open market, that would be ok, but if not, it is unlikely that co-operatives could support scores of aspiring poets or dancers. Of course they could pursue their calling, but it wouldn't count as their labour contribution to the co-operative, unless that was agreeable to the other members. When the community's material needs were met, then this could be loosened up quite a bit. Hey, I'd love to be a writer, book publisher or a scholar, but it doesn't pay the bills.

Membership in a co-operative would be voluntary, and you could choose to be independent of any co-operative, and interact with the co-operatives on a cash basis. This is the arrangement that Augustin Souchy described in his book "With the Peasants of Aragon", about

his visits to various peasant collectives in Spain during the revolution/civil war of 1936-39. One interesting observation I made was that there was generally only one co-operative per village, and that these co-operatives attempted to provide for all the needs of their members. If you had an arrangement of several ad hoc co-operatives in one village, people would either have to split their labour into tiny segments in order to help produce all the goods and services they would want to consume (15 minutes weeding tomatoes to get a share of the tomatoes, 30 minutes of child care to have access to child care, etc.) or engage in all kinds of barter or monetary transactions to exchange their products for others they need. While one co-operative union per village would make more economic sense, since it is more efficient to have workers doing what they do best, and sharing the production, instead of dividing their labour into tiny segments, making a multitude of small transactions, or having each individual or co-op barter their production with one another, tomatoes for child care, etc., one can easily imagine a village splitting into factions over how work should be organized, hours of labour required, personality conflicts, etc. and forming several coexisting co-operatives that would work out exchanges among themselves. In fact, a system of smaller co-operatives in a village would mirror the co-operative confederation. As time goes on and people get the system working more and more smoothly, the co-operatives could become more closely linked and less barter or currency exchanges would be necessary, on all levels. Eventually, as co-operatives merge, there could eventually be large co-operative unions, resulting in a situation where "each produces according to their ability and consumes according to their needs" without any barter or exchange being necessary between members.

While it is interesting and necessary to think about anarchist macro-economics, it might be more practical to try to envision how anarchist economics would function on the level of the individual, family, business or other basic economic unit. I suspect it is

much more likely that anarchist economic arrangements will evolve from this level than be adopted dramatically on a society-wide scale. One way an anarchist community could evolve is if anarchists with a communitarian orientation could simply migrate to the same location. Once in geographic proximity, they would naturally get to know one another and help one another. As trust builds up among them, more and more ambitious co-operative projects could be organized. People could participate in projects they favour and opt out of those they don't need or like. The members of the various co-operatives would overlap, and co-operatives would coordinate their activities when necessary. People could, if they chose to, share or barter their skills as individuals instead of as members of a co-operative. Eventually, as the range of goods and services available becomes more diverse, more and more of the members' needs could be met within the co-operative network, with less and less reliance on the mainstream economy. At first, most of the participants would be employed in the mainstream economy, but more and more of them could gradually be absorbed by co-operative projects or be engaged in bartering with the co-operative. People could invest their private savings in co-operative ventures, but would be guaranteed repayment in the event they decide to withdraw from the venture. The venture would borrow money from the mainstream economy if necessary to repay departing members. Working in the mainstream economy to earn hard currency, and having access to credit are two examples of how the existing economy would be a useful "crutch" for anarchist co-operatives until they are able to stand on their own. It would be extremely difficult for a group to provide for all its members' needs overnight, without any pre-existing infrastructure or organization. Another way capital for starting a co-operative could be raised, besides the personal savings of members, is through donations made by activists in their wills. And members have personal lines of credit they could borrow against as well. The really hard part is getting enough interested parties in geographic

proximity, and building up enough trust among the participants that they are willing to attempt such an arrangement. If these types of co-operatives were attempted without a majority of anarchist participants, it is likely the project would stray and become a non-profit business, a traditional business, or some other type of hierarchical arrangement, with a board of directors and wage slaves as employees, as is often the case with existing co-operatives.

Modern economies are able to access labour, goods and services world-wide through the capitalist market system, and it will take some time to develop a socially just replacement that can operate as efficiently. Eventually, this new, co-operative economy could potentially outperform the capitalist system, because of all the built-in

inefficiencies of capitalism (luxury demands of rich are met but not basic needs of the poor, thus a large security apparatus is required, huge numbers of small transactions, complex and labour intensive financial system, speculation, boom and bust cycles resulting in oversupply, shortages, business failures, and unemployment, shortages of skilled workers since many families can't afford to pay for their children's training, shoddy goods and services, etc.). Marx's analysis of capitalism appears to have been pretty accurate as we see more and more small businesses being replaced by Walmarts, McDonalds and other chain stores, as these huge corporations merge into even larger ones, and as fewer and fewer average people are able to be successfully self employed. Free Trade will soon trump even national

sovereignty and local customs, and most of us will find ourselves wage slaves and political subjects of international corporations. Although there has been no big push to enforce international labour protections and norms, the U.S. being deficient in this area, since employees who attempt to organize labour unions are brazenly fired and/or blacklisted here, for example, there certainly is a concerted effort to provide a laissez-faire business environment across national boundaries. If it's not bad enough already, it will definitely be in every working person's interest to get an alternative economic arrangement going so that we won't be dependent on corporate capitalism as the noose tightens even further.

such people would be helped in a stateless society.

