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**INTERVIEW WITH MICHAEL HUEMER, BY
NON FACIES FURTUM**

Michael Huemer received his BA from UC Berkeley in 1992 and his PhD from Rutgers University in 1998. He is presently professor of philosophy at the University of Colorado at Boulder. He is the author of more than 60 academic articles in ethics, epistemology, political philosophy, and metaphysics, as well as four amazing books that you should definitely buy: *Skepticism and the Veil of Perception* (2001), *Ethical Intuitionism* (2005), *The Problem of Political Authority* (2013), and *Approaching Infinity* (2016). As he is a very influential libertarian philosopher active in the Front Range area, we contacted him for an interview and asked several questions related to the philosophy of liberty, and to his work.

FRV: *Can you outline your strongest argument for why the state lacks legitimate authority?*

MH: We don't need an argument that the state lacks authority. We would need an argument that the state *has* authority. If there's no reason why the state would be relevantly different from other agents, then we should assume the state is subject to the same moral principles as other agents.

Now, there are several philosophical theories about why the state has authority. I discuss the most important ones at length in *The Problem of Political Authority*. But none of the theories is any good. All of them either (a) appeal to factually false claims, or (b) appeal to claims that, even if true, simply would not establish anyone's authority. An example of (a) is the claim everybody at some time agreed to establish a state (of course this never happened). An example of (b) would be the claim that a majority of people support the state (if a majority of people want something, that doesn't make that thing right).

I can't fairly present all the theories of

authority, nor the problems with them, here. I wrote a 350-page book to do that (among other things), and all of it needs to be read to understand the complete argument. But the basic reason I don't believe in authority is simply that no one has given any good reason why the state *would* have authority. In brief, no one has told me why 535 people in Washington have the right to tell everyone else what to do. If there was a good answer to that, someone would probably have thought of it by now.

FRV: *What do you think is the most practical path to achieving a stateless society?*

MH: I don't know. What I am doing is trying to get more people to understand anarcho-capitalism, in the hope that if enough people understand the theory and why it's a good idea, it will eventually come about.

We could move toward anarchy gradually. For example, we could start with local governments outsourcing policing duties to private security guard companies. (Of course, there would need to be a number of competing security companies, and an easy mechanism for citizens to change companies.) Similarly, courts could start referring more cases to private arbitrators. If these experiments went well, they could be expanded, and the government shrunk at the same time.

Of course, this probably would not happen until there was much greater understanding of and support for free markets.

I don't know whether this is the *best* path. But it's one possible path that seems to me worth considering.

FRV: *You have written much on the subject of ethical intuitionism; can you explain this idea, and provide some examples of how applying it to moral situations leads to the conclusion that the state is an immoral institution?*

MH: The theory holds that we have intuitive awareness of some objective ethical truths, and this is the basis for the rest of our knowledge of ethics. I've written a book on the subject (*Ethical Intuitionism*), as well as a number of academic articles. You're basically asking me, "Hey, could you summarize your 300-page book in a couple of minutes?" To which the most accurate answer would be, "No, I can't." There's nothing I could say in a brief space that wouldn't be misleading. (The book is 300 pages because there is a complex set of ideas and arguments that require that amount of space to fairly present.)

But I can give you some examples of the moral problems with the state. One example is about taxation. Suppose that I personally decided to start "taxing" people. I go around to people's houses demanding a cut of their total income, which I plan to use for a charity that I run to help the poor. I threaten to kidnap and imprison my neighbors if they don't give me the money. This would be regarded as clearly wrong, and no one would think they owed me the money. I would be called a thief and an extortionist.

But that is like the government's behavior when it collects taxes. The difference between "extortion" and "taxation" is just that one is done by a private agent, and the other is done by the government.

A second example concerns military intervention. What if I announced, one day, that a certain foreign country might be building weapons of mass destruction, and that they had to be stopped? What if I got a group of friends together, flew to that country, and started shooting people and blowing up buildings, in an effort to change that country's government? Most would consider my behavior wrong even if the foreign government was really bad. I would be labelled a terrorist and a mass murderer.

But this is like the government's behavior when it goes to war. The chief difference between "terrorism" and "war" is, again, that

one is done by a private agent and the other is done by the government.

Most people judge extortion much more harshly than taxation, and terrorism much more harshly than war. We're failing to apply to the state the moral standards that we apply to everyone else. But, as my book argues, we have no good reason for this double standard.

Notice that my argument here does not appeal to some abstract, general moral theory, such as utilitarianism, or ethical egoism, or even a theory of natural rights. I am just appealing to common sense moral judgements about particular cases that almost everyone would intuitively accept, regardless of their political orientation. Whether you're a liberal, conservative, libertarian, or something else, you almost certainly think extortion is wrong (when done by someone other than a government). So that seems to me a fair starting point for a political argument.

FRV: *What are your strongest arguments against moral relativism?*

MH: Moral relativism is commonly understood as the view that what is right or wrong is determined by social conventions, by what society approves or disapproves of. So, for instance, polygamy is wrong in our society because it's against our customs, but it is morally right in most primitive societies.

This view also implies that if society approves of torturing babies for fun, then it's morally right to torture babies for fun. It implies that the people who lived in Nazi Germany were right to persecute Jews, since that was the custom of their society. And that those citizens who tried to save the Jews were actually acting wrongly, because they were defying the customs of their culture. These are absurd conclusions, and we have no reason to believe them.

Most relativists appear to be guilty of an embarrassingly simple confusion: they confuse *truth* with *belief*. Thus, they infer from "there are different moral beliefs in different societies" to "there are different moral truths in different societies." The premise does not at all support the conclusion. Once you remove this confusion, there isn't any reason for believing the conclusion.

FRV: *Is moral relativism often used to justify state intervention and growth?*

MH: I can't recall any examples of that. In fact, some people believe that moral relativism supports less government intervention. They reason that since there are no objective moral truths, we shouldn't impose our values on other people.

Of course, that's an error. If moral relativism is true, it doesn't follow that we *shouldn't* impose our values on other people. What follows is that we should impose our values on other people if and only if *the customs of our society* support imposing our values on other people.

FRV: *Besides government, what other institutions or practices have you determined to be immoral, that you would like to see done away with?*

MH: I think the most immoral thing our society is doing right now is factory farming (the source of almost all the meat you get in stores and restaurants). It inflicts extreme pain and suffering on animals of a sort that, if inflicted on a human, we would certainly call torture.

Why do I say it's the *worst* practice? Sheer numbers: in one year, we kill about 40 billion animals for food worldwide -- about six times

the entire human population of the Earth. In just three years, we kill more animals than the total number of humans who have ever lived. This makes it plausible that a few years of factory farming causes more suffering than all the suffering human beings have ever endured, from all causes combined, for all of history.

For some reason, most libertarians don't seem to care about this. But I find it hard to see how this isn't the worst problem in the world. You could think that human suffering counts for a thousand times more than animal suffering, and it would still be true that factory farming is the worst practice in the world by far.

FRV: *For readers who are interested in reading your work and seeing more of your ideas, which pieces would you recommend starting with, and how can they go about finding your writings?*

MH: Search for me on Amazon. I have four books out, all on very different topics, plus a fifth coming in 2018. I suggest starting with the topic you're most interested in. *The Problem of Political Authority* is the most popular, since it's about politics. I also have some videos, interviews, and articles available online for free.

[We would like to thank Michael Huemer for his responses and contribution to this edition of the Front Range Voluntarist. His ideas are valuable for their ability to help define an objective system of morality, and they make an excellent introduction to both a truly logical approach to morality and to the fundamental convictions of liberty-oriented thought. Support another Front Range Voluntarist and check out his work!]

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BUILDING LIBERTY COMMUNITIES

**THREE COMMON MISTAKES THAT
LIBERTARIANS MAKE, ARTICLE BY JUAN
FERNANDO CARPIO**

[This article originally appeared in The Libertarian Standard, but Juan has submitted it to us for republishing. He is the author of 10 Lecciones de Economía (que los gobiernos quisieran ocultarle; or, 10 Economic Lessons (that governments would like to hide from you)]

While advocating for the principles of a free society, libertarians find obstacles of all sorts. Whether one sees it as a battle of ideas or — better yet — a sales campaign, sometimes our methods of persuasion and debate become a big part of the message. Thus sometimes our mistakes become the biggest obstacle to our success. Let's review three very common ones.

1. Thinking that libertarianism is “intuitive” or “obvious”

To be sure, certain moral positions (on stealing and murdering) are universal and intuitive enough, but the whole edifice is neither obvious nor easy to grasp. The problem is, most people forget how they learned and especially, forget their previous ignorance. Thus, they project a light of knowledge over their past as if they always knew. This is easy to observe when one reads giants like Mises and Rothbard. The second after we absorb some keen insight of theirs, we internalize it and begin to think it is “obvious” and should be so to others. Well, it isn't. We acquired it through long years of studying dozens, sometimes hundreds, of books. Every libertarian I know continues to read and debate the fundamentals of libertarianism, not only applications to current events or history. This tells me that libertarianism is an unfinished edifice with many parts, even if one can sum it up in several ways. Those essentials and

summaries will never replace the whole of the doctrine.

2. Assuming common ground with everyone

The fundamental clash throughout human history, Liberty vs. Power, can only be properly understood when the basics are properly identified. Let's begin with liberty. In ancient times, liberty was defined as the ability to participate in collective decision-making and independence from other nations. Thus, liberty was about political participation and national sovereignty. The individual was not the relevant political unit. It wasn't until the advent of Humanism, placing the individual at the center of political and economic analysis that Liberty could start meaning what us libertarians need it to mean in order for our insights to be popular at any time and place.

