

Any Time Now

Spring 2005 - A Newsletter Of Social Anarchism - Number 22

<http://www.atnzine.net>

The Nature of Anarchism

Why is most anarchist writing just boring? Try to read London's FREEDOM and you will see what I mean! It is an overlong suicide note. One of the main troubles is quite simple. People, anarchists, think that anarchism is all about economics - see Griffin's paper in the current issue. Fatal!

Anarchism is, or ought to be, about politics, about decision-making in all matters of government. Our libertarian ancestors made no mistake about it. THE AGREEMENT OF THE PEOPLE by the Levellers in 1647, with the Putney debate to follow, was all about democracy - no economics. Thomas Paine's devotion was to American independence, the Rights of Man, The Age of Reason and the Welfare State - no economics. WALDEN was about life-style and environmentalism. Blake rejected politics, economics and the church - in favour of the human spirit, The Chartists had Six Points, all political, no mention of the economy.

So where and how did it all go wrong after 1848? The answer is bloody Karl Marx! In DAS CAPITAL he set out to persuade human kind that life was essentially an economic matter. Total garbage! And he was hugely successful!

People were looking for a new God - since Jehovah was dead or dying. And Marx gave them the 'historic role of the working class'. More garbage! Bright young members of the middle classes then saw their chance to become the new priesthood - the leaders of The Party - God help us! You know the rest! 150 disastrous years in which the cause of the Left was consistently perverted by weird dogmas and authoritarian structures. We are still suffering from the hangover. It has virtually destroyed the anarchist movement.

For my sins I went right through the Marxist, Stalinist, Trotskyist mill between 1945 and 1960 from the inside - so I know what I am on about. My DIRECT DEMOCRACY came out in 1975 and has been updated regularly ever since. Its current eleven-page update is on E-mail and available, just ask. Now PLEASE can we start work on an intelligible anarchist POLITICAL theory?

I reckon that the US will suffer political collapse within the next four years. So stand by your beds! I predicted the Soviet collapse 33 years before it happened - no one believed me. Ah well... Peter Cadogan email: PeterCadogan@aol.com

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FRATERNAL MEMBERSHIP OF EARLY 20TH CENTURY

AMERICAN LABOUR LEADERS - by Eugene Plawiuk

<http://www.freewebs.com/plawiuk/>

At very fine article. Ever since I read De Toqueville years ago, I have been of the mind that when North Americans were at their most "individualistic", they were also at their most "socialistic". I am talking, of course, about the 19th and early 20th Century, before the rise of consumer capitalism. By showing the extent of the fraternal lodges and their relationships with the labor and socialist movements, you have certainly given added credence to this view. Interesting to note that the IWW were also into the fraternal groups. But then the Continental anarchist and socialist groups

were always Masonic. We must add to this the more than 6000 intentional communities, most with overt socialist and anarchist ideologies, that were attempted in the US and Canada at about the same time. In the 20th Century the myth of "rugged individualism" was created by ruling class apologists as a straw man to undermine the earlier "individualistic" socialism. The authoritarian left bought this as well, as they wanted to replace self-managed autonomous groups with the state. Consumer capitalism reduced individualism to consumerist conformism and narcissism. At the same, as added proof of the relation between individualism and cooperation, membership in voluntary associations, such as the lodges, fell off rapidly. (The picture I get is that of a flock of violent sheep quarreling over their fodder.)

That people can be "individualistic" at the same time as "socialistic" is only a problem for folks who understand neither concept beyond that of a media cliché. While I believe cooperation is innate, I don't discount the utilitarian aspect to it. Life is simply easier for the individual if people work together. An "individualism" that made my life worse, would be foolish indeed. Thus, as an individual I am drawn to socialism. Foolish people, for whom the innate sense

of cooperation has been undermined by corporate state brainwashing, live a "dog eat dog" existence and suffer accordingly.

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THE ANARCHISTS NEXT STEP? -- By Larry Gambone

(With apologies to Tom Brown)

Ten years ago anarchists in NA were few in number. Many of those that did exist tended to tail the left, a left which at that time was in mental chaos. The left had no answer to the neocons but a return to the social democratic "good old days". Political correctness took its toll. At the same time the working class was very uneasy. Unhappy with the lost at sea left, many gravitated to right-wing populism. The left attacked the populists as fascists and many anarchists tailed them. VCM however, pointed out correctly the radical potential of this populism and the fact that it existed was a result of the left's failure to develop a left-wing populism. For this we were denounced by many anarchists.

A great confusion existed as to what exactly anarchism was. VCM clarified this with a series of statements which pointed out that anarchism was neither social democracy or Leninism in black drag. We were denounced as dogmatists. Radical anarchists who were not happy with just tailing, tended to be preoccupied with violence or primitivist extremism. All of this came to a head in Seattle in 1999. VCM and a number of other anarchists like Fred Woodworth correctly denounced the violence and were persona non grata for the majority of the movement.

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A lot has changed in a few years. Right-wing populism fell apart, most of its supporters getting sucked into the neocons. However, a significant minority, the most intelligent members, are actively opposing drug criminalization, war and imperialism. The left-libertarian right coalition that we proposed is now old hat. The left has also changed. While right-wing populism is finished, a left wing variety has arisen. More and more people on the left are willing to discuss mutualist and decentralist ideas.