Long before the welfare state came into existence, fraternal societies existed in the united states which provided both formal and informal mutual aid in the form of life insurance, health insurance, survivors' benefits, old age housing, and other social services. And these societies, such as the Masons, the True Reformers, and the Ladies of the Maccabees, consisted largely of poor working people who banded together voluntarily to take care of themselves and their fellow members. These groups, of course, were in addition to the family and churches which were primary providers of reciprocal assistance before the government began providing social security and other benefits.

Similar voluntary associations and social networks could again provide the bulk of assistance for needy individuals in an anarchist society. There would, however, need to be different provisions made for those who were permanently unable to work or take

care of themselves. But who, just like vast numbers of Americans, despite heavy taxation to support government benefits, also contribute voluntarily to private charities, individuals in a stateless world would also contribute to private organizations dedicated to the care of those unable to care for themselves.

There remains the question of those able, but unwilling, to provide for themselves. In an individualist society, unless those unwilling to work were able to convince some individual or group that their companionship or existence was worth the cost of their upkeep, they would have to either work or leave the community and seek more hospitable surroundings. It is unlikely, however, that even the most altruistic collective or commune would long tolerate slackers more gladly than would a group of individualists. Additionally, since the amount of work necessary to acquire the means to feed, clothe, and house oneself would probably not be nearly as much in any kind of future anarchist society as it is

today, it is not unreasonable to expect everyone who is able, to work for their keep. Collectivists seem to believe that individuals and their private organisations cannot be trusted to be compassionate, and that, therefore, compassion must be socialized and administered by the community. Individualists, on the other hand, while perhaps not motivated primarily by compassion, work towards a world where people, as free individuals, can establish voluntary, overlapping networks to provide for all their needs and those of others. When free people are confronted with a problem, individualists believe, they will rise to the occasion. Although collectivists may talk more about the social benefits of anarchist society, individualists will provide them just as well, and in a freer setting.

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Individualism, Anarchy and Compassion BAD Broadside #14

ONE of the problems that individualist anarchists have in trying to promote acceptance of their ideas among other anarchists, as well as many non-anarchists, is that they are sometimes seen as being insufficiently compassionate. Individualists envision a future where personal freedom, self-reliance, independence, and private property are the order of the day, and some believe that such a society would not provide well for those unable to work or otherwise fend for themselves. But, while an individualist society would certainly not provide aid to those in need in the same way that the welfare state or an anarchist commune would, free individuals are just as capable of being helpful to others as are the members

and institutions of other kinds of societies.

Individualists tend not to emphasize the social service aspects of anarchist society, instead talking about the freedom it would provide for independent and able people to live the way they wish, collabourating or cooperating with others when and where they choose to. Collectivists, on the other hand, often concentrate on what individuals will get from the community in an anarchist future, e.g., free education, free health care, communal food stores, etc. This difference arises from their different views of people. Individualists see people as generally capable of fending for themselves when not prevented from reaching their full potential by

government and law, whereas collectivists view people as unable or unlikely to lead full and happy lives without a formal social network of responsibilities and benefits, even in a stateless world.

Individualists don't believe anyone "deserves" anything other than the full fruit of their labour, ownership of property acquired by means of this labour, fulfillment of any agreement freely entered into with others, and the freedom to be otherwise left alone. Despite this, individualists do acknowledge that some people, and perhaps most people at some time, will need assistance from others to get by because of unforeseen and/or unfortunate circumstances. And individualists do have ideas about how

HUMAN RIGHTS? NOT LIKELY! Jean Pollard

ON 2nd October, 2000, the Human Rights Act 1998 becomes law in this country. It incorporates the European Convention of Human Rights into domestic law and cases which went to the court in Strasbourg can now be heard in this country. It is supposed to give more power and rights to the individual. However, as this article aims to show, it is just another government illusion.

What are human rights? In the legislative framework, they are described in detail and the whole idea of the Act, taken from the Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations, following the Second World War, was to ensure that totalitarian states do not rise again. But of course, there would

be no need for a Declaration if it were not for the governments who make such declarations! Governments start wars; governments run totalitarian regimes. Every human being should have the right to flower to their full potential, unrestricted by a system which channels them into a government-accepting drone. The person then finds his or her own way in the world and interacts, by mutual aid and co-operation, with others. The "protection" of the individual's flowering should come from the person themselves and from the group with whom they share their existence. But once government harnesses human conduct, it becomes rigid and narrow. It does not take much working out to realise that "human

rights" are only what is politically expedient for the ruling group of the time.

