

# *anchorage anarchy*

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## 57 Varieties of Anarchist Thought

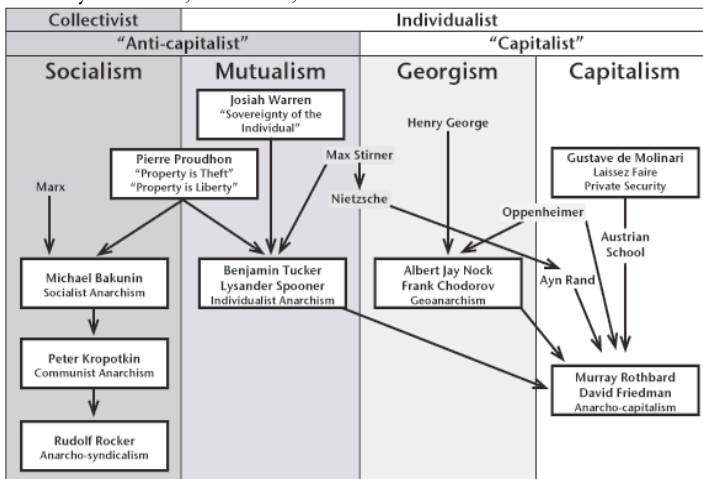
The aim of *anchorage anarchy* has always been to provide an anarchist perspective that emphasizes the importance of individual freedom. Without absolute liberty for people to act as they choose, as long as they do not initiate force against others or otherwise limit the equal freedom of others to live as they please, there can be no anarchist society worthy of the name. However, even when one accepts this as a first principle of just human interaction, the question remains as to how a society based on the idea of individual sovereignty and equal freedom would operate.

Individualists differ among themselves about how a thoroughgoing anarchist society would, should, or could function.

The early american individualists experimented with intentional communities where the participants functioned entirely without state supervision or internal government or hierarchy. They exchanged labor for labor, utilized alternative, non-state currencies, and minded their own business when it came to matters which concerned no one except the voluntary participants. While none of these communities were particularly long-lived, they served to demonstrate that people are capable of living equitably, in peace and freedom, without being ordered about and regulated by higher authorities of any sort.

Inspired by these pioneers, other writers and advocates of various sorts sought to

promote the ideas of individualism and anarchy among the broader community. They campaigned against profit, rent, interest, and what has become known as intellectual “property,” ie, patent and copyright, all of which serve to aggrandize the few at the expense of the many. And none of which could exist without a state to force them down the throats of those suffer because of them.



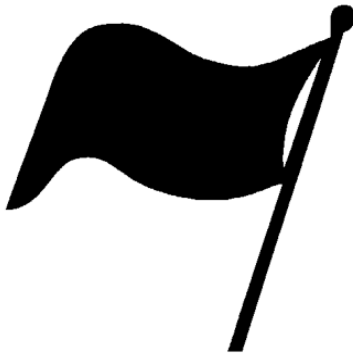
These individualists shared the ideas of the earlier anarchists, but developed or elaborated on them in various ways. They promoted mutual banks, free credit, labor reform, free love, and free speech. They believed there was no justification for any form of state or government, since free people were more than capable of sorting things out for themselves in all areas, whether economic, social, or sexual, once

the privileges granted and coercion practiced by the state were abolished.

This tradition pretty much faded out around 100 years ago and the anarchist individualist current was dormant until it was “rediscovered” in the 1960s. At this time, some of its advocates once again reinterpreted the ideas of its earlier exponents in innovative ways. While accepting much of the legacy of Warren, Tucker, etc, these writers and activists rejected some of their economic ideas as outdated and introduced the heretical idea that one could be pro-capitalist as well as an anarchist. While rejected as “real” anarchists by most anti-capitalist libertarians, the pro-capitalists have contributed in important ways to anarchist thought.

Although pro-capitalist anarchists have a high profile among libertarian individualists, there continue to be some of us who advocate approaches more like those of the historical individualist anarchist writers and activists. We call ourselves all sorts of things, from mutualists, to market socialists, to, simply, individualists. We all differ among ourselves, but share a commitment to individual liberty, which is, after all, what is most important in the anarchist tradition.

I expect this issue of *anchorage anarchy* will demonstrate some of this range of opinion among individualist anarchists. I have included a piece by Nick Evans on Josiah Warren and the Utopia community, as well as part two of Richard Garner’s defense of pro-capitalist anarchist ideas. Hope you enjoy. Variety is, so it is said, the spice of life.



