



The Complete Guide to Forming Communities

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A Brief History of Mutual Aid

“The mutual-aid tendency in man has so remote an origin, and is so deeply interwoven with all the past evolution of the human race, that it has been maintained by mankind up to the present time, notwithstanding all vicissitudes of history.”

Peter Kropotkin Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution

Anthropology typically credits our species’ success to our large brains and ability to make tools, but arguably our greatest survival strategy has been our ability to co-operate and work together.

The logic is simple. A lone individual in the wilderness can survive for a time, but the slightest injury or illness, and that individual will quickly succumb to the elements, starvation, or predators.

A family grouping offered better odds of survival, but with the addition of offspring, the duties and responsibilities of the founding pair bond are increased and their resources stretched, and, as with all defenses that are stretched, they become more vulnerable to the same dangers as a lone individual.

The first and most effective survival strategy for our species was the formation of tribal groups. Such groupings pooled their resources, to help insure nourishment, shelter, and defense against predators. A few writers have postulated that the human brain is hard-wired towards tribalism due to its evolutionary advantages.¹



Tribes

Tribes were the first mutual aid societies.

The social structure of a tribe can vary greatly, but, due to the small size of customary tribes, social life involves a relatively undifferentiated role structure, with few significant political or economic distinctions between individuals.

Traditional tribal societies tend to have a Chief or Headman also known as the Big Man, but their authority was always subject to the approval of the rest of the tribe especially the tribal elders.

The ‘Big Man’ collected many of the resources from the tribe, but rather than keep it all for himself, a portion was stored so that it could be distributed to the tribe during times of drought, or if the hunt failed provide meat. He was also expected to redistribute those resources to feed work parties for village construction projects, hold numerous feasts and festivals where everyone would share in the food and which helped group bonding.

We can also see in the tribal structure the origins of government, and why government was a good idea. In this scenario, an authority figure who has earned the trust of the community oversees overseeing the collection and storage of surplus resources, such as grain, corn, smoked fish, honey etc.

Working in teams and communities is a force multiplier that, under normal conditions, produces surplus. This surplus is pooled in order to sustain the community during difficult conditions. Some of the surplus is used for projects that would benefit the community, such as digging wells, building fences for livestock, or walls for defense.

The tribal organization is often cited as an ideal system that validates such political systems as socialism and communism. However, as we shall see later in this chapter, such political systems have been a disaster.

The problem lies in the fact that the tribal system is not scalable. Just because a system works with a group of a hundred people, does not mean it will work with thousands, or millions of people.

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There are three reasons a utopian tribal structure cannot work on a large scale. The first is trust. In a tribal society, members of the tribe choose leaders because they all know that person intimately. They have worked together, shared together and lived together. Their trust is based on firsthand knowledge. Their leaders have earned the trust of their fellow tribesmen.

In a nation state, most citizens would never have spent any time with, let alone even met in-person, their leaders. It would be impossible for citizens to develop trust and confidence in any political leader without direct experience. That so many do is a fault of our species that can perceive abstractions as reality. In a nation state we must base our trust in what such leaders say in public. Thus, such a system guarantees that all leaders will be liars at best, or more likely psychopaths.

Second, in a tribe, all members would have access to the 'Head Man' and council of elders, to ask for help, vent their grievances, or offer solutions.

In a nation state, it would be ludicrous to imagine that an ordinary citizen would be able to have a one-on-one talk with any political official. This means that it is unlikely, if not impossible, that a nation state would reflect the will of the people, and thus the people would have no influence on the way the state is run.

Finally, in a tribal society, should the leadership be incompetent, or making decisions that the tribe is in vast opposition to, they could remove their leaders from power in a day.

In a nation state, removing leaders is a long and drawn out process requiring years, assuming that the leaders would be willing to relinquish power in the first place. Thus, the damage such governments do cannot be prevented or remedied quickly.

This guide includes the best lessons gleaned from the study of tribal societies.