So what are we being offered next October? The Articles (the Rights) range from Prohibition of Torture (Article 3) to the Right to Respect for Private and Family Life (Article 8), but anarchists will recognise the hollowness of government's concept of human rights in such issues as The Right to Marry (Article 12) and the Protection of Property (The First Protocol, Article 1). These are not "human" rights: these are prescriptive issues designed by a controlling system. Those Articles which look, at first sight, to be significant and offer some change are, on closer examination,

hedged with so many restrictions that they become meaningless. Article 9, relevant to all free-thinking people, is entitled "Freedom of Thought, Conscience and Religion". It states: "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observance."

Taking the religious aspect out of it, the paragraph looks impressive for those of us who may wish to challenge the accepted beliefs and be able to say so in public and in a teaching forum. Add to that Article 10, the Freedom of Expression which says: "Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers..." and it looks like any dissenters can spread their own views anywhere they like - the McLibel trial may never have been brought!

Not surprisingly, this is not the case. Article 9 has a second paragraph: "Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs shall be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of public safety, for the protection of public order, health and morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others."

Forgive the inclusion of another chunk of legislation, but it is important

to see the restriction in full because it shows the illusion of the Right. "Necessary in a democratic society" is an example. The right is immediately restricted by being in a "democratic society" because that means government controlled. And "necessary" could mean anything which government decides is expedient for its own ends: at one stage it was thought "necessary" to place mothers of illegitimate children in mental institutions and sometimes even giving them lobotomies. Notice how the other parts of the paragraph are expressed in a paternalistic way by the "interest of public safety" and "protection" of "health and morals" and possibly the most hypocritical of them all, "the protection of the rights and freedoms of others".

It is interesting to note that single mothers today could be in no better position under the Human Rights Act than before the Second World War. Article 8 states that everyone has the right to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence, but again there is the second paragraph in similar terms to Article 9. So if government thinks it is "necessary", bolstered by the brainwashed people who accept that this is for their own protection, then you can be sure that the incarceration and lobotomies would continue.

Article 8 is also further restricted by necessary interference for "the economic well-being of the country" and for the "prevention of disorder or crime": once again, money and order

are the bedrock of government - you and your family life come second.

The only restriction, such as it is, on government is that where they seek to interfere with a Right and are using the requirement of "necessity", the interference must, as decided by one case in Strasbourg, "correspond to a pressing social need and be proportionate to the legitimate aim pursued by the state". Any interpretation of "pressing social need" and "legitimate aim", will ultimately be by the European Court but it does not take much imagination to realise that any government action can easily be fitted into such phrases.

There is something tawdry about having "human rights" expressed in legislation. It is like caging a wild bird and still calling it free. Human beings can live peaceably with each other and it is only the corruption of the individual by government and its consequent intrusion into our lives that has interfered with human behaviour. The expression of any "human rights" would not be necessary in a society where each individual lived their life to the full in peaceable co-operation with those who surround them.

There will be much hype and media attention when the new Act gets under way, but whatever happens, we can be sure that the people will only get whatever "rights" government want to give them. "Human rights" can never be in the gift of governments.

PRAGMATIC 'ANARCHISM' OR ANARCHISM? - - A RESPONSE TO JOHN GRIFFIN

John Griffin's review of my book *Towards An Inclusive Democracy*, (Cassell, 1997) - *Total Liberty* (Vol. 2 No.1, summer 1999) - is so full of distortions and misrepresentations that one wonders whether this is due to a deliberate attack by a 'pragmatic' anarchist or just to the fact that the author never went further than reading a couple of chapters of it (which he also manages to misrepresent)! This is

obvious from the author's decision to ignore the entire first part of the book, on the grounds that 'earlier chapters are critiques of capitalist development, state socialism and the ecological crisis; assuming readers to be too familiar with these matters, I'll pass on quickly to the positive proposals, elaborated upon in much detail in the latter pages.' All this, when the first part was not just a critique of capitalist

development as he (mis)represents it, but an attempt to devise an alternative libertarian economics on the emergence of the market economy and its development into the present internationalised market economy - an economics which is based on power relations rather than the usual Marxist categories. As the same author in an earlier issue of TL (Vol 1 No 3) was lamenting the fact that in libertarian

theory 'there is no thorough going economics, just smatterings from Baldelli and Castoriadis', it is really strange that when he came across the first modern attempt at the development of a libertarian economics he did not manage to perceive it as such.