Power, on the other hand, means political power for us. It springs from the use of force or the threat thereof. Education, the media, tradition and others influence human behavior but they can be either chosen or rejected if needed. That's why any talk of commercial billboards or TV content having power over society is ultimately doomed to fail. But in the same way any talk about “oppressive bosses” or “gender oppression” are confusing. Bosses cannot deprive oneself of rights, because to have a boss (as opposed to a slave-owner, a socialist dictator, a lord or a king) requires a contract in which one has freely entered. Ergo, bosses implies rights and where there are rights there is liberty, and power is absent. A boss may be demanding, rude, etc but as long as one has “exit”, there is no oppression. Gender oppression strictly means that women are denied their (individual) political rights to personal integrity and property. But gender discrimination when those rights are fully present such as in most Western countries, on the other hand is an exercise of others' rights. When men are preferred for a job over..

..women, it's the company's loss to deprive itself of that talent. But in many professions that deal with security and force, such discrimination is not only necessary but wise. Confusing a lack of women's rights with an exercise of men's rights that we dislike is worse than misleading: it will invite State intervention to "fix" a non-problem. Or at best, a problem that has to be solved (if need be) through civil, pacific means.

Thus, power has to be understood as political power. Its ties to cultural forms are just that, ties.

If liberty and power have to be agreed upon in order for the libertarian discourse to make full sense, the same happens to the concepts of property, contract, market, State, law and a host of others. We cannot assume common ground with everybody, specially in postmodern times where every Western concept is being nuanced and redefined by barbarians inside the gates.

3. Ironically, forgetting about the importance of ideas and persuasion

Closely related to points 1 and 2, libertarians sometimes think (oh, the irony) that ideas stop mattering at some point. Once one has adopted the libertarian worldview, there is a strong temptation to make ideas disappear and consider people who trust the State to do X or Y as either lazy, dumb or corrupt. As a former social-democrat, I know that isn't so: a myriad of political thinkers and activists have good intentions, but just haven't been lucky enough to grasp the notions we hold so dear. To be sure, most know some version of our positions, but as any teacher can tell you that will not suffice. Making an idea your own, requires not only a good exposition of the concepts but also the right mood so to provoke a disposition to learn. Too many libertarians wield insights as swords with a self-righteous attitude, seeking to punish the non-convert. As any music buff can tell you, if you want a friend of yours to love some

rock album that we cherish, a frontal proposition will almost never work. The human ego being what it is, that task is better accomplished by subtler means, making it appear as if he discovered that band by himself.

See, it's our attitude that which drives people away from the ideas. If they were intuitive, persuasion would not be needed. But they aren't. And if they are, then we're two times at fault: socialist ideas then are the counter-intuitive ones but the socialists' persistence and ability to persuade have brought success for them worldwide. What gives?

***"THE FUNDAMENTAL CLASH
THROUGHOUT HUMAN HISTORY, LIBERTY
VS. POWER, CAN ONLY BE PROPERLY
UNDERSTOOD WHEN THE BASICS ARE
PROPERLY IDENTIFIED."***

In conclusion, libertarianism would benefit largely from a recognition of how deeply the battle of political ideas is only a special case of the global philosophical battle over concepts and significance. Also, it wouldn't hurt to remind ourselves that a worldview such as libertarianism has to be subject to the same principles as any other good in the market is, even if the one for ideas is severely hampered and set against human liberty. If we are to succeed in such a market, we need to remember how the good was sold to ourselves in the first place, so we win over the hearts and minds of our contemporaries. Antagonizing them and assuming as obvious what is now — thanks for 150 years of socialist control of education — hard to grasp, is a recipe for failure.

[Thanks for the submission, Juan. Very good stuff to keep in mind. We hope to have you back on in a future issue. Juan is possibly the first Austro libertarian to dance on Karl Marx's privately owned entry-fee grave in London ~Mike, FRV]

THE IMPORTANCE OF PROPERTY AND OWNERSHIP, ARTICLE BY VERESAPIENS

"Thou Shalt Not Steal" is found almost universally at the core of religious commandments and secular legal systems. The implication of this is that property, and property ownership, are universally considered to be of central importance. And not just in legal systems, but also in religions.

Why is property ownership so important that respect for it is enshrined as a basic tenet of Human society?

Ownership only begins to take on importance when there is scarcity involved.

We typically don't worry about who owns the air we breathe. Air is obviously important, but as long as there is plenty for everyone, and your breathing does not reduce the amount of air available for me to breathe, then we don't have to worry about who owns what air.

The easiest way to illustrate how the issue of scarcity leads to the concept of property and ownership is to use a typical 'Robinson Crusoe on a desert island' scenario.

Shipwrecked and alone on a deserted island, Crusoe would have faced a severe scarcity of modern supplies and tools. But he still had no need to worry about whose property the remaining food supplies and tools were. Because there was no one else on the island, there was no one whose usage of the supplies would impact Crusoe's usage.

It is only when another man, Friday, arrives on the island that the issue of property might arise. For then there might be a conflict over scarce resources. Property rights serve as a means to prevent conflict over scarce items.

The structure of the property rights in this case could take a variety of forms:

- Crusoe could maintain full ownership rights to the scarce supplies and declare that they are for his use only.
- Crusoe could maintain full ownership rights to the scarce supplies and make all of the decisions, himself, as to how much to share them with Friday.

- Crusoe could give ownership of some portion of the supplies to Friday, giving Friday full control over those specific supplies.
- Crusoe could agree to share ownership of the supplies with Friday, based on mutually agreed upon rules as to how supplies would be allocated by the two men.
- Or, the scarce supplies could be considered the property of no one, and therefore under the control of neither man.

The final option, above, assigning communal rights to the supplies so that no one owns them sounds nice. It fits nicely with the sentiment in John Lennon's beautiful song, "Imagine"...

*"Imagine no possessions
I wonder if you can
No need for greed or hunger
A brotherhood of man
Imagine all the people
Sharing all the world"*

Unfortunately, "no possessions", meaning no person owns or controls the property, doesn't mean no person makes decisions about the property.

If neither Crusoe or Friday owns the scarce supplies, it means that each of them can decide what to do with them.

Crusoe, who has found ways to survive on local foods, might want to continue to ration the modern supplies or keep them for emergencies. Friday might be weak and starving from the mishap that landed him on the island, and decide that he needs to consume the supplies now to regain his strength.

If Friday does start to rapidly consume the remaining supplies, what would Crusoe do? If it starts to look like there may soon be no supplies for him to save or ration, he may decide he has to consume whatever he can before Friday finishes all of it.

This scenario, which often plays out when there is 'community property' (scarce resources with no owner) has been called 'The Tragedy of the Commons' by ecologist Garrett Hardin:

"The tragedy of the commons is a dilemma arising from the situation in which multiple individuals, acting independently and rationally consulting their own self-interest, will ultimately deplete a shared limited resource, even when it is clear that it is not in anyone's long-term interest for this to happen."

So, having clear ownership of resources is important, even when the plan is for them to be shared by everyone.

Other examples of the problem with 'no possessions' are pretty easy to come up with.

Suppose strangers off the street started living in your house? That would be okay, since there would really be no such thing as 'your' house. Or your car. Or your money.

It's hard to imagine a functioning real-life society with no property rights, no possessions.

John Lennon's goal is a good one...

*No need for greed or hunger
A brotherhood of man
Imagine all the people
Sharing all the world
...*

...but possessions are not the problem.

Respect for possessions, ownership, is a core requirement for a functioning society. And only a functioning society could become the kind of brotherhood of man that John Lennon envisioned.

[Veresapiens blogs at veresapiens.org]

TRADITION AS A SPONTANEOUS ORDER,

ARTICLE BY *INSULA QUI*

When we think about libertarianism it is easy to conceptualize libertarians as people who have no care for anything higher than themselves and are even individualistic to a fault. If you have talked to a sufficient amount of libertarians, chances are that you have come across someone who makes arguments that go completely against

common decency. This is one of the greatest problems in libertarianism, there is a streak of refusing to properly explain the importance of tradition when it comes to liberty.

This is not to say that we need a war on drugs or that we need to stone adulterers. But rather libertarians tend to completely ignore everything related expected social norms, even when they are not imposed violently. And it is easy to conceptualize norms as a sort of restriction upon the independent will and personal liberty of someone. But to know why libertarians are wrong on this, we need to apply methodological individualism to history.

Basic libertarian theory establishes that society is formed out of a spontaneous order. The interests of individuals form co-operative bonds which then create society as a concept. This view is useful because it helps us see society as something co-operative and personal. The problem with libertarians is when they deviate from this view. And that is often the case when we come to the subject of tradition.

We tend to ignore that tradition is similarly formed out of co-operative individual bonds. It's never as if a king decreed that everyone ought to hold one another to certain moral standards and to shun behaviours that go against accepted morality. Obviously kings on occasion enforced the customs of the land, but the customs emerged spontaneously first. Not only is society co-operative, past societies which created tradition were similarly co-operative, this means that the view of society as a spontaneous order should also apply to intergenerational exchange and past societies.

And tradition is just intergenerational exchange, morals and standards passed down from the older generation to the younger generation. Tradition is a similarly spontaneously emerging order, it is in no way lesser than the order of our current era, it would be very unwise to assume that only

the current society is correct. And because tradition embodies the intergenerational transfer of countless generations, we can even call tradition the spontaneous order of civilization. Tradition is outside the state, formed by the people and it should be one of the most libertarian things.

But even though tradition is best characterized as the spontaneous order of civilization, it's so often rejected by libertarians as we tend to think that we know better than anyone before us could. Since we live now and not in the past, we are better at absolutely everything and have no need for tradition, but to do so would be to ignore the origins of tradition. The societies we live in were built by those people from whom the traditions that we have in our societies originate from.

The entire process of replacing the uncivilized man with something much better and something much greater is facilitated by the same people who created this tradition. Without the wisdom of the people who created tradition, we would not even have a society or a civilization. These millions of people who have lived through hardships that we can't even imagine have come up with ways to deal with relationships, the self, purpose in life and every existential question there is.

This tradition was not born out of some baseless desire to repress people and not let them be themselves and it certainly is not something that we have grown out of. Our social progress and knowledge may be unparalleled and we may be at the farthest point in history where anyone has ever been, but this does not erase the necessity to answer fundamental existential questions. And if there is one thing that modern society has a problem with, it is those existential questions.

