
ANARCHO-SYNDICALISM

THE ANARCHIST LABOR MOVEMENT

COMMUNITY-BASED ECONOMICS

MONEY

How do you exchange a pack of gum, or a comb, or a beer? For some things, money is the most convenient form of exchange. Many communities have marketplaces for food or goods where goods can be traded or bartered and sellers are self-employed or craft workers (with no taxes). This kind of “free marketplace” is sometimes called an AGORA (from greek).

The primary objection is the opportunity for profit-taking and exploitation (e.g., hoarding, speculation, and price-gouging). How do we fight exploitation? How exploited am I if a pack of gum is \$1.50? \$1.00? or \$1.75? It is a silly question. I pay based on my “willingness to pay”, sometimes on impulse, and sometimes not at all. How we respond to things we want or need varies? Some things we plan/budget, others we want freedom of choice. Socially, we want everyone’s needs (well-being) to be met and no one to wastefully consume more than they can possibly use, when others go without. We criticize the Class System and the Consumer Society for deliberately doing the opposite: servicing the vanity and gluttony of the rich and their sycophants.

Equality of remuneration (shared compensation for value of labor) will help equalize excessive consumption.

Many communities have experimented with *Local Currencies* (“script plus”) to keep locally earned wealth in the local community (e.g., Ithaca Dollars). A similar system in the Free Community or in a regional economy of several communities could do a lot to stem speculation and wild price swings. Prices might even be negotiated by an economic planning system.

With worker self-management, there is no profit motivation for exploitation of consumers (Workplaces pay no rent and comparable remuneration to workers). If official prices (or price ranges) were publicly known, price-gougers would be called to account by the community. Workers will also be encouraged to live in the communities where they work, where they would also be consumers.

A national bank is the basis of the credit of the State and the currency of capitalism (i.e., power to tax and spend, borrow and lend with “full faith and credit, and control the money supply). A social system without the State will not maintain a national bank or currency. To protect society from the amassed capital in national banks, international banks, and the U.S. Federal Reserve Bank system (i.e., gold; commodities; real wealth) from being seized and used to raise reactionary mercenary armies to reclaim the exploitive institutions of the past, we will decentralize wealth into *many* community credit unions. These can also serve to issue *Local Currency*. NOTE: *Local Currencies* are not intended to be convertible currencies, so persons who want to exchange them do so at their own risk and are not “exploited”. The best way to exchange them is with a letter of credit from your local credit union (e.g., if you are traveling or visiting away from your home town).

This system of exchange would simplify simple services, sundries (petty cash), and groceries. We might also create a Local Service Exchange. A person would be credited with service coupons when they perform a service and participation in the service exchange would be voluntary. Each service would have equal value unless the participants in the exchange *agree in advance* to credit a special service with a value of more than 1 coupon. Coupons would only be redeemable to participants in the service exchange. Participants would receive a periodic list of participants in the service exchange and what services they were offering/providing.

EXCHANGE

The principle item of exchange in an economy is information. People have to find out how to get what they want and find an end user for what they have.

It is not practical for a Free Community to barter for its needs one item at a time. However, they can forecast

what they expect to produce and what they expect to need for the whole community (plus standard deviation), based on past experience. Corporations and governments do this now in order to write a Budget (a plan for rationing resources based on expected needs). The Free Community could provide for consumer goods and services; and raw materials, tools and spare parts for production. It could also search for types of workers (jobs) it needs.

A Free Community could report what it needs and what it has, so another Free Community could contact it and look at what they have (perhaps on a computer system like e-bay). Services, producers and consumers could also be noticed/listed for exchange like the Yellow Pages (in the telephone directory). People would then meet and examine what is offered for exchange to see if it meets their needs. Many manufacturers currently produce product catalogues of their product inventories.

Workplaces/communities with long term expected needs could negotiate long term exchange agreements; especially, when they need things from outside of their local economic region. Exchange would be the most effective within the same local economic regions (regional economy). Producers within a region could form coops to exchange similar items, or from similar manufacturers or growers, in bulk and more conveniently (in place of "wholesaling").

We intend to end the capitalist practice of dumping products and materials which are found to be unreliable, unhealthy, or unsafe on other economies and nations.

IMPORT SUBSTITUTION

We discourage the Neo-Liberal practice of importing items over long distances, which can be or are produced locally, in local workplaces or farms, and with local labor. One of the objectives of economic planning within the workplace, the Free Community, and the regional economy (economic region) will be to develop new goods and services production locally or regionally where they had been imported before.

We will also design education, job training, and apprenticeships/internships to provide local workers with skills and knowledge needed in some local workplaces; and to make sure persons entering the workplace can perform the useful labor needed (brain work and manual work).

Work places are encouraged to seek out new workers locally; and to work with trade unions and community colleges for technical training and retraining. Instead of serving capitalism, we hope that universities will become centers of creativity which teach complex job solving skills and problem-solving knowledge, but also research and develop material and social means to improve people's quality of life, and fight social and ecological problems (e.g., to undo the damages left by the current economic system and social system; and, to move away from a war-based economy).

An economic region is usually also an ecological bioregion. We hope to enable our bioregions to accommodate their infrastructure needs for public utilities, to correct their unique industrial and human pollution problems, and to reclaim, reuse, and recycle waste products produced locally (including the disassembly of manufactured goods). This will require regional planning and cooperation.

ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY

The Community will organize Working Groups of its workers and residents to negotiate: [1] land use decisions, [2] economic plans and exchanges, and [3] mediation [and others *ad hoc*, if needed]. They will cooperate and coordinate activities among workplaces and among residences. Delegates to each Working Group would be recallable by those they represent. A Free Community may call a meeting of the Community General Assembly by a *petition* outlining the community problem(s) which the General Assembly would meet to correct.

We want to encourage workplace delegates to live in the community so that they also understand the needs of resident consumers, but it is not common for people to live and work in the same community (even after recent gentrification). Working Class people are more likely to live and work in the same community where they are transit-dependent. An increasingly egalitarian society with scarcer non-renewable energy and resources might also have more people living closer to where they work.

The Free Community should have its own Popular Charter to facilitate and simplify its operations and their functions. The role of collectivized infrastructure (roads, rail, water, sewers, drainage, power, trash, telecom, terminals), services (safety militia, fire, ambulance, transit), and facilities (schools, libraries, parks, medical), should be described. It will also assure social ownership of real property and individual rights.