However, this fact may not be as strange as it looks prima facie. His concluding statement below is not only a monument of errors and distortions, but also indicative of the sort of pragmatic 'anarchism' its author suggests:

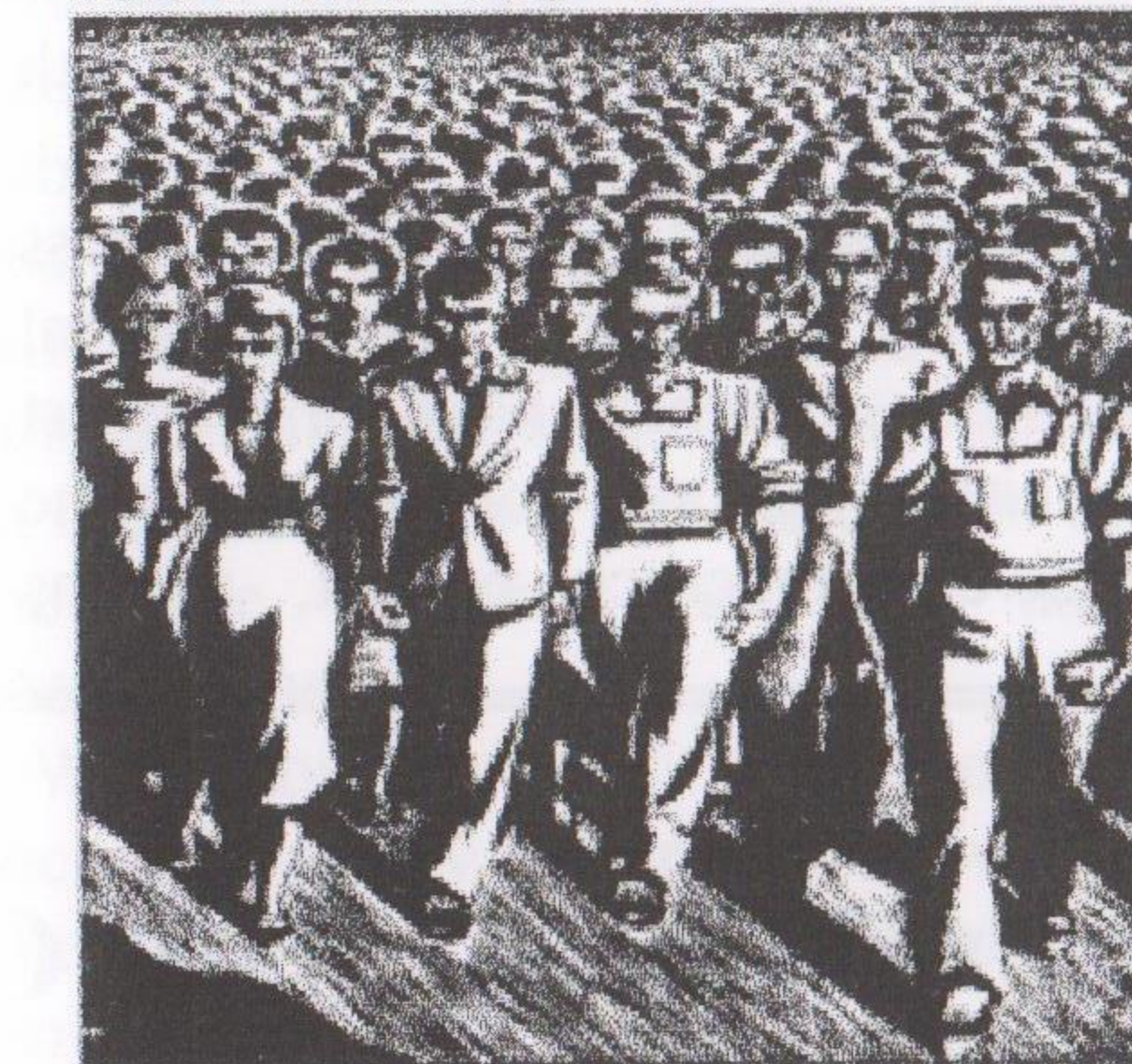
I found "Towards an Inclusive Democracy" to be strongly reminiscent of "Workers Councils and the Economics of the Self-Managed Society" by Cornelius Castoriadis, 1972, and "Social Anarchism" by Giovanni Baldelli, 1971. What is astounding to me, as a practical man, is that anyone can be so reckless as to propose throwing away all the pieces of the existing economic jigsaw, in favour of just one untried system, yet Fotopoulos follows the above writers and does just that. All seem blind to the fact that the market, and the informal unregulated economy, are concrete realities because they work, and have been working effectively for centuries - since the Greeks in fact.

I will list the errors/distortions in this statement.

- The economic model proposed by Castoriadis has almost nothing in common with the Inclusive Democracy model since the former presupposes a real market and money economy whereas the latter, following the anarchist/libertarian tradition is explicitly based on a moneyless, marketless and stateless economy.
- The model suggested by Baldelli differs significantly from the Inclusive Democracy model, as I made obvious in the book in which I only used one idea from Baldelli (assessing desirability for each type of work) which I expanded and changed into a complex index of desirability.
- An even stronger example of his reckless reading, however, is his statement that, following Castoriadis and Baldelli in rejecting the market (which he adopts as a concrete reality 'because it works!'), I tend 'perhaps deliberately to confuse it with the capitalist market'. All this when I spent

a significant part of the first chapter of the book drawing the crucial difference between markets, (which indeed did exist for centuries) and the system of the market economy - which is a broader term for capitalism - and only has a history of two centuries! As I make clear in the book, the reason I argue for a moneyless, stateless, marketless economy is based on the historical analysis offered in the first part of the book which shows that today's market economies have nothing to do with the 'pre-market economies' (i.e. pre-capitalist) markets. Since the time of the industrial revolution, the socially controlled markets of the past have been converted into the systems of market economies of today for the reasons I explain in the book.