We may have the best medicine, we may have the best economies, we may live in times where everyone can access all

information from home. But that does not make us any wiser, we can't learn wisdom simply from thinking about it hard enough or using scientific formulas. We have disrupted the process of civilization by rejecting tradition. When we come face to face with strife and when we are challenged towards ourselves, maybe the right thing to do is look backward.

[Insula Qui is an independent writer. For books and more essays visit www.insulaqui.com]

MORDOR ON THE POTOMAC, **ARTICLE BY JIM DAVIDSON**

Special to the Front Range Voluntaryist

"Governors and their staffs went out poor and came home rich. Tax-farmers made handsome profits. Usurers lent money at exorbitant rates of interest to provincials who could only meet the tax-gatherers' demands by borrowing. Rome, in short, was living on the proceeds of her extortions. From an economic point of view she was a parasitic city giving little or nothing in exchange for what she took. In Rome herself no industries existed except for local use. She consumed without producing; and the only reason why she did not completely exhaust the resources of her provinces was that the money she had wrung from them by her extortions went back to them in payment for the luxuries they supplied to her and so became available once more for a renewed extortion."

~ Cyril E. Robinson,

*A History of Rome from 753 BC to AD 410,
Second Edition, 1941*

The above quote may well remind you of the extortions of the British empire or those of the American empire. The particular passage quoted actually refers to the Roman republic, roughly 150 BC. Given the extent of the power of the hereditary oligarchy that ran their senate, the term "republic" was, by that

time, somewhat inaccurate. About a century later, the form of the republic would be "swept away" by Julius Caesar and his successors. My purpose here is not to dwell on ancient history.

Instead, I invite you to consider Washington, District of Columbia. The district has a rather odd shape, given that it was originally to be a square ten miles on a side. The Virginia portion went away in the War Between the States and never came back. But it is, like ancient Rome, a parasitic city. It produces metric tonnes of paper, and gigabytes of regulatory idiocy. It produces tax farmers and corporate welfare whores. It has spawned an entire "health care coding" profession to match disorders and diagnoses with codes that provide for ersatz payment. It does not, however, produce anything of value.

For the last century, it has gotten worse and worse. It now controls an annual budget of trillions of dollars, plus a "black operations" budget that, despite the clear admonition in Article One, Section 9 of the constitution, is never published. No monies shall be spent from the public treasury without a regular statement of accounting of them. Gosh, how odd that the constitution is powerless to prevent an abuse of power.

Trillions of dollars flow to Mordor on the Potomac from all corners of America and from all quadrants of the Earth. Few countries are not extorted in some way to cooperate with the mass murdering American government. Those which object, such as the Afghan regime of the Taliban, the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein, the Libyan regime of Muammar Gaddafi, are eliminated by the military conquest of these places. U.S. military aircraft, including drones, are currently involved in slaughter of civilian targets in Somalia, Yemen, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and other places. Opposing Mordor is costly and deadly.

Orcs

Imperial orcs do go forth at the orders of those in power in Mordor on the Potomac. They go out to communities around America to harass men and women, brutalise their families, murder some of them, barbecue a few dozen Texans in a church (1993), assassinate a woman holding her baby in Idaho, shoot surrendering men and women to death. The scum who do these jobs are evil filth and work for agencies like the FBI, ATF, DEA, IRS, and CIA, and they do not have ethics. They only have an eagerness to rape, murder, and pillage. They have few of them read the constitution which purports to limit their action, and none of them care about it. Were it up to any of them, they would use it for toilet paper.

Nor are their international colleagues in the military, diplomatic secret service, and espionage agencies any better. These men and women are evil and disgusting, trained to slaughter without qualm, to obliterate lives without mercy. They do terrible things because they were trained to do them, encouraged to do them, and, let's be candid, because they got to like doing them. These are not mindless brutes, but clever and frequently psychopathic killers who understand what they are doing, do it thoughtfully and with care, and enjoy spilling blood.

Your Lack of Power

Many Americans acknowledge that their government is out of hand, and some think they can take action to correct these excesses. In fact, their government is operating as designed, exactly as Washington and Hamilton envisioned. The national government of the USA has made a plantation of the entire world and enslaved nearly everyone on Earth. The government uses propaganda and terror incidents, many of them false flag actions perpetrated to panic the populace, in order to keep power.

Villains like John McCain, Lindsey Graham, and Paul Ryan keep being re-elected not because they win votes, but because the machine political system manufactures votes to keep them in place. The dirty dealers in the FBI and CIA know all the secrets of these politicians and are happy to expose them, but do not as long as they get what they want: money and power.

Some Americans persist in the illusion that they can vote themselves freedom. I am indifferent to this idea, because I see no reason to expect voting to change much. Emma Goldman once said that if voting were going to change things, those in power would make it illegal. I think she's right. As well, I don't think most county governments that have substantial populations are actually interested in counting votes. The Hursti Hack and other evidence strongly suggests that the electronic voting machines are committing fraud. Since these facts have come to my attention, I've become indifferent to Americans voting, because I don't think it hurts anything, nor helps very much.

Voting is probably helping in the two areas that John Mackey used to complain libertarians should stop talking about: guns and drugs. Marijuana legalisation and constitutional carry have become widespread in places where referendum and initiative are available, as well as in a few states where it is not. So it is arguable that voting *has* helped on these two issues.

Nevertheless, every two years, elections put the same villains in Congress, even though only about 10% of Americans approve of Congress. Incumbents have massive powers to retain their seats, and it doesn't really matter if you vote or campaign against them. There have been national elections every two years since 1789 and Americans are less and less free in many ways after each election.

Some Changes

There were some changes over the years. In 1913, the Federal Reserve Act, the income tax, and the racist Woodrow Wilson changed many aspects of the economy. Wilson enthusiastically brought in Prohibition and the treaties relating to narcotics trafficking arrived soon after. Wilson created the Black Chamber to spy on all Americans by opening their mail, reading their telegrams, and monitoring their phone calls. He brought the country into World War One to serve his European imperial masters. He rejected Ho Chi Minh's overtures at Versailles, condemning Americans to ten years of open warfare (and another ten of clandestine warfare before) from 1964 to 1974 in Vietnam. Wilson also pushed through the Enemy Aliens act, imposed sedition laws, and created the Federal Bureau of Investigation to thwart freedom everywhere.

There were also numerous changes under Nixon, who created OSHA and the EPA to provide power to baby boomers who were happy to drop their revolutionary pretensions for steady pay and opportunities to hurt others. Nixon destroyed the passenger rail companies, putting the mail on the interstate highways and encouraging those long double and triple-bottom trucks to swerve in moderate to high winds. Nixon bombed Cambodia and other parts of Southeast Asia to slaughter millions of civilians because he and his buddy Kissinger enjoyed having blood on their hands. He also fully destroyed the connection of American currency to gold, heralding the increasing disparity between wealthy and middle class. His successors have effectively wiped out the middle class in America.

Calls to Action

What are you going to do about it? Well, for my part, I see three useful strategies. I am going to work on all three for as long as I'm able.

First, I believe it is possible to establish communities where free people can be free. I've identified a number of these around the world in Burma, Belize, Argentina, Chile, French Polynesia, and I've recruited a board of advisers representing many of those places. I've also located land in Ohio, Kansas, Texas, Wyoming, and other places suited to free communities. There is an opportunity to build an online network of communities and there is an opportunity to build physical communities in various places. I've put most of those ideas on the ResilientWays.net web site.

Second, I believe it is possible to establish legitimate currencies that effectively compete against national fiat money. FA Hayek and EC Riegel both thought so, too. You might want to read Hayek's *Denationalisation of Money* and Riegel's *A New Approach to Freedom* to learn more. Bitcoin and about 1200 variations on the theme have created a surge of interest in this area. They now represent about \$5 trillion a year in annual transactions, making the crypto-currency economy bigger than all but the three largest national economies in the world. There is a lot more work to be done in this area, especially as regards privacy. However, I think your financial autonomy is going to be increasingly secure, because thousands of computer experts (hackers) have decided to make that possible.

Third, I think there are some fun political projects that can be useful to bring a sense of what is possible to more people. Ron Paul did a really great job in 2008 and 2012 creating a "Campaign for Liberty." I think Adam Kokesh is about to do the same thing with his [2020 campaign](#) to become president in order to shut down the national government. I'm planning to help raise awareness of his work. You might get some messages from me on the topic if it interests you.

There's more than enough work to do to free the slaves, stop the wars, and end the state to

fill several lifetimes. I hope you'll join me, and get busy doing some of it.

[Jim Davidson is an entrepreneur, storyteller, public speaker, activist, and world traveller. He is available to speak at events and to advise on business development. He writes business plans. He also teaches English, mathematics, science, history, and economics to various students. His information security consulting business is doing well. Find him at ResilientWays.net and elsewhere. Reach out to Jim at: jim@vertoro.com]

ON GOVERNMENT VIOLENCE AND THE CITIZEN'S REFUSAL TO ACKNOWLEDGE IT,

ARTICLE BY CODY FOX

"I heartily accept the motto, "That government is best which governs least"; and I should like to see it acted up to more rapidly and systematically. Carried out, it finally amounts to this, which also I believe—"That government is best which governs not at all"; and when men are prepared for it that will be the kind of government they will have."

-Thoreau

At a young age, 10-12 I believe, I was put on the path to liberty by George Carlin and his can't trust the government attitude. George was not perfect by any means but his influence led me to other free thinkers like Thoreau and Emerson in high school and later Rand, Rothbard and other freedom oriented authors. The more I read and studied history, the more I began to see a common thread among all governments of the world, since forever. No matter when or where, that commonality is state sponsored violence. This alone is cause to reexamine and deeply analyze the way government operates in the modern age.

If we look at the 20 and 21 century alone we can find countless examples of state sponsored violence, murder and genocide. According to ushmm.org, in 1915 the Ottoman Empire enacted a plan to expel and massacre Armenians living within their borders.