Similar to tribal organizations, the following community plans are based on undifferentiated roles with no hierarchy. Certain individuals will have a greater affinity and ability for fulfilling certain roles within the tribe, and their expertise may be deferred to in situations where decisions between the tribal members are at a stalemate. However, there is no hierarchy that must be obeyed.

In addition to kinship and extended family relations, another important factor to the formation of a tribe is shared values, customs, and ideology.

This is a crucial factor to social cohesion and any attempt at forming a community would need to ensure that members, if not sharing kinship, should at least share the same values and ideology. Indeed, shared ideology forms stronger bonds than kinship as anyone from a large family can tell you.

In times of social collapse, evolutionary instincts will drive people to form tribal association again for mutual survival. Those that cannot find a tribe to belong to, or find one too late, will find it much more difficult to survive.

A key advantage to forming a group for mutual aid, is that should a major disaster occur, a group of people that already have a social structure, mutual trust, and some training and equipment will be better able to survive and take advantage of fleeting opportunities, while other people are scrambling to survive themselves.



North Creake Abbey, England

Monasteries

Probably the second oldest forms of mutual aid society are monasteries. Verifiable remains of monasteries date back five thousand years and are found the world over.

Monasteries typically were located away from major population centers. This offered some advantage by being separated from the corruption and machinations of the ruling classes. This enabled them to survive much of the social destruction that occurred between dynasties.

Most monasteries were also self-sufficient and either managed their own farms or engaged in agribusinesses such as wine and cheese making with which they could trade and barter for food and equipment with surrounding farmers and tradesmen in addition to collecting alms.

The disadvantage was also their isolation, which made them vulnerable to attack by invading armies and organized bands of bandits.

In England, starting in 793, monasteries were a favoured target of Viking raiders due to the riches that they hoarded. The monks' religious standing protected them to some degree from local governments and gangs, but the Vikings had no religious inhibitions and the monasteries' isolation made them easy and lucrative targets.

Some monastic orders found a defense against possible predation by training their monks in military arts.

Most famous is the Shaolin Monks of China (founded in 464 AD) who became renowned and feared for their martial arts skills. Their fearsome reputation no doubt helped dissuade criminal gangs from plundering their temple although they were ransacked and much of the temple destroyed by bandits during the Red Turban Rebellion in the 14th century.

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When foreign Manchu tribesmen invaded China and founded the Qing dynasty, the Shaolin monks started to get a reputation for anti-government sentiments. Much like a modern-day patriot or resistance movement, the government viewed the monks with suspicion and kept a watchful eye on their activities.

Sometime in the 1600's, (the exact date is sketchy) believing the monks were actively involved in aiding anti-government rebels, the Qing forces sacked the monastery. This effectively destroyed the temple's fighting force and the temple fell into ruin with only a few monks remaining. In the early 18th century, the government of the Qing Dynasty patronized and restored the temple, though it never regained its former glory.

Some Monastic orders in Japan held an equally fearsome reputation. In the 11th century, the warrior monks known as *Yamabushi* formed large monastic communities in the mountains surrounding the capital of Kyoto. Over time, their ranks increased, and their power grew to the point that each monastery maintained a private army. From time to time, these monk armies would march into the capital to demand favors and concessions from the emperor, who by this time had become merely a figurehead.

In the west, the Knights Templar was another example of a monastic order that trained for battle.

Founded in 1119 under auspices of protecting pilgrims on their pilgrimage to the Holy Lands, the Knights Templar quickly gained a reputation for martial prowess.

Like Japan's *Yamabushi*, the Order of the Templars grew rapidly and were able to field whole battalions of fighting monks. One of their most famous victories was in 1177 during the Battle of Montgisard, where some 500 Templar knights helped several thousand infantry to defeat Saladin's army of more than 26,000 soldiers.

The major disadvantage of being isolated away from government centers could be overcome by having a strong defensive force trained in military strategy and combat. Such orders all quickly gained much power and influence over their surrounding areas. However, in each of the above-cited examples, their downfall came when they became too prominent, and attracted too much attention from their own governments that in each case, attacked and destroyed the orders.