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Therefore, any current talk about going back to pre-industrial markets which would be socially controlled etc., betrays a complete lack of understanding of the dynamic of the market economy, which has inevitably led to the present globalised (or better internationalised) market economy. The establishment of a true economic democracy securing equal distribution of economic power among all citizens is incompatible with markets, money and states. It seems however that Griffin's 'pragmatic' anarchism (and unfortunately this characterises several people in the British anarchist movement) can live with a market economy based on money - a stand which is not that different from the one supported by the demoralised Left today!

No wonder that Griffin supports the need for a money economy on the grounds that 'psycho-social tendencies like power seeking and greed, are surely not going to be "engineered" out of existence by monkeying around with the currency' (point 5 of his specific comments). It seems that for 'pragmatic' anarchists people are born greedy and are not made greedy by the money/market economy, as libertarians used to believe before the discovery of pragmatic 'anarchism'. If this is anarchism, one wonders, why bother with it and not join, instead, the left wing of the Labour party. This way we would be even more 'effective', and effectiveness seems to be the litmus test for any theory of action, as far as this sort of pragmatic 'anarchism' is concerned.

To return to the book, the first part, which was ignored by my reviewer, is critical in understanding the second part. This is because the proposal for an inclusive democracy is not just another utopian libertarian proposal. It is seen as perhaps the only way out of the present crisis which, as this part of the book shows, is due to the concentration of power at all levels to which the present system based on the market economy and the nation-state has led us.

In the rest of this response, being conscious of the space constraints, I will try to deal briefly with some of the specific points of 'criticism' raised by John Griffin.

1. It is an absolute distortion that the core idea of the libertarian model of the economy proposed by the book is 'ongoing economic planning meetings, to replace the billions of decisions made by individuals in the market', and that the voucher system, which is characterised as 'heavily bureaucratic', is burdened by additional operating costs, and 'likely to collapse under the weight of all those meetings.' In fact, the opposite is the case! The voucher system has been proposed as an effective way of replacing the real market - which is singularly unable to meet the needs of all citizens (in fact, the majority of world citizens) - with an artificial market, a way which avoids the bureaucracy of the planning mechanism and at the same time secures freedom of choice and the

meeting of the needs of all citizens. The billions of decisions Griffin refers to will still be made by individuals, through vouchers, and only the overall allocation of resources will be decided by the assemblies. It seems, however, that the pragmatic 'anarchism' of John Griffin cannot do without money and markets, despite the fact that most important anarchist writers, from Bakunin and the other classical anarchists in the past, to Bookchin today, have always talked about a moneyless and marketless economy!

2. As regards the question of how the exchanges between factories on raw materials etc. would be effected and what form investment would take, I have described in the book (p 267) the general principles behind the way in which the production of such 'intermediate goods' and technology would be determined.

3. I never 'rejected' the gift economy, as my critic asserts. People can use the goods they obtain by means of non-basic vouchers for whatever purpose they like, including, of course, the expression of mutual aid. What I ruled out was a 'moral' economy which does

not provide for any mechanism of allocation of scarce resources because I think that such an economy belongs to the communist fiction of a post-scarcity society.

4. The reason why 'there is no discussion of what might constitute sustainable levels of consumption' is that this cannot be determined in advance, without knowledge of the specific circumstances and the time/place constraints. This is a decision to be taken democratically by citizens' assemblies and I have explained in the book why the institutional framework of an inclusive democracy is highly likely to raise the level of ecological consciousness. This is so because, in contrast to today's market/money institutional framework (which pragmatic 'anarchists' do not reject), in an inclusive democracy there will be no institutional pressures for the production/reproduction of a growth economy.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that, to my mind, it is not accidental that British anarchists have for the most part either ignored or attacked the inclusive democracy project, as has

been expressed in the book *Towards An Inclusive Democracy* (which has already been published in Italian and Greek and is being translated into Spanish) as well as in *Democracy and Nature*, *The Journal of Inclusive Democracy*, of which five volumes have been published (15 issues of about 220 pages each). The reason is that British anarchism is unfortunately dominated by 'pragmatist' or irrationalist tendencies, which are inimical to any idea of a radical remaking of society on the basis of a genuine democracy. But it is at least ironic that the same people who lament the desperate 'under theorisation' of libertarian economics should dismiss and attack an attempt (as far as I know the only attempt at the moment) to remedy this, not by engaging in a rational debate about it but by simply distorting and misrepresenting it!

Takis Fotopoulos

Editor, *Democracy and Nature* *The Journal of Inclusive Democracy*

Individualist Anarchism, or Free Communism?