By 1916 at least 664,00 and possibly as many as..

1.2 million Armenians were dead at the hands of the Ottomans. When the dust cleared from the state sponsored violence of World War 1 the death toll was estimated at nearly 40 million military personnel and civilians killed. The National Socialist Workers Party, the Nazis, wiped out a high estimate of nearly 6 million Jews during the Holocaust and World War 2 was responsible for 60-80 million deaths in total. When the Khmer Rouge took power in Cambodia in 1965 between 1.7 and 2 million Cambodians died in the "Killing Fields". In 1994 in Rwanda the majority Hutu government massacred an estimated 800,000 Tutsi and politically moderate Hutu. Communist regimes are estimated to have killed up to 100 million people in the 19 century alone. And to top it all off, the beacon of freedom, Team America itself, the U.S. Government, has been responsible for the deaths of countless civilians including the near extermination of the American Indian, countless declared wars, black ops and numerous C.I.A. sponsored proxy wars that have destabilized various regions leading to further bloodshed.

State sponsored violence is not to war crimes. In the U.S. police can detain, assault and even murder you at the slightest resistance to their demands and chances are they will get off with no real consequence. Police violence in the U.S. is an everyday thing. According to the Washington Post, there have been 867 people killed by police in the U.S. in 2017. Regardless of who these people were or why they were killed, the fact that a militarized police force is allowed to murder citizens with nearly no repercussions is absolutely detestable and should not be allowed to continue in a modern nation.

There are also U.S. troops and other military personnel deployed in countless areas all over the world including active combat zones and peaceful areas. These countries include but are not limited to Peru, Brazil, Djibouti, Greece, Kuwait, Iraq, Turkey, Greenland, Spain, Bahrain, Qatar and Germany. Regardless of what label you put on this it is still foreign soldiers occupying another people's land.

There are also numerous countries under Sharia Law, the set of laws that Muhammad, the most violent messiah in the history of modern religion, dictated for Islam. Under Sharia Law punishments are extreme, easily falling under western laws against cruel and unusual punishment.

Here are a few examples:

-Theft is punishable by amputation of the hands. Quran 5:38

-Any female alleging rape without producing 4 male witnesses is guilty of adultery. Quran 24:13

-A man can beat his wife for insubordination. Quran 4:34

-Muslims are to subjugate the world under Islam. Quran 9:29

-Apostasy is punishable by death.

This is by no means a comprehensive list. The atrocious punishments are far more numerous.

In the modern age a case against state sponsored violence is not hard to make. Technology has made it easy for people to access information yet so many still put their faith in government. People can watch videos of state sponsored executions from all over the world. There are even entire countries that still follow systems of laws created by early medieval religions that have not reformed to modern sensibilities. Intelligent, morally upright people should not be able to stomach being a part of any system that participates in any such practices, military, policing or religious. I'm not saying everyone needs to become an anarchist right now, but I am saying everyone needs to more closely evaluate the entities and systems they support.

[Cody Fox is from parts unknown in Wyoming. He is a social media guru, crack shot with a long gun, gym rat, prepper and voluntarist. You can bother him any time on Twitter: @cody4140]

GRANDPA'S WOOD: A STORY OF SURVIVAL, PROPERTY RIGHTS, AND BEING WILLING TO DO WHAT THE OTHER GUY WON'T, *By MARGARET HOWE*

My grandfather was born in 1922 in the village of Lynnvill, Illinois. He was born at home, and although I don't know exactly who delivered him, it wouldn't surprise me if it was his grandmother, who was a bona fide "country doctor," of the sort of that grew her own herbs, set broken bones, and delivered everyone's babies. There were no board certified doctors in Lynnvill. They didn't even have reliable electricity until the post-war era, and nobody had indoor plumbing, either.

My great-grandparents owned a grocery store, and during the Depression, that was not a bad profession to have. They had a huckster wagon, and my grandpa grew up working either behind the counter or on the huckster wagon route. He cut and carried ice for people's ice boxes, bartered and traded with the farm wives for goods, and made the Friday run into Jacksonville to sell the chickens the farmers didn't want to the slaughterhouse, from whence they would be sent on to Chicago.

Life was tough in Lynnvill, and a lot of people were dirt poor. He told me stories of folks coming in to buy dog food to feed their families, since he knew they didn't keep dogs. He caught and sold squabs and brought them into town to a restaurant to make extra money so he could buy guns and ammo to go hunting. The social event of the year was the Christian Church's barn dance, and Halloween was a time for terror, not because of ghosts, but because outhouses tipped, buggies wound up on top of the schoolhouse, and windows all over town ended up covered in a filmy layer of soap.

Since there was no central heat, people had to cut down trees and chop wood. Anyone who has ever chopped wood knows that

this is no mean task, but most people do not take into consideration what has to happen before the tree comes down. Back in those days, people would stake out trees a year in advance. They would strip the bark completely off to kill the tree, and then they would mark it as their own. Grandpa never gave me the specifics on how one came about a tree when one didn't have wooded property, but I assumed it was either a payment or trade situation. In any case, once people had a tree stripped, they would tag it as their own and come back later to chop it down and haul the wood.

Of course, there are always scavengers. Sometimes people would come and take a tree that had already been stripped and which belonged to someone else. God help them if they were ever discovered, though. In a rough world where fuel was scarce and people depended on wood not only for heat but also to cook food, taking a family's tree was literally grounds for murder, not because people were evil but because it put their family at risk during the harsh winter months.

There was a woodpile out back behind the garage when I was growing up with my grandparents, but I never paid it much mind. We rarely used the big fireplace in the living room, and that wood had probably been there since the beginning of the Vietnam War. My grandpa told me a story once that made the woodpile more intriguing, though. I didn't believe him initially, but my uncles later confirmed it to be true, and when I put story into the context of my grandfather's background, it made a lot more sense.

When my folks were younger, they did use the fireplace somewhat frequently. During an especially cold winter, it came to my

grandfather's attention that there was a thief stealing logs from his woodpile. Whoever it was hadn't even bothered to mask their footprints. My grandfather, even though logs weren't a matter of life and death anymore, couldn't quite shake the anger that came naturally at having his property walk away like that. You can take the boy out of Lynnvile...

It is also worth mentioning that my grandpa was in the Corps of Engineers during the war, and he was the unit's demolitions expert. He drove the truck full of dynamite and rigged everything to blow bridges and the like. He was also a lifelong gun aficionado who made his own ammo and knew, in my estimation, everything there was to know about guns.

The demolition expert's solution to the woodpile thief problem was to take a piece of wood, drill out a small piece in the middle, and put in some gunpowder. Not a lot – just enough to make an impression. He replaced the little wood plug, and left it where he knew it would get picked up right away. And he waited.

Not a week or two later the family heard a great boom from a couple of blocks behind the house, and a minute or two later, fire engines came barreling into the area. And he waited.

About half an hour later, a man called, and he read my grandpa the riot act when he picked up my phone. He accused my grandpa of trying to kill him. The man accused him of wanting to blow up his house. I'm sure he called him "everything but a white man," as Grandpa used to say.

Grandpa's response? "Let me get this straight. You're calling my house to confess that you stole wood off of *my* property to heat *your* house? I ought to call the police myself and report a thief in the neighborhood!"

The man didn't know what to say, of course, since he knew it was true. He let off a string of swear words and hung up the phone. Grandpa never heard from him

again, and no more wood ever went missing off of Old Man Howe's woodpile.

People with "modern sensibilities" will no doubt say that my grandpa was a crazy person, but that is not an accurate portrayal of the man. He was from a different era, and it was an era to which he remained faithful his entire life. He was also a person who, quite frankly, didn't give a f**k. More than anyone else I have ever met in my life, he did not care what people thought of him. He was also more fiercely protective of his property than anyone else I have ever known. He never called himself a libertarian, but he was – probably the truest libertarian there ever was.

We have it a lot easier today than my grandfather did growing up. It is tough to understand the importance of property rights when we are so far removed from them. To truly understand the value of property, one has to be in a situation of dependence and survival, and I have never met a single American living that sort of life in this country. We are spoiled. We are pampered. We have phones that summon taxis from thin air, cars that show us we are backing into a phone pole, and crockpots and thermostats that can be remotely controlled. These are wonderful things that seem frivolous but have dramatically improved our collective standard of living. That improvement has come at the cost of understanding of basic principles, though.

Can there be any better explanation of Rothbard's idea about homesteading, taking from Locke, than the simple example of the stripped tree? Rothbard's proposition was that, if a person settled a given piece of ground and worked that ground and made it productive, it was his. He had homesteaded that ground. It is still pretty common in this area of the world to own wooded ground, for hunting if nothing else. To go out and strip a tree for winter wood is a perfectly reasonable thing to do, and it asserts ownership. To have someone come onto the ground you own and steal

something, or have someone come and steal something you have rightly purchased from the landowner, was treated as an act of aggression.

How do we deal with aggression today? We allow the government to steal our money. We allow property taxes to be levied upon ground and buildings which we have purchased with our own earnings. How would our grandfathers and their fathers have handled someone coming onto their land and stealing the fruits of their labor? They would have treated it as it deserved to be treated: As theft carried out by an unethical scoundrel against a hardworking person trying to do right by himself and his family.

I am not trying to romanticize the past. I could tell a lot of stories that paint a far less

quaint picture of the early 20th century. Nevertheless, there are lessons to be taken from my grandfather and his explosive woodpile. It is selfless, not selfish, to take care of yourself and your family. It is unethical in the extreme to deprive someone of the fruits of their labor. Property rights are worth preserving as a basis for our ethical and our legal codes. They are worth fighting for, and it is worthwhile to ask ourselves once a while how far we would really be willing to go to keep them. Sometimes you have to do or say something that puts the world on notice. Sometimes you have to take a stand. Sometimes you have to put a little proverbial gunpowder in your wood.

