Anarchist view on economic self-organisation in an All-Crisis context

Introduction to the topic

This text was written as an introduction to a conversation at a meeting of an anarchist Facebook group. It grew in the course of writing, which made it necessary to add a short summary at the beginning. The final version has been slightly edited and a chapter presenting impressions and reflections from the online conversation has been added at the end.

Content

Summary

Proposal for a definition of economic self-organisation

Grassroots organisation of people to meet their needs by economic means, usually in the form of a co-operative.

Why do we need all this?

These needs could be personal sustenance, political struggle (hacking the system), financing the movement and its infrastructure, creating a non-alienated work environment and an asylum for those harassed or unable to work in a capitalist environment.

Significant historical examples

- Diggers (Diggers) - England 1649,

- Co-operatism in Poland at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries,

- anarcho-communist cooperatives in Spain in 1936,

- countercultural initiatives in the USA in 1968 and 1971.

Why it is different today

- The dismantling of the traditional social base: the precariat instead of the proletariat, the contraction of the peasantry.

- Cultural change: "'narcissism culture', the myth of individual self-realisation and 'identity projects'. The casualness of social relationships.

- Technosphere and infrastructure instead of nature. "Cracks in the system" instead of the frontier.

- The gradual disintegration of civilisation: All-Crisis instead of revolution.

Inspiration for the here and now

What today's initiatives look like:

- Catalan Integral Co-operative,

- solidarity-based healthcare in Greece,

- FairCoop -- a global co-op with its own cryptocurrency,

- the whole world -- consumer (not just food) co-operatives,

- Solarpunk -- an optimistic version of the future in our hands.

It is not that easy...

Internal and external obstacles in our way: our own adaptation mechanisms, the fetishisation of money, the fetishisation of power, the habit of playing games with the state.

TePeWu model

Integral co-operative in the Polish reality: an organically built community, jointly undertaking

economic projects, hacking the system at the financial level. The aim is to create a zone free of capitalism, interacting with the state and capital as an organised economic and political force. Target form: an association running social enterprises of various types.

Mosaic method

To undertake (in the spirit of TePeWu) a variety of activities and initiatives, attracting different groups of people. People who become convinced of the concept will naturally become co-founder(s) of TePeWu when the formalisation stage comes.

More details

Proposed definition

As economic self-organisation we will consider the voluntary and equal association of persons wishing to collectively satisfy their **diverse** needs through economic methods, i.e. through production, processing and services in the tangible and intangible spheres.

It usually adopts the structure of a cooperative which (in our case) allocates the surplus earned to political purposes, especially solidarity.

Why do we need all this?

Propaganda by deed, or economic guerilla

The obvious need for anarchism is to fight the state and capital. Following the principle of "*hitting where it hurts most - in the wallet*", using economic methods to weaken institutions and drain the resources of the opponent can be an attractive proposition. An additional aspect is the spectacularity of *propaganda by deed* - as in the recent struggle of the "swarm" organised via social media against [hedge funds](.).

Such clashes, if they take place on capitalist terms, however, often turn out to be a sham when the playing field is controlled [by the adversaries](.).

Financing and construction of movement infrastructure

Expropriation as a means of financing revolutionary movements is a time-honoured tradition, but it has limited effectiveness in the modern world, not least because of the importance we increasingly attach to 'image issues'.

To my knowledge, the last major action of this kind in the European anarchist movement was that of [Enric Duran](.), which funded quite a few cooperative initiatives in Catalonia, and the creation of FairCoop, a global cooperative with its own cryptocurrency.

With the explosion and " Hold *to the Moon!* " bitcoin and the rest of the crypto-ZOO, a group of anarcho-millionaires emerged (your humble servant didn't catch on :-( ) who used their speculative profits to fund further anarchist ventures. On a smaller scale, the vast majority of people who support the movement follow the same model: we seek income in the hostile world of capitalism, then tax ourselves for the benefit of the movement that this capitalism hopes to throw off its bike.

