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Mesh Mode is written by Julian Paul Butt, originally as an adaptation for North America, of Abdulla Öcalan's ideas and their practice in the Federation of Northern Syria. This is not meant to be a philosophy in competition with Communalism, Libertarian Municipalism, or Democratic Confederalism; but a set of models in addition to these ideas, in order to find a shorter route to the realization of a decentralized civilization, by any means necessary.

To explore Mesh Mode or the SEEDS Method further, check out MeshMode.org. If you would like help adapting this writing to your own community, with a customized, printable layout such as this, made with your edits and additions, or web presence space for your efforts, email Jules@MeshMode.org.



Mesh Mode

.org

Updating Social Systems

The suffering from poverty, state violence, environmental destruction, and oppression of social segments comes from obsolete systems of government, economics, and cultures of centralization. We haven't updated these technologies of social systems for centuries, or even millennia. Our problems are not handed down from the heavens, they are problems created by human hands and they can be solved by our choices.

These are not accidents of bad management, they're caused by these systems. All the reforms and patches in the world can't change the roots of these outmoded systems. We have the technology and the intelligence to provide plenty of wealth, health, and freedom to every individual on Earth, but we are limited by the momentum of these social systems. We need new social systems and a realistic plan to build them.

Mesh is the mode of social systems that is decentralized to best serve the basic human needs of subsistence, protection, affection, understanding, participation, leisure, creation, identity, and autonomy; for the most individuals as possible, as effectively as possible.

Like a mesh, each knot of a community or a workplace is tied together to form one, united net, each as equals in cooperation. The flow of decision-making is across a horizontal, grassroots, bottom-up structure that gains its strength from interdependence and mutual aid, rather than dependence and top-down force. The Mesh Mode is a model of strategy and ends based on Democratic Confederalism, adapted for North America, and developed according to the SEEDS Method, although written, here, in brief to give the reader an introductory understanding.



The 7 Qualities of Mesh Mode

1. Mesh Mode is the practical, democratic update to obsolete systems of corporatocracy and the nation-state, for the benefit of small businesses, workers' cooperatives, employees; communities, marginalized groups, and individuals.
2. Current, centralized social systems are fundamentally dysfunctional, must be completely replaced, and can not be replaced with outmoded methods. All social systems are along a spectrum from centralization to decentralization. Mesh Mode is a model of decentralization in every social system, in order to maximize autonomy and liberty for all communities and individuals.

The more decision-making processes are decentralized and autonomous, the more free and democratic they are, better expressing the will of the most people possible. Direct democracy has the highest probability for outputs that best correspond to the inputs, resulting in the most effective, efficient, desirable social systems for the most people possible. Mesh Mode is the decentralization of and self-rule in every social system, to the furthest practical extent.

3. Mesh Mode is an adaptation of Abdullah Öcalan's Democratic Confederalism for North America. It is a model of strategy and analysis that augments other models and is not mutually exclusive with them. It is part road map and part observational, inclusive of models that fit within its framework, not instead of them. It is meant to be an organizational and educational tool, as a model, to implement Democratic Confederalism in North America, not to be an ideology nor a competing philosophy with extant decentralized models of social systems.

Democratic Confederalism, in Rojava, is a form of Mesh Mode model, as are credit unions and workers' cooperatives, because Mesh Mode is

community must be communal and mixed with art, dance, music, and those social elements that make a community. For example, there could be an evening of musical performances, with intervals of ten or twenty minutes of discussion, writing ideas and exchanging contacts.

Initial steps to organization begin to form around ideas that help today—not writing congresspeople or marching, but things such as providing a free breakfast for children program or free medical clinics.

Those in these initial meetings will begin organizing in their own communities, using neighborhood associations as the initial organizing bodies, beginning to transform the makeup of extant neighborhood associations. A majority vote to reshape the leadership and character of neighborhood associations could quickly be found in many cases, simply through this new participation. The greatest delay may be in board election cycles.