**REVIEW OF: MAKING ECONOMIC SENSE,
MURRAY ROTHBARD (CHAPTER 2), BY
AMELIA MORRIS**

According to Rothbard, there are ten major economic myths and they are as follows:

The first are two myths that contradict each other but neither are true: Deficits are the cause of inflation and deficits have nothing to do with inflation. Deficits mean that the federal government spends more money than they receive in taxes. There are two ways to finance this spending. They can (1) sell Treasury bonds to the public. By doing this, no new money is created because people just take from their bank accounts and that money is spent by the government. They can also (2) be financed by selling bonds to the banking system. In this case new money *is* being created in the sense that the banks create new bank deposits and use those to pay for the bonds. The new bank deposits are spent by the government, thereby entering into the economy, raising prices. Rising prices

are the *effect* of inflation, which is defined as an expansion in the money supply. As Rothbard explains, *"Thus, deficits are inflationary to the extent that they are financed by the banking system; they are not inflationary to the extent they are underwritten by the public."*

Changes in price are determined by the supply of, and demand for, money. If the supply rises but demand does not, prices will rise; and if demand for money rises while the supply stays the same, prices will fall. In the early eighties, policymakers believed they had proof that deficits and inflation had nothing to do with each other because deficits were accelerating, and inflation was abating. The government was creating a lot of new money, much of it being used to finance the growing deficit. However, the severe depression during this time increased the demand for money due to severe business losses. This short increase in demand fell as recovery picked up, along with spending, accelerating price inflation in the process.
(*cont. next*)

The second myth is that deficits do not have a crowding out effect on private investment. The U.S. has a low rate of saving and investment. Policymakers tried to stomp out the worry that deficits would divert savings into unproductive government spending, crowding out productive investment and lowering living standards. Logically, if savings go into government bonds, there will be less savings available for productive investment, and interest will be higher than they would be without the deficits. If deficits are financed by the public, it makes sense that the money would go right back into wasteful government projects. If the deficits are financed by the bank, the crowding-out takes place by new money competing with already existing money. Realistically, deficits probably have the largest effect on crowding out, as they tap into the public's savings, which, as well as consumption, is already depleted by taxation.

The third myth is that tax increases are a cure for deficits. Raising taxes, i.e. simply giving more money to the government, is the most detrimental because at least with inflation, though it is still technically a form of taxation, the public still benefits from the exchange. The only sensible "cure" for deficits is to cut the federal budget wherever possible. In Rothbard's classic tone, *"Curing deficits by raising taxes is the equivalent to curing someone's bronchitis by shooting him."*

The fourth myth is that every time the Fed tightens the money supply, interest rates rise (or fall); every time the Fed expands the money supply, interest rates rise (or fall). A rising money supply is interpreted as lowering and raising interest rates as well as being inflationary on prices. The same goes for when the Fed tightens the growth of

money. Because the Fed expands the money supply by creating credit, forecasting it can never be a sure thing.

Myth number five is that economists, using charts or high-speed computer models, can accurately forecast the future. This might be possible if economic trends never changed, but forecasters have yet to be able to catch when trends change. Because the economy depends on individuals, and individuals cannot be predicted, this will never be possible so long as humans are involved.

The sixth myth is that there is a tradeoff between unemployment and inflation. Inflation may temporarily reduce unemployment, but in the long run, wage rates will catch up with inflation, bringing recession and unemployment. Despite what Keynesian economists say to try to convince the public otherwise, this has been proven in the past. The episode in the 1970s was essentially an empirical refutation of the Keynesian doctrine which supposed that neither could occur at the same time.

The seventh myth is that deflation—defined here as falling prices—is unthinkable, and would cause a catastrophic depression. This can be simply disproved by the fact that when selling prices fall, costs fall as well. *"Usually, wage rates remained constant while the cost of living fell, so that "real" wages, or everyone's standard of living, rose steadily."* All that matters for profitability is a spread between costs and revenue. The fear of deflation is usually just a justification for a policy of inflationism.

The eighth myth is that the best tax is a "flat" income tax, proportionate to income across the board, with no exemptions or deductions. What this suggests is that the government essentially owns 100% of

someone's income and just allows them to keep a portion of that income. This is a wrong way of approaching things. And while, really, the best tax is *no* tax, if taxes were levied like market prices, they would be equal to everyone.

The ninth myth is that an income tax cut helps everyone; not only the taxpayer but also the government will benefit, since tax revenues will rise when the rate is cut. This is merely an attempt to maximize government revenue. There is no telling how long it would take for an income tax cut to help the taxpayers. It's like throwing a bone to a dog when the public should be focused on lowering tax rates much farther below what the government deems appropriate.

The final myth is that imports from countries where labor is cheap cause unemployment in the United States. This was probably the easiest myth for Rothbard to disprove. The U.S. is in no danger of unemployment due to cheap labor from other countries because we are aided by much more capital here, bringing prosperity. In countries where wage rates are low, it makes sense that productivity is also low.

**MAD ABOUT FREEDOM: IS A POSITIVE
REVOLUTION POSSIBLE?, ARTICLE BY MADDY
NASON**

"The greatest danger to American freedom is a government that ignores the constitution." -Thomas Jefferson

I've been thinking a lot lately about what it actually takes to start a revolution, and if it can be done from a defensive and passive standpoint rather than an aggressive one. Must we murder, beat, degrade to capture the attention of the masses? Must we assassinate? I truly believe that course of action will only lead to failure.

These groups, the ones claiming to peacefully fight for their cause, seem to start getting more and more violent. Why do these "peaceful protests" end in destroying public and private property, riots, violence, attempting to burn down buildings and blow up cars? What exactly does that prove or accomplish? Nothing. In actually pushes their opposing side further into hatred of their cause, and they push the rest away by looking like beasts. This isn't protesting, it's domestic terrorism.

People fear these groups, people wonder who will be attacked next. Even if this level of violence could be considered a legitimate form of protest, is it really time to play that card? Are they risking it all on a gut feeling, or carefully planning their next move? Personally, it seems to me that they will lose all of their chips in the next round.

The American people are extremely polarized, and I believe that they have fallen into a carefully placed trap. What would be the best way to distract 300+ million people? Define a two party system as an absolute division of opinions and actions within the government. Make sure that people feel as if they only have 2 choices. Of course other choices exist, but they receive significantly less attention than that of the main parties.

Then, if you speculate that distraction is one of their prized weapons, I can look no further than Donald Trump. He's brash, arrogant, incredibly wealthy, and quite insensitive at times. I could see how some people might not like him, that's understandable. However, he knows what to say to close a deal, and he does it perfectly. His sometimes inappropriate comments and somewhat bizarre behavior, I believe, can be attributed to charisma and ability to rile up a crowd. He stirs up the people so they run to their social media. Before you know it, there are 2000 articles online, all repeating the same story, but applying emphasis to different parts. This happens all of the time, especially on mainstream media sources.

This is all fuel to the tender minded. They get on the internet and network with hundreds, maybe considerably more, people that agree with them on everything. They get so swept up in the high of being accepted that they end up blinded. Then, they just accept all decisions, ideas, and opinions from their party or group, even if they don't necessarily agree. What bothers me the most about this war over the Trump presidency is that

so many people are willing to let their ship sink. So many genuinely want to watch president Trump, and our country, fail. I know he has been a strange choice, but why would we want him to fail? Then, you see the other side of the coin and they seem to wildly overestimate Trump's abilities. One side seems naive, the other seems immature.

It seems clear that at some point, the US government became more corrupt than ever. This leads me to believe that there are many wolves in sheep's clothing within the government with ulterior motives. These wolves also will push their motives at any cost. The ends will justify the means. They use the media and entertainment industry to keep people sufficiently busy and bloated by their narcissism. Social media even apparently releases the same "reward" chemicals as a mind altering drug. We're literally addicted to media.

Social issues in America are no better. Some are claiming a major resurgence of racism, homophobia, Islamophobia, transphobia, etc. A huge part of our country, most seem to be millennials, are fighting very dirty for these beliefs. They are extremely offended by any little comment that pokes hole in their soft sensibilities. Of course everyone gets offended at times, that's natural. However, I truly believe that offense over an opinion should not result in laws limiting our speech. This is clearly the path to fascism.

To end this rant, I will say, I don't want the government hovering over my life. I want the freedom to be an individual, to make my own decisions in life. I don't want to be told what to eat, drink, smoke, what I can own, who I can marry, what I can do with my body, where my money goes. You can't have things "kind of" free, it's not free enough. We could do it. We could take our freedom back with strength, courage, and respect. Unfortunately, I don't see many that would give their time, let alone their lives, to protect their virtues and morals. They just want to keep up with the Kardashians.

[Maddy Nason is an amateur fighter for freedom and liberty. She lives in Florida with her husband, family, cats, and many raccoons. She hopes to reclaim our American liberty and pride.]

SUPERFICIALITIES TRUMP YEMEN, ARTICLE **BY NICK WEBER**

The war-state must love Trump, but not so much in the way you might initially think. Yes, his bombastic saber rattling with North Korea and Iran along with continual drone bombings all over the Middle East certainly help and an elevated troop presence in Western Europe is always good for business, but the biggest advantage afforded the war state are the superficial distractions. Given the "freak out about everything" mentality of the populace these days; the news cycles endlessly focus on the superficial rather than anything of substance, creating a vicious idiot cycle that gives the war state amazing cover to run any number of operations that they see fit, knowing that on the homefront, the populace will be focused on — how to explain this to future generations — some tweets.