It is a different world now. We have a left which looks more to the Zapatistas and the Argentine worker's movements, rather than trad. leftism. We have a rebirth of syndicalism in Europe. We have a much greater number of anarchists, most of whom have a more mature outlook. This is not to say we would agree with everything they write or do, but that is not the point. Rather what we now have is a situation where we can work in common with a broad range of people on the left and other anarchists.

North American anarchism has seemingly reached a stage of maturity. It has happened so quickly, that some might not be aware of these changes. What evidence exists for this new-found maturity?

- * Marginalization of the extremist factions
- * Anarchists and anarchist groups in all major cities in NA.
- * A large number of organizations and individuals, while not overtly anarchist, are sympathetic to anarchist ideas.
- * Attempts to organize city-wide and regional federations.

The failure of Black Bloc ideas led to self-criticism. Few people wish to engage in such tactics any more. The violent images are passé. The star organizer for the IWW is an ex-Black Blocker. The primitivists slunk back to their caves. You find more of an emphasis now on working people and practical anarchism. As well as the IWW doubling in membership, new organizations like NEFAC and the NW Anarchist Fed. have developed, which reject the silliness of the past.

Where do we go from here? We have two living examples of how to proceed. One is the example of the British anarchist movement. There are no less than four different ideologically-based federations, each with a tiny membership and a number of local independent groups. FREEDOM, the largest and most influential publication is a biweekly with a circulation of less than 1000 copies. On paper, there are a fair number of anarchists, but the movement is far weaker than it ought to be.

The other example is France. A number of different groups and federations exist, but they are overshadowed by the FAF, a federation which UNITES the different anarchist ideologies. The FAF has 60 groups with 500-600 members and is found throughout France. They have their own radio station and produce a beautiful weekly newspaper with a circulation of at least 15,000. FAF members are involved in the syndicalist union, the CNT-F and a host of other projects that unite ideological anarchists with sympathizers.

The FAF is this way because it was influenced by the thinking of Sebastian Faure, who more than 90 years ago recognized correctly that ALL genuine anarchists have more in common with each other than non-anarchists, and ought to work together. He thought it foolish for anarchists to divide themselves over secondary issues. This is known as the Synthesist Position. Furthermore he saw, again correctly, that outside of the anarchist milieu, were large numbers of people who shared many anarchist ideas. It was necessary to work with, AND RESPECT these people in building mutualist movements, opposing war, etc.

For our next step here in NA, I suggest we ought now to encourage

anarchist unity and the Synthesist concept. We ought to hold the FAF as closer to the model we want to see develop here. This does not mean we should rush out and form a federation, either national or North American. We have already tried this top-down approach with SRAF and the AFC, both of which failed. Rather than that, merely discussion and awareness of the need of a FUTURE federation growing naturally out of existing functioning groups.

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MUTUALISM, MARXISM AND THE LTV - by John Griffin

The momentous changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution first got under way here in the UK around 1750, and came to prompt much thought on social processes. At that time, sociology and economics as we now understand them, did not exist as separate academic disciplines, the territory of both fell under the heading of "political economy". The 19th Century saw significant developments in those very partial expressions of political economy, classical liberalism, socialism and anarchism, issues around which remain as hotly debated as they were then. I think it important to emphasize that the moves from feudalism to capitalism, from agrarian to industrial society, and from bonded serfdom to waged labor, constituted an extended and messy transition, which took place over some 150 years. The political ideas and social analysis followed variously in the wake of change, sometimes, as was the case with Marxism, trying to anticipate it. The combination of all these factors can make the assessment of 19th Century ideas difficult for a 21st Century vantage point.

Adam Smith's lifetime (1723-1790) came as the Industrial Revolution was in its infancy. He became interested in the factory system of production and the increasingly sophisticated division of labor that it used. Alongside these studies, arose the question of how much factory workers were paid in exchange for their labor. Taking note of the usually extremely low rates, and seeking to emphasize the importance of the producers, Smith introduced to political economy the Labor Theory of Value (LTV). The LTV maintains that produce can only attain a market exchange value after labor has been expended on the raw materials required for its manufacture and distribution. It was a simple enough idea that came to be developed first by David Ricardo (1772-1823). Ricardo stressed the tendency of the prices to be proportionate to labor costs, even as prices were also subject to the pressures of supply and demand in competitive market conditions. Modern economists, even with decades of research and experience to draw upon, would not disagree with these basic ideas.

In being aware of the operation of the market, it is most unlikely that Smith or Ricardo ever regarded labor as the sole determinant of commodity prices. The LTV had its origin not as hard economics as we know it, but as an arm of social analysis and criticism. As such it was taken up by that other very famous political economist, Karl Marx (1818-1883) who integrated the LTV with his class analysis of capitalism. Marx regarded industrial produce as having a core use value, but through the wages system, the exploited workers were made to generate "surplus value" for their employers. Short circuiting Marxist terminology, surplus value approximates to profit.

It is likely that Marx's great rival Pierre Joseph Proudhon (1809- 1865) was attracted to the LTV, since he admitted, according to his biographer George Woodcock, to being influenced by Adam Smith. Whatever the truth, basing economics on labor input was at first irresistible to the founder of Mutualism. So, for a while, Proudhon advocated the issue of vouchers in exchange for goods retailing at prices calculated in hours of work taken to

produce them. The unearned income expropriated by the capitalists, was thus eliminated, but not surprisingly, the idea came to naught, and Proudhon reverted to market principles in his later work.

Proudhon's voucher scheme saw a belated and brief flowering during the Spanish Revolution of 1936-1939, but its use was limited to small agrarian villages; the collectivized factories in the towns continued to use hard cash. There could be other, probably unknowing expressions of LTV; LETS schemes have some similarities, but these function within the context of modern welfare capitalism.