Meanwhile, **creating our own economic structures will not only allow us to live and work in a friendly environment (see below), but also to keep more of the fruits of our labour -- both on the production and consumption side.**

Moreover, at a time of increasing - and perfectly legal - repression by a recovering police state, we (and many others) will create environments where **people who have been fired from their jobs, expelled from university or school, or isolated because of** *their* **political activities, will find a place to work among** *their own*, **earn a living and support the activities of others.** This is where mutual aid has its most serious application.

Dealienation of work

> *"Each_ of us already has some kind of home environment, some circle of friends - but more often than not the environment of gainful employment is imposed on us by circumstances. Economic compulsion means that other areas of our lives have to bend to values that are most often alien or hostile to us - at the risk of losing our livelihood for ourselves and our loved ones.*
>
> *Most people see liberation from this dissonance in some form of "passive income", which is supposed to free them from the economic constraint of work. This "passive income" is supposed to come from property, which in practice limits its availability to a small minority of the population. A slightly smaller group chooses the seemingly sovereign life of entrepreneurs and freelancers, which quickly turns out to be a rather zombie-life of precarious self-exploitation. In a capitalist system, the primary motivation is to get into _some_ privileged group -- an aspiration by definition unattainable for all. Ultimately, the majority achieves apparent freedom through the subordination of other spheres of life to "corporate culture" -- the way of life imposed by economic compulsion thus dominates everything else. The only salvation seems to be "self-exclusion"; internal emigration to the periphery of the system, where - at the price of a modest, sometimes poor, economic existence - we gain more freedom to arrange our social life.*
>
> ***But isn't it time to stop running away? We have the knowledge and access to tools with which to build our own working environment. To start working in the way - and with those - that our need for integrity prompts us. Such a tool, mature and tested, is the co-operative."***

> https://freelab2014.wordpress.com/2013/12/21/czy-nie-pora-juz-przestac-uciekac/

Significant historical examples

Gerrard Winstanley and his 'Diggers' (Diggers) - England, 1649

> https://peertube.tepewu.dev/videos/watch/64658f96-b0c1-4c66-bbb1-097f56cac0a3

"The Diggers were a group of Protestant radicals in England. They are sometimes seen as the forerunners of modern anarchism, and have been associated with agrarian socialism and Georgism. Gerrard Winstanley's followers were known as True Levellers in 1649, and later became known as Diggers because of their attempts to farm the common land.

Their original name came from their belief in economic equality based on a specific passage in the Bible. **The Diggers attempted (by 'leveling' the land) to reform the existing social order with an agrarian lifestyle based on their ideas of creating small, egalitarian rural communities.** *They were one of many non-conformist dissident groups that emerged during this time."*

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diggers

Abramowski and Społem - Polish co-operatists and co-operative women at the turn of the 20th century.

Having broken off relations with the government - we will have to start creating our social life ourselves; we will have to learn to live as free people who get around without the help of the government. And this will be a benefit to ourselves.

We will stop using government schools - and start creating our own secret schools.

We will cease to go to state and municipal courts with our cases - instead, our disputes will be settled by amicable courts of our own choosing.

We will stop going to the police for theft and rape, and instead organise our own security guards, able to protect us better against thieves than the bribed Tsarist police.

We shall cease to count on any help from the government, in the disasters of life, in the prevention of poverty, or in the defence against exploitation, but we shall form among ourselves various associations of mutual aid, workers' and farmers', in order to secure everyone from poverty and exploitation.

In this way, our struggle against the government will be a creative struggle; it will be, at the same time, the creation by us of a new social life, the life of free men; it will be a gradual but continuous building of that common Polish folk thing which we so desire, and which no one will give us until we create it ourselves.

https://pl.anarchistlibraries.net/library/edward-abramowski-zmowa-powszechna-przeciw-rzadowi

"Społem" developed its own distinct ideology, consistently distancing itself from purely political disputes. It was based on a criticism of capitalism and the need to emancipate united grocers from intermediation.
According to the biweekly 'Społem!', in the 1930s about 10% of Poles participated in the cooperative movement."

https://magazynkontakt.pl/spoldzielczosc-reaktywacja/

Catalonia then

"Revolutionary committees were formed in every city, town and village, which rejected the government and dealt with all the questions which had hitherto been reserved for the

central authorities. The workers socialised most of the workplaces - all public buildings were also taken over including: hospitals, orphanages, schools, public transport so that they served the general public and everyone was guaranteed the opportunity to use them (for the first time workers could go to the doctor for free).