Councils of Interests should immediately be formed in these bodies, to begin to transform their structure and functions. In this way, neighborhood associations are repurposed like old factories, doubling as an organizing body that ultimately replaces non-profits and other community organizing bodies into one community institution. It would quickly begin competing with them for volunteer hours and donations, and eventually absorb some into the structure of Councils of Interests, especially, in later steps, when capital, democracy, and community are united in the neighborhood assemblies, making some groups redundant and comparatively ineffectual once this is a viable option.

As initial programs begin to bear fruit in the communities, progress towards gaining the support of key community organizers, influencers, and those with technical knowledge will begin. Key participants who can help build the foundations are onboarded, such as lawyers, accountants, project managers; rabbis, imams, preachers; small business owners, non-profit organizers, community leaders, etc.

With technical knowledge and community influ-



encers contributing, neighborhood associations can start to join together with existing, or set up new credit unions. These will start to form the capital for investing in the community and providing benefits for small businesses and coops to become a greater part of the organization, not through influence, but mutual aid. A structure of Councils of Interests might be formed to give coops and small businesses in the neighborhood a space at the table.

A few communities may start to organize capital and political organization to a greater degree, perhaps even starting their own community coops, to provide more jobs and capital to the community. As this builds, a few may formally associate with each other in some form of loose network or even confederation, based on these principles.

As a few communities strengthen this bond and further structure their relationships, they can begin to pressure city government for more rights and responsibilities and some elected officials, such as in city council, may begin to initiate this as well. As the strength of community organizing builds, petitions to influence local government can begin to take root. This is where campaigning to change tax law and the structure of corporations, as well petitions for the power of community to be increased, dejure, in neighborhood assemblies.

The first major pushback will begin, at this point, in earnest. Campaigns to market these organizing endeavors to the public may come from these assemblies, from independent groups that support the ideas, or both. This will be the first real conflict between extant power structures, as the real potential of this competition to their monopolies becomes clear. This will create an opportunity for a catalyst for rapid growth, as the potential PR and response to attacks from these power structures can create an equal and opposite reaction, if well planned and branded.



cilors to begin to concede new rights and responsibilities to the organizations, with political and economic pressure on the council-members, or through council-members simply agreeing with the idea. As this type of development progresses, the reach and influence of confederations of communities will challenge larger institutions, from city, to state, and so forth.

Meanwhile, the power of the corporation must be dismantled by restructuring it. Corporations are controlled by executive officers, who are selected by boards of directors, who are selected by shareholders. The control by shareholders must be severed and distributed to the employees.

The capital of corporations can't be democratized by simply occupying it, as it was in 1936. Even if every corporate workplace in the US was occupied by workers, we're still dependent upon the machinery of the corporation, in the shipping, finance, and other logistics connecting us with factories halfway across the Earth, with workers with whom we can't even communicate, for daily needs of production for the common American. The machine can't stop functioning, because so many depend on its operation, but its systems prevent a simple one-step decentralization. It must be operated upon while it's kept running.

Instead of taking over the factories, we need to take over the corporation itself. This can be done by changing tax law, which defines the structure of these institutions, to be from shareholder-controlled boards now, to workers' control for every business with assets or employees above a small business.

Possible First Steps

Some first steps may look something like the following, but this is in no way the only means. It's just an example to provide some ideas of how it might look. Every step must be intrinsically meaningful to the participants. This can not be a



movement for a promise of a far-off ideal, it must be a practical solution to real problems, today.

Every step must be considered for its worth to the community and for its contribution to the next step. Every step must be for both. The people, for whom Mesh Mode is meant, work long hours, face real, daily threats from this system; in discrimination, in poverty, and in other ways. This is not for philosophers or arm-chair activists, for the ideological or for the dogmatic. This is not a study group or a political fan club.

This must be accessible to the communities, for which it's intended, and that means considering different needs and different abilities. The people, for whom this is meant, often do not have time for many meetings, or to read manifestos. Some folks have physical challenges that make certain activities difficult to attend. Some folks can't afford to meet in certain spaces or at certain times.

Therefore, every step must solve real problems immediately, without the need for dogmatic ideological commitments or abstract ideas, while advancing steadily towards the Mesh Mode. There can not be one solution or one answer. Each community has different needs, different cultures, and different approaches. This must be about listening to the needs of people, not telling people what they need. It must be self-organized, according to the uniqueness of each community, in a diversity of action, towards a common vision of free communities. While the Mesh Mode offers a model to move forward, it must not be taken as liturgy. There is no one answer and communities know what they need, not a single party or a single author.