Monasteries and their female equivalent, nunneries, were single sex and so kinship did not play a role in maintaining loyalties and social cohesion. Instead it was the shared ideology of religious beliefs that provided the common purpose of such organizations

For Survivalists and Preppers who are intending to organize a retreat and homesteading location to survive long-term social collapse, the examples of monastic systems can offer valuable lessons.

Defensive fortifications, storage and maintenance of weaponry and training of members in military skills are paramount.

The key caveat is that these preparations and training should be kept secret, hidden, camouflaged, and under the radar.



Shaker Community Meetinghouse

Religious and Spiritual Communes

A commune, from the Latin word *Communia*, meaning a large gathering of people sharing a common life is an intentional community of people living together, sharing common interests, property, possessions, resources, and, in some communes, work, income and assets.

Probably the most defining difference between a monastery and a religious commune is that communes allow for both sexes and children. Monasteries' were single sex and, at least in theory, celibate. Religious communes were not.

In addition to the communal economy, consensus decision-making, non-hierarchical structures and ecological living have become important core principles for many communes. Whereas monasteries have a hierarchal church structure of authority

The functions and purposes of communes were essentially no different from farming communities and villages of times past.

Some of the earliest examples of religious communes date back to 16th century with the founding of such groups as the Hutterites founded by Jakob Hutter in 1536 who, like the Amish and Mennonites, trace their roots to the Radical Reformation of the 16th century.

Many of these have survived into the modern age with branch communities all over the world.

While these religious communes centered on agrarian production, most entered business and manufacturing as well.

The Shakers, a religious sect, maintained one of the longest and most successful experiments in communal living in the United States. It was founded by Mother Ann Lee in Manchester, England. She and a group of followers settled in Watervliet, New York in 1776. By the mid-19th century, the sect grew

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to over 6,000 members living in 18 major communities, as well as 6 shorter lived ones. Although their numbers began a steady decline after the Civil War, one Shaker community remains active today in Sabbath Day Lake, Maine.

Shaker communities ran farms using the latest scientific methods in agriculture. They raised most of their own food, so farming, and preserving the produce required to feed them through the winter, had to be priorities. It was reported that their livestock were fat and healthy, and their barns were commended for convenience and efficiency.

Shakers also ran a variety of businesses to support their communities. Many Shaker villages had their own tanneries, sold baskets, brushes, bonnets, brooms, fancy goods, and homespun fabric that were known for their high quality. They were also famous for their medicinal herbs, garden seeds from the Shaker Seed Company, applesauce, and knitted garments.

Another such example was The Oneida Community, a commune that lasted from 1848 to 1881 in Oneida, New York. In addition to farming, the community began the manufacturing of silverware in 1877. Secondary industries included the manufacture of leather travel bags, the weaving of palm frond hats, the construction of rustic garden furniture, and game traps.

The Oneida Community dissolved in 1881, though several members incorporated to continue running the silverware business which exists today as Oneida Limited.

Key lessons learned from the religious/spiritual communes are that food self-sufficiency, combined with running manufacturing workshops and small businesses, provided them with economic independence.

In addition, none of the communes became militant like some of the monastic orders, and yet managed to survive through the American Civil War, though many were raided by passing armies and bandits. This is no doubt partly due to these groups all being devoted pacifists.

Finally, the early American communes were anti-slavery and did much to buy and free slaves and assist in their escape via the Underground Railroad. Many also took in orphans and transients, and women were universally treated as equals and many played key roles in the women's' emancipation movements.

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Holodomor Mass Starvation, Ukraine 1932–1933

Socialist Communes

The religious and spiritual communes are often regarded as attempts to create utopian societies and their success has inspired many thinkers and philosophers to try to design ideal social organizations that people could live happily and peacefully under.

The first to apply political ideology to the communal model were communists, left-wing socialists, and anarchists. These groups saw the Commune as a model for the liberated society that will come after the masses are liberated from capitalism, a society based on participatory democracy from the grass roots up.