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# Utopia: The Successful Libertarian Market Socialist Economy

by Nicholas Evans

For anyone interested, here is an article about a successful experimental free community in the 1800s. I think some of the reformers back then were very advanced, especially coming from a time when I believe the ideas of Hobbes were popular. Hobbes was a thinker who generally thought life outside civilization was short, brutish and unpleasant, and civilization saved people from their violent ways. Yet we know now that life outside civilization (particularly Simple Hunter Gatherers) was very different. For Simple Hunter Gatherers, relative egalitarianism was normal and their central rule was sharing. Humans lived in these egalitarian, sharing societies for 90% of human history. (Lee, Richard B & Daly, Richard. *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Hunters and Gatherers*. (2004), p 4 and back cover. Also please see: Evans, Nicholas. "The Relatively Peaceful Societies of Simple Hunter-Gatherers" (2009); I also discuss the views of Keeley and LeBlanc along with Ferguson and Fry and others.) So many of the reformers back then were trying alternative communities probably without this knowledge,<sup>1</sup> which I find very brave and respectable.

The article I wrote about below deals with a community with a competitive market economy made up of mostly self-employed individuals or employers that paid their employees enough to buy back what they produced. The community was voluntary and free thought and expression were encouraged. Socialism in general is a system where businesses or workplaces are organized democratically. (Please see works by Proudhon and others like Marx.) However, technically Socialism includes any system where employers pay their employees enough to buy back the general value of what they produce. As such, a Market Socialist system with employers is also a branch of Socialism. I will go into more detail about Socialism with employers in the article below.

I also use the term libertarian in the article. The term libertarian has been used since the 1800s to describe a free society with a Socialist economy. (It's meaning is different from the Libertarian Party.) It also distinguished between Marx and his big top-down government and Bakunin and his voluntary Libertarian Socialism. Marx and Bakunin often had discussions about their differences in the International Workingman's Association. For anyone interested in learning more about the views of Bakunin, Proudhon, Warren, etc. please see: [www.anarchistfaq.org](http://www.anarchistfaq.org) (I am a contributor to the site. Main credit goes to McKay. The site has been regarded as "very comprehensive" by Graham, et al, *Introduction to Political Ideologies*. (2006) p 109; and as an exemplar of community governance by Reagle, "Why the Internet is Good." (1998))

So here is my article, and I hope you enjoy it.

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<sup>1</sup>The exception being to an extent Henry Thoreau and his influences and friends and others due to their knowledge and views of life outside civilization. Modern people who are continuing a similar line of thought but wish to live free from civilization include the excellent writers such as Fredy Perlman and John Zerzan.

"I found I could exchange my labor for theirs...I borrowed twenty six dollars to commence my business with, and paid all that and had thirty dollars left. I now have a house and lot...I feel now that I am a whole individual..."<sup>1</sup> wrote EG Cubberley, a resident of Utopia. Utopia was a successful voluntary market socialist community based on the principles of Josiah Warren.<sup>2</sup> Warren's views were a form of a labor theory of value and operated free from profit, interest, and rent\* in a community of free individuals that could live as they wished on a voluntary basis.<sup>3</sup> At around 1850 Warren's theories were put to the test on a tract of land a mile from the site of the Claremont Phalanx on the bank of the Ohio River.<sup>4</sup>

This tract of land was to be the future village known as Trialville or Utopia, and it operated on voluntary market socialist terms.<sup>5</sup> "The outcome of Warren's theory of value..." stated Bailie "...was to

place him squarely in line with the cardinal doctrine of all other schools of modern socialism. He believed that labor was robbed through rent, interest, and profit..."<sup>6</sup> His aim, Bailie states, was the same as socialists who preferred a society free from unearned income.<sup>7</sup> The views that Warren held are essentially the analysis of Capitalism that other major socialists such as Marx and Proudhon held.<sup>8</sup> According to Warren's labor theory of value, and also according to the labor theory of value of Marx and Proudhon, profit exists only through Capitalism.\*\* Capitalism is a market system where employers pay their employees a wage less than the general value of what they produce.<sup>9</sup> The money the employer keeps that would have been the employees' if the employees were paid enough to buy back what they created is the profit. Therefore market socialism is a system of self employed individuals, democratic businesses, and employers

that pay their employees enough to buy back the general value they produce.<sup>10</sup> The extra money they make from their businesses would be considered income rather than profit. The residents of Utopia, following Warren's labor theory of value, based the value of their products on how much labor went into producing a good. Corn was adopted as a medium of exchange at a rate of 20 pounds to the hour as an alternative to actual labor.<sup>11</sup> Other products were used for the medium of exchange depending on the state of the community economy, technical learning, and machine production.<sup>12</sup> Prices of individual goods included wheat at six hours to the bushel, milk at ten minutes per quart, eggs at twenty minutes per dozen, shoes varied between three and nine hours depending on quality, etc.<sup>13</sup> The value and prices were expected to change depending on new production methods that were introduced. The economy of Utopia worked, noted Martin, and it was illuminating.<sup>14</sup> The success of Utopia also included being free of rent.