Recently in New York, there was an organized "primal scream" event marking the anniversary of the election of Donald Trump. Apparently, *that* is what is important and will make the world all better: hey guys, let's scream like a three year old at a bombastic man we don't like. The "all too consumed with trivialities" crowd can't be bothered with the reality of US military involvement in SEVEN (that we know of) countries, including Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Syria, Somalia, and Libya. I know, I know, that was only six. Here is disgusting number seven: Yemen, where a brutal multi-years long coalition with Saudi Arabia, in which the US has proffered arms support, air power and encouraged an economic blockade (read: starvation), has decimated of an entire population. (cont. next)

A population that has never even come close to threatening our beloved “freedoms” and where they are literally vomiting and diarrhea-ing to death. This has irreparably damaged the future of the Yemeni people and has most certainly decreased our security with the only guarantee being *assured blowback*. General McChrystal calls it insurgent math: where you kill two and create twenty enemies. Historical podcasting legend Dan Carlin refers to this as the ripples of pain. Whatever it is called, the concept isn’t new and it is clear that we are well on our way to creating countless enemies. And yet, the uninformed still ask: why do they hate us? The information is out there and if there was ever something to get outraged about, surely this would qualify. Too distracted to read up on Yemen but want to prove a point for me? Listen to this entire Tom Woods podcast featuring Mid-East expert Scott Horton; it will leave your head reeling as they go through the details of our current military actions, *or if you are too busy*, fast forward to the 35 minute mark for the sordid reality of the situation in Yemen.

What to do? So you think you can just vote your way to a better foreign policy? Consider this: our “representatives” have hidden behind decades old authorizations of military force signed by people who aren’t even in office any longer. How’s that for representation? Republicans and Democrats have continually acquiesced and tacitly supported wars all across the globe over the previous sixteen years with hardly any objection. Our beloved constitution specifically delegated initiation of war making to congress, yet congress repeatedly runs from that responsibility. This is why that piece of paper doesn’t matter and never

could matter when you have fallible human beings skirting responsibility at every chance. We’re often told that that is why our constitution is so great: it is written down, the framework is there, all we have to do is follow it. I’m guilty of following this line of reasoning, but our political climate is consumed with plausible deniability, where our representatives are more concerned with political point scoring than taking responsibility for inflicting unimaginable suffering on an unsuspecting people in a far away land. To wit: they would rather ponder, how will this play with my base? What are the optics for this vote? How can we spin this to make the other party look bad? This is what representation is? This is why it is so important to “get out there and vote?” File this under the myth of representation.

I guess we should not be surprised, our society has been conditioned to—Look! Someone said something insensitive—not have any critical, continuous—AH! He bowed to a foreign leader—thought of any significance, especially when—lapel pin, lapel pin—it comes to the war machine. But we sure do a bang up job fomenting the outrage machine. It’s far easier to go along with the masses and wag a finger at an individual: you, sir, are a bad human and behind the facade of the collective, we all agree. Some vociferously proclaim that they are living in a police state on account of Trump’s “fascism,” ignorant to the fact that it is society writ large that is the police state. When culture shouts, nay, shuts you down, not the state, this is the opposite of a police state. Someone more creative than me can come up with a catch phrase for this phenomenon. We willingly choose to be focused on a typo in a Trump tweet: he did

what!?! That is so unpresidential. That handshake was so awkward! We can rally the troops, so to speak, to voice in unison an opposition to one person's braggadocious demeanor, but do nothing of substance to even feign interest in rolling back the war machine. Outraged citizens pop up out of nowhere to condemn a teacher for using the wrong gender pronoun but nary an outraged voice can be heard over the number of troops and drone bases that we have in Chad, Niger and countless other places.

Our indiscriminate drone bombing policy is now well entrenched in our foreign policy apparatus. We have learned that it is much easier to drone bomb from afar, collateral damage and all, versus the targeted picking up of alleged terrorists and prosecuting them. This lesson has been well learned courtesy of the precedent set by Bush and Obama. Of course, this is all contrary to that feel-good-habeas-corpus-due-process-junior-high-civics-class stuff we all learned growing up. The imagery of the benevolent superpower starts for us at a young age and a large majority of the populace has been conditioned to be complacent with drone bombing and "military actions," so long as the message is delivered in a genuine, genteel manner (if it is talked about at all). Please, Mr. President, do your warring, just don't be so brash about it. Tom Woods summed it up best in a recent email: *"...we want our presidents to be polite as they're dropping bombs, apparently. These critics want to get back to traditional "presidential" activity, like the invasion of Iraq, the internment of Japanese Americans, the confiscation of Americans' gold, the lies about babies being thrown out of Kuwaiti incubators, the bombing of Serbia over bogus claims, the destruction of Libya...Quit the Twitter taunts and get bombing, seems to be the message."*

It's as if we can overlook the realities of military actions so long as we change the phrasing and mask it with feel good slogans on the order of "Operation Enduring Freedom" or "Operation Iraqi Freedom."

How is it so many unflinchingly accept our aggressive foreign policy? The answer lies in the continuous, never-ending pervasiveness of the military image. The military is everywhere, at every sporting event at every level, every church service and at every public event. It has been recently uncovered via documents reviewed via FOIA requests that the Pentagon, CIA and NSA actively influence and edit numerous movies, tv shows and commercials. You can't escape it. Expanding this even further Eric Hoffer notes in The True Believer (p. 65) that, "The uniforms, flags, emblems, parades, music and elaborate etiquette and ritual are designed to separate the soldier from his flesh-and-blood self and mask the overwhelming reality of life and death." The image that is everywhere; the illusion of moral superiority. The image is strong and we are often afraid to speak out against it. Most take the tack of blissful ignorance: I'm better off if I just don't know. Certainly, that is one approach, but another reality is far more menacing: fear. No stranger to the concept of fear of speaking out, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn concisely summed it up in the Gulag Archipelago: *"They just want to make you say things that you know aren't true. That is what power is."* That is why you stand up for the flag. An alleged symbol of freedom, it has you standing on account of fear: fear of ostracization, fear of condescending looks, fear of violence, fear of what your neighbors would say. This is thought control; this is true progressivism. All must conform to the almighty Federal collectivist view. Don't think about, don't

read, don't challenge the as-written history. It's all settled, we'll tell you the sanitized and mythical version. This paragraph is quote heavy but let's just hammer it home. Jacob Hornberger summarized the reality behind the military image as: "Hegemony. Dominance. Control. Empire. That's it. That's what U.S. forces have killed and died for. Not "defending our liberties" but instead to establish, maintain, and expand the foreign hegemony, dominance, control and imperialism of the U.S. government." We know there is a war on somewhere and we know we are doing the right thing; we are told that every day. There is never a shortage of experts to convince us. We conjure up all the faux outrage over insignificant trivialities much the same way that we imagine our war machine continually and undoubtedly doing good. Again from Hoffer, "*We are ready to sacrifice our true, transitory self for the imaginary eternal self we are building up, by our heroic deeds...*" We are consumed by the imagery and ignorant of the reality.

We focus on the optics of Trump and the war machine drones on. We wonder what the world thinks of us because we elected Trump and the war machine drones on. We eagerly await scrolling through our Twitter feed in the morning to find out about the next great outrage and the war machine drones on. It's never the wars. It's never the bombing. It's never dead families. And what the hell happens when *they* get drones? Talk about a dangerous precedent. The outrage should be within us all. Oddly enough, the working title for this article was: **The U.S. Way of War: You all suck and I do too.** Sleep well tonight knowing that your family, your kids and your neighbors aren't familiar with the sound of a drone coming to bring you "democracy."

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DUBIOUS GOVERNMENT STATISTICS AND WHY INFLATIONISM CAUSE WEALTH DISPARITIES, ARTICLE BY NOAH LEED

What we see as a result of monetary inflation, credit expansion and "stable prices" (as was seen in the 1920s) is a rise in income and wealth inequality. So we know the rich benefit.

And the number of renters putting at least half of their income toward housing hit a record high of 11 million people a few years ago, and twice that many are spending 30% or more of their income to cover rent, also a record high.

So with rent prices rising faster than wages, we know who's getting "mildly" harmed: the poor. But if they could suddenly afford rent more easily, that would probably indicate a drop in GDP and/or asset values, and be a result of some kind of damage to "the economy" as we know it: ever-rising nominal wealth of asset-holders.

As they did in the 1920s, central banks still foolishly look to consumer price indices (CPI) as some reliable metric to guide them in the pursuit of the rates of interest or monetary/credit expansion most "beneficial" to sustainable productive economic activity.

This is nonsensical for the simple reason that not all spending and economic activity is productive (as indicted by speculative asset bubbles, as well as by the likes of annual phony "growth" of 20% realized during WWII).

Further, such reliance on the observed CPI makes little sense because consumer prices are going to be also influenced (= pushed down) by gains in productivity. There could be upward or downward price pressure by other factors affecting global flows of goods and capital, not to mention the upward or downward price pressures that occurs with rising or falling asset prices.

There is no reason that CPI "price stability" should not at times mean a gentle decline in the prices of goods, services and commodities; especially when technological innovation or globalization means an increased availability of certain goods, services and commodities even as the time, labor, energy and other inputs into their production is being greatly decreased.

THOUGHTS ON “BUY LOCAL”, ARTICLE BY MIKE MORRIS

The idea of “buying local” for the sake of doing so is one that is perpetuated in the popular culture. It’s no less popular today than it was before, somewhat ushered back into prominence by Trump’s idea of forcing people to produce domestically, or punishing those who produce foreignly and sell to us imported goods with “border taxes,” i.e., tariffs. This fallacy exists on both ends of the political spectrum: Democrat-types like it for their idea of supporting the town’s little shops, Republican-types have their equally unfounded infatuation with “Made in U.S.A.” There are even growing traditions such as Small Business Saturday to follow up the envy of Friday’s big box-store purchases, as if those jobs mean less.

The economists at the *Colorado Springs Business Journal* accept this idea, too. In [an article](#) by Helen Robinson titled “*Buying local produces big economic results*,” Nathan Landry of the Colorado Springs Regional Business Alliance is quoted saying, “*There’s no argument. When you spend locally, more of it stays in the local economy.*” Well, perhaps that much is true. But we must ask however if the positive effects that are derived from this statement, which seem to suggest that money and consumption are what matters, are erroneous.

