

A Brief Description of Egoist Communism

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*” If we want no longer to leave the land to the landed proprietors, but to appropriate it to ourselves, we unite ourselves to this end, form a union, a société, that makes itself proprietor; if we have good luck in this, then those persons cease to be landed proprietors. And, as from the land, so we can drive them out of many another property yet, in order to make it our property, the property of the — conquerors. The conquerors form a society which one may imagine so great that it by degrees embraces all humanity; but so-called humanity too is as such only a thought (spook); the individuals are its reality. And these individuals as a collective (mass will treat land and earth not less arbitrarily than an isolated individual or so-called propriétaire. Even so, therefore, property remains standing, and that as exclusive” too, in that humanity, this great society, excludes the individual from its property (perhaps only leases to him, gives his as a fief, a piece of it) as it besides excludes everything that is not humanity, e.g. does not allow animals to have property. — So too it will remain, and will grow to be. That in which all want to have a share will be withdrawn from that individual who wants to have it for himself alone: it is made a common estate. As a common estate every one has his share in it, and this share is his property. Why, so in our old relations a house which belongs to five heirs is their common estate; but the fifth part of the revenue is, each one’s property. ” ~Max Stirner, *The Ego and Its Own**

The subject of egoist communism has been a favourite of contemporary egoists, the new readers of Stirner seem to have realized the implications of his findings. These implications, the abolition of the sacredness of all methods that uphold the state, including private property and morality as well as the concept of the state itself; if everyone or at least a majority thought through this psychology, would violate these abstractions to a degree which would most likely lead to the abolition of the state, private property, class, currency, etc. Not only do egoist communists see this as the logical conclusion of egoism on a material basis, but these conditions are in their favour, as they allow for a radical scope of freedom. Our idea has been under fire of course, with most criticisms based on the notion that egoist communism is the replacement of one system by another, that we aim for a goal system. On the contrary, egoist communism is not some sort of ideal for society to achieve, it is a practice. Egoist communism describes a voluntary mutually beneficial relationship between parties out of egoistic interest that utilize common ownership for that interest and in implication the insurrection against the current state of things. That current state of things being the state and capitalism, as well as its spooky justifications. I do not seek to draw out the blueprint for an ideal society, this is an explanation of egoist communism, which is distinctly a method of insurrection itself. The utopia does not lie in the distant state of things, it lies in each individual’s own insurrection against all forms of the state of things itself.

Part One

It is true that, when looking at the bare bones philosophy of egoism, one can see that nearly any system could call itself egoist in nature. But can any system be egoistic? Both psychologically and materially? No, because the abstractions that Stirner deconstructs and call for an insurrection against turn out to be clear components of almost every system out there. Even the idea of a set system itself is opposed by egoism, because a set system requires a set identity for those enacting the system, the individuals, only through conforming to the constructs of the system can they still call it that system. For instance, capitalism would not be capitalism without the idea of private property rights, making individuals subject to believe that these rights exist in order for the institution to be carried on. If we are ever to liberate ourselves from the constraints of the capitalist state, if we are to ever own the property we should have had in the first place, we must rebel and rise with a radically different method of life and ownership. We practice egoist communism not out of the idea that it is the right system, it is not even that, it is the system that benefits us, the system that we want to practice in order to improve our lives and destroy that which attempts to oppress us.

Private ownership of the means of production only allows someone else to control the means to get what I need, with commodity production this leads to not only a possibility, but an incentive to exploit those who do not own property. Exploitation and repression of individual autonomy are a given if the property is only owned by some. Private ownership takes away from me what would be put to better use if it was mine. In order to free myself, I have to own every means as to prevent a higher authority from forming. A higher authority, a hierarchy, would create a monopolization of anything I may need or want. For example, if the production of food was taken over by someone, or some group in which I was not included, they have the ability to exploit me for access to food. Even if that was not the owner's original intent, do we really want to be clueless, and at their mercy? No means of action is left but to abolish private property in favour of common ownership, only through common ownership can I have power and autonomy in every product I want or need. If everything is owned by everyone, and I am a part of that everyone, I own and have access to everything held in that common.

There is, however, a hesitation to embrace this idea, as there is always the fear of a tyranny of the majority; this is a fair objection. Common ownership only maximizes individual autonomy if every individual involved has equal power over the property, through this every individual has the ability to control the means completely by them-

selves if they wish. Common ownership can no longer be ruled by the spooky idea of the collective, it is now a mutual trust among those who create it; that mutual trust being that we are going to work together to provide this for ourselves, and one of us isn't going to purposely ruin it. However, the main distinguishment from other forms of communism is that though all resources are owned by everyone, they are not distributed by everyone. To avoid an authority alien to the individual; goods are not distributed by a single organization, goods are distributed by voluntary groups on the basis of use and labour. Imagine an economy of gangs, all who join a gang join it out of self-interest; though they may agree to work to get and maintain the good or service, they nevertheless join because they know they will get something out of it. Through egoist communism, if I wanted milk then I would not have to rely on a central organization to distribute it to me, instead, I would meet with other people who also want milk or already produce it. I would help those who I have unionized with, and once we have produced milk we would all take our share. This does not rule out the existence of a central distributor, but that distributor must be voluntary; nothing should force you to rely on and work for that distributor or any. Egoist communism organizes through this method of mutual association, not through democracy or hierarchy.