Contemporary anarchists, as far as I know, have not criticized Proudhon's apparent early use of LTV - but then most are also likely to be embarrassed by his later advocacy of the market. The LTV in relation to Marxism, has however drawn plenty of flak: it is rightly pointed out that it neglects market forces, and is incapable of accounting for the cost of land or rents, neither of which entail labor.

On the other hand, few anarchists too squeamish to use the market, but looking for an alternative economics, have resorted to the LTV. For instance, in 1974 the Philadelphia Solidarity Group published "Workers Councils and the Economics of a Self-Managed Society," and in 1997, the Greek, Takis Fotopoulos put out "Towards an Inclusive Democracy". Both of these efforts proposed the use of work vouchers along with a lot of centralized planning and were inspired in part by the work of Cornelius Castoriadis a.k.a. Paul Cardan, the French (Marxist?) libertarian socialist. Neither publication acknowledged a connection with the LTV, and Fotopoulos went out of his way to deny within the text, that this was the case. Oh, what a wondrous web we weave!

And now, in 2004 from the US, comes "Studies in Mutualist Political Economy" by Kevin Carson, which is according to the review in ATN 21, "Reestablishes the LTV"! Now I admit to not reading the book, but cannot help noticing the strange presence of those words "political economy" within the title, and wonder if there is any significance in their use. Is this current terminology in the US? The book seems to be a critique of capitalism with Mutualism - without vouchers - as an alternative, but quite why Carson should find the need to rake over the LTV to do this is beyond me.

Is it not time that we followed Proudhon, and started using conventional terminology in an open, and let's face it, honest way? I agree that the language of economics tends to equate to the language of capitalism, but this is so only because the capitalists are so dominant. The relatively few practitioners of contemporary Mutualism, like those of Mondragon in Spain, are I am sure not wasting their time trying to find ways of using the LTV. We understand the sociology that goes with co-operative working well enough. What is needed is an unambiguously market-based economics with clear proposals for financing welfare and education. Without these essentials, we will not have an effective economics, and will continue to fail to come to terms with the modern liberal-democratic state: we will continue to be struck in our 19th Century rut.

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-----**IT MUST BE SOMETHING IN THE WATER**-----

Thanx to Y. A. Duck for the following:

STUDENT SUSPENDED FOR WRITING PROTEST LETTER

PITTSBURGH POST-TRIBUNE - A Portage student's punishment for writing and printing 200 protest letters over new school policies is taking on tones of a 1960's U.S. Supreme Court case. Tyler Zilz, a sixth-grader at the Willow Creek Middle School, said he received a one-day, in-school suspension

Wednesday for writing a three-page protest letter and passing some of the copies out to his classmates. In the letter, which he wrote with the help of his brother Eric, a Willow creek eighth-grader, he called for students to show their opposition to the rules. Since Monday, all students have been prevented from wandering halls before the start of school and roaming the cafeteria during lunch period. The moves were designed to make it easier to monitor students, said Andrew Halaschak, Willow creeks principal. Students haven't been happy with the changes. "We, as a student body, we are strong," Zilz wrote. "We are also intelligent enough to realize an unfair judgment when we see it." He encouraged students to wear white shirts and blue pants this week to protest. Reports have filtered out that some students are following the protest dress. . Zilz's mother, Sherry, said she was called to the school and signed a letter for Halaschak accepting the suspension. She said Halaschak said her son's letters were "interfering with the educational process."

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STUDENT STRIP SEARCH

"Ten students between the ages of 11 and 12 were strip-searched as officials at their charter school tried to find a missing \$10 bill. Seven girls and three boys at the Mainland Preparatory Academy were searched down to their underwear Thursday after one of the girls reported the money missing, said Principal Wilma Green. The money was not found."

http://www.boston.com/news/odd/articles/2005/01/07/police_probe_student_strip_search_in_texas/?rss_id=Odds+and+Ends

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THE WELFARE DEBATE

I was delighted to see that my essay on UK welfare in ATN 19 has stirred some interest, and thank Larry Gambone, Keith Preston and Kevin Carson for their observations.

Since Larry and Kevin raise some historical points, I think it makes sense to begin this further belated installment from me with a brief account of the early mutuals, or 'Friendly Societies' as they were called. As Kevin says, the main reason for their inadequacies lay with the extremes of poverty generated by the capitalists. Unfortunately, these difficulties were compounded by organizational problems involving ignorance, and sadly, theft. E. P. Thompson's authoritative *The Making of the English Working Class* gives a flavour of this:

Failures owing to actuarial inexperience were common; defaulting officers not infrequent. Diffused through every part of the country, they were (often heart-breaking) schools of experience. [p.460]

Funds slowly acquired would be lost with an absconding officer, with no possible recourse to law. [p.561]

They also had the attentions of governments to think about: having banned trade unions in 1799, even the Friendly Societies, offering insurance for sickness and funeral expenses, were seen as likely centres of revolt; an Act of 1846 required all societies to register their existence- many declined.

The Social Contract

It was not until 1875 that Friendly Societies gained legal status, and were thus able to safe-guard their funds. Despite the appalling circumstances, these early mutuals had achieved a great deal, and in 1911, Government paid them a

back-handed compliment when it appointed 'approved' Friendly Societies, as agents to implement its own embryonic National Insurance System. From that point on the mutuals were pushed into remorseless decline, as State schemes were extended. (Doesn't it make you spit?) More reforms were prompted by the discovery during the 1914-18 War, that many conscripts were barely able to shoulder a full pack and rifle, never mind march and fight. Here then is the genesis of the so-called 'social contract'.