In addition, anarchists in many places created centres for the care of the elderly, new schools (which taught on the model proposed by Francisco Ferrera), compensatory institutions, and social welfare centres (the most telling symbol was the use of the Ritz Hotel in Barcelona as an eatery for the poor and the Palace Hotel in Madrid as an orphanage).

Revolutionary sentiment even reached distant Gijon, where the dominant CNT formed a "War Committee" and fishermen socialised all businesses related to fish processing and fishing - so boats, wharves and can factories were collectivised.

In the countryside, agricultural collectives were established en masse; in Aragon 450, in the Levant 900 and in Castile about 300. Alongside the agricultural collectives, workshops were set up to produce tools for agriculture. Industry was followed by barbers, butchers and bakers, who also collectivised their own branches of the economy.

According to Beevor, the collectives in Catalonia and Aragon involved around 70% of the workforce. In Catalonia, workers socialised almost every branch of industry, from light to heavy industry to machinery and oil.

In numerous places the anarchists did not limit themselves to collectivisation. In many industries they carried out massive restructuring, closing small and inefficient factories and concentrating by shifting the main burden of production to larger and more modern plants, resulting in increased employment and productivity. The often cited examples remain the famous 'Barcelona tramways' and the timber industry."

https://drabina.wordpress.com/2009/09/03/komunizm-wolnosciowy-w-praktyce-%E2%80%93-
rewolucja-hiszpanska-1936-roku/

Diggers of San Francisco

"In their social programme to create a Free City, The Diggers have combined street theatre, anarchist direct action and art happenings.

Their most famous activities centred around handing out free food every day in the park and distributing 'surplus energy' in a series of Freeshops (where everything was free for the taking).

Diggers have coined various slogans that have made their way into counterculture and even the mainstream - "Do your thing" and "Today is the first day of the rest of your life" being the most recognisable of them.

> *The Diggers, a hub of the nascent underground, were the progenitors of many new (or reinvented) ideas, such as baking bread from whole wheat (made famous by the popular Free Digger Bread, which was baked in one- and two-pound coffee cans at the Free Bakery) the first Free Clinic, which inspired the founding of the Haight-Ashbury Free Medical Clinic; tie-dyed clothing; and the communal celebration of natural planetary events such as solstices and equinoxes."*

https://www.diggers.org/overview.htm

Hoedads (Oregon)

Half a century ago, in 1971, the first **Hoedad** Cooperative brigade was formed in Oregon. It was formed by people who today we would perhaps call environmental activists. They didn't call themselves that. They were simply planting trees.

They organised themselves into small cooperative brigades. No bosses, no hierarchy. Together they hired themselves out to work in the reforestation of the leeks left after the pillaging of Oregon's mountain forests.

By the time the co-op disbanded in 1994, the Hoedads had not only changed the face of the forest industry in Oregon (not least by organising partially and entirely female brigades).

They also became a model for implementing the hippie culture of radical democracy and cooperatism with the everyday practice of wage labour.

Today, as more and more people are aware of how their daily work is destroying the Earth, **recalling the tradition of Oregon forest co-ops can point us toward a practical commitment to environmental regeneration** - not as an "after hours" occupation, but as a full-time livelihood.

https://tepewu.pl/2020/03/09/ludzie-ktorzy-sadzili-drzewa/

Why it is different today

We cannot count on mass social movements.

Capitalism has abolished the traditional base of revolutionary movements: the proletariat and the peasantry.

Instead, he created a precariat, brought up in constant volatility and a culture of individual self-fulfilment. A class of "millionaires in process" who, contrary to their real interests, identify more with capitalists than with working people. Rather than associate, they are ready to go "on their own". "*Zausz firme*" becomes the answer to everything.

The widespread poverty of workers is no longer (or is it yet?) a mass phenomenon which provides motivation for action. For example, food cooperatives are no longer formed to meet elementary nutritional needs, but to provide access to quality food, produced using natural, often traditional, methods.

Instead of organised social self-defence, co-operatives have a 'supporting' role in the realisation of 'personal identity projects' and self-expression. Participation in social movements becomes as precarious as working in the *gig economy*.