The concept

Before tackling related fallacies, the whole concept of “buy local” should be challenged on its face: *where* is local? Is it the neighborhood, a certain side of town, towns right outside city limits, other cities in the same state, other states? Clearly it must be arbitrary where to stop with the “local” rationale, but we can assume this at least ends with the fictional borders of the country, which is a sort of unfounded economic nationalism. But most likely it is something closer to home. My guess is that proponents of “buy local” have no idea where “local” starts and stops, and probably haven’t even thought about it. It seems to be another thing you’re supposed to just accept and move on.

The concept is rendered meaningless as no geographical boundary can be defined as to what is “local.” Perhaps it is nothing more than a marketing ploy. We see in Colorado grocery stores now a “Colorado Proud” tag on items, but

does it really matter to the consumer *where* the product came from?

It is also a matter of who does what best, which isn’t concerned with location. If Mexicans produce cheaper avocados than Californians (I don’t know that they do), Californians should find something they’re relatively more productive at, leaving the avocado business to Mexicans; the consumer should purchase the cheaper avocado and be on with his day. Namely, then, this all misses the idea of comparative advantage and the need to exchange with others to satisfy our ends.

Contracting with each other in voluntary exchanges is the means of raising our standard of living beyond what we alone are capable of. To restrict this exchange because arbitrary borders have been raised between them is only to hamper mutually beneficial exchange. And furthermore, there are only individual actors seeking means to satisfy their own subjectively valued ends. There is not this collective which should “buy local,” nor should any one person be told who he should exchange and contract with.

This concept can get even more absurd, though. Many people, if left to “buy local,” would quite literally die. Specialized medical services are offered in Denver, Colorado which are not offered in rural parts, or even other bigger cities such as Colorado Springs. Should the old lady in the small mountain community, without the specialist she needs or the specialized medical equipment required, be told to “buy local?” No way! She needs to *not* “buy local.” It is a non-local facility (or is it) that can fulfill her needs. (Or, is heading to Denver actually still local?) This is almost to say that someone cannot get what they want unless the locale in which they reside produces it. You shouldn’t buy a Gibson guitar if you live in Colorado, because they’re made in Tennessee (using wood that comes from anywhere else).

Thankfully, however, this absurdity isn’t held up between interstate trade. Rarely anyone would even think you shouldn’t buy something from Kansas or Kansas shouldn’t buy products from Colorado. But what about the *other* “local” economies, then, that aren’t local to *us*? Should they boycott our products? Should we unleash a trade war where there is no more cross-border exchange, where authorities get to define the borders? What’s the point in all this? Is the goal to end exchange and make everyone self-sufficient? Probably not.

What about labor? All of the time local companies are bringing in workers from out of state to perform jobs that locals cannot. I recently met some pipe manufacturers from Utah who told me that no one in Colorado even makes the pipe they needed, so they were called out for the job. Were they stealing "local" jobs? Were they "taking money out of the local economy," as the "buy local" sees it? Should they be told to keep away since when locals are employed instead (though they obviously cannot do the job), the *"money leaks out of the economy more slowly,"* as Paul Rochette of Summit Economics is quoted saying in the article? Again, I don't think so.

There are endless considerations. Should no "local" companies be allowed to buy labor from someone who doesn't live in Colorado? Must employers only purchase doctors who were born, raised, and trained in Colorado? I hope you can sense the absurdity in these notions. Can foreign companies make beneficial capital investment in our local economy, even though they will make their profits "overseas?"

Really, the whole idea is a wash. Each state, each city, each neighborhood might all be said to have trade deficits with each other. They all might contribute to a product before it's in its final stages, ready to be consumed. If a Coloradan spends his money in Texas, a Texan will spend his money in Colorado. It really doesn't matter. Are we to tell traveling Texans that they should turn around and "go back home and spend their money locally," because "we don't want the tourism...and Texans are hoping they'd spend it locally too?" Holding the "buy local" fetish would have to imply these things.

The economics

In the article it's stated that, *"subsequent rounds of spending,"* after the businesses have received the money from the locals, will *"increase the local impact of that money far beyond the dollar value of the original purchase."* How so? Money is simply the *medium of exchange*, but here it's spoken of as if it does the work itself and is the end. This notion of "keeping the money circulating" (and locally) is a funny conception of the economy. There is no such thing as making "your dollar work harder," as Robinson states it.

I guess we're then at the magic of the so-called Keynesian multiplier as the reason for *not* buying outside of your local economy, presumably "when possible." This idea holds that, *"an increase in spending creates a ripple effect that ultimately*

generates increases in employment, income and consumption greater than the initial amount spent." This is an excuse to justify government taxation and spending under the belief it can somehow "stimulate" the economy. But it's not true, despite its wide acceptance, that increased consumer spending increases employment. And as they're for in the article, it's assumed government spending can simply increase wealth by boosting economic activity, no matter what this activity is. It might even be true in the short-run that government can "create jobs" by stimulating bad investments via credit creation, but then these jobs building homes, constructing bridges to nowhere, etc., will inevitably go bust in the end. It is also the job that is not the end itself, but a means to the end of consumption.

But the fundamental importance is to see that production must precede consumption. This is Say's Law, which Keynes allegedly refuted, which is at the heart of the issue here. Before we have purchasing power, something must be produced that enables us to buy another product. Printing new money does not create more purchasing power in the economy. The driving force of the economy is entrepreneurship and production, not simply consumption as they see it, in which all is needed for people to spend more money to enrich others.

The example

They then delve into even deeper fallacious territory by explaining how it is that this magic "multiplier" plays out. Tom Binnings at Summit Economics explains: *"The direct impact is the first round of spending. Let's say the dollars come in to the local community from wages paid to military personnel....The military facility, say Fort Carson, then buys from local contractors based in Colorado Springs. The more they buy locally to support the facility, the more indirect impact is generated."*

By this logic we're supposed to believe that taxing productive people and redistributing it to the military, who produces nothing in exchange (i.e., *exchange nothing for something*), makes the local economy richer than if it had never been taxed in the first place. What should be obvious, taxation heightens the cost of production and lowers the cost of consuming other's property through the political means. Taxation doesn't create new things, but destroys productive efforts. Government spending must be counted as *consumption*, not investment. The point is, the government is not producing something to earn

an income, but they take, via taxation, from productive activity. The government is not of the nature of the private business which seeks to exchange with others.

Government spending can thus scarcely be considered beneficial. In fact, all intervention into the economy must be considered a *net-loss*, as only the free-market can maximize what we might call social utility. Never can government intervention do so. It is the difference between voluntary exchange and violent or coerced exchange. Taxation always has an injured party whereas free exchange is mutually beneficial. The State is *parasitical* on production (of which the end goal is consumption), not a public benefactor as such economic reasoning related to the buy local fallacy would have it.

If taxation were ended, it is true that none of this military spending would continue. But it can be made up for by private—and productive—spending once the taxation were ended. Would this mean we lose out on the alleged benefits of the Federal government taxing us, giving it to welfare recipients on Fort Carson, who then spend money into the economy (though having offered up no good or service themselves)? No. It's just that government has screwed a lot of and will continue to do so. But if the extortion to fund the military, a force for evil in the world, were to be ended, then since government has caused a massive misallocation in resources, they would indeed unwind in the event they were to stop redistributing property. Businesses built up around serving the military would perhaps fail; people working for the State would have to get real jobs.

But this economic correction is needed, as taxation siphons off wealth to blow it where ever the government thinks is necessary. Is it an argument against ending the theft of taxation because less soldiers will spend their money at the grocery store now? No way. This spending as of now is funded by compelling payment from the taxpayers, and cannot be said to benefit them as they otherwise wouldn't have made the choice. If they would have, then there would be no need for taxation. But if this money were back in their hands, rather than that of murderous thieves, then they could choose where to spend it. Indeed, we wouldn't be blowing it on this multi-trillion dollar military that is *burdening* the economy, but other more useful things.

We wouldn't see so many contractors coming into town doing seemingly never-ending construction on Fort Carson. But we don't need them. In fact, rather, if the tax-extortion ended we would be spending our money on things that benefit *consumers* directly—like housing, or whatever else it is we desire and demand—instead of to satisfy *government*, i.e., using the money to luxuriously and wastefully spend on military personnel who necessary add no benefit to the community whatever. Soldiers would be more productive to get real jobs that satisfy consumer needs, not whatever it is they're currently doing, which cannot rightfully and honestly be considered “work” as it's considered.

Whatever value it is they're said to produce is apart from individual's subjective valuations, so it's dubious to suggest it's a good thing. Much less does stealing from us and spending it back into the economy supposedly nearly double the initial spending. The military-industrial complex is not in the business of satisfying people, but in taking from the productive and giving to themselves. To believe they economically support us, rather than to see them as a drain on the economy supported by ourselves, is totally fallacious. This is the whole purpose of taxation: deprive the consumers of their desires to satisfy the government's.

The military in this sense is nothing but a giant welfare program, and it cannot be said to be of benefit to the economy anymore than if they increased the food stamp budget and they all bought “local” produce with it. The wages paid to the military are not from goods or services they offered someone else, but are paid out of extortion (tax) money. To act as if they're a benefit to economic growth would contradict their other fallacious notion that “freedom isn't free,” which would seem to suggest there *is a cost* to have a tax-funded defense monopoly decide how much it is we owe them in the supposed cause of freedom. For economists to come along and excuse them as a public benefactor is telling of people who supposedly have taken an honest approach to economics.

Statistics

To back up this effect of a dollar spent locally continually working harder to produce more wealth, they report that, “*the Colorado State Demography Office recorded a 1.84 percent multiplier for El Paso County, Binnings said. Every dollar spent ultimately generated \$1.84.*” Who knows how such

statistic is derived or what this even means. In a genuine free-market, there is no need for statisticians. We need entrepreneurs and producers, not quacks making up numbers for government data, attempting to reduce the human component to an equation. They should all go get real jobs too, like the military. Collecting statistics is a need only under the notion that the government should intervene in the economy. There is no way to aggregate complex economic exchange into one simple number such as consumer prices or economic growth, and there's no need to do so either. Perhaps some companies might find it useful to collect data on economic activity as to help plan for their own private investments, but we don't need economic central planning or spending.