It may begin with interested citizens gathering in casual meetings, such as in homes, parks, bars, and coffee shops to consider the core problems facing their communities, today. These meetings should not only be dry reading-club style gatherings, but part of culture and community. The discussion of



composed of both models of analysis and prescription, making decentralized models Mesh Mode, as much as it also unique in some characteristics. Mesh Mode is a name to describe other models and to present distinct models. Mesh Mode is only one articulation of decentralized, directly democratic social systems in modern day, in means and ends, to model it for practical implementation in the US and wherever else it applies usefully. Anything that roughly corresponds to these 7 defining qualities is Mesh Mode as much as Mesh Mode is its own, distinct model.

4. Mesh Mode is a dual power strategy that achieves the goals of completely replacing the corporation and the nation-state with direct democracy, within one generation, while solving problems of immediate urgency, today. It's a means and ends to replace these obsolete systems by building their alternatives and providing solutions to problems now, both combined in the same tactics. Choosing between promises of far-off ideals or providing for needs of today is a waste of effort and fruitless for either one without the other.

5. All efforts towards decentralization must seek the liberation of the individual in every social group, in which she resides, and begin liberation with the individual, moving to each larger social circle, not the other way around. Liberty begins with pluralism in groups and autonomy for individuals, followed by families, communities, and institutions.

The voice of marginalized groups, minority interests, and interests of ecology require dedicated space at the table of discussion. The social and psychological liberation from domination and centralization comes about through dedicated space in the decision-making body and dedicated effort given towards this transformation of the individual, in groups as much as in everyday thought and discussion.

Mesh Mode includes Councils of Interests. In each neighborhood assembly, where there are enough people of a given interest, councils or committees are formed to focus on that interest and to represent a voice, explicitly for it, in the general deliberation and participants are elected and volunteered from



among the people of the neighborhood assembly. Ultimately, the current social roles of non-profit corporations and the efforts and resources now devoted to them in North America are replaced with Councils of Interests, with Mesh Mode.

6. Mesh Mode is the replacement of the nation-state with confederations of autonomous, self-governed communities, operating by direct democracy in neighborhood assemblies. Where limited centralization is necessary, such as the election of delegates to represent communities in city and regional councils within confederations, policy-making and most decision-making is retained at the community level, with delegates and other elected officials serving purely administrative roles, rather than policy-making, as it is in a republic.

7. Mesh Mode is the replacement of the undemocratic ownership and operation of capital and other means of production by corporations, and the centralized ownership and operation of corporations, in-turn, by share-holder elected boards; with ownership by employees and operation through the democratic election of management, by employees, and company policy-making by direct democracy of the employees.

Banks and other financial institutions are replaced with credit unions, while wage systems continue to exist, until the opportunity to replace them can be feasibly realized. The ownership of corporations, cooperatives, and credit unions will mix with ownership by self-governed communities, but the operation will remain by direct democracy of the employees of the companies. Large companies that aren't yet corporations will also be replaced with the same, but small businesses will remain undisturbed, while business owners may choose to form cooperatives with their businesses and be aided by the self-governed communities in doing so.



The Problems

Centralized Power Vs. Democracy

People Are Controlled By Bread Or By Bullet. People are controlled by the threat of ending their existence. The core sources of power are dependence and violent force. Anyone who can control access to what is needed has influence over those who need it. If someone has a greater violent threat, they can compel those without.

Control of capital gives power to those who possess it. Economies are the production and distribution of goods and services. The ability to work depends on the tools and systems of capital. We depend on the means of production, in all the material things needed to create goods and services, such as fields, factories, and other workplaces; the infrastructure, resources, shipping, financial networks, logistical networks, etc. Whomever owns and controls the means of production, holds the source of power for the economic system.

Access to the means of production is access to survival itself, today. Anyone who doesn't have access or control of means of production is at the mercy of those who do. Capital is controlled, not by many, but by few, in a handful of corporations, banks, and firms, woven together by controlling shares in each other. We live in corporatocracy, where the corporate class holds nearly all economic power in a small collection of economic dictatorships. Every corporation is a kingdom and we're the serfs.