In Utopia, people owned only the land they lived upon. Land ownership by landlords that receive pay from tenants is considered rent.<sup>15</sup> As with Marx and Proudhon, Warren considered rent a form of unearned income.<sup>16</sup> For this reason, each member of the village owned up to two lots at most. The system of ownership was set up so the rights of each person and their land in the community were respected. Differences of opinion, the responsibility of every individual and how each individual used their own individual land were encouraged, particularly with the mature members of the village.<sup>17</sup> In this way, individuals were able to build and own houses and businesses through their own

work. Four families became the original core of the town. By exchanging labor, they built satisfactory homes. At a later point, nearly two dozen families occupied the site in their own houses in the voluntary village, while also having successfully built stores and small mills to support and upgrade all the professional trades in their community.<sup>18</sup> Yet profit and rent are not the only way to make unearned income according to the views held by Warren and the other major socialists.

Utopia operated by a voluntary system of a labor theory of value in a free community. Interest beyond expenses is considered a form of unearned income in Marx's and Proudhon's, and therefore Warren's, labor theory of value.<sup>19</sup> An example of interest operating only as the cost of covering expenses in Warren's system can be observed in an account between a store keeper using Warren's methods and a borrower. A stranger had borrowed thirteen dollars from the store keeper. "The money was lent—the note and security taken."<sup>20</sup> In two weeks the stranger returned laying down thirteen dollars. The stranger noted the borrowing of the money saved him and his family from so much loss and distress and he wanted to compensate the keeper in proportion to the benefits he received. "I am ready to pay you any premium you choose to ask." The stranger paid ten cents to cover the cost of interest expense since it took around ten minutes of actual work for the lender to lend and receive the money.<sup>21</sup> This principle of paying interest only for the cost of expenses, was the principle that was carried out in Utopia.<sup>22</sup> The views of Warren and his theory of a free market socialist society continued to be successful, long after Warren left.<sup>23</sup>

The village of Utopia was a libertarian Market Socialist society that worked when applied in practice. Warren later visited the village and he radiated with optimism. "It is not the display that the little group of buildings makes to the eye...but knowing the means by which these...have been acquired, and seeing that there the subject of Equity has had eight years and six months deep study and practical trial, and that from the beginning... the subject had lost nothing with those who first took

hold of it...but had gained...from year to year...”<sup>24</sup> As Martin notes, the village based on the labor exchange was without a doubt an outstanding example of decentralist social and economic principles in actual operating situations.<sup>25</sup> And unlike Marx and his big government way of socialism, Warren’s market socialism was like Proudhon’s market socialism, based on voluntary and therefore libertarian views. Utopia was “...a community without a formal government; it also persevered without the presence of a patriarch and escaped the general fate which fell to those whose fortunes were inextricably interwoven with those of a dominant leader.”<sup>26</sup> Yet there was order. As a result, meetings by villagers tended to be for leisure only. “We have had a few meetings, but they were for friendly conversation, for music, dancing or some other social and pleasant pastime...”<sup>27</sup> Utopia, like many communities with alternative theories, was tested for its practicality in the real world. It was proven that Warren’s ideas of individual freedom, his labor theory of value and a libertarian market socialist society free from profit, interest, and rent was applicable in a real economy.\*\*\*



\*A socialist community can exist with landlords. It is called Feudal Socialism. Please see Section 3, part 1 A in *The Communist Manifesto* by Marx.

\*\*Capitalism is only one type of market system. There are other types of market systems. (e.g., Market Socialism) As the economist Stanford notes: “But capitalism is not the only

economic system which relies on markets. Pre-capitalist economies also had markets-where producers could sell excess supplies of agricultural goods or handicrafts, and where exotic commodities (like spices or fabrics) from far-off lands could be purchased. Most forms of socialism also rely heavily on markets to distribute end products and even, in some cases, to organize investment and production. So markets are not unique to capitalism, and there is nothing inherently capitalist about a market.” Stanford, Jim. *Economics for Everyone: A Short Guide to the Economics of Capitalism*. (Ann Arbor, MI: Pluto Press, 2008) p 36

Sometimes individuals, even scholars, mistake Warren as a Capitalist because he supported markets. And as radical Capitalist Rothbard noted, “We must therefore conclude that we are not anarchists, and that those who call us anarchists are not on firm etymological ground, and are being completely unhistorical...” Rothbard, Murray N. “Are Libertarians ‘Anarchists?’” Ludwig von Mises Institute re-print 2008 (original mid-1950’s in the unpublished article “Faith and Freedom” under the name Aubrey Herbert.) Rothbard is using the term ‘Libertarian’ differently then I use it and how it is used in this article.