When it comes to making cynical compromises, there is of course no more shrewd judge than the State, and welfare provision was probably the biggest compromise it ever made- it was the most effective way of buying off the labour force, and thereby forestalling the threat of revolution. Business choked on its rising tax bill, but paid up- and it worked, for the most part, very well. Thus, the practitioners of ruthless competition were made to support a grudging and mean-spirited form of mutual aid.

Theoretical Crisis

The success of state welfare inevitably pushed labour organizations towards statist viewpoints, leaving those who came to see themselves as anarchists on the side-lines, and looking increasingly utopian and out of touch with reality. The sweeping reforms of the 1945-51 Labour Governments, and the consensus politics that followed, did much to take welfare off the agenda. Post-war libertarians turned their attentions to such issues as nuclear weapons, the Vietnam War, feminism, and now ecology.

If the 19th-century radicals thought little about welfare in terms of written theory, it was understandable, since mutuals were established already, and with the support of millions; problems for the mutuals, as we have seen, lay in the realm of practice, not theory. 20th-century anarchists were of course aware of the emergence of the liberal-democratic state, but as the years rolled by, and the mutuals declined to insignificance, they generally preferred not to engage fully with the resulting theoretical crisis- and often seemed not to understand that there was one! These facts are a sad commentary on the movement's often dismissive attitude to theory in general, but I digress.

Without a large mutual sector to point to as a working alternative to state provision, contemporary anarchists are presented with practical considerations, as well as theoretical problems which can be regarded as fundamental. Pause to consider:

*Anarchism is about personal freedom and independence, but people reliant on social benefits are to some degree dependent, and therefore logically unfree. Thus, for some, freedom as an ideal may be in conflict with the principle of mutual aid. (It would be interesting to hear from long-term carers of the elderly or mentally ill about the social dynamics of dependency.)

*Anarchists want a voluntaryist society, but an 'all-in' approach suggests the need for compulsory contributions, or some other means of ensuring compliance... Even so, most would probably favour an entitlement to welfare for all, as of right.

*Adequate hospitals and cash benefits require very large centrally administered funds; problems involving control and accountability follow, as the early mutuals soon found out.

*The need to establish very large funds, promptly exposes our shaky grasp of economics.

Pragmatic Anarchism

We could wriggle out of this tangle of conflicting priorities by simply declaring

that responsibility for welfare lies with individuals. We could assume that post-revolutionary charities will resolve whatever problems remain- knowing only too well that charity does not guarantee support as of right, or through custom. Perhaps we should ask the disabled what they think of such a 'strategy'. Or, of course, we could continue to do little or nothing, but are we so devoid of imagination? Surely not!

It seems to me that the way we regard ideology, needs to be more flexible and pragmatic. We are concerned with people; we have to accept that freedom in the real social world does not and never will exist as a fixed ideal- that only happens on the pages of anarchist journals! The degree of freedom and responsibility present out there can be extremely variable. If we allow ideology to rule, then we will wind up with some kind of secular religion built on faith, rather than a social movement built on reason and logic. Real social change has always been slow and messy, we can only work towards freedom; I see anarchism as a directional philosophy, not as a set of rigid ideals.

A century ago, the State made its compromises to gain a (tension prone) social peace, and as a result is probably more firmly established now than at any point in its history. In ATN 19, I made my compromises clear: I prefer to keep universal welfare support, even if it means making contributions to the social fund compulsory. Some would argue that this is not an anarchist position, and if anarchism is defined in terms of freedom alone, they would be correct, but anarchism is also about an absence of hierarchy.

Things may be very different in Canada, but I think it possible to mutualize the existing UK welfare network, giving all a share in its ownership and control, and stripping out its hierarchies. The removal of the State would take out the engine of authoritarianism; a move that would not in itself guarantee socially free and responsible behavior at the personal level, but it would be a huge step towards that end. -----John Griffin, March 2005.

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RESPONSE TO JOHN GRIFFIN'S COMMENT

(On Studies in Mutualist Political Economy.) - Kevin Carson

I feel I should respond to John Griffin's comments on *Mutualist Political Economy* toward the end of his article, but frankly, I'm at a loss as to where to begin. Since the article is a response to Larry Gambone's book review, rather than a review of the book itself, I'm unsure how much of it to take as a criticism of my own work. Things are further complicated by his never having read the book. Well, I can't be too hard on him for that, since commenting on books I never read helped get me through school. At any rate, he does an admirable job of bluffing his way through, armed only with a knowledge of the book's title and the reasonable assumption that it has something to do with the labor theory of value.

Reading Griffin's article, it's hard even to get a clear idea of what the labor theory of value is supposed to be. At the beginning, he seems to depict it as part of the Smithian/Ricardian theory of exchange-value: "Ricardo stressed the tendency of the prices to be proportionate to labor costs, even as prices were also subject to the pressures of supply and demand in competitive market conditions."

I hate to quibble on a technicality, but Ricardo actually claimed that commodities tended to exchange at the same ratio as the amount of labor involved in their production--not the labor cost. The fact that wages were less than the labor-value of the product was central to the Ricardian theory of exploitation. Since the wages of labor and the profit on capital were both

derived from total exchange-value created by labor, it followed that labor and capital could each increase its income only at the other's expense. Generally speaking, though, Ricardo's labor theory of value was pretty much as Griffin described it: a simple empirical theory of exchange value.