In Marxist theory, the commune is a form of political organization for the proletariat, sort of poor man's parliament and which supported the communist principle of collectivism.

The communist version of communes was more political and focused on social organization. Like many of the religious communes, socialist communes were also organized around an industry or farming in accordance to the communist principle that the people should control of the means of production rather than an oligarchy.

Despite the lofty ideals and common-sense principles of a communal society, the reality put into practise under the socialists was a different animal altogether.

Under Communism in Russia, farming communities were forced to form collectivist communes under the pretext of freeing the workers from landlords and improving production. The result was the famine of 1932–1933 in which estimates of the number of people starved to death range from 5.5 to 8 million, with some estimates going even higher.

In 1958 in China, Mao Tse-tung, apparently oblivious to the Russian example, likewise undertook one of the most ambitious and, in terms of the sheer number of people involved, staggering social experiments in modern times: the drive to bring the entire rural population of China into huge monolithic units called The Peoples' Communes. Under the lofty title of The Great Leap Forward, Mao forced all agricultural communities to adopt a collectivist commune system.

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Within a year, China was devastated by a famine that lasted three years and was responsible for between 15 to 36 million deaths.

Clearly, socialist attempts at communal living were unmitigated human disasters. It is difficult to determine whether these were genuine attempts at creating utopian societies, or merely that the noble ideals of communal societies were used as the pretext and cover for totalitarian control and mass murder. But, since the religious and spiritual communes tended to be so successful, proving the social model was workable, one must conclude the socialists never had any intention of creating a utopia.

The key lesson from socialist communism is that while small communes formed through the free and willing participation of its members can succeed, forcing large numbers of people into a communal system by a political hierarchical government guarantees disaster.



The Rocky Neck Art Colony, 1915, Gloucester, MA

Hippy and Artist Communes

Communes had a brief resurgence in popularity in the 1960s' and 70's with the Hippy and Back-to-the-Earth movements.

The communes of this time had three main characteristics: first, egalitarianism – that communes specifically rejected hierarchy or graduations of social status as being necessary to social order.

Second, human scale – that members of some communes saw the scale of society as it was then organised as being too industrialised (or factory sized) and therefore unsympathetic to human dimensions.¹

And third, that communes were consciously anti-bureaucratic.

Many communes followed core principles: such as

1. Live and work together
2. Have a communal economy, i.e. common finances and common property (land, buildings, means of production)
3. Have communal decision-making, usually consensus decision making
4. Try to reduce hierarchy and hierarchical structures
5. Have communalisation of housework, childcare and other communal tasks
6. Have equality between women and men
7. Have low ecological footprints through sharing and saving resources

¹ Basically, keeping membership numbers low, reflecting the lesson of low density organizations we discussed in tribes.

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Each hippie commune was different: some were deeply religious communities while others were completely secular. Drug use was rampant on some hippie communes and forbidden on others. Some were strictly self-sufficient agrarian societies, but other hippie communes participated in capitalism—owning businesses such as selling music tapes and arts and crafts. There was no “one-size fits all” model, and each hippie commune developed its own culture, rules, and personality over time.

By the 1980s, the original fascination surrounding hippie communes had largely faded, and they began dropping off the map, while a few continue to limp along today.

The dissolution of the hippie communes usually came about for two reasons.

The first was due to internal squabbles and personality conflicts. Typically, cliques would form among members that would be on opposite sides in decision-making and would eventually end in feuds and arguments. Finally, core members would leave, and the remaining members would struggle on for a few years before they too abandoned the whole idea.

The second reason is their popularity. Those communes that were initially successful, and had open memberships, became more widely known which attracted numerous potential members. Many of these new recruits however, had social problems, were addicts, or drifters, and those whose motivation for joining had more to do with finding a free ride than utopian ideals.

As so often happens, a few dedicated members would work to support the rest, but without the equal effort and participation of all members, the community becomes unsustainable and inevitably ends in collapse.