BY state socialists and free communists alike, we are told that goods ought to be distributed according to need. Engels suggested that the state was capable of doing this; free communists, such as Berkman, have suggested that the commune could do a similar job locally with rationing, in much the same fashion as was done in Spain. There are many other patterns open to socialists - to each according to labour, etc. However, "from each according to ability, to each according to need" has proven the most popular. We could, for the sake of this exercise, though, imagine a socialist society operating under this or any pattern.

Now, consider this: let us imagine a society where goods are distributed according to your favourite pattern (in this case "to each' according to need").

Everything everybody owns (possesses), they do so on the basis of need according to your principal of justice. So everything is owned justly. Suppose that I take my commodity X, which I justly hold. I melt it down and reconstruct out of it a machine. Some people I know agree to turn the handle of my machine so long as I give them philosophy lectures. Some others that I know agree to give me some of the raw materials that they justly own (in accordance with expected needs, or some other pattern), in exchange for some Socratic styled lessons on basic economics. Thus I own capital because wealth has been distributed according to need. By voluntary agreement I have hired, or bought labour to drive my machine, in exchange for my limited skills as a philosopher. By voluntary agreement I have bought raw materials

in exchange for my crude abilities as an economist. The workers agreed to accept philosophy lectures in exchange for their labour, and are thus content with what they get out of the venture. Likewise with the suppliers of raw materials - they are content with what they get. (Possibly, I would have refused their services if they wanted more, or I could offer them more later from the product or from the wealth produced that I have saved. In the future I could even cease to give lectures and lessons and pay for labour and raw materials out of the proceeds of the enterprise).

The point is, because I am entitled to own wealth that it is agreed that I need, (or in accordance with any other pattern of distribution that you may agree with) and because I can make voluntary agreements, I can employ workers, buy

raw materials, own capital, engage in a commercial enterprise, and increase my wealth due to this. Even though I live in a society where goods are distributed in accordance to some socialist pattern, the fact that I am entitled to control what it is considered just for me to own, and because I am free to make voluntary arrangements, I can set up a commercial enterprise. This leaves communists with two options:

(1) They could forget that need entitles you to own wealth and decide that "society" always has the right to regulate and control individual conduct and the usage of resources as it sees fit. So, for instance, although the state or commune has decided that the average person needs a certain quantity of X to live, individual holders of X, as distributed to them by the state/commune, may be forbidden from constructing machines or capital from it. And/or society could forbid the sort of free agreements by which labour and raw materials are purchased. This way people are forbidden to dispose of their labour and the goods that they are entitled to as they see fit, but ought to be forced to do what is in the "general good". This is hard line communism, authoritarian socialism with a vengeance. It actually would appear, under this system, that workers, and people in general, would have fewer opportunities and possibilities open to them than under any other system. People would effectively be nationalised resources.

(2) We could have anarchist or free communism. This is based upon the dubious assumption that the entire

global population and all future generations will simply choose not to use their resources as private capital, and will simply choose not to exchange their labour for goods with which they may supplement or replace their basic supply. Why they would do this we cannot tell. The best and most extensive writings on anarchist economics (rather than anthropology or psychology) have been produced by individualists, not communists - and are thus market oriented; Josiah Warren's communities lasted longer than both the Spanish and Ukrainian anarchist communist ventures, and, because individuals had more control over their lives than the collectives did, they were more anarchist. Thus there is little practical or theoretical evidence to assume that, if the state were abolished, individuals would choose communist arrangements over market oriented ones. However, this contention is debatable, so instead we will deconstruct the proposition that people will voluntarily agree not to set up commercial enterprises and hire labour, in order to achieve the same ends that the state socialists aim for using coercive means.

Well, consider this: in the state socialist society described above the integrity of communism could be maintained, but at the expense of liberty. On the other hand, if people had the right to own property and dispose of it in any manner they see fit (that doesn't violate the personal and negative rights of others), individuals could choose to pool their property and set up communist communities

voluntarily. It is conceivable that every community could be communistically arranged in such a manner, thus engendering communism without any need for a coercive structure such as government.

Now consider the aims of the "anarchist" communist - to choose to freely maintain communism and not to engage in commercial enterprises. Isn't this the situation that would arise out of the society of free, property owning individuals as described above? A person is unlikely to do what they have decided that they ought not to do unless prevented from choosing any other option, because that would contradict the "ought". Therefore someone who believes that they ought to be able to choose not to engage in commercial enterprises must also believe that they have a right to. Thus voluntary communism, or free communism can only occur properly where people have a right to property that is not interfered with, and a right to make free agreements (liberty of association) and arrangements that are not interfered with, even if they be commercial arrangements. Free communism cannot exist where people don't have these rights.

Thus it is a necessary truth that "anarchist" communism can only exist as an option, after the aims of the individualist anarchists (be they mutualist or capitalist) have been accomplished.

Richard Garner

Evolution Versus Revolution

ALL anarchists are revolutionaries. The form of society which we all aspire to is so radically different to the here and now that the actual creation of such a society could be nothing but revolutionary in nature. The issue is not, however, ends but means. How do we get from here to there? Put bluntly is a rerun of the 1917 Russian revolution the best, or only, means of transforming society?

