

In the last issue of we discussed additional methods of promoting the ideas of the anti state, non market sector. The article in question related to the idea of a café/bookshop located in local areas and the concept of areas of social space, the argument being that what was needed was places where people could come into contact with our ideas on a more regular basis. In the following article Lyla Byrne goes into more detail of the advantages of areas of social space and of the idea of setting up local café/bookshops. If anyone has any ideas on this sort of venture or experience of involvement with radical bookshops, café or social centers or would like to offer criticisms or ideas on the following article than please get in touch via the contact details on page 1 of this issue.

PRACTICAL PROCESS - Lyla Byrne

Ways are needed sustain and expand an informed revolutionary movement. Along with lack of time due to financial pressures, the two main LACKS in society that cause continued support for capitalism and/or political disengagement are:

1) **Lack of impartial or full information.**

2) **Lack of democratic space:** Lack of places to encounter and to share ideas, to have discussions, and experience non hierarchical democracy working.

Cafés/bookshops and/or communes/communities can contribute to the momentum for change by filling this information and democratic void, and in particular by being a model for the practical organization in communities that is required.

Ideas inevitably affect lifestyle in various ways, and vice versa. Capitalism of course puts limits on the changes that we wish to make, but it is equally important to promote and facilitate ideological and lifestyle change, because both work together to produce wider ideological and lifestyle change etc., etc., etc.

The following sets out ideas for a café/bookshop and for a commune separately,

although there is a lot of overlap - which would be complete if the commune ran such a café/shop. The commun(ity) section contains most general points that pertain to both.

How a café / book shop can spread awareness:

Books and booklets available to buy. To make it more inviting (and financially viable), we could also stock informative and inspiring books that do not clash with or obscure the case. Stocks could be built up gradually, partially by donation.

A place where political discussion and study is encouraged.

A base for meetings. A venue for visiting speakers and debates, films and live music/theatre nights with local and traveling musicians/players to bring people in. All these could be advertised in local newspapers, and by posters and leaflets.

Plenty of free pamphlets and cards around, with information including basics of political message, contact numbers/addresses/internet websites and fliers with dates and times of meetings and any other upcoming events. Displays on some of the walls

The purpose will arise during interactions not only with visitors but with the local community and other networks, spreading awareness.

Democratic organization would set an example. It will be a democratic space within capitalism [see 'Democratic space' in commune section].

General: I think that a café/bookshop could quickly become well known in the area - bringing some awareness even to those who just hear about it. For a start more people would get to know what socialism, communism and anarchism really means. It could be the beginning of a string and then a network of such cafes/bookshops across the country and the world. Such places can be

cores of activity and mutual support from which political change emanates.

Socialist communes/local community organization?

Groups and organizations in the anti state, non market sector are communities of sorts within capitalism, although the members tend to be dispersed in space. Organizing as a community increases the efficiency of our work in numerous ways.

A 'commune' or community sharing a space (with private living spaces within that as required) - or in sufficiently close proximity to have more shared facilities/equipment/projects - would enable more mutual help, which would give us more time and energy for spreading ideas. It would also give us further means of doing so in the following ways:

Democratic space. For now we still have to function within capitalism, and it does intrude; but we can create a democratic space as far as possible, and a great deal more so than people usually experience. This sets up a comparison and the concessions that have to be made and the intrusions themselves become examples to use for showing people how capitalism operates.

Showing the true potential of democracy. Non hierarchical democracy can be used from the outset, and these methods will be demonstrated in managing internal commune/ity affairs and in carrying out interactive projects. This in itself sets an example to all who encounter its workings of what democracy can actually be.

A base for activity. A place for discussion, study and a project centre. A place for members to visit/use facilities/help out. A place for interested people to visit for discussion/study/to help out. Could run a café and bookshop.

Ease of meeting to make decisions and to take action. A venue for events. See café and bookshop notes above which are also applicable to simply having a meeting place.

General interactions with the wider community. A commune(ity) is a tangible enterprise, providing a focus of interest. The purpose does not only rely on people attending meetings. The setting up and running of such a project involves numerous interactions locally as well as with wider networks. In the course of this the purpose of the project will naturally be raised, and this will facilitate political conversation. More people may attend meetings as a result.

Concerning finance. Some extra expenditure is to be expected in setting up the venture. However, savings of time and money can be made by sharing of work, facilities, equipment, and bulk buying of some food and other items. If we add to this some self sufficiency from community production of food and other goods, energy efficiency and energy generation - we will make living considerably cheaper. It is possible to be 'off grid' concerning electricity and water, and even to generate extra electricity which can be sold. This would free people up in terms of time that they have to spend working just for money, and may also make extra funds available for various projects. Due to those very financial pressures that we want to rid ourselves of, time and money to spare for political work have been in short supply. Community cooperation is one of the ways that we can change this state of affairs, including by helping to set up more such ventures.

Escaping capitalism as much as possible.

To practice self sufficiency and sustainability as much as possible within the commune and by sharing/networking with other such groups, is to escape capitalism (and thus also to *cease to support it*) as much as possible. In particular we can cease to support its large, super powerful, community destroying corporations such as supermarkets, gas and petrol companies and agro business. This is also to set an example. More local production (including clean energy generation) is also an environmentally friendly way to live, enabling us to cut out a lot of packaging, food miles and the generally poisonous and inhumane methods of capitalism. It is also a healthy and enjoyable way to live, combining care for the environment and each other with a variety of activities and shared experience. Interestingly

- but perhaps not surprisingly - this is where equality based political organization and the enrichment of our environment and communities meet.