This same pattern is evident in our current society where the expensive salaries and benefit packages of bureaucrats and government employees, along with welfare payments to the underprivileged, are all paid for by an increasingly shrinking middle class. This is equally unsustainable and likewise headed for collapse.

Similar in ideology and often identified as hippie communes were the artists' communes. These were similar in structure and operation as most communes throughout history, but the focus of their efforts was on creating art rather than farming or manufacturing.

One example was Drop City, a counterculture artists' community that formed in southern Colorado in 1965. Abandoned by the early 1970s, it became known as the first rural hippie commune.

In the 1960s and 1970s art communes such as Friedrichshof also known as the Aktionsanalytische Organisation flourished. Creative art was enthusiastically produced within such groups, which became gathering points for the counterculture movement.

While artists' communes are identified with the hippie movement of the 60's and 70's the concept dates back much earlier. In the 19th and early 20th century they were called Art Colonies.

It is estimated that between 1830 and 1914 some 3000 professional artists participated in a mass movement away from urban centres into the countryside, residing for varying lengths of time in over 80 communities.

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An art colony or artists' colony is a place where creative practitioners live and interact with one another. Artists are often invited or selected through a formal process, for a residency from a few weeks to over a year.

Artists' colonies were run according to three types of organizations:

- Villages with transient and annually fluctuating populations of artists. Such as painters who visited for just a single summer season.
- Villages with a semi-permanent mix of visiting and resident artists. Some artists would live year-round in shared or private dwellings, with guest rooms or cabins for visiting artists.
- Villages in which a largely stable group of artists decided to settle permanently whereby artists bought or built their own houses and studios.

Today's art communes are a mix of artists, drifters, collectivists, activists, Dadaists, and hangers on. Such groups are more politically and ideologically diverse than their mid-20th century counterparts. Most offer the benefits of time, space, and refuge from the usual workaday world.

Lessons learned from the hippie and artist's communes are that while opening the doors to your community to anyone and everyone is an idealistic and egalitarian sentiment, it always ends in disaster.

The artists colonies were more successful because they screened their members before acceptance. Typically, anyone wishing to join such a community needed to show their 'body of work' which in effect proved, not only that one had talent, but that one could actually work to create something thus weeding out those who could talk a good game but actually produced nothing themselves.

For this reason, in order to weed out undesirable elements, this plan recommends that regardless of what type of community you form potential members should be required to provide a history or portfolio, so to speak, of past works and skills, and/or undertake some prerequisite training such as enrolling in, and passing a standard First Aid and CPR program, or passing a firearms safety course, or taking a self defense course.

If a potential member cannot do this on his or her own, then they are not likely to provide any value to the community.



Odd Fellows Lodge, 1919

Mutual Aid Societies

Mutual aid societies have been around as long as monasteries. In Roman times, they were called Colleges, in medieval times they were called Guilds, in China they were called *Tongs*

Medieval guilds were an early basis for many Western mutual benefit societies. A guild charter document from 1200 states:

"To become a Guildsman it was necessary to pay certain initiation fees,..(and to take) an oath of fealty to the fraternity, swearing to observe its laws, to uphold its privileges, not to divulge its counsels, to obey its officers, and not to aid any non-guildsman under cover of the newly-acquired 'freedom.'" C Gross, *The Gild Merchant*, 1927

During the last couple of centuries, mutual aid societies were known as Benevolent Societies, Fraternal Lodges, and Service Clubs.

While communes tended to be established in rural areas and focused on agrarian production, Mutual Aid societies tended to be urban and focused on trades and industries.

Before the modern era, governments did not provide social services to the poor, working, and middle classes during either personal or national emergencies. Communities organized to provide such services themselves through the formation of Mutual Aid Societies. Members of these organizations paid a small monthly membership fee and in return received such services as medical care, disability funds, emergency food and shelter, retirement and funeral costs, and even business loans.

Mutual aid was one of the cornerstones of social welfare in the United States until the early 20th century. The fraternal or friendly societies played a leading role in providing the social services we expect from governments and insurance companies today.