Egoist communists, though not specifically opposed to informal competition, are generally opposed to formal markets, and do not plan to create them. The existence of a formal market requires the existence of money, and with that the existence, of centralization; with the inconvenient tendency of markets to create hierarchies and monopolies(as we see that the existence of markets tend to accumulate vast amounts of wealth inequality, especially when they are barely regulated), a pseudo, if not a full state becomes unavoidable. More importantly, the existence of the profit motive would most certainly corrupt the mutuality of unions. The monopolization of property gives individuals no choice in where they get certain products from and who they work with, or in this case work for; those who have no choice are then vulnerable to exploitation. Exploitation will surely happen if there is incentive to; making the union unegoistic. Individuals cannot be expected to act out of egoistic interest if there are other, more pressing incentives. For example if I have to get a job that I don't want, or join a union because I have to make a certain amount of money to survive or to profit, I am doing it for the profit, not because I would want to otherwise. Informal markets are fine and even expected in egoist communism. Competition, not of who sells the best product, but of whose union is most enjoyable to work with, who is most talented. A varying combination of price and quality is a shallow and impractical way of measuring success in a market; there are other factors for consumers to consider, not just in regards to the products they buy but in their quality of life. If a union makes the best milk around and is the most pleasurable to work with, then naturally more people will want to join it. Once there becomes more members of the union, if the amount continues to increase then there may be a time when the splitting of products leads to members getting less of that product; if this occurs then a group within the union has the opportunity to split off to form their own union. This splinter

union may take the skills that they built up from the other union in order to make quality products for themselves. This pattern is likely to create a branch out effect of competition; through learning and improving skills, unions can split, branch out, and generally improve quality and quantity of benefit, and union conditions.

Of course, not everyone can be expected to put so much time and effort into production, we want more leisure time not less. Communes are a solution to this, because a commune is meant to encompass more needs, and potentially luxuries. It may be more efficient to form communes of egoists. Both forms of organization would probably be used, due to varying specificity. The only difference between a union of egoists and a commune of egoists in this context, (in another context they would mean basically the same thing) is that a commune deals with a wider range of demands. A union that produces milk may concentrate on milk, but its communal alter is more likely to concentrate on food in general. This may lead to a decrease in variety regarding products, however, it would be more efficient in general. The difference is so minuscule that it would really all come down to personal choice.

The existence of currency not only becomes unnecessary in a collectively owned economy, but it should naturally be opposed by egoist communism. Money only restricts my buying power, why should I allow my ability to obtain property be dictated by something generally alien to me? Likewise, why should I allow other people to do restrict it? Whether it be a corporation or a congress, a community or a cooperative, restriction is restriction no matter who does it. Not only is currency restrictive to individual freedom, but it is nearly impossible to maintain in an anarchy. Maintaining a currency requires centralization in order to make sure it can be universally circulated, and if that system is to be expanded, so will the amount of centralization required to keep it functioning. This would most certainly lead to a manifestation of a pseudo-state, as well as symptoms of capitalism due to the hierarchy a formal market creates. My system is to be based on my needs, not some imaginary, arbitrary value we put on a certain amount of demand, supply, or even labour. We nullify these systems of value because as egoists we don't bother ourselves with the pursuit of higher ideals, such as the glorification of hard work, or the pulling up from bootstraps nonsense. Anarchy requires the abolition of all material systems of value imposed onto the individual, and those systems can definitely be abolished by egoists. Nothing should determine my worth but myself.

As the current proletariat, all we have been shown are empty promises to merely improve our conditions, rather than abolishing them and creating our own. I don't just want to own the means of production to have a better quality of life, I want to own the means because I want to become the owner, I want my liberty in power. We are tired of being the workers, we are tired of our lives being determined by the class we were born into. Down with that class and down with the idea of the proletariat, no longer do we want to be the subjects, we want to be the owners. Class must be abolished in order to give individuals their power to decide their own fate and power. We are not the loyal factory workers keeping society up and running, we are fighting for the

destruction of this society. Class is the material manifestation of the management that society imposes onto those that make it up, it is a spook. We decide what we want to do with our lives, we do not desire to be managed. We will certainly not uphold our "managers".

