

Labor & Individualism



by **Sir Josephine**
Deathscythe

Mongoose Distro
PO Box 20069
Brooklyn, NY 11222

see it like that, you'll say. Other people are not me and I am me. So. I either want to be my own boss or share profits with the people I work with.

But this mutualism thing is so small, so underground, people will say. The internet was once also underground, and small. And im not even saying that mutualism or geolibertarianism will be the future. I can't judge about the future. But the fact that something is small in this time, won't mean that it will always stay small.

If we see it this way, the mutualist position is somewhat aristocratic. And the capitalist position is collectivist. The capitalist is slaving around for a hierarchical collective, called 'a company'. And in their perception they are living an individualist lifestyle. But are they, or are their bosses? All these labour/might/individuality themes are also a sort of taboo, because both the workers and the bosses, don't want to talk about the ugly parts of daily live. Because it will lead to tensions, and people want to keep the peace.

If you reap the fruits of your labor, then you are freer than when a CEO reaps the fruits of your labor? That does not strike me as a very radical, controversial position. I find it strange that the geolibertarian and mutualistic economic theories are not getting more acclaim. Apparently people like hierarchies. Apparently people want to work for something above them. But that mutualism and geolibertarianism, its vague and niche. You can say something like that, but that irrelevant for the argumentation.

Classic 19th century libertarianism. Mutualism has never been attempted, they will say. This is not true, there have been several experiments with it in the 19th century and you still have companies that are cooperatives. But those companies are then not efficient, says the libertarian. We weren't talking about efficiency. We were talking about individual freedom, not efficiency, modernism, utilitarianism, or innovation. The company with the CEO is very efficient, you say. But why should I care? If my work doesn't benefit me, what do I care that the company is doing really well? I won't profit from it. All the profit goes to the CEO's. Why should I care, that the company is so efficient, and customerfriendly, or whatever.

Then they say: but you are the company and the company is you. That's what managers say, things like that. Yes, I've never experienced it that way. As long as I don't control my workplace and see the profit, I don't feel like I'm part of that company. I am in an alienated position. But other people don't

I don't think capitalism is really individualistic. It is individualistic (!), says the libertarian. Well, we disagree, seemingly.

What is work? Effort. And for that effort you get money. And what is money? Money means having options. Money is power. So, you make an effort to gain opportunities and power.

The radical left doesn't like money, because the radical left doesn't want you to demand anything for yourself. The Radical Left believes that you work for society, not for your own desires. The left doesn't want you to have power. Only the party/the collective should have power. The people have power. But who are 'the people'?

Good. I have nothing against work. But I want my work to benefit *mé*. And this doesn't happen in communism and it doesn't happen in capitalism. Neither are purely individualistic/egoist institutions/ideologies. In communism I work for the state, the people, the working class, the country, progress, modernism, justice, solidarity, dignity, pride, love, unity and belonging. But I don't work for *mé* (!!)

In capitalism I work for a company, so for a CEO/shareholder. And I work to pay the landlord. So my labor is for you. My effort goes to you.

But you choose that yourself, says the libertarian, indignantly. Is that right? What if I had no choice? Starving or working for a boss, is that a choice? Communism offers me a similar choice. Work, or end up in a death camp. Work for the system, or die.

Yes, but capitalism brought us a lot of progress, says the libertarian. That is an utilitarian argument. The same sort of argument the communist comes up with. The communist says: Socialism is miserable, but in the end it is the best for the world, because it provides progress and modernity. Capitalism and communism have something in common, strangely enough? The extremes touch in the middle? Our system is the best for 'humanity', say both ideologies. Yes, but then again, it's not about me. I am a selfish romantic, not a collectivist modernist. I don't care about 'humanity'.

In what system, would my work be my work? What supports egoism best? I think we come close to mutualism, if we answer that question, the old 19th century French mutualism. The idea of the cooperative, or the family business. A thought experiment. Suppose you own a bakery with your brother and sister and you divide the profits you make, and you have no rent, because the property is yours and you pay no taxes, because you evade it. Then your labor will benefit you. Straight away. It does not flow to the state and not to a landlord. Small scale organization, and distribution of profits are therefore crucial if you want to start from a purely individualistic production.

But then the libertarian says: to me individualism is working for a boss and being part of a big company. Well, then we have a different perception of what individualism is. And of course, that's possible, we don't have to argue about that, we don't have to agree, and it's not even my mission to win you to my side. I often have the feeling, that people don't get what I'm saying anyway, so I'm done with trying to convince them. Why should I convince them? Something we can talk about later on.

The anarcho communist, left-wing anarchist, says: for me individualism is working for the collective, the commune . That's not how I'm in it. I just don't work for you, whether you are a capitalist, or 'the proletariat'. If I make an effort to learn, or develop, or whatever, that's for me. We can do something together, but that together is also reasoned to me. The center of gravity is still with me. I do together, for me. I don't do together, for together. Collectivism is not an end in itself. The moment it becomes an end in itself, it becomes creepy.

Geolibertarians (I assume you know what geolibertarianism is), too, assume a perception of radical individualism. The geolibertarian doesn't want to work for the state and he/she doesn't want to work for a landlord. And whether their system would be better for progress and technology is irrelevant to him/her. That's not where the priorities lie. The mutualist, geolibertarian anarchisms are not modernist in design.