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It is estimated that one-third of adult American males belonged to lodges in 1910. There was a fraternal organization that provided for virtually every major service of the modern welfare state including orphanages, hospitals, job exchanges, homes for the elderly, unemployment insurance, health insurance, pensions and scholarship programs.

But societies also gave benefits that were much less quantifiable. By joining a lodge, an initiate adopted, at least implicitly, a set of survival values.

In the 1902 book: *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution*, author Peter Kropotkinⁱⁱ aptly summarizes the history and importance of these associations, as follows.

“Mutual aid societies predate most functions of the modern state. They're at least as old as armies, but their mission is life, not death. For millennia, people have banded together to provide each other with health care, pensions, unemployment aid, investment capital, buying power, aid to the poor, disaster relief, old age care, child care, culture, entertainment, political efficacy, education, food, shelter and livelihoods.

Benefits are not necessarily monetary and may include services and social activities. Members of mutual aid societies have a democratic voice in the organization and have an equal opportunity to receive benefits, depending on their needs and the needs of others.”

The fraternal societies of the 18th to early 20th centuries called themselves by such funny names as: The Odd Fellows, the Fraternal Order of Eagles, the Knights of Pythias, the Loyal Order of Moose, the Household of Ruth, and the International Order of Twelve Knights.

They observed quasi-mystical rituals and customs, greeted each other with secret handshakes and were often known for their bizarre headgear that included antlers, fezzes, and pseudo-Native American headdresses.

Their defining features were “an autonomous system of lodges, a democratic form of internal government, a ritual, and the provision of mutual aid for members and their families. Fraternal orders were astonishingly diverse, self-selecting their members by geography, ethnicity, religion, or, like the Odd Fellows, nearly no criteria at all except “good character.”

Unlike the religious and hippie communes, the members of the fraternal orders were not anarchists. The orders tended to be organized in a rigidly hierarchical way, and their leaders loved to boast of their capitalist idealism and denounce radicals and revolutionaries.

Anarchists have always projected mutual aid as the basic organizing principle of a non-hierarchical, non-authoritarian society. By contrast the fraternal orders embraced the capitalist structure that cut across classes and gave immigrants and people of color a tool for advancing themselves when government and the capitalist system were both geared to keep them in their place.

Contrary to the major problems of fraud encountered in contemporary government-based welfare programs, the early American versions of mutual aid societies maintained an ethical organization by policing their own members to ensure benefits went to those who were legitimately in need. Such societies were also strict in their membership, permitting admittance not only by character but also by sex

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and race. However, this did not stop people of all demographics from starting mutual aid societies. There were societies for men, women, African Americans, Hispanics, Polish, German, Jewish, and others.

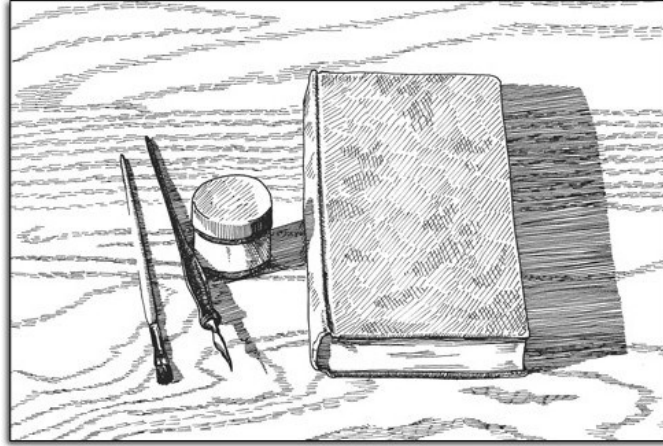
Historians tend to point to the Depression as the era of decline of the fraternal orders, although some continued to provide the same set of benefits to a dwindling number of members into the 1960s. Many were forced to raise their dues, leaving jobless members unable to pay—even though all the biggest orders found ways not to cut benefits.²

Government-run social programs, especially Social Security, unemployment insurance and Aid to Families with Dependent Children, diminished the need for independent mutual aid societies. And when the government started providing tax credits for employers to create pension and health benefit plans for their workers, many companies jumped at the offer since it meant they could effectively defer a portion of workers' wages until after they retired.