The background to this is a culture of narcissism, built on the obsession with creating one's own image and finding self-confirmation in the eyes of others. This weakens the sovereignty of the self which reduces the ability to engage with others on a sustained basis. (https://magazynkontakt.pl/spoldzielczosc-reaktywacja/)

The most common type of anarchist motivation today is rebellion and the venting of frustration, which is not conducive to constructive or long-term activity.

There is no frontier anymore, there is a technosphere

From the perspective of us gathered here (the inhabitants of the Global North), the idea of 'returning to nature' should be forgotten. **Most of us are condemned to live in urban, or at best suburban, conditions. This means living in a technosphere - the technical infrastructure is already an indispensable life support system for us.** The apparent rejection of technology changes nothing - we live in an environment that is shaped and maintained technologically.

Our opportunity is to take control of the technosphere and directly manage the infrastructure on which our lives depend. And this we can only achieve through organised collective action.

An all-crisis instead of a revolution.

Observing the pace of the unfolding All-Crisis, driven by the twin forces of climate change and the depletion of strategic raw materials, we can expect that a global or even continental anti-capitalist revolution will not even have time to happen before the "end of the world as we know it". Revolts -- yes. Struggle against the state or capital -- sure. But the main factor in the destruction of capitalist civilisation is already clearly becoming the All-Crisis, the backslash of abused planet.

Consciously or not, all political forces are now calculating how best to survive in difficult (possibly catastrophic) times and how to ensure that the "only right" option inherits the Earth, or at least its most attractive pieces. **We and "our" people are destined to be trashed - to live an impoverished life, deprived of rights and prospects under the pretext of the effects of a catastrophe. In a degraded environment, under the control of sophisticated technical and sociotechnical systems. Until the cumulative effects of the All-Crisis drive the rulers and owners of Earth into protected enclaves - and we will inherit the "bad lands".**

And this is the scenario, for next several generations, that we should prepare for.

Inspiration for the here and now

Catalonia today - Cooperativa Integra Catalan

The CIC aims to create a self-governing post-capitalist society based on peer-to-peer principles, common goods and socio-environmental realities.

- *The co-operative as a project that practices economic and political self-governance with equal participation of all its members. Also because it takes the same legal form.*

- *Integrally, to bring together all the basic elements of the economy, such as production, consumption, financing and local currency. And at the same time,*

> *because it wants to integrate all the sectors of activity necessary for survival: food, housing, health, education, energy, transport...*

> - *Catalan, because it is organised and operates mainly within the territorial limits of Catalonia*

> - *The cooperative's legal form, specific to Spanish state law and regional Catalan legislation, is flexible and fits with the CIC's objectives."*

We use the co-op as a common tool to "hack the system"

The consumers' (users') co-operative and the service co-operative serve as a framework for conducting profit-making activities, managing members and the overall social capital of the CIC.

A tenants (housing) co-operative serves the management of properties.

These and other co-operatives together form a 'cap' that allows various initiatives to function with minimal interaction with the state bureaucracy. It also creates a refuge for those trapped in debt.

https://commonstransition.org/catalan-integral-cooperative/

Greece

"We live in a time when, because of the economic crisis and the efforts of capitalists to pass it on to the working class, unemployment and poverty are radically increasing, leaving thousands of people on the margins.

On the other hand, in the context of restrictive fiscal policies and the commercialisation of health, government spending in the vital health and welfare sector has been drastically reduced and the state is reducing its responsibility to cover even the most basic health needs for a large proportion of people in the country.

In a recent interview, the president of the National Academy of Public Health confessed that after the introduction of compulsory fees for patients, the percentage of the population in our country that does not have access to the health system has risen to 20%.

The five euros required for a visit to a doctor's office, payment in full of clinical costs and laboratory tests for the uninsured, and other payments with various participation costs for those with medical insurance, have essentially eliminated the right to free medical care.

For a poor, unemployed, severely and chronically ill person, this means the completion of his social exclusion, a rapid deterioration of his health situation, total destitution and finally premature death."