The value of what the employee is not paid in exchange for their labor, after other costs of production, from the wealth created by their labor, ultimately becomes profit for the corporation. The less the employee is paid, the lower the price of their labor-power as it's bought by the corporation, the more profit the corporation enjoys. Without taking the wealth made by the employee,



the corporate class could not exist. The capital of billionaires comes from all the wealth that employees created but never received.

The freedom to acquire such significant wealth is a freedom only for those who acquire it, but not for those, the majority, whose labor-power is purchased at a loss to the worker, as the surplus of which becomes the wealth of a few. As a Kingdom, the king may be free, but that doesn't help the serfs. Undemocratic control of capital is not freedom and poverty is created by the very control of it by corporations.

Corporations Control Social Systems

The control of capital determines the control of every other social system, today. Those who possess capital, control the nation-state and its machinery, in its bureaucracies and its monopoly of violence. Our government is controlled by a few billionaires, through corporations and banks. Democracy in such a system is a joke. Politicians are selected by the corporate backers, through funding political campaigns and other, legal bribes, such as paying for expensive "talks," and funding certain foundations.

Once they're in office, they serve corporate power, those who sponsored them as well as any other corporate interests, over the interests of the communities they are meant to represent. In a two-party system, it's even worse, as the parties are funded by the same corporate class and the parties exclude anyone who might upset this balance from running within the parties, while rigging rules to prevent other parties from making any headway. The politics of the present parties and any that might arise while there is still a corporate-ruled economy are always committees of the rich to manage the affairs of the corporate class.

Legal systems and media are controlled by the same few, because court cases favor those with the most money to spend on lawyers or judges



ests appropriate for all.

The Councils of Interests include and incorporate marginalized groups in a way beyond rhetoric or simply as part of an assumed liberation of each, presumed to arise as a consequence of liberation from centralized institutions. Such liberation does not naturally arise, even after the causes of the oppression are removed, as the remnants of oppression remain unless specifically addressed in the culture and as an explicit component of new systems. Therefore, space must be made to invite the diversity of groups to the table.

In the economic system, capital will be controlled in participatory democracy, where the workers of a company will vote on the policies and investment decisions of the company. Management would be elected and, like community delegates, administrative and not policy-making, recallable at any time. In terms of the ownership of capital, it will either be owned by the neighborhood assemblies, by the workers, or both. Small businesses will operate as they do now, with small business owners participating directly in the new systems. Companies over a certain number of employees or amount of assets will be democratized and controlled by the workers and the community.

Building Mesh Social Systems

Corporatocracy will not be replaced overnight, but it won't be in decades, either; we can't survive the wait. It may seem hard to imagine moving to a completely democratic society from where we are now, but only if it's conceived as one step, in some sort of instant revolution. Complete change of these outdated social systems takes several steps, but can and must be done in this generation.

The state will not be dismantled by violent means, because its violent capacity is too great. It will not be dismantled through elections, either. Its power comes from its monopoly of control over bureaucratic machinery and its monopoly of violence. Its monopoly must be broken up by introducing a competing organization of communities. The very same structure that will become the new social systems must be built in stages. Each step will hollow out the state, by taking over its power,



piece by piece, providing for the needs of communities, delegitimizing the state's authority, and winning people over to the new civic institutions of participatory democracy.

The democratic organization of capital, especially in workplaces, is very similar to worker-owned cooperatives, today. The present concentration of capital in the hands of corporations and firms, however, makes a gradual market competition between corporate power and coops ineffective as a strategy. Without a viable alternative to buying from corporations for daily needs or working for corporations, the extreme dependence makes it difficult to fight corporate control.

Many of the components of Mesh Mode already exist, today, but they need to be stitched together and slightly modified. The strength of credit unions, community assemblies, small businesses, and coops must be united together to organize capital for the benefit of each and to begin to provide alternatives to corporate power. Credit unions and neighborhood associations exist throughout the US. Credit unions, when directly combined with neighborhood associations, can provide the capital for community services and can help small businesses and coops. Small businesses and coops could get loans from and could invest in these joint credit union-neighborhood organizations. The mutual support of small businesses and coops with these neighborhood organizations can create a symbiotic relationship that offers more power from capital and political influence than could arise separately, beginning to compete with state and corporate influence.