The egoist takes no hesitation in grabbing their property, in determining their own worth and power, and in forming unions with others who share their goals. By joining forces to form unions and communes, we have vastly more power, a collective power, to seize and manage property than if we attempted to obtain that property by ourselves. Through common ownership the individual can exercise control over more of their property, their property is not blocked off from their reach by money, private property, or the state. Our common ownership is an ownership in which the commonality of property allows any individual to take and manage what they want. It is a common ownership independent of a default, and higher central distributor; this allows for individuals to have complete control over their property. By abolishing currency and markets, individuals are able to freely measure themselves through their standards, and their demand; not according to the amount of money they have or the popularity of the products they make. The amount of money I have may be influenced by my effort or talent, but in the end, it is the property owners and the consumers who decide how much my effort is worth to them. The products I may sell only give me profit according to the demand of the consumers. I refuse to have my value, my power, be determined by anything other than myself. Even if I get satisfaction from another's enjoyment of my talent, without my relying on it for survival and property, I can always do things and make things just for my enjoyment. Through this form of communism, we can occupy ourselves to our enjoyment, not to measure up to a separate value system or the enjoyment of others only.

Part Two

The days of formal parties, rallies, and reaction are over. We will take no part in those methods, as all they have proven to do is pacify the movement. Formal parties and formal organization restrict our praxis by only allowing us to work within a system or even the system. It restricts flexibility and stunts the drive for change amongst anarchists. Formal political groups also allow for subtle hierarchies to set in and lead to a vanguard like structure, which almost always takes any hope of anarchy out of the picture, even if they did manage to get anything done for once. A political party or other formal organization might seem like a powerful and effective method until you find yourself alienated, delivering constant lip service in praise of the cause that will never be. Don't create parties, create networks; networks that have specific goals in mind and can be spontaneously mobilized and dissolved as needed. Through this, we can keep ourselves from being alienated by a lack of action, if we want something done we organize only so much as to get things done and then dissolve, it is a waste of time and energy to stick with groups that no longer serve a purpose. Rallies and protests are almost always nothing more than reaction to yet another abuse by the state and the bourgeois, and they have maintained their status because of that. We already live under this system, trying to stop it from encroaching onto what little autonomy we have left is counter productive. Don't fight authority only when it shows itself, be in a continuous state of insurrection. The most effective way to carry out this continuous insurrection by enacting mutually beneficial relations on both an economic and interpersonal basis. Create spaces of autonomy to better enact these relations.

Egoist Communism advocates an occupation of everything. Seize your property through your own and a commune's power when needed, a union of egoists, a gang. We will not manifest ourselves through the formation of parties or other forms of formal organization, nor will we hope for "the people" to finally revolt and bring about national or global revolution. Rather we will take on egoism as a lifestyle to create it's material relations and conditions now. Form unions of egoists in order to become self-sufficient, contact more unions and seize areas to create autonomous zones. When we create communist relations in a particular area we have occupied it, after an area has been occupied, we will build up self-sufficiency. Once an occupied area has become fully self-sufficient, it has become an autonomous zone. Those who make up this zone will have successfully created a unique space of freedom; a small area in which society has collapsed.

But we egoists want more than that, we will not settle for scattered plots of anarchy; we will eventually need to strive for more. This need not be a set plan to take over

the world; this is instead, the logical progression of things. The spread of our methods and psychology is key to the progression of the material conditions created by egoism, those conditions being communist. Once autonomous establishments are created, and in possession of more resources and man power; hostility towards local state and capitalist authority will escalate into violence. Despite our plan to slowly and clandestinely expand, we must always be sure to defend ourselves from being snuffed out before we can go on the full offensive. Do not hesitate to use violence when needed.

Perhaps these egoistic relations don't last, and get beat down and scattered by the state. No matter, we would just create new ones; even if the state puts down those they still cannot stomp out the spread of our lifestyle. In a society built and maintained on servility, any blossoming of freedom and ownership is a rebellion. Any free territory, any commune, any union is a slap in the face of that which considers itself alien to me. Nothing is alien to me as all the world I occupy is seen through only my eyes; I will stomp out the dignity of any so-called "authority" that claims itself independent of me. The capitalist system desires all that I have, even that my survival is on its terms, it literally demands the world of me. I destroy it bit by bit when I diverge to collaborate in my method, a method of complete opposition to it, and every system like it. The existence of its lacking in any area disrupts its production and lures it's slaves away. The individual prospers off of the fall of capitalism, and eventually the fall of society.

Method

Our zones are our property, our spaces, but most importantly, another win in the battle against society. To destroy, blaspheme, and occupy everything held in sacredness and authority is our method. To liberate ourselves is our goal. No spook is left sacred, no hierarchy is left un-toppled, and individuals are all that remain as the only reality, the only way of life is our own. Capitalism has tied us up with its capital, we will free ourselves through the abolition of all capitalist constructs; a stateless, classless, currency less condition is created through that destruction.

” Pauperism can be removed only when I as ego realize value from myself, when I give my own self value, and make my price myself. I must rise in revolt to rise in the world. ” ~Max Stirner, The Ego and Its Own

A critique of his ideas & actions.



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