I am using the term Libertarian as it was used in 1858 in New York by French Anarchist Joseph Déjacque, has been used since, to mean a free society with equality of opportunity. Also please see: McKay, Iain. *An Anarchist FAQ*. (Oakland: AK Press, 2008) The FAQ has been regarded as “...very comprehensive...” in Graham, Paul & Hoffman, John. *Introduction to Political Ideologies*. (London: Pearson/Longman, 2006) p 109; and as an “exemplar of the principles...” of community governance by Harvard resident fellow Joseph Reagle in: *Why the Internet is Good: Community Governance That Works Well*. (Cambridge, MA: Berkman Center for Internet and Society at Harvard University, 1998) .

As Martin notes, all the Individualists preferred to live free from profit. Martin. *Men Against the State*. (1970) p 209n.

\*\*\*Warren’s views were later modified by Greene, who suggested a Mutual Bank and currency based on a commodity standard of value, but also allowing for the monetization of all durable wealth. These views were to work with the more advanced industrial forms of society.

In an industrial society where wealth can be made in very large amounts, it might be helpful if followers of Warren’s economic theory adopt a community controlled organization to regulate large companies and their wealth in order to prevent market power. Market power can come about as over time a successful company becomes very wealthy, therefore being able to afford new machinery and hire many employees. Smaller businesses may not be able to compete with the large company with its machinery and products. Most people would not be able to enter into the market to compete with the large company, and therefore believe they have no choice but to work for the large company. Most people would therefore not have equality of opportunity as they must always work for someone else involuntarily, hence would appear not to be free (i.e., work or starve).

The large successful company would also gain control over



the local market as no one else would believe they could compete with them. The large company would then be able to generally set prices they would want on the market because of lack of most competition and therefore hold market power. Proudhon had a solution to this through regulation of the market by the local communities. Please see Proudhon's *Principle of Federation*. As Proudhon notes below, "The advocates of mutualism are as familiar as anyone with the laws of supply and demand and they will be careful not to infringe them. Detailed and frequently reviewed statistics, precise information about needs and living standards, an honest breakdown of cost prices, the foreseeing of all eventualities, the fixing after amicable discussion of a maximum and minimum profit margin, taking into account the risks involved, the organization of regulating societies: these things, roughly speaking, constitute all the measures by means of which they hope to regulate the market." Edwards, Stewart (Editor). *Selected Writings of P-J Proudhon*. (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, 1969) p 70.

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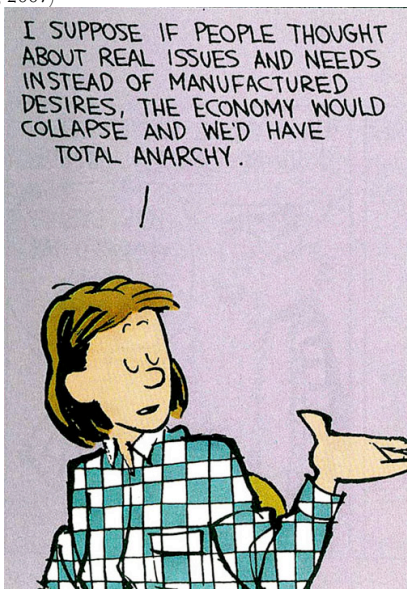
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<sup>1</sup>Martin, *Men Against the State*, p 59

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid*, p 63

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid*, p 61

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid*, p 58

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid*, p 58

<sup>6</sup>Bailie, *Josiah Warren*, p 111

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid*, p 112

<sup>8</sup>Marx, *Capital, Volume 1*, p 676. Marx states: "The working day of 12 hours is represented in a monetary value of, for example, 6 shillings. There are two alternatives. Either equivalents are exchanged, and then the worker receives 6 shillings for 12 hours of labour; the price of his labour would be equal to the price of his product. In that case he produces no surplus-value for the buyer of his labour, the 6 shillings are not transformed in to capital, and the basis of capitalist production vanishes." Also see Proudhon, *What is Property?* p 129. Proudhon states: "...that the producer may live, his wages must repurchase his product."