Note: *I am not against cities [communes can be in cities] or industry or technology - I do however look forward to them being used for the common good, and I think that many of us would like to be able to do more of that now, and that it is helpful to do it in the ways that we can. Nor am I suggesting that a future society should be made up of small fairly self sufficient communes of the type that we may have in mind today.....only that these are one of the means that we can use now to further our cause. Given the choice a lot of people might live in this way - but a moneyless, classless, stateless, cooperative world society will bring and allow for many changes - some of which we may not even have thought of yet.*

Showing that another way is possible.

Demonstrating non-hierarchical democracy, and to some extent common ownership and freedom from money in action as an example for all those who encounter us. We can show how non-hierarchical cooperation works and point out how it would work even better in fully revolutionized society. Enough people following this example means the end of capitalism.

That capitalism isn't the only system is a huge revelation to most people. That we can manage far better without systemic hierarchy is another huge revelation. We can show that another way is not only workable, but vastly more suited to providing benefit to humanity. To practice common ownership, cooperation without financial transactions, equality and democracy *as much as possible* within capitalism is to **get this new way started in as many ways as possible.**

Building a functioning non hierarchical democratic foundation. This increases the movement of ideological and lifestyle transformation contributing to it becoming a

majority movement. Coherent, equality based communities that can transfer to a world of common ownership without massive change and upheaval will also provide some much needed stability in a transition period. They would simply have to take any vestiges of financial arrangement out of the system.

Communes/ities can help to protect and develop our environment and our humanity NOW in the ways that we want to, as well as being part of the change that is needed to free ourselves from the real dark ages of capitalism. These two necessarily go together. We will not have successful revolution without a living environment and appreciation of what is truly valuable in human relationships. Communities that prove the benefits of freedom from capitalism are where a new society can take root and flourish; and the growth and seeding of such communities will contribute to revolution being as peaceful as possible, by enabling the most healthy transition.

Such communities require work and commitment, but I think that the benefits are many and become clearer to everyone as the community is established. There are particular challenges involved in having a greater degree of communal living - but we face challenges in our lives which ever way we may turn; and the challenges of non hierarchical communication and cooperation involve recovering and developing the skills that we need. Democracy is a process and to use it wisely takes practice.

Along with other efforts, such communities can be an efficient way of creating and expanding a vibrant movement - and may be necessary for a successful revolution.

Below is a list of groups/organisations of the anti state, non market sector. Where possible we are providing postal as well as online addresses. Some of the groups listed do not seem to be active any longer but this should not deter people from checking them out as the ideas they contain remain relevant. If you know of any other group that you think should be listed please contact me and we will try to include it.

Anarchist Federation: www.afed.org.uk. Postal address BM Arnafed, London WC1N 3XX.

The site includes texts from former **libertarian socialist or communist groups such as Solidarity, Subversion and Wildcat**. This is all well worth reading as much can still be learned from it and used in the light of our experiences in the last twenty to thirty years and also in the context of the present time.

Red and Black Notes: <http://ca.geocities.com/red>

This group which was based in Canada is interesting but unfortunately is no longer active. The journal is listed from May 1997 to the spring of 2005. The last reference seems to be an anti war leaflet handed out in Toronto which was produced in 2005. The leaflet concerns the war in Iraq and is entitled “**What’s Going On?**” It lists periodicals and details of like minded groups. The sections on articles, reviews and history/theory are well worth taking a look at. I found the reference to it via the World in Common website under links.

World Socialist Movement/SPGB: worldsocialism.org/spgb. Postal address: 52 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7UN.

Apart from all the information about the SPGB This site contains a section entitled “other useful links” and through this you can find **Marxist Internet Archive, Labour Start, John Gray for Communism, Interactivist Info Exchange, Riff Raff, New Internationalist and Counterpunch.**

World in Common: www.worldincommon.org.

This is one of the best sites for finding out about both present and past groups that do, or have made up, the anti state, non market sector via the links page. It is well worth visiting the theory and archive section and there is an active discussion forum to join.

Industrial Workers of the World: www.iww.org or p/o Box 1158, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE99 4XL.

Here is an alternative for organising at your workplace. The dues are fairly cheap and based on monthly take home pay. The IWW is not based on full time officials trying to control the way you organise and do things. No one in the IWW is going to tell you to go on or not to go on strike. So if you are fed up with paying substantial dues to a bureaucratic organisation that does not seem to represent you all that well and prefer to get together with workmates to sort things out amongst yourselves but need support, this could be for you. The IWW is an industrial organisation and whilst members can have their own political or anti political affiliation and views these should be kept separate from IWW business.

Libcom.org.

This is the online place to keep up to date with what is going on in the world wide struggle against capitalism. Apart from the news section it has **Library, history, Gallery and Forum** sections. There are various forums to get involved in. Well worth a visit.

Northern Anarchist Network

If you are interested in getting in touch and participating in this group than please contact Brian Bamford, 46 Kingsland Road, Rochdale, Lancs., OL11 3HQ.

Wrekin Stop The War

This can be found at www.wrekinstopthe.org

Anarchist Archives

This features information and thoughts of all the great Anarchist theorists and it also has information on pamphlets and periodicals and a section on Anarchist history.

Other Anarchist sites that you might want to visit would include **Red and Anarchist Action Network** and there is the **Worker Solidarity Movement** at workersolidarity.org. To round up in a more Marxist direction there is the **Socialist Labour Party of America.**