

## **CRITICAL REMARKS ABOUT 'BUILDING THE MOVEMENT'**

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I'll give some critical remarks on the organizational question which is treated in Jaut's book in the chapter "Building the Movement"

If libertarian municipalism (LM) pretends to be a liveable alternative in the face of a triumphant capitalism, it has to succeed in inspiring a mass-movement, like anarcho-syndicalism did in the first decades of this century.

A necessary condition for the building up of a mass-movement is the existence of a well-organized LM-current. Bookchin warns in many cases against the danger of the 'tyranny of structurelessness' (which opens the way for arbitrariness and for authoritarian manipulation).

A clear organizational structure and written rules regarding the functioning of this structure, are not only a necessary condition for the internal democracy, but also for an efficient construction of a mass-movement. And therefore we need a libertarian organization which reconciles the autonomy of the local groups with the indispensable discipline of the whole.

In the book of Janet Biehl, I can read a lot about the building up of groups, but I can find nothing about the structure or function of the regional/national/international federations which can encompass and reinforce these local groups.

Such a national or regional organizational structure has to facilitate the work of the local groups. I'll give some examples –not an exhaustive list– of these 'internal' tasks: organization of the exchange of experiences and tactics which were successful in various neighbourhoods; organization of lecture-cycles which can be given in different localities; publication of a national newspaper on LM; Calling up activists from different cities to reinforce acute struggles in specific neighbourhoods; planning of regional/national activities or participating in nation-wide campaigns, etc.

But a LM-federation will also have several important 'external' tasks. There will be a lot of discussion with anarchists of all currents who don't recognize themselves in the LM project. To prevent that our local activists would lose themselves in those endless discussions, it could be a task of the federal organization to decide if it is opportune or not to continue these dialogues or polemics with the other currents.

The same may be true for the decision to publish a separate newspaper or to participate in an already existing paper or for the decision to participate in national anarchist federation in which all the currents are represented.

On the local level there will be an inevitable confrontation with militants of the different leftist groups or parties and with members of the green party. They'll be present in every attempt to build up local citizens assemblies. What will be our position towards them: critical collaboration or not? Shall we leave this decision, case by case, to the local level or does it belong also to the competence of a federation?

Last but not least, there's also the problem of the international structuring of our movement. There has to be a clear structure to guarantee its democratic character: 'who' is organizing and 'what' belongs to the competence of an international LM federation. But there's also the problem of the 'why': how can an international structure reinforce the local struggles (exchange of experience, mutual help (financial, exchange of comrades), organization of international campaigns, publishing of an international newsletter, etc.)? And the problem of the 'how': material and financial means volunteers for an international secretary ...

These are the huge organizational problems and questions we have to resolve if we want to build up a LM-movement.

But I want to conclude my intervention with a reflection upon the connected problem of 'militancy'. Considering our small quantity of devoted activists and considering the huge tasks we set for ourselves, I ask myself how we can prevent the danger of degenerating into a kind of robot-like militancy (compare with maoist activism) in which life (family, friends, social life) is sacrificed on the altar of political ideals. How to avoid this degeneration into religious-like sectarianism which will never be able to attract a majority or even a big minority of the population? We must always bear in mind that LM has to remain attractive\* with the potentiality to become the political philosophy of the majority of average citizen, and may not become the exclusive faith of some fanatical idealists.