I do not think that anarchists (and other revolutionaries) spend sufficient

time considering what in reality a revolutionary transformation of society would entail. Gaining power, the main focus of revolutionary activity, in itself is not enough. New social systems would need to be created, the dominant public mode of human behaviour would need to change (from competition to co-operation) and new models of social organisation would need to be brought into being.

Looking at the history of left wing revolutions, two things seem apparent.

Firstly while good at gaining power, revolutions have by and large simply appropriated existing power structures and not created new ones. Secondly in no country has lasting social change been achieved. I acknowledge that arguments can be made that the problems in Russia, Cuba, North Korea et al are not the result of the revolutionary process itself but of the ideology or individuals behind it, indeed Western Marxists have made a career out of trying to explain why the

Russian revolution resulted in a system which denied basic freedoms and was economically and environmentally ineffective. I do not believe this. The problem is the revolutionary process itself. It does not work.

The biggest and most sustainable economic and social transformation in the modern period is capitalism. As a system not only does it survive, but it grows so that now, for the first time most of the world is capitalist (capitalism has, of course, always been global, it is just that the world has not been capitalist). That capitalism represents a revolutionary change compared to the system (in Europe) which preceded it (feudalism) is not in doubt. What is interesting, though, is to consider how capitalism became the dominant economic and social system first in the West and now (almost) the world over.

Simplifying somewhat capitalism's origins can be traced back to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the very height of feudalism, with the creation of the first City States and the development of new land and tenure rights in England. The creation of a new class (called 'the middling sort' in England) not bound by land ownership, but driven by the accumulation and reproduction of capital gathered pace in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (fuelled by population growth and the expansion of international trade). A series of what Marxists call Bourgeoisie revolutions (such as the English Civil War and French Revolution) were the beginnings of a shift in power away from the old landed aristocracy to the new merchant class. Violent upheavals such as the English

Civil War reflected deep rooted changes already taking place in society, they did not impose changes on society. Indeed the more radical demands of groups like the Diggers and Levellers were defeated. Finally the eighteenth century saw creation, through advances in technology, of the factory system and with it the dominance of wage labour and competition.

Capitalism was not created by a group of bosses storming Parliament. It took literally centuries. Its evolution was not however smooth or peaceful. To borrow Stephen Jay Gould's biological evolutionary term its development was characterised by 'punctuated equilibrium' - periods of slow steady growth or stasis, punctuated by periods of rapid accelerated change, (in human history as in the rest of nature these periods are frequently characterised by violence; there is nothing fluffy about evolution).

The important point to note is that the future begins in small ways in the present. The medieval Italian City states such as Venice relying on finance and trade rather than land ownership existed in a world dominated by feudalism. Few in the fourteenth century would have guessed that Venice represented the future.

The idea that lasting, sustainable change can just be imposed on a social system is wrong. Before the Russian revolution, as Kropotkin pointed out, no examples of a Soviet style system existed. On his train journey from the Finland station Lenin could not point to living examples of the dictatorship of the proletariat or of a community of artists all painting in the style of social realism. Marxist Leninism was not a

natural evolutionary or sustainable change. It was imposed on Russian society through violence and was only sustained through violence, but because it was not natural it floundered (unlike capitalism).

This does not mean that as anarchists we have to be passive or wait 500 years for change! As was pointed out in the last issue of Total Liberty everyone is an anarchist: there are examples of mutual aid and co-operation all around us from squats, to sustainable agricultural projects to LETS and Credit Unions. Like the Medieval City states these may represent the future and became the dominant means of economic and social organisation.

Direct action, confronting the state with protests and demonstration are also necessary. The power of the state (and global capitalist companies) need to be challenged. This activism should not, though, be narrowly focused on one class but embrace everyone wishing for a more civilised, humane way of living.

From where we are now achieving an anarchist future seems like climbing Mount Improbable. Attempting to reach the summit in one leap (as some revolutionaries seem to want to) will be impossible, however climbing one step at the time is much more feasible. We need to put as much of the future in place as we can. We should to seek as Marxists do to appropriate the structures of capitalism (the state, factories, mass unions etc..) but to create something different. Many anarchists are doing this.

Richard Griffin

ultimately dependent upon, the innate sociability of our species and its place in the natural world.

Communists can be most persuasive when they argue that the ownership of the land and all that comes from it is immoral: By what right should anyone claim to own a mountain or a valley, along with the snow, trees and animals upon it? And why should human produce be given a monetary value which debases its use-value and alienates the paid labour of its producers? When I first came to anarchism, I found this kind of language irresistible.

Here was something bright, pristine and hopeful, so utterly removed from the machinations of power and greed, it demanded to be taken up with a fervour that bounded on the "religious"; it felt so indisputably "right" as to be a "natural" way of thinking. Kropotkin's use of mutual aid is really a form of Social Darwinism.