Shortly thereafter, though, Griffin makes an entirely different claim: "The LTV had its origin not as hard economics as we know it, but as an arm of social analysis and criticism." So what was Ricardo, if not an economist? Then, at times, Griffin seems to set the LTV in opposition to "the market," and to identify it with some sort of labor-note or labor-time voucher system.

And worst of all, he attacks a straw man version of the LTV that is nowhere to be found outside of Paul Samuelson's lecture hall. For example: "In being aware of the operation of the market, it is most unlikely that Smith or Ricardo ever regarded labor as the sole determinant of commodity prices." Or this: "it is rightly pointed out that it [the Marxist LTV] neglects market forces...."

Both the Ricardian and Marxian variants of the LTV were quite explicit in saying that only the *equilibrium* price of *reproducible* goods was determined by embodied labor. And both were likewise explicit in describing the market forces of supply and demand as the mechanism through which the law of value operated--not exceptions to it.

Griffin questions my use of the somewhat archaic term "political economy." I adopted it deliberately. "Political economy" is commonly identified with the classical school of Smith, Ricardo and Mill. The dominant schools of modern economics, both neoclassical and Austrian, claim to have demolished and supplanted classical political economy. One of my purposes in the first part of my book was to examine the so-called demolition of classical political economy, and find out if rumours of its death were somewhat exaggerated. In addition, classical political economy incorporated questions largely outside the scope of the conventional economics of today: for example, questions of the distribution of ownership of "factors of production" like land and capital, and the role of political and social forces in determining this distribution. Such questions are generally treated as irrelevant by modern economics, which accepts the distribution of "factors" as a given.

Griffin sums up his criticism: "The relatively few practitioners of contemporary Mutualism, like those of Mondragon in Spain, are I am sure not wasting their time trying to find ways of using the LTV. We understand the sociology that goes with co-operative working well enough. What is needed is an unambiguously market-based economics with clear proposals for financing welfare and education. Without these proposals for financing welfare and education, we will not have an effective economics, and will continue to fail to come to terms with the modern liberal-democratic state: we will continue to be stuck in our 19th century rut."

Not included in Griffin's needs list is the need for an analysis of the present system or its exploitative nature. And that, essentially, is my reason for resurrecting the LTV. I accept, as the framework for my analysis, the insight shared by Thomas Hodgskin, Benjamin Tucker and Franz Oppenheimer: that the natural wage of labor in a free market is its full product; and that labor receives less than its product only when the state intervenes in the market to guarantee the monopoly returns of landlord and capitalist. Central to this understanding is Oppenheimer's distinction between the

economic means to wealth (peaceful production and exchange) and the political means (coercion, robbery, and privilege). Coercion is necessary for exploitation. Voluntary exchange is a benefit to all parties involved in it; when the state's coercion enters the picture, however, one party benefits at the expense of another. The state, in its essence, is a mechanism for benefiting one person at another's expense.

The evils of capitalism result, not from the free market, but from state intervention in the market. The state exploits workers by forcing them to engage in unequal exchange in the labor market, and to pay tribute to the privileged owners of land and capital by accepting less than their full labor product in exchange for access to them. The state exploits the public by subsidizing the operating costs of big business at taxpayer expense, externalizing all the inefficiency costs of giant corporations on the taxpaying public.

The importance of all this theoretical discussion, for the anarchist movement, was stated in the preface to my book: "If there is one valuable practical insight in this entire book, it is the realization that coercive state policies are not necessary to remedy the evils of present-day capitalism. All these evils -- exploitation of labor, monopoly and concentration, the energy crisis, pollution, waste -- result from government intervention in the market on behalf of capitalists. The solution is not more government intervention, but to eliminate the existing government intervention from which the problems derive. A genuine free market society, in which all transactions are voluntary and all costs are internalized in price, would be a decentralized society of human-scale production, in which all of labour's product went to labor, instead of to capitalists, landlords and government bureaucrats."

I attempt to use the labor theory of value, in other words, as a unifying principle; it integrates a theory of how the present system of exploitation works, how a non-statist and non-exploitative system would work, and the best way to get there. Whether the exploitative features of the present system derive from the inherent nature of markets, and whether markets are an acceptable form of organization, are intense and divisive questions among the various strands of anarchism today. The answer to this contention is not to assume it out of existence, by ignoring the debate and operating on the assumption that free market or mutualist organization is the best practice. Rather, the questions must be directly addressed. We must know why we're doing what we're doing, or abandon the idea of rationally persuading anyone who doesn't already share an aesthetic affinity for our approach. To paraphrase a Confucian maxim, theory without experience is dangerous; but experience without theory is empty.

----- Kevin Carson

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MORE ABOUT ANARCHISM IN GREECE - Pat Murtagh

It's been a little more than 6 months since we arrived back from Greece, and I have had the opportunity to review what I wrote previously. I have also read more on what has previously been published on anarchism in Hellas. Please see the end of this essay for useful contact info.

At one time there was indeed a 'Food Not Bombs' group active in Athens, but I doubt that they presently exist. There are two Indymedia groups in Greece, one in Athens and one in Thessalonika. Both have small English

sections that contain most of their features, but nothing of the "peripherals" that make an Indymedia site interesting.

