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Economic Nihilism

An Anarchist Case Against Economic

December 27, 2010

Economics can be defined as a field of social science mostly focused on analysis of the production, consumption, and distribution of goods and services. The economy can be defined as the system developed to control and manage the production, consumption, and distribution of those goods and services. Note that the focus is not on meeting needs, maintaining symbiosis with the local bio-region, ecosystem, or the planet. There's nothing about keeping land bases healthy, or species survival. Nothing is mentioned about replenishing, just production, distribution, and consumption.

The cycle of production, distribution, and consumption is not to be conflating with people coming together to find ways to best meet their needs and fulfill their lives. Like an organization, the first priority of an economy is to continue to exist and generally to grow. In most cases an economy has to continue to grow to exist. Like an organization, as a result of self perpetuation being a priority, the existence of that economy takes priority over the individuals in the economy, the land base upon which the economy is imposed, and the planet. In the same way that an organization is not an accurate representation of the wills and desires of its individual members, an economy is not an accurate representation of the needs and desires of the individuals in that society and the ways in which they want to fulfill those needs and desires.

As anarchists we seek to abolish the economy and economics and all that they entail, be it markets, remuneration, central planning, industry, or work. As such we are economic nihilists, declaring that there to no value in any system of production, consumption, and distribution of goods regardless of whether that system is feudalist, mercantilist, capitalist, socialist, or communist. Not only do such systems have no value but they are a means of social control, harmful and deadly to people, non-human animals, eco-systems, and the planet and ergo must be destroyed completely and absolutely. Whether the economy is run by a capitalist, fascist, or socialist regime, or even if it is a participatory economy, it is still a system of authority that is imposed upon people, non-humans, and land bases.

Many anarchists, from anarcho-capitalists to mutualists to anarcho-communists, define themselves by their economic theories, the ideologies and dogmas to which they adhere. I am not saying that these people are not anarchists, but that their dogmas are not anarchistic and their implementation does not result in anarchy. When what one perceives as anarchistic in theory is in practice authoritarian or hierarchical, what then? Do we cling to our economic systems and theories, declaring them infallible, and externalizing blame (Ex: "Capitalism hasn't failed, we just have the wrong people in power" or "socialism didn't fail, it just hasn't been implemented right")? Do we jump to the next economic experiment like the voter jumping to the next party? Or do we realize that anarchy and economics

are mutually exclusive and can not be fused, despite the prominent use of red and black or yellow and black flags and the prefix “anarcho-”, and continue to look beyond dogmas and prefabricated economic models for something more desirable? Will we seek economic freedom, or freedom from economics?

Where we abdicate personal responsibility we grant other people, or structures authority. If we give responsibility for meeting our needs, expressing our desires and acting towards fulfilling those needs and desires to councils, unions, federations, organizations, parties, politicians, religions, or any other entity, we grant them authority. It is no different when we abdicate to an economy and economic forces which alienate us from our power and autonomy and make separate the business of coordinating the logistics of life and living it. There may not be a dictator anywhere in sight, but try going against the rules put in place by the economic order under which you live and you will likely find that it is you versus a giant, system that has all of the built in features to weed out or crush anyone that doesn't fall in line. Because most civilizations have developed ways of getting people to identify more with their economy than other people, you will likely find people who will want to crush dissidents as well.

The capitalists seeks to manipulate production, consumption, and distribution in a way that brings them the most profit. The socialists seek to manipulate them in a way that gives them absolute control and power, and at least in rhetoric, serves society. The anarcho-economists seek to free economics from government and corporations, but fail to seek freedom for people, non-humans, and the planet from economics.

The economy is one of the key pillars of civilization; uncivilized peoples do not have economies. In most cases they have developed ways of living where face to face accountability, responsibility, and independence are maintained. The autonomous person, band or tribe needs food, so they grow it, forage for it, or hunt for it. If a friend and I are walking through the woods or down a city street for that matter and we see a peach tree and pick peaches and eat them, this is not economics. We were hungry, we saw something we could eat, and we ate it. Prairie dogs, ants, geese, salmon, bees, and every creature you can think of has found a way to meet their needs by adapting to the world in which they live, but we do not speak of “buffalo economics” or “fire ant economics.” This is not economics. This is life.

Even with supposed “anarchist economics” (sic) or “participatory economics” each individual is subjugated to the economy and economic forces. The needs of the economy are placed above the needs of each person. Keep in mind also that much like with direct democracy, participatory economics tend to be dominated by the kind of people that would run for office anyway. Good luck, however, finding someone when seeking accountability.

We are not reformists. We do not seek the *right* economy or even the best economy, the right people in charge of the economy, or even a counter economy. Rather we are economic nihilists who seek to destroy economics and economies altogether. If we truly seek liberation and anarchy it is not enough to oppose only capitalism and/or socialism. Anarchy stands in opposition to all economies and economic systems, regardless of the rhetoric of those implementing them. Economics presupposes a break from the face to face accountability and personal responsibility that is integral to anarchy. We seek not to reform economies or create new and better systems, but to destroy them outright, along with the state and civilization and every last vestige of authoritarian society in favor of autonomous individuals engaging in voluntary association and mutual aid.

Fighting For Anarchy,
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