Keynesians

The "buy local" fallacy is essentially the Keynesian fallacy of the economy as demand-driven. This thinking still dominates economic thought today. The Keynesian strain (or should I say, stain?), which I think the "buy local" idea might originate, is to think that keeping the money local and consuming as much as possible has an increased "multiplier" effect, and is therefore better. But again, what or where is "local?" The only answer must be arbitrary and assume that money sloshing around various hands is the needed economic activity.

Indeed, Keynesians think consumption could be on just *anything*, divorced of a need to use scarce resources (labor, capital) toward the most highest-valued needs. This is how to get things moving again. Make-work infrastructure projects funded by the government will suffice as "stimulus," which is the notion in this article that military spending is the needed boost. Keynes famously posited that the Treasury could bury money in a coal mine, cover it in trash, and the economic activity (for activity's sake) of having people dig it up would make the people richer and end unemployment.

Keynes also thought a lack of spending could cause unemployment, and monetary or fiscal tools should be used to remedy this. Keynesianism, one eventually discovers, is but a cover for State aggression in the guise of economic efficiency and stability, of which is never achieved. This would seem to be what is suggested by saying the military makes us better off than if we had not

been robbed by them and spent the money ourselves.

If anything, though, an increased demand for money (by holding off consumption) is a good thing as this will lower prices, as an increase in money-holding (pejoratively: "hoarding") can only occur by bidding down money-prices elsewhere. Keynesians have an irrational fear of "money hoarding" since it would take away from consumption, the driver of the economy in their view. Keynes also wrongfully feared this meant business would anticipate falling prices, thus causing businesses to reduce investment and to hoard their money too. The free market is alleged to be inherently unstable, and Keynesian economics its savior.

But if you spend *too much*, since it's believed this consumption drives rising prices, then it should be checked by increased taxation! "The economy," to Keynesian macroeconomists, seems to be this manipulatable thing that becomes sluggish sometimes (justifying government spending and inflation) or "overheats" (requiring raising taxes and running budget surpluses).

What a sham! Any solution is a government one. The ethical reality, however, is that people need to be free in their preferences, to consume, save, hold cash. They don't need to have their choices made for them under the idea that "the economy" can be made better off (though this is untrue). "The economy" is not this entity to be played around with using supposedly sophisticated models no layman could understand. Manipulation of interest rates, a favored policy, will get us nowhere in genuine economic growth. In fact, artificially depressing interest rates is the cause of the business cycle, which Keynesians have said they would end (though never have).

Keynesian ideas, despite having claimed to be capable of achieving a post-scarcity world in a generation, and despite remaining the policies we live with today, are highly destructive to the pool of real wealth in the economy. Essentially, Keynesianism is nothing but an economic rationale for government intervention into the economy. It is social engineering, more or less. It's a policy of inflationism. But as should be sufficiently demonstrated already, monetary expansion (inflation) cannot be used to make us richer. Any economy is enriched by an increased amount of goods and services available, not by "more money." It is capital investment that raises

the demand for labor and wages, not spending or laboring for the sake of doing such (“buy local”).

Keynesians engage other fallacies too, such as assuming there can be involuntary unemployment on the free market, in which case it is the role of the State to step in and create “full employment,” a stated goal of the central bank today. The market cannot be trusted, it’s said. Keynes believed adding money to the economy can have a positive effect on employment, but this isn’t true either. Since there’s no involuntary unemployment in the market economy, as Keynes believed, a “full employment” policy by the government is but a scheme.

The real way to end unemployment is to end government interventionism into the labor market that created it. If employers only hire when wages are perceived to be lower than the marginal value product, in which it would be a loss to hire any further, then imposing a minimum wage law *above* the marginal productivity of labor will cause disemployment.

So surely, there is no money supply problem, as the central bank and others think. And spending more money isn’t what’s needed. An economy is not in need of *more* money, but more production; and more money doesn’t stimulate more production, but only decreases the purchasing power of each preexisting money unit. Once a natural money is established, i.e., gold or silver, there is no “shortage of the money supply” warranting someone to step in and inflate and counterfeit more notes, which is certainly the Keynesian prescription we’re given. Again, to no avail.

How do we get rich?

So what is always needed is more production and capital investment, not more monetary consumption. Indeed, in *refraining* from consumption and investing, this savings is the means to extend production into the future as to expand output. More goods are created by more capital investment. It is a low time-preference society that can increase its wealth. Taxation heightens time-preference and thus makes us poorer.

The driving force behind the economy is entrepreneurial investment. This is what creates employment. This requires savings in order to make happen, which means foregoing consumption. Inflation, which is the policy of creating new money, is not the same thing as

savings. Indeed, since it must decrease the purchasing power of every pre existing monetary unit, inflation is *punishing* to savers. It devalues their holdings. For Keynesians, this is probably the goal: people save too much when they ought to be out spending, so, destroy the incentive to save (an appreciating value of the money). Of course, all this necessarily implies a government money-monopoly as we have.

This idea that what we need is more money and spending all seems to fall in line with the general public’s assumptions that printing money creates actual wealth. Wealth is defined by the goods and services an economy produces, not it’s amount of money. If all it took to create wealth was to print more money, then which ever country printed the most would be the richest. This obviously isn’t true (e.g., Zimbabwe).

The mistake is then to conflate money (the medium of exchange) with real wealth (goods and services ready to consume. Money is only to help facilitate exchange. Ignoring what the government has done to it (monopolized the natural money, gold, turning it into fiat paper-money ran by the central bank), money is only the most marketable medium of exchange that all other goods trade for; wealth is measured in the actual output of goods and services in an economy. Increasing the supply of money doesn’t *add* to the wealth, but helps to redistribute it and deplete it. A policy of inflation cannot make a society richer, but indeed will impoverish it by causing capital consumption.

Do we want self-sufficiency?

The division of labor, which is the natural course an economy takes in which people, based on their unique skills and talents, fall into specialized roles, is what makes man infinitely richer than if he performed all his labor in isolation. Should man be alone in the woods, he must prioritize his use of time and labor, constructing a shelter, fishing, etc. Should another person show up, they can do what they do best, and both can exchange to each other’s benefit. But all alone, or even with one other person, he would conceivably never be able to produce a car himself.

The idea of self-sufficiency, which “buy local” seems to be saying, is wholly against the division of labor across geographical boundaries which makes us rich. This is the specialization that everyone takes part in, exchanging their labor for money, and their money for the array of goods in

the economy produced by everyone else. It's a psychological-emotional thing, bred by years of ingraining nationalism into us, that anyone feels there's something wrong or bad about imports and something favorable about exports or "local" goods. These imaginary borders drawn by states apparently shouldn't have goods cross them, and this is why collectivist concepts like "buy local" should be dismissed.

Autarky is not the goal; international exchange and specialization is. Preferably *everyone* is incorporated into this vast, complex network of exchange which doesn't care for where something originates. But of course, States control exchange and such potential for wealth is highly diminished through taxes, regulations, tariffs, quotas, and other trade restrictions. We're denied the full benefits of a global division of labor as local protectionist policies serve to shield inefficient domestic firms from foreign competition, at the expense of better, cheaper goods for the domestic residents. These people seem to think the U.S. should go back to producing things they're no longer most efficient at, like textiles. We don't want American's making shoes; that would take away from what they do relatively better.

But is buying local even a possibility? Global supply chains have it that parts are manufactured everywhere, assembled in different places, and then shipped elsewhere for final consumption. If "we," in some undefined "local" jurisdiction, were forced to buy local, then this would mean we would be indefinitely less productive than before. It's impossible to think that all the factors of production—machinery, fuel, tires, paints, raw materials, other inputs—could be produced locally. They can't. If this were a requirement, say by law, that only local purchases may be had, then it wouldn't too far off to assume everyone would die out. We need products from everywhere, all around the world. There's no such thing as a "buy local" banana in Colorado. I'd venture to guess that few products are made 100% in the United States, but again, this doesn't matter anyway.

Ideally in this division of labor though, everyone across the whole world is incorporated into it with one common and natural money (e.g. gold) in which they can all calculate and exchange in. This would yield us all the greatest results. The whole idea of "keeping the money local" should be completely disregarded, I'd say.

Last thoughts

There's too many problems with this which can't be covered here, but suffice it to say there's no issue with buying non-locally. One should buy from whoever offers them the *best deal*, not whoever is closest in proximity. If one was faced with product *A* and *B* which were virtually identical (say, a plain white t-shirt) but *A* is \$15 and was produced locally and *B* is \$5 but made elsewhere, then that means if you purchased *A*, you would have that much less to spend (\$10), perhaps locally, at another business. I don't think hurting yourself by paying more for a local product for community feel-good purposes is any way to really help the economy.

There's yet another argument that there are less transportation costs in doing so, and that this is good for the environment. But it might be possible that someone else is *so productive* that this isn't true; they can make it and ship it cheaper than the domestic firm. This is all for the market economy to sort out, not what essentially amounts to a propaganda campaign to purchase locally.

Though I'm not sure of any examples, "buy local" could lead to further calls for protectionism such as placing a tax on all non-local imported goods as is already done on the national level. Or perhaps, preventing online retailers from shipping goods into the state as easily since they compete with local goods. But forcing consumers to spend more money is not of benefit to them. They prefer cheap goods, and for them, it doesn't matter *where* they came from. They want the best deal.

So, sure, "buy local" (wherever that is) if your heart desires. But I see no convincing argument for why one should do so purely because they have an affinity for "keeping the money local," short of supporting your friend's business, which you do anyway. But the positive economic statement that it's better for the economy than if you bought something non-local for cheaper seems to me a false one. One should be free to decide how much they allot for consumption and how much they allot for savings or holding cash, and from where and whom they wish to purchase their goods from. The economy is not this living entity, but a network of individuals exchanging with each other. In the methodological individualist approach to economics there is necessarily no concept of "local." There are only acting individuals.

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