With the rise of big government and the welfare state, these old societies were effectively legislated out of existence. However, we currently face an undeniable decline in social and medical services, emergency services that quickly become overwhelmed by even minor natural disasters, an increasing financial depression, and the very real possibility of a social breakdown.

Unless we are somehow able to reverse the decline of western civilization, the only remaining solution to these threats is to resurrect the concept of the mutual aid societies wherein we rely on one another for emergency assistance rather than an impersonal and uncaring government bureaucracy that is increasingly unable to provide such assistance.

² As recently as 1920, over one quarter of all adult Americans were members of fraternal societies



The Lessons of History

Civilizations have come and gone over the past six thousand years, yet people have survived it all. Mighty empires have risen and flourished then disappeared completely without a trace. From catastrophic natural disasters to war and revolutions to plagues and pestilence, people have lived through it all.

By examining history, we can discover which survival strategies were successful and which were not. Clearly, the prime strategy to survival for humans is cooperation.

One of the key features of these groups is that they are relatively small and intimate. It is an unspoken assumption that because we live in cities and nations, that we are still part of a cooperative system - we are not.

Mutual aid works because members know and trust each other. Under a national government, most citizens neither know, have met, nor trust the people in charge of operating the system.

In a mutual aid group, everyone has an equal say in how the group should be run, what resources are allocated to where, and what activities the group should engage in. Under our current 'democratic' form of government, we are given a vote, once every four or more years. However, the reality is these voting rights mean nothing. We are never asked to vote on how much taxes we wish to pay, where the government spends our money, not even such life and death decisions as whether we should go to war.

One would think that because of the tremendous benefit that mutual aid groups can provide to societies that government would encourage and support the formation of such groups, but the opposite is true.

Central governments have from the beginning persecuted and tried to destroy all forms of mutual aid societies.

Monasteries were more often attacked and plundered by government forces than by roving gangs of bandits. Most famous is the looting and destruction of Catholic abbeys by Henry the VIII, but he was by no means the first, nor last, of hundreds of European kings and emperors to prey upon the rich holdings that monastic institutions invariably acquired.

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Rural villages were also targeted by their governments. The current theory is that in Western Europe, the Village System died out by a natural death, because the communal possession of the soil was found inconsistent with the modern requirements of agriculture. However, the truth is that nowhere did the village community disappear of its own accord; everywhere, on the contrary, it took the ruling classes several centuries of persistent but not always successful efforts to abolish it and to confiscate the communal lands.

Religious and spiritual communes have always aroused government suspicion and attacked and disbanded them where possible. Even the harmless fraternal brotherhoods and friendly societies were legislated out of existence.

With all the social benefits they provide society, why would a central government want to persecute mutual aid communities?

The answer is that all mutual aid communities are essentially anarchist in ideology.

The power that is concentrated in a government will always and everywhere, attract the worst type of people, the type of people that should never have power, the psychopaths.

Therefore, governments have always been rife with greed and corruption and will eventually destroy itself, either through revolution, or through war.

When psychopaths are running government, their dream is to enslave the rest of humanity. This is why the age of any political structure can be judged by the degree of tyranny it imposes. The longer a ruler has been around, the more tyrannical he becomes. The same holds true for states.

The word Anarchy has received much negative innuendo. This was intentional. Most people believe Anarchists are terrorists, violent, and advocating for destruction and chaos. Police and agent provocateurs routinely dress in black masks and run around smashing windows and setting fires during peaceful protests and the media tells us they are anarchists. Some fools no doubt believe that emulating such violent behaviour likewise makes them anarchists. However, this is the image the government wants you to believe.

Anarchism is in fact merely a political philosophy that advocates self-governed societies with voluntary institutions based on the principles of non-aggression and non-hierarchical free association.