Alongside a naturalistic view of social life, communist-anarchism stresses ethical considerations which most tend to find difficult to rebut, nor do I wish to do so here. However, we should be careful to note that its critique in effect *denies* economics, at least as it is conventionally understood, for it rejects the use of a means of exchange. Without money there can be no formal regulation and integration of production and consumption; without some means of measuring relative values there can be no meaningful economics. Economics is essentially about measurement. We need look no further for communist disenchantment with economics; the two are mutually incompatible, conflict between them is built in!

That said, communists are right to condemn the grotesque over-emphasis on market values in our society, and yet paradoxically, maybe we are moving in a money-less direction. With the introduction of bank cheque accounts, credit cards and direct debiting, the act of paying for something is becoming an increasingly remote experience. Without all that coin-clinking and note rustling, without weight, texture and smell, money is becoming ever less "real".

Long gone are the days when payment in gold was demanded.

Promissory notes, or IOUs have been acceptable for hundreds of years- "I promise to pay the bearer...." is still to be found on our paper money. The Chancellor has started to sell off the mountains of gold ingots held by the Bank of England, obviously seeing little need to back paper money with precious metal. The value of our money is now very much based on what we *think* it is worth, and with so much of it invested in unemployment and global ecological collapse, one wonders when people will realise that the emperor has no clothes! Will people ever question the continuing proffering of money, "real" or plastic, when everywhere we see shelves groaning with "goodies"? Don't we just need to even things out, so we can all make a contribution to the social product and enjoy a comfortable life?

This is not the place to argue a detailed case for continued monetary regulation. Suffice it to say that I suspect the withdrawal of money from our contemporary economy would be like riding a bike with no hands, OK for a while, but you soon need the checks and balances that the handlebars provide. Nevertheless, I am enthusiastic about no cash exchanges wherever they are workable, and where people wish to use them. History demonstrates their success in locally resourced, self-sufficient and socially cohesive societies, and even our own money-mad society has a large informal economy. Less money means a reduced banking and insurance bureaucracy, so there are pragmatic reasons as well as ethical ones for at least reducing the size of the cash economy, if not getting rid of it altogether.

The economic chickens come whizzing back home to roost when communism is presented as the only valid system for anarchists. A technically sophisticated economy like our own cannot function with all transactions made in face-to-face encounters; more remote, i.e. contractual relationships, are almost certainly inevitable, given the uneven spread of resources throughout the globe. Communists, in denial of the real substance of economics, are usually reduced to expressions of common-sense generalised desires for a careful use of resources, or soundly based

agriculture etc. They could take up an extreme position and advocate a return to pre-industrial technologies to match the pre-industrial economics; that at least would be consistent. Murray Bookchin has demonstrated the use of modern technology in small decentralised communities - but of course he does this quite miraculously without the aid of any economics (look no hands!).

Just as it is ludicrous to pretend that communism can be made universal, so too would it be ludicrous to suggest that all exchanges must be contractual - people are apt to be offended when offered payment for what was intended to be a gift. All economic forms have their uses and limitations, there is no logical basis for adopting one or another on ideological / doctrinal grounds.

For a movement which talks long about "holism" and "many-sidedness", it does at times show an alarming tendency to erect spurious "isms". Encouraging dialogue across these divides is always welcome, but it is surely more appropriate to deconstruct their bogus ideologies. I use pragmatic philosophy to do just that, but anarchists should not need to learn their way to understanding that freedom requires flexible multi-stranded approaches. Some of our fiercest doctrinal wrangles have been around economics, the most under-theorised facet of anarchism; I fear that if we don't sort it out we are going to be stuck with the sectarianism.

John Griffin

Footnotes

Communist-anarchists reject all that attaches to exchange economies: money, markets and the concept of ownership. Some reject even bartered exchanges because, like the market, they too involve value judgements. Economic regulation is through the exercise of individual responsibility and social controls exercised by the community.

Collectivist-anarchists accept money and markets, but want an egalitarian society in which ownership and control of the economy is spread as widely as possible through the use of federations etc.

Individualist-anarchists are also happy with the market, but dislike federal structures. Each would require a directly controllable stake in the economy, which would be wholly redeemable at any time.

Communism and Deconstruction

TOTAL LIBERTY has played a useful role in stimulating the ongoing debate around libertarian economics. The recent focus on individualism, an often neglected viewpoint, has been welcome, but worrying to me has been the lack of contributions from communists who after all do make up the bulk of the movement. Whilst not of that

persuasion, I do have a multi stranded approach to anarchism, which looks forward to a time when our internal ideological differences can be deconstructed and finally consigned to history.

For those who may be confused over terminology, the brief notes below should make clear the basic differences between communist, collectivist and

individualist approaches to economics. These terms are of course also used elsewhere, and sometimes confusingly, in relation to social characteristics generally. What the academics call the "social" and the "economic" are often not easy to separate; indeed, economic activity is inevitably social to some degree. The communist perspective more than any other is rooted in, and