<sup>9</sup>Please see footnote 9.

<sup>10</sup>Please see Warren, Josiah. *True Civilization*. (Boston, 1863); Marx, Karl. *Capital Volume 1*. p 931; and Proudhon, *General Idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century*. pp 213, 217

<sup>11</sup>Martin, *Men Against the State*, p 61

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid*, p 62

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid*, p 62

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid*, p 62

<sup>15</sup>Please see: Martin, *Men Against the State*; Marx, *Capital Vol 3*; and Proudhon, *What is Property?*

<sup>16</sup>Please see: Marx, *Capital Vol 3*. p 926; Proudhon, *What is Property?* p 129; and Martin, *Men Against the State*.

<sup>17</sup>Martin, *Men Against the State*. p 60

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid*, p 59

<sup>19</sup>Marx, *Capital Vol 3*. p 460; and Proudhon, *What is Property?* p 129; and Warren, *True Civilization*, Passage 260

<sup>20</sup>Warren, *True Civilization*. Passage 260

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid*.

<sup>22</sup>Please see: Martin, *Men Against the State*

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid*, p 65

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid*, p 63

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid*, p 63

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid*, pp 60-61

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid*, p 60

# Anarchism and Anarcho-Capitalism, Part 2

## Counter claim: Anarchist Socialists that Won't Allow Non-Socialist Anarchism Are Betraying Their Own Principles

Jerome Tuccille, in his semi-autobiographical history of his travels through 1960s politics, *It Usually Begins With Ayn Rand*, recounts an experience he had when trying to forge an anti-authoritarian “left-right alliance” between socialist anarchists and market anarchists against the state:

Beginning somewhat apprehensively, I emphasized the areas of agreement between free-market anarchists and anarchists of the Left...

So far so good.

The great barrier between us, of course, was the formulation of economic principles, most especially the question of property rights. Here you had to step a bit more carefully.

“Hey, man. What do you mean by free-market economics anyway?” a voice called out through a furry beard in the back of the room.

“Free exchange of goods and ideas on an open market place.”

“You don’t mean that if some pig wanted to own his own factory and hire other people to work for him, he could get away with that, do you, man?”

“The only way you can stop private ownership and the exchange of labor for capital is by state coercion. If you’re serious about anarchism you have to accept the possibility of all forms of voluntary exchange whether you like them or not.”

“Like, that’s exploitation! How about private property, man? You don’t believe in private property, do you?”

“There’s no such thing as freedom without a private-property system. There’s no way you can divide the earth equally among all people if you wanted to.”

“We don’t wanta divide, man, we want everybody to use anything he needs. The earth belongs to everybody.”

“It’s impossible for everybody to use everything in common. Unless you acknowledge the concept of individual autonomy and individual ownership, there can be no freedom, no privacy.”

“Fuck privacy, man! We all gotta love one another. I mean, like, we’re all brothers, you know what I mean?”

“If some people want privacy, they have a right to it. You can’t force people to share everything if they don’t want to, not in a voluntary society. That’s not anarchism, you need a dictatorship for that.”

“You can’t have some pig ripping off the land from the people and let him get away with it. That’s exploitation, not freedom. Some greedy fuckers are gonna have more land and more money than others under your system.”



“The only way you can guarantee complete economic equality is with a dictatorship. If you destroy individual initiative, you’ll only be able to guarantee equality at the lowest level. If you want to

eliminate greed in a libertarian society, you'll have to do it through education – if you try to outlaw it you'll have to create a state all over again.”...

Now the Objectivist was on his feet.

“I just want to know one thing. If we were living in an anarchist society and you people had your commune organized the way you wanted it, what would you do about private property owners who didn't threaten you in any way? Suppose there was a capitalist community five miles away that left you alone and minded its own business – would you co-exist with it or would you try to suppress it?”

Perhaps it was a reaction against the anarcho-capitalist and his little marketplace, perhaps they really meant it; I have no way of knowing for sure. But to this question there was a universal outcry from the class at large:

“We'd come in and kick the shit out of you, man!”

“We'd beat your ass in!”