FairCoop

"A deep and comprehensive transformation of all parts of society, including its values and structure. A new, self-managing society is based on autonomy and the abolition of all forms of domination: the state, capitalism, patriarchy and all other forms that affect relations between people and with the environment. Conscious and strategic action is needed to compost outdated structures and recover those values and qualities that allow us to live in community. We see a new economic system as the most promising starting point for collective change. It offers people the opportunity to finally break out of the vicious circle of capitalist enslavement and its side effects, to find space for new ideas without borders and to enable a transition to a healthy life in balance with nature."

Consumer co-ops (mainly food co-ops)

Co-operatives are run by ordinary people and work for the benefit of ordinary people. They must be organised in such a way that their members can easily understand and control them. Therefore co-operatives must be organised and managed according to the KISS ("Keep It Simple Stupid") principle. The KISS principle states that simple, uncomplicated systems work better, so simplicity should be a key feature of any organisation and unnecessary complexity should be avoided. This principle should be applied to all aspects of a co-operative - its purpose, functioning, form of organisation, management structures, principles, practices and systems of operation.

*The most important organisational principles must be reflected in all rules of conduct adopted by the Board, and must be monitored and rigorously supervised on an ongoing basis. **All organisational rules must be based on sound fundamental principles and on a management system that ensures that the cooperative's adopted rules and practices are reflected in the day-to-day routine functioning of the organisation. The organisation must function on a daily basis in full compliance with all the fundamental organisational principles required of co-operatives.***

Solarpunk

- Solarpunk acknowledges and appreciates the historical influences that science fiction and real-world politics have had on each other.

- Solarpunk considers science fiction not only a form of entertainment but also a form of activism.

- ***Solarpunk wants to counter the problems of a dying planet, a huge gap between rich and poor or a society controlled by corporations. Not in the perspective of hundreds of years, but within the reach of our hands.***

- ***Solarpunk consists of a young maker culture, local solutions, small power grids and the creation of autonomous systems, not only technological but also ecological. This is how our love for the world manifests itself.***

- Solarpunk takes into account all cultures, religions, fitness levels, genders, gender roles and sexual identities.

- Solarpunk proposes a social evolution leading not only to tolerance but even wider acceptance and empathy.

<div align="right">

https://alxd.org/manifest-solarpunka-pl.html

</div>

It is not that easy...

The biggest problem in breaking free from capitalism is not capitalism. It is the defence mechanisms that each of us has developed in order to live under capitalism and not go completely mad. These same mechanisms at the same time block the "leap of faith" necessary for us to break away from our old habits and consciously form new ones within ourselves.

There is no need to fight against it, especially since no one can guarantee the success of our efforts. Therefore, instead of taking a leap of faith, we can take small steps: single practical actions, gradually building confidence in ourselves, in our fellow travellers and in the very process we are co-creating.

Everyone does as much and at a pace that is comfortable for them. There are no ideals to live up to. There are only our own potentials, which we can realise in the community. There is a pragmatic "auto-sociotherapy" that must be tailored to each individual.

The advantage of self-organisation is that we have a support network, collective knowledge, experience and intelligence at our disposal. Nobody has to go through this alone!

Our aim will be to create an environment in which cooperation is the dominant behaviour and trust is the normal state.

<div align="right">

https://sin.github.io/trust/

</div>

Money

The reductive narrative of capitalism, which is now an object of almost religious worship, both by its supporters and opponents, has introduced and cemented price as the determinant of value. Leaving aside the shortcomings of credit money as it is now widely circulated, the very idea of "*it's worth as much as someone pays for it*" *sits* in *our* brains as a great truth or antitruth.

This **fetishisation of money, giving it the characteristics of either absolute evil or absolute good, is a major obstacle to cooperative 'realpolitik'.** One of the most daring (and partially successful) attempts to overcome this was the launch of a cooperative global cryptocurrency, FairCoin. Despite its incomplete success, it is an important lesson worth learning.

<div align="right">

https://wiki.fair.coop/en:faircoin:start

</div>

Authority

Anarchism was born with a cry of protest against power. This makes power and its dynamics the second fetish of anarchist thinking, next to money. Much energy has been devoted to developing various methods of non-hierarchical self-government and today we have a whole range of solutions. The difficulty lies rather in how to discern this wealth and how to assess which method will be appropriate for a given community.