While there is indeed a lack of bicycle groups (and a lack of bicycles!) in Greece this may be because of the nature of the terrain. Very suitable for the ever-present and annoying motor scooters, but very unsuitable for bicycles. YET, much more of the roads of Greece are devoted to pedestrian traffic than in a country such as Canada. This is NOT because of any political pressure, as it might be in North America. It is more a matter of tradition. The Greeks have a reputation for "insane driving", and out on the road. But in town it is different. Aside from using the sidewalks as just another lane or convenient parking (something that may be universal in Southern Europe) I did not see stuff like going 120 in a 60 zone like I see outside my front door every day. They also like their horns a lot, and use them in a manner that here in Winnipeg would tie up traffic forever as people would leave their cars in the middle of the road to have the obligatory fist fight.

Which, of course, leads to the observation that this pedestrian traffic makes Greece incredibly crime free in a North American sense. I must admit that every time I get out of dear old Winnipeg (4 to 5 times the Canadian murder rate, 3 times the rate of NYC and twice that of LA) I am impressed by how civilized everywhere else is (except maybe Vancouver's East side). The general level of civility is much higher in almost ALL of Europe, and it is NOT (the obligatory anarchist argument) because of more cops. It is simply because the streets are public places where people socialize.

The Greek cops actually seem to be "doing something", unlike the truly reptilian level of inactivity that I observed amongst Spanish police (of which there is a great oversupply) a few years ago. The average Spanish cop exists in their own private time zone where a cigarette lasts 10 times as long as it would in the real world. Except, of course, when Mutt and Jeff from the Guardia are questioning the wife and I (but that's another story) where time is only twice the Canadian standard.

Whether movement equals achievement is a different matter entirely. I had the opportunity to watch the "riot squad" in "action" in Greece. I was not impressed and not just because they seemed like "shrimps" in a Canadian context. They were marched up one street at double time, down another, up another, etc.,etc.,etc. while the anarchist inspired student demonstration against the EU milled around in front of the offices without any idea of what they were going to do. VERY barnyard-like with the anarchists as the flock of mindless chickens and the cops as the roosters strutting about on the outside. At the end of it the students drifted off, and the cops were marched back at double time to their vans.

Credit unions are quite rare in Greece, and their state could best be described as "gestation" rather than "expansion". The co-operative movement is strongest in Crete and almost invisible elsewhere. This is contrast not only to countries such as the USA/Canada/Scandinavia/France etc. where there is no history of dictatorship, but even to countries such as Spain where the co-operative movement thrives. A few squatted properties in Athens and Thessalonika give an appearance of coherence to an anarchist "scene", but, as is usual in other countries, encourage a self contained complacency amongst the participants. In anarchist matters "safety in numbers" quite often leads to "smug self-satisfaction in what are really tiny isolated numbers".

Yet, there have been many recent attempts to give anarchism in Greece an outlook that is more organized and consistent and also geared more towards the ordinary person. The Anti-Authoritarian Movement which I

mentioned previously (ATN 21) can hardly be described as an organization, as they themselves admit in a statement dated August 30th, 2004 where they say that; "Therefore the antiauthoritarian movement is not a federation but rather an open form organization that can accept a lot of organizational forms without being committed to any one"

Yet there are those in the AAM who see this rather amorphous gathering as insufficient. Observers from the AAM were present at last year's congress of the AIT in Spain, though it should be obvious that they were there in a "personal capacity" as the AAM has no mechanism to "officially delegate" anybody.

Impatience with this informality in relation to organization has led to the creation of the OADE (The Federation of Anarchists of Western Greece). This group first began to organize in the Spring of 2003, and they released a statement of principles last fall that sums up their criticisms of the present state of anarchism in Greece in the following; "...the anarchist-antiauthoritarian movement in Greece has been consumed regarding its intervention in the wider society, in only two or three subjects of a mainly emotional and romantic character (eg the state repression or government owned terrorism and support with ant political detainees). Most of the activities of the times were irregularly organized..." They also offered a vision of a more "publicly oriented" anarchism that would "address henceforth all the citizens" rather than a movement that was, as they expressed it, "self-consumed".

The OADE can probably be best seen as a "platformist group" that has everything but the label. Aside from the ESE they are the best organized of the Greek anarchists, but it should not be imagined that they are the only people there be think that anarchism should be both more organized and more oriented towards the general public.

Anyone familiar with has been previously published in 2002 on the Greek movement in Green Anarchy will notice a marked contrast with what I have written. What they wrote was basically an extended display of cheerleading for the vandalism of the bizarre bastard political offspring of the mating of Maoism and anarchism known as "autonomism". Some of this is the ability of anyone in the GA mendacity to "read out" any evidence that their heroes are being criticized. I have little doubt that people such as those I met and those whose works I have read weren't unknown back the "prehistoric times" of 2002. I also, however, have little doubt that, just like in North America, the Greek movement has matured and grown further apart from juvenile romanticism. This can be true in even a few short years. Note how here the "traveling anarchist rent-a-riot" known as the Black Bloc has become increasingly unpopular. The movement in Greece has become more mature with growth, the same as it has here. As Greek anarchism matures, just like anarchism across the world is maturing, there will be less "vandalism as sport" and more serious attempts to present anarchism to the average person.

Our Greek comrades start out at a higher plane of numbers than NA anarchism does, and great things can be expected in the years to come from the ESE, platformists like the OADE and "synthesists" within the AAM who, while disagreeing with the platformists on matters of theory and organization see the need for a more organized and popular approach to anarchism.

Anyway, a few useful resources:

1) There are Indymedia groups in both Athens and Thessalonika, and they can be accessed via any general Indymedia site. Both have small sections in English translation.