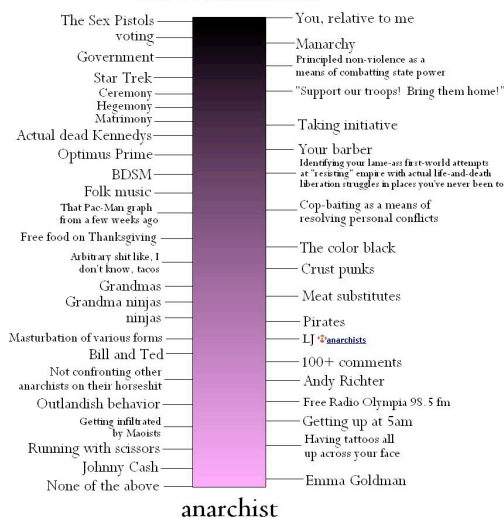
“We'd rip you off, baby! Just like that!”

Now, obviously socialist anarchists would probably be eager to see this as a parody or a strawman. They wouldn't really “come in and kick the shit” out of members of the capitalist community, or private property owners that didn't threaten the commune members, but didn't join either. But this leaves open the question of what, precisely, socialist anarchists would do about them? How, absent a state, would socialist anarchists prevent what Robert Nozick has called “capitalist acts between consenting adults”?

Likewise, with hierarchical relationships, in the firm or otherwise: *how would you stop them?* If someone, as a self-owner, decides they want to be subjected to a hierarchical relationship, placed in a position of subordination to another person, and that other person wants to subordinate the first, or hold his position in the hierarchy, then *how will you stop this?* Socialist anarchists may be quite right that such relationships are, in some way, bad, or wrong, or harmful to those involved...but as anarchists, surely they think that people should be free, if they

want, to subject themselves to experiences or things that others think are bad, wrong, or harmful to those involved. Surely this means that if people want to form hierarchical relationships, in which one person is, for instance, the worker, and another is the boss, then they should be allowed to. After all, self-ownership means that what a person does with themselves should be up to them, so if they want to put themselves in a position of subordination to others, for whatever reason they choose, then respecting their ownership of themselves would mean not preventing them from doing this.

### NOT ANARCHIST



anarchist

Socialist anarchists differentiate themselves from authoritarian socialists, state socialists, by saying that they, unlike the statist, want “voluntary socialism.” But to say that socialism is voluntary is to say that it has been adopted in preference to some available alternative, without fear of violation of one's rights or aggression if not so adopted. But this further entails that if socialism is to be voluntary, alternatives to socialism must be available, at least as possibilities that people can engage in if they want, and can justly obtain the means to create. So, unless alternatives or options to socialism are permitted as choices, voluntary socialism is impossible. Voluntary socialism entails, then that voluntary non-socialism



# INDIVIDUALIST

should be an available or permitted alternative. This means that if people are not permitted to engage in what Nozick called “capitalist acts between consenting adults,” then they are unable to voluntarily accept alternatives to “capitalist acts between consenting adults,” but are compelled to accept these alternatives. Such anti-capitalist arrangements would, therefore, be compulsory, not voluntary. Only, then, if capitalism is permitted, can socialism be voluntary. This means that unless anarchists permit capitalist arrangements, then they cannot possibly be *voluntary* socialists.

The anarcho-capitalist economist Bryan Caplan wrote,

Critics of anarcho-capitalism sometimes assume that communal or worker-owned firms would be penalized or prohibited in an anarcho-capitalist society. It would be more accurate to state that while individuals would be free to voluntarily form communitarian organizations, the anarcho-capitalist simply doubts that they would be widespread or prevalent. However, in theory an “anarcho-capitalist” society might be filled with nothing but communes or worker-owned firms, so long as these associations were formed voluntarily (i.e., individuals joined voluntarily and capital was obtained with the consent of the owners) and individuals retained the right to exit and set up corporations or other profit-making, individualistic firms.<sup>1</sup>

Likewise, in their anarcho-capitalist classic *The Market for Liberty*, Linda and Morris Tannehill wrote,

As long as a man doesn’t initiate force, the actual goals and interests which he chooses to pursue don’t control the free choice or threaten the goals of anyone else. It doesn’t matter whether a man goes to church every day or advocates atheism, whether

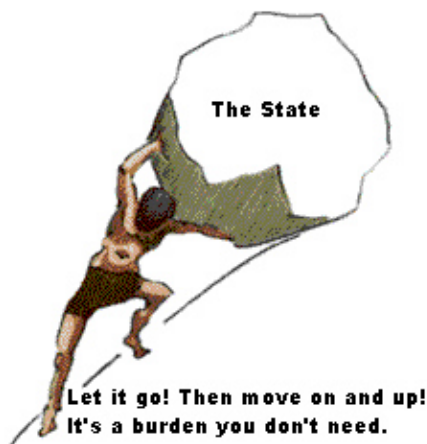
he wears his hair long or short, whether he gets drunk every night or uses drugs or stays cold sober, whether he believes in capitalism or voluntary communalism – so long as he doesn’t reach for a gun...or a politician...to compel others to live as he thinks they should. As long as men mind their own business and don’t initiate force against their fellow men, no one’s life is a threat to anyone else.<sup>2</sup>