As always, this requires calm and deliberate testing of successive solutions, with stops to learn from successive attempts. **Many valuable things have been developed in non-anarchist environments, such as ietf.org (***rough consensus and running code***) and radical post-hippie movements (social permaculture).**

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rough_consensus

Eternal game with the state

We are accustomed to operating "in the context" of the State. It is a structure of oppression, but it is also the "Game Master", regulating -- albeit biased and unfairly, but rather predictably -- the environment in which we operate.

We play games with it, trying to 'hack the system' and get it to 'drift' in our favour, or we confront it by agitating wider groups to take up protests or revolts.

But only few of us, and usually not for long, are able to reject all interaction with the state, as Abramowski postulated...

https://pl.wikisource.org/wiki/Ustawa_stowarzyszenia_%E2%80%9EKomuna%E2%80%9D/ca%C5%82o%C5%9B%C4%87

TePeWu model

The Society for Mutual Aid and Solidarity Economy is still more a concept than an implementation (see below). Its aim is to develop and test a Polish equivalent (but not a copy) of the Catalan integral cooperatives. In addition to local specificities, it is intended to take into account the increasing intensity of the All-Crisis, and especially the progressive degradation of technical and social infrastructure.

The essence of TePeW is the gradual creation of a community that -- as in Catalonia -- would meet its needs collectively, acting as an organised economic and political force in the face of the capitalist environment.

Organisationally, it is supposed to be an association, statutorily taking care of its members and financing this care, among other things, from its business activities. In the Polish legal reality this formula gives the widest room for manoeuvre.

Mosaic method

Of course, it is not possible to introduce such a revolutionary solution simultaneously from the bottom up and on a large scale. That is why we have used the mosaic method, in which we test partial initiatives, designed in the spirit of TePeWu. If these attract the right people and demonstrate sustainability, the pool of people and energy from which TePeWu will then grow will expand.

It is a working assumption that with 5 people seriously involved it will be possible to move on to the next stage -- the official constitution of TePeW. I invite everyone to take part in this!

Workshops

I have conducted a number of (mainly online) workshops and training courses in 'alternative technologies' over the past year. These provide a good basis for future educational, service and production activities. I am waiting for funding applications for more such projects to be processed. I am preparing two field projects in the spring - gardening and construction. Each is conceived as a future piece of the big TePeWu puzzle.

TePeWu Dev

With the help of friendly hacktivists, we have launched an experimental server where we are testing services for activist groups. The aim is to "produce" typical tool configurations for different types of grassroots activity and put them in the hands of interested people. At the moment I have three people working on it, and there is enough space for at least another five. :-)

Ultimately, TePeWu Dev may become a cooperative that creates and maintains telecommunications and other infrastructure for free communities, especially for those engaged in active freedom and anti-capitalist activities.

At the moment the first info-anarchist activities are being organised around TePeWu Dev.

https://wiki.tepewu.dev

Long Table

The Long Table was the first successful initiative under TePeWu. It proved useful during pandemics, gave rise to two 'branches' of development and perhaps another, more ambitious urban food security project will build on it.

Długi Stół — Żywnościowa Sieć Pomocy Wzajemnej

Jesteśmy **oddolną i nieformalną** inicjatywą osób **poszkodowanych przez kryzys ekonomiczny**

- **zdobywamy świeżą żywność**,
- **przetwarzamy ją** domowymi sposobami,
- **tworzymy wspólne zapasy** przetworów „na czarną godzinę".

