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Anarchozionism

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Ayn Rand's shrugging Atlases at least faced a crumbling state, one which was becoming too weak and incompetent to find and destroy their embryonic free society. It is self-consistently obvious that if those who make the statist society work abandon it and devote their efforts to a free society, the State will fall and the free area will function.

But without these people and conditions? A is A, but suppose you don't have A? Ayn herself has never backed a single new country group, to her credit. My conclusion is that if the promised land seekers continue to pursue their Zion despite a dismal record in practice due to demonstrated errors in theory, they don't need Rand, Rothbard, or, for that matter, Konkin or Royce. Szasz and Branden may offer more concrete assistance.

As for me, anarchy begins at home.

The boat sank, and prospective sites were nationalized, but they still are plugging away in Saguerties.

Then came Michael Oliver and his New Country project, which eventually decided on a Pacific coral reef named Minerva. Perhaps the goddess of wisdom drove the men involved mad for their hubris. As soon as concrete plans were formed, Oliver split with the rest. A hardy individualist who actually went to the reef to photograph it and lay claim by homesteading was burned by organizers when he returned, and the ship that arrived in N.Y. to carry a load of anarcho-immigrants never sailed. It just sat in dock and leaked. The comical King of Tonga then laid claim to Minerva and was supported by the less funny states of Fiji and Indonesia.

Now it appears that the Bahamian secessionists of Abaco are interested in American backing and are even willing to listen politely to John Hospers. But their aims are to set up a state of their own. The Bahamian state has deported Hospers as a dangerous Subversive and seem ready to act to keep their citizenry ensnackled.

Can It Work?

The villain in all these plays has been the State—always ready to move against the opening of a free society anywhere. But sometimes, dear Brutus, we must not look to the stars but to ourselves. Why hasn't the State's intervention been assumed from the beginning? After all, these were libertarians leading and organizing these plans. Was it not the very frustration with the State's omnipresence that lead them to desperate measures? Why should they believe that the very institution willing to follow them home, into their pockets and bedrooms, would suddenly go "hands-off" because they crossed some imaginary line on a globe?

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So now it's Abaco.

From the earliest days of Ayn Rand's influence over the Libertarian Movement, frustrated activists have given up on their efforts to reform or revolt against the American State to seek the promised Gulch.

In the early 1960's, a group composed primarily of engineers and technologists worked on a plan to construct an island nation on a shallow land base of the North Sea. Preform agreed on a tiny, nominal government, a free port status which would thrive on free trade between Britain, Norway, and Denmark. Individuals who had been into education and political action (the LIBERAL INNOVATOR, leafletting the Cow Palace GOP convention) gave up and published PREFORM-INFORM backing the escapees.

Then the British seized the pirate radio stations operating outside their territorial waters. Oil was discovered in the North Sea, and Britain, Denmark, and Norway promptly carved up the sea bed. The Preform crowd either Browned out or went into escapist trips such as becoming nomads, troglodytes, or wilderness dwellers. They sought "invulnerability to coercion"—or vonu—and PREFORM-INFORM became Vonulife. Recently it sputtered to a halt, and the paranoia freaks drifted back to civilization.

Operation Atlantis

Then came Operation Atlantis. Again the anarchist ocean bed was the site, and a platform-island was to be constructed in the Caribbean. A group gathered in Saguerties, N.Y., took over a motel, and built a boat. Again they published a newsletter, and started a commodities operation (real goods bank) called AT-COPS which took silver deposits. They even began their own money system, the Deca (10 grams of silver).