And Jerome Tuccille wrote that,

Specifically, a libertarian society was one in which everyone would be free to choose his own life style: to own or not to own property; to work or not to work, for himself or for others; to trade freely in an open market place or not to trade at all; to delineate clearly the boundaries of his own autonomy and live privately, or to join in communes or cooperatives or other communitarian structures on a voluntary basis.<sup>3</sup>



So, anarcho-capitalists and libertarian capitalists are not particularly, *qua* anarcho-capitalists/libertarian capitalists, opposed to people forming cooperatives or communes. After all, they both strongly believe in property rights, which means that they clearly think that nobody should be prevented from using their property, or that of

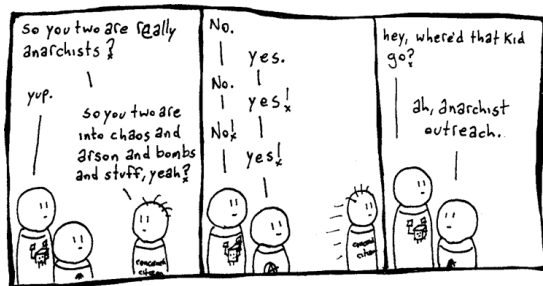


consenting others, to start cooperatives or communes, or making their property freely available, according to need, to whomever should want it. If I want to leave my house open so that whomever may want to may enter and find a place to stay (or do anything in it), then libertarians and anarcho-capitalists would surely defend my right to do so. In other words, then, people under a libertarian or anarcho-capitalist system of secure property rights would be able to live as socialists. But would people under socialism be able to live as libertarian capitalists?

The objection, of course, will come that not only do private property rights allow an owner of a resource to leave that resource open to use as and when anybody should want to use it, but they also, and more usually, allow the owner to *exclude* people from that resource, and it is that aspect that socialist anarchists object to. But what is it that people are being excluded from? The first piece of property is a person themselves, and libertarians believe each person should be considered the full owner of themselves, which entails exclusive control of themselves. Socialist anarchists surely do not disagree with that. The second thing that people are being excluded from is a product of labour. The third is some plot of land. Do socialist anarchists deny that some people should be excluded, by others, from things that are people's products? The

idea that workers are entitled to the products of their labour would surely entail that if somebody takes that product without a worker's permission an injustice occurs. This plainly entails that socialists should either deny that workers are entitled to the products of their labour, or that they are entitled to exclusively hold them, and refuse access to them by people who might need or want them. More on this later.

A crucial issue is land ownership. But even here, surely, socialist anarchists are inconsistent. After all, they strongly, or so they say, believe in decentralization. Under anarchist communism, for instance, the nation state would be replaced by a network of voluntarily federated, voluntarily formed, communes. But decentralization is just another way of saying that people X and not people Y should be able to make decisions regarding something. It means that only people in a particular commune should be able to decide what is done with that commune's land, and that people in other communes are not entitled to have any say over it. If somebody from commune A wanted land in commune B to be used in a particular way, then whether it will be or not would be the decision of the members of commune B, not that person in commune A.



So it seems plain that anarchist communists, at least, believe in some people having a right to exclusively own or control land. Now suppose that the chap in commune A who wants land in commune B to be used in a certain way said, "if you guys put this land into my preferred usage, or let me do so, then I am willing to give you some of this product I have made, or provide this service to you."

The first question is whether anarchist socialists think that this fellow should be able to offer his products in this manner (since his being able to make this offer entails that he also has a right to refuse to provide people with access to his product, and therefore to exclusively control its use, regardless of the need others have for it), and what they will do to people in order to stop them doing so. The second question is whether this really basically means that commune B would be renting its land, or selling it, to the chap in commune A? This would seem to be the case to me, in which case we have the question of what anarchist socialists propose to do to communes, or their members, to stop them making these agreements, and how they would reconcile this prevention with their commitment to decentralization and the claim that how commune B's land is used should be decided only by commune B, or its members?