Nadwyżki przetworów przekazujemy jako pomoc solidarnościową dla potrzebujących spoza sieci. Działając w duchu **Zero Waste**, obierki i inne odpadki przekazujemy ogrodom społecznym i działkowym, a w zamian otrzymujemy nadwyżki z ichniejszych plonów.
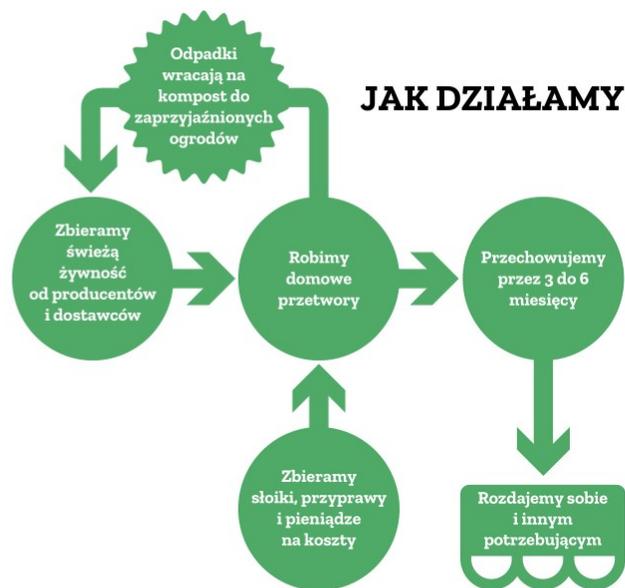
Działamy w tej chwili w Poznaniu, na Łazarzu i Wildzie. W miarę, jak będzie przybywać chętnych, mamy nadzieję uruchamiać kolejne grupy w innych dzielnicach i miejscowościach. Zależy nam, żeby każdy długi stół łączył ludzi lokalnie, bez centralizacji.

Zarejestrowaliśmy **publiczną zbiórkę żywności** (2020/1606/KS), która obejmuje swoim zasięgiem całą Wielkopolskę.

dlugistol.pl · dlugistol@pm.me · t.me/DS_public · FB: @DlugiStol2020

JAK DZIAŁAMY

Odpadki wracają na kompost do zaprzyjaźnionych ogrodów → Zbieramy świeżą żywność od producentów i dostawców → Robimy domowe przetwory → Przechowujemy przez 3 do 6 miesięcy → Rozdajemy sobie i innym potrzebującym ← Zbieramy słoiki, przyprawy i pieniądze na koszty

CHCESZ DOŁĄCZYĆ I POMÓC? ZAPRASZAMY!

Długi Stół — Żywnościowa Sieć Pomocy Wzajemnej

dlugistol.pl · dlugistol@pm.me · t.me/DS_public · FB: @DlugiStol2020

And what next?

In short: *let's get on with it.*

We know that something has to be done, because we are facing worsening living conditions, the group of excluded people is widening, and the human face of capitalism and the state is rotting and flaking off the bone.
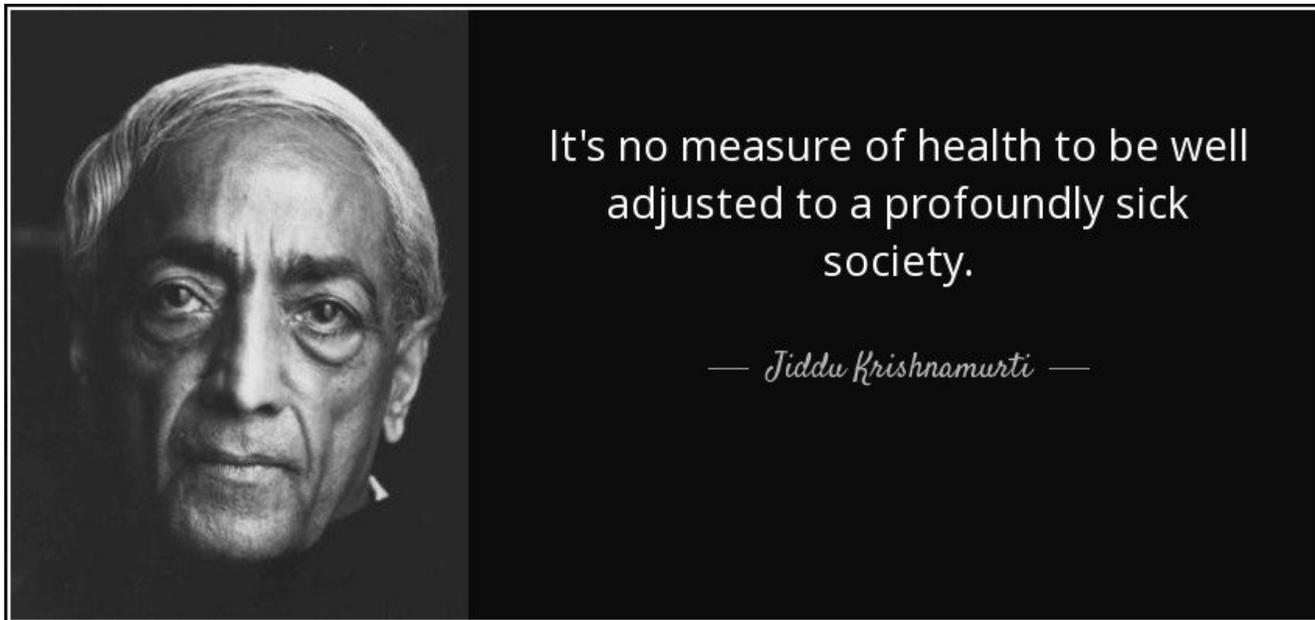
We know what economic self-organisation initiatives have been and are like in the world and in Poland.