2) There is a pamphlet called 'A Brief History of Anarchism in Greece(1848-1973)', written from a "left anarchist" perspective (as opposed to an 'autonomist' cheering squad) by a Greek anarchist resident in Australia. It "may" be obtainable from "No-God-No Master", Box 300, East Brunswick, Victoria 3057, Australia. Query first.

3) The website of the 'Anti-Authoritarian Movement' can be accessed at: <http://www.resistance2003.gr>

Some English translation is present at this site.

4) The OADE can be reached via the following: Contact Section Box 1333 (Central Post Office), Patras 26001, Greece.

Email address is: <a_omospondia@yahoo.gr>

There is also a website at: <http://homepages.pathfinder.gr/anarchywest>

For information in English (and hopefully for a copy of the pamphlet mentioned above contact Box 2120, Lygon St. North, East Brunswick, Victoria 3057, Australia; or email: <outtheos@yahoo.com.au> or <anthropia@hotmail.com> (email address presently under test)

5) The ESE can be reached by email at: ese_union@yahoo.gr or at: epi_ta_proso@yahoo.gr . The latter is the address of their journal.

6) The AAM movement publishes an interesting journal which would be transliterated as "Diadromi". They can be reached at: diadromi@revolution.gr . The paper is entirely in Greek. A note on language: Most, but not all, Greek comrades speak "some" English. Fluency in French is rare except amongst the comrades of the ESE. Spanish is a "non-starter". Italian ???- who knows; I don't. Perhaps more common in western Greece.

- Pat Murtagh -

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-----Letters-----

Dear ATN,

Greeting! Thanks for the last issue #21. The piece on mental illness hit home for me. I see it all the time. People are deliberately mentally impaired in this demented society.

For example, one of my brothers, Lee, is diagnosed as schizophrenic and has heavily dosed with strong drugs like Holdol, Lithium, Sonetres, Stelazine and Thurazine. He's basically a chain smoking zombie and has been since his late teens. He subsists on SS1 and lives in a one room apartment for the disabled and elderly. He'll be fifty this year.

It all started with our parents sending he and I to a shrink in High School to get us to stop smoking pot. I escaped but for him it escalated into years of incarceration in "mental health facilities," forced drugging (& lifelong addiction) and restraint, electroshock "therapy" and a lifetime self-loathing and misery - stultified hand to mouth existence in a constant fog of confusion. But really he's not much different from the mopes who go to work and vegetate in front the idiot box every night!

A conscious prisoner - Klalani Khaldun _ has recently been moved to the psycho wing of the SHU (secured housing unit) at a morbid tomb in Indiana, because -get this- they were tired of his constant litigation over the dreadful conditions at this gulag. Final straw for the authorities was his refusal to accept a paltry settlement for the hundreds of personal photographs of his family they maliciously destroyed. They're now trying to blow his mind, literally!

An articulate Chicago anarchist, Katherine Hooges, recently put a well done zine together entitled "Thinking About Suicide" which is available through my distro. She formed a group here in Chicago called "Mad Lib."

I see how this society brain washes and psychologically hurts my own children in school. I see the effects on my co-workers of the psychological debilitation, desensitization and dehumanization of our wage slavery. You can imagine what monsters they are creating in Iraq and else where. But then how else could such a lie-based evil system function without its living dead drones going through the prescribed motions?

Anthony Rayson, P.O. Box 721, Homewood IL 60430 USA

-----**Questions and Answers**-----

Q: Hi! I am currently doing a project on Anarchism and was wondering if you could answer a few questions I had about it. Would an Anarchist treat, punish, train, educate, or rehabilitate youths that are incarcerated?

A:DM - There are problems in any society, but what we propose is not a punitive way or adversarial means to achieve social harmony. We would prefer to work with systems of restorative justice which involve reconciliation "Restorative justice is a systematic response to wrongdoing that emphasizes healing the wounds of victims, offenders and communities caused or revealed by the criminal behavior."....

http://www.restorativejustice.org/rj3/intro_default.htm

We do not favour a system of legislated law but feel that the basic premises of law are simple and self evident and think the best legal system is one of natural law."... natural law is the doctrine that just laws are immanent in nature ... and/or that they can emerge by natural process of resolving conflicts ...In either case, natural law is considered to be something that exists independent and outside of the legal process itself..."

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Natural_law

A lot would have to depend upon any specific community locally but there would also be global networks of skilled or resource people who could help deal with issues. We feel that a free society with a meaningful community life would; to start with; would already have a greatly reduce the crime rate. Some of the things which our society considers legal are in fact abusive; rent, taxes, profits gained from the labour of others; holding what should be public domain property as private, abuse of power etc. etc. These things lead to a situation where the people do not accept the system seriously. Because of the ethical contradictions, people tend to justify or find resolve in crimes of various sorts.

Q: What would Anarchists see as the greatest advantage and disadvantage, if any, of an open immigration policy?

A:DM - Anarchists would not want an immigration policy because then there would have to be a political authority to enforce the policy. What we propose is a world which is egalitarian so that it becomes more of a level playing field, one reason people migrate is to gain better economic circumstances, another is authoritarian governments and the resulting consequences of war.

Q: If everyone has the freedom to do what he/she chooses, couldn't he/she publish child pornography and spread it out to the public?

A:DM - When we say freedom we do not mean that there are no limits or bounds to what a person can do. We mean that things are done by consensus in a cooperative manner rather than by rule of a social or political authority.