Anarchistcorn

Or consider this: Groups of anarchist communists successfully achieve the revolution, abolishing the state, replacing centrally imposed authority with local autonomy for voluntary communes. Everything people produce is pooled in their local commune, and made available according to need. Now the people of commune A work hard to clear a plot of wasteland and make a field in

which to sow crops. Exhausted, they retire to bed, to rest before they sow their seed in the morning. However, when they wake up, they discover that people from commune B have come along and planted crops in the field, different crops from those that people in A wanted. Now, have the people from commune B done something wrong? Should they have asked permission? If so, then doesn't that mean that the field is the exclusive property of the people of commune A? Perhaps the people from commune B should give some share of the crops to the people of A? But then, wouldn't that be payment for use of the land? It would seem to me, then, that either socialist anarchists should accept property in land, or be prepared for the possibility that people such as those of commune B should be allowed to come and take land with impunity!

Inequality would surely also still exist. After all, some communes will control better land than others, and so get better produce from it. Likewise, members of some communes may be healthier than members of others, meaning they may be better able to produce, etc. This will mean that some people will be richer than others. This again leads to the question of what anarchist socialists plan to do about this. Of course they could say, "well richer communes will voluntarily give a share of their wealth to poorer communes, to even out the distribution so things are equal again." But the same answer could be given by anarcho-capitalists to the fact that inequality will arise under their proposals: People can voluntarily correct that inequality if they want to. Neither anarcho-capitalists or socialist anarchists expect this to happen (anarcho-capitalists expect charitable giving to be high, but the point of charity is not to produce equality or reduce inequality), so why would it happen under these communist arrangements...unless human nature somehow changes!

<sup>1</sup> <http://economics.gmu.edu/bcaplan/anarfaq.htm#part10>

<sup>2</sup> Tannchill, Linda and Morris, *The Market for Liberty*, (San Francisco, CA: Fox and Wilkes), pp 10

<sup>3</sup> Jerome Tuccille, *It Usually Begins with Ayn Rand* (San Francisco, CA: Fox and Wilkes), p 17

An excerpt from

# Anarchist Individualism as Life and Activity

by E Armand (1907)

To say that the anarchist movement embraces several tendencies is not to put forward anything new; it would be surprising if it were otherwise. Non-political, outside of parties, this movement owes its existence solely to the individual personalities of which it is composed. Since there is no *a priori* anarchist programme, since there are only anarchists, it follows that each one of those who call themselves anarchists has his own conception of anarchism...To ask that all anarchists should have similar views on anarchism is to ask the impossible. Hence a wealth of diverging conceptions is to be found among them.

...[W]hoever denies that the intervention of government is necessary for human relationships is an anarchist.

But this definition would have only a negative value did it not possess, as a practical complement, a conscious attempt to live outside this domination and servility which are incompatible with the anarchist conception. An anarchist, therefore, is an individual who, whether he has been brought to it by a process of reasoning or by sentiment, lives to the greatest possible extent in a state of legitimate defence against authoritarian encroachments. From this it follows that anarchist individualism—the tendency which we believe contains the most profound realization of the anarchist idea—is not merely a philosophical doctrine—it is an *attitude*, an individual *way of life*.

His relationships with his comrades are based on reciprocity, on mutualism, on *comradeship*, and take numerous forms, all voluntary: free agreements of every type and in all spheres; respect for the pledge word and the carrying out of promises and engagements freely consented to. It is in this fashion that the individualist of our kind practices *mutual aid in his species*.

If he joins a trades union regardless of its

colour, the anarchist enters it purely as a member of a particular trade, in the hope of obtaining by collective action an improvement in his own lot—but he will see nothing anarchistic in gaining a wage increase, or a reduction of working hours. From an economic point of view, under present conditions, each anarchist does what he thinks best for himself—one by working for a boss, another by acting outside the law; one benefits from the advantages obtained by association, another by participating in a “free milieu,” yet another by satisfying his needs as an artisan. None of these ways of getting by are more “anarchist” than the others—they are makeshifts, sometimes “evasions”, neither more nor less.

The anarchist denies authority because he knows he can live without it. He is guided by the play of agreements freely entered into with his comrades, never trampling on the liberty of any of them in order that none may trample on his.

Anarchists no more want to be masters than they want to be servants—they no more want to exercise violence than to submit to it. They expose, they propose, but they do not impose. They are pioneers, attached to no party, non-conformists, standing outside herd morality and *conventional* “good” and “evil”—“a-social,” a “species” apart, one might say. They go forward, stumbling, sometimes falling, sometimes triumphant, sometimes vanquished. But they do go forward, and by living for themselves, these “egoists,” they dig the furrow, they open the breach through which will pass those who deny archism, the unique ones who will succeed them.