We know what challenges lie ahead, internally and externally.

All that remains is to make a decision. And start doing.

What did we say to each other online?

On 6 February 2021, we met in about 10 people for an online conversation on the topic described in this article. You can <u>listen to the </u>audio recording <u>here. </u>

It's no measure of health to be well adjusted to a profoundly sick society.

— *Jiddu Krishnamurti* —

Comments from one of the participants

- *Conversations are fun, they activate me more and have a lower entry threshold than reading texts.*

- *This is a much better place to exchange ideas than feebook comments.*

- *I liked the relaxed format, however I found the incitement to discussion a little lacking. Perhaps a literal bit more of a plan and agenda and/or set of questions to stimulate discussion would have been useful.*

- *Of course it could have been a simple problem of natural shyness but, for example, L. had very valuable comments and I got the sense that she was holding back, perhaps others were too, even more so.*

- *I wonder if there was a lack of summary but the nature of the discourse may preclude it or it may be me who expects clear answers.*

- *I think I missed out on outlining what economic self-organisation is, and there was confusion between the two terms in the discussion. Perhaps in addition to the questions, it might be worth doing a short speech and outlining the topic of discussion despite the introduction?*

Main points of discussion

Captured by me, grouped and annotated by me

"*I am not a specialist*".	Anarchism requires participation. If we talk about the political organisation of our lives, we cannot put it "in the hands" of specialists. We need to become experts ourselves on our individual and social lives.
Theory of labour self-organisation. Worker self-organisation, trade unions.	Social self-organisation is a wider area than labour relations. It also includes the direct social satisfaction of our needs, through cooperation (e.g. freeganism, community gardens) and mutual aid.
After the collapse of the USSR, there is no benchmark/benchmark.	Worse still, a false dualism prevailed, recognising only two (equally mythical) ideological and economic orders: capitalism and communism, represented by the corporation and the state. The social order, represented by self-governing co-operatives, was relegated to ideological oblivion.
None of us wants to be 'marginalised'.	More and more people have already dropped out of the system, they just do not know it yet. Even more will fall out in the next year or two. To be excluded by capitalism is not necessarily derogatory - but to recognise it, of course, is to deny all the brainwashing we have been subjected to since at least 1990.
Something shitty has to happen	Unimaginably shitty things happen every day. It is up to our political and moral consciousness **how close to us these things have to happen in** order to influence our life decisions.
Foodles, scotches, trade unions	These are all elements of our game with the state and with capital. They are not the solution to the problem, but the expression of our resistance and at the same time
We have to work within capitalism.	Capitalism has virtually become an ideological monoculture on a planetary scale. We are unable to change it - but we do not need to change it. A sufficiently ambitious practical goal is to create capitalism-free zones capable of surviving the impacts of an all-out crisis and multiplying to form a safety net for the 'surplus population'.
It is impossible to build anything big.	For a number of reasons, some of which I will discuss in the next article, we do not need to build large structures. We need structures that are "human-sized", easy to replicate and willing to cooperate in a federated economic and social network.

In addition to the above, quite a few questions and issues were raised in the conversation that deserve to be treated in more depth. I will address them someday, I hope. Thank you all for your participation in the discussion, your comments and your spiritual support. See you in a better world!

Petros, Poznan, 9.02.2021