The process of governance legislates laws which are then imposed on the citizens by police or other enforcers. It really is not an effective way of doing things because it drives the offenders underground. I think any egalitarian community where everybody was actively involved would find it necessary to protect children and deal with prejudice. Community committees and restorative justice would be means to achieve compliance with the needs of the community. Anarchism calls on the individual to take more responsibility in the life of the community, without greater responsibility on the part of the individual anarchism could not work. It is a process of evolving a new consciousness among the people, which I believe will come about through the process of dealing with the problems which governing authority and the state bring into our lives. Our struggles to deal with these issues are the training ground for the new future.

Q: Would Anarchism ... allow them to do what they choose? If they do, would that not cause a lot of chaos and hatred? What would they do to prevent this?

A:DM - I don't think disseminating ideas, opinions or either information or wrong information will cause social problems, there are always people who bounce off the wall and say all kinds of things, but in a self-reliant conscious society they would just lose credibility. Attacking people or destroying stuff are social crimes which can be dealt with in a better fashion than prison justice. In extreme cases a community may have to put a person under supervised custody or treatment like for mental problems or maybe isolate them from the community.

Q: Also, would an anarchist community decriminalize narcotics?

A:DM - Yes, I think we would deregulate narcotics although the production and distribution of medicine would have to be done by associations of health care workers. I think our efforts would be to deal with the social problems that lead people to do narcotics rather than regulating the substance. Currently a lot of crime occurs by people who steal to support an addiction or are involved in trafficking. Some people can not be reclaimed from this, but current society leaves people without alternatives. Increasingly we live in a world of spectators as consumers of entertainment, news and fantasy and have lost creativity in our lives; this is called alienation. This is what saps the meaning from people's lives and creates the social basis for addiction.

NEW RED LION PRESS PAMPHLETS

THE PRIMAL WOUND - by Larry Gambone – explores the origins of mental illness and authoritarianism using the most up-to-date archaeological and climatological evidence. Old European civilization was egalitarian and peaceful – was invaded by warrior tribes from the Steppes, whose violent culture was the result of desertification. 16 pages \$2.00

THE FORCES OF THE REVOLUTION - by Sebastian Faure - Written in 1921 by the person probably most responsible for the highly successful French Anarchist Federation. Sees the forces of the revolution as encompassing the free thinkers, socialists, syndicalists, cooperators and anarchists. First time translation from the French. Question for today – what are the forces of the revolution now? 12 pages \$2.00

(It should be mentioned that RLP just distributed its 5000th pamphlet in March!) To contact Red Lion Press (do not mention name when writing)

Mail to: Box 174, Succ. D Montreal QC H3K 3B9

email: redlionpress@hotmail.com

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PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

TOTAL LIBERTY - Vol. 4 #4 Spring 2005 Includes "New Ideas on the Liberation of Learning", a review of Kevin Carson's STUDIES IN MUTUALIST POLITICAL ECONOMY, Ethical and Reform Anarchism, The Defence of Individual Sovereignty, A comparison of Tony Blair to Mussolini, A Government Health Warning, The necessity of diversity, a review of KNOWN TO THE AUTHORITIES – Anarchists In Social Work, Zen and the Art of MZ Maintenance, War and Government and the petty attack on Father Petty of Sol Fed. L1 from: 47 High St. Belper Derby, DE56 1GF England http://mysite.freemove.com/total_liberty1

Extranjero - Stories of life and adventures of Kris (an American) and his Spanish partner, Lola as they encounter the culture of the Extremadura region of Spain where they have made their home. Informative, fun reading from an anarchist point of view. Get a copy for a modest donation in US\$ or Euros or your zine in trade.

Kris and Lola, Calle Obispo 4 Bajo, Plasencia 10600, Cáceres Spain

The Dawn - A monthly advocate for constructive anarchism.

This is a relatively new effort, about a year in publication, and it deserves a chance. Broad in scope and subject matter covers international news and analysis; Saudi Arabia to Venezuela, Labor organizing to anti-globalization, important news with good analysis. Subscribe: \$10 twelve issues in the US, The Dawn, P.O. Box 24715 Oakland CA 94623 USA.

DEFENDER - Fall 2004 Newsletter of family farm defenders. A US version of the Via Campesina movement. Donation, Box 1772, Madison WI 53701 USA www.familyfarmdefenders.org

THE MATCH - issue #102 Winter 2004-2005 Another fine issue! The usual columns, such as "Crap Detection" and "Who the Police Beat" plus letters, reviews and articles on technical topics such a building a camera for page layouts and much more. Donation from: Box 3012, Tucson, AZ 85702 USA

PRAIRIE FIRE - Feb. 2005 - Newsletter of the IWW in Wisconsin. This issue dedicated to the memory of the late Carlos Cortez, whom we will all miss. Donation, Box 2442, Madison WI 53701 USA

THE CUNNINGHAM AMENDMENT Vol. 7 #1 - That gorgeous looking and hilarious zine is out again! Articles on Ethics, the basics of Anarchism, If Only, Anything Goes and much more. Super! Donation:1005 Huddersfield Rd., Bradford, BD12 8LP England

THE ROOTS OF THE WAR IN IRAQ - by Giorgio Paolucci Probably the best analysis of the causes of that war.

AFRICA – Showcase of Capitalist Decline – shows how imperialism the root of the problem and how "national liberation" is a pipe dream.

Both pamphlets available for a donation from RS, Box 173 St. C, Montreal, H2L 4K1 Canada