This describes perfectly the structure of tribes, villages, communes and mutual aid societies.

Anarchism holds the state to be undesirable, unnecessary, or harmful and entails opposing authority or hierarchical organisation in the conduct of human relations, including, but not limited to, the state system.

It is no surprise that governments, states, and the empires have always persecuted institutions that value anarchist ideals.

Those of us currently living in the west are taxed at a rate approaching, if not surpassing, 80 percent.ⁱⁱⁱ That means for 10 months of the year each of us works for nothing, every penny going to the government.

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The difference between our current situation and that of slaves is that slave owners provided food and shelter for their slaves. We are allowed two months to earn enough money to pay for our own food and shelter.

Governments and nations are essentially, and have always been, nothing more than tax farms. These tax farms work best when the cattle have as little choice and say in decision making as possible.

Anarchy and its practical application, the mutual aid community are the antithesis of the current political structure.

Creating a mutual aid community is not only the most effective strategy to survive almost any social and natural disaster; it is also the most effective tool to use against an increasingly tyrannical central government.

In addition, depending on what type of legal entity you plan on creating for your group, there are even ways of reducing the amount of taxes members and their organization will have to pay.

It is because of every government's fear and loathing of mutual aid communities that I advise, those wishing to form such a group, do so under a false front. Choose a name and charter that cannot be easily defined.

That is why I believe founding a group under the Emergency and Disaster Response moniker to be one of the most effective since, being outwardly non-religious and apolitical it is less likely to cause concern for the authorities, and thus may escape persecution.

Forming a group under the pretext of an arts colony would likewise work in avoiding unwanted government attention.

Remember, each community can be run to provide whatever functions and services the members feel they need, regardless of their organization's outward image.

A Disaster Response Group could still act as a lending circle, a buying club, a mutual aid fraternity, and even establish an autonomous retreat community. Lending circles, buying clubs, and mutual aid activities could be listed as, training, equipment and group insurance expenses, while a survivalist retreat could be listed as a training and education facility.

This may seem unnecessarily secretive and conspiratorial or even paranoid, but history shows how quickly any government can turn to tyranny with socialist regimes being the worst offenders.

Most western governments are already deeply socialist and approaching Marxist Leninist communism. In every country in history in which communism took hold, they quickly targeted exactly the type of community groups we are seeking to organize.

Without exception, each communist government rounded up artists, writers, school teachers, professors, and the type of people that would be part of a mutual aid association, and simply marched them to the outskirts of town, shot them in the back of the head, and buried them in mass graves by the millions.

The Complete Guide to Forming Communities

Given such a history of undeniable atrocities, it would be naïve and foolish to believe that it can't happen to us, in our country. It already has. There have been numerous incidents where our government sent out the army and National Guard to shoot peaceful protesters, union workers and striking miners.



Kent State Massacre, Ohio, May 4, 1970.

¹ Erich Fromm; Michael MacCoby (1970). *Social Character in a Mexican Village*. Transaction Publishers. pp. xi. ISBN 978-1-56000-876-7.

ⁱⁱ *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution* (1955 paperback (reprinted 2005)), includes Kropotkin's 1914 preface,

ⁱⁱⁱ A middle-class taxpayer's has to pay a 25 percent federal income tax. Then there is the federal Social Security and Medicare payroll tax of 13.3 percent. 5.65 percent of that is removed from the employee's paycheck, and the remaining 7.65 percent is supposed to be paid by the employer, but in reality, the employee pays the entire 13.3 percent, because the employer's portion of the tax does not affect the cost of labor so they just pay their employees 7.65 percent less.

And then there are state taxes which averages at 4.82 percent for the middle-class taxpayer, and which brings the total to at the conservative end to 43.12 percent in federal and state taxes. And it's going higher every year.

First, we take away 43.12 percent for state and federal taxes, then deduct 25% for the embedded taxes, oh and don't forget sales tax, anywhere between 5 to 15% but let's average it out to 10%. That brings us to a grand total of 78% of every dollar earned and spent going to taxes.