Once neighborhood associations begin to take on more of a character of neighborhood assemblies than their typical forms today, and with the strength of capital of credit unions, they can begin to start workers' coops of their own, to offer jobs in the community and capital for the community. They can use this strength to begin to challenge state power structures, such as getting city coun-



when needed, rather than an expression of the monopoly of violence of the state, in defense of a corporate class.

Liberty begins with pluralism in groups and autonomy for individuals, followed by families, communities, and institutions. Beginning with the expressions of centralization, in domination and oppression, communities are liberated after the individual is liberated, psychologically and socially, from violence and discrimination arising from social stratification based on gender, race, sexual orientation, and all other social groups an individual inhabits.

The movement and social transformation for autonomy and decentralization can not isolate the liberation to one sphere, such as economics or government, it must begin with the very essence of individuals, who compose society, and the cultures that are formed out of the psychology of decentralization, expressed in pluralism and egalitarianism for all. The largest social structures are formed by individuals and social structures are nothing but the collective effort of individuals, voluntary or not. This makes directly democratic institutions as oppressive and tyrannical as any, if the individual is not first liberated from the psychology of domination, and in the same turn, liberation of the individual leads to institutions which reflect liberated psychology.

This must come about through inclusion, not alienation and moral enforcement, through supportive and educational efforts, rather than through coercive methods of fear, guilt, or shame. Those cultural elements, which influence the individual and are influenced by the individual, and every relationship of the individual, must be examined and an extra effort given to each to deliberately transform these, not by force, but by voluntary effort given by the individual to transform herself and to encourage the proliferation of this decentralized culture, with every interaction they have.



The voice of marginalized groups, minority interests, and interests of ecology require dedicated space at the table of discussion. The social and psychological liberation from domination and centralization comes about through dedicated space in the decision-making body and dedicated effort given towards this transformation of the individual, in groups as much as in everyday thought and discussion by the individual.

Each neighborhood assembly, or level of confederation of communities, will have Councils of Interests. In each neighborhood assembly, where there are enough people of a given interest, councils or committees are formed to focus on that interest and to represent a voice, explicitly for it, in the general deliberation. Committee participants are elected and volunteered from among the people of the neighborhood assembly. For example, there must be a gender council, to address gender inequality, or for people of color, for sexual orientation, for education, for ecology, and so forth. Ultimately, the current social roles of non-profit corporations and the efforts and resources now devoted to them in North America are replaced with Councils of Interests, with Mesh Mode. There are some parallels to cabinet positions in a republic, with a wider application. Core components of the councils are to promote and safeguard pluralism, equality for all, to address key segments of society, and ecology.

By making the Councils of Interests voluntary and of and by the individuals of a particular segment or interest of the assembly, this structure both provides space for many otherwise marginalized interests, by design, as well as ensures that no single interest is imposed by a single ideology, party, or outside group. Through the allowance of an organic formation of Councils of Interests, according to the desire and composition of the neighborhood, this preserves the principles of autonomy and counters paternalism. There is no way to know what unique groups or interests may compose one neighborhood or another, and each is distinct, making no one set of Councils of Inter-



and 90% of US media is controlled by 6 corporations. Through law, the monopoly of violence of the state is controlled both in the writing and enforcement of laws in the favor of the corporate class. Through media ownership and marketing budgets, public opinion is manipulated through unprecedented propaganda campaigns, as public education is defunded and dismantled by the same parties.

Every lever and dial of the machinery of the state is controlled by the corporate class and the state holds powerful machinery. The people of towns, cities, and regions have become dependent on the nation-states for bureaucratic machinery, the organization and funding of daily life, in roads, schools, standing military, and all the other crucial components of modern cities and towns. In its monopoly of violence, the citizenry have been effectively disarmed and are dependent on the state's police and military and are at the mercy of the same.

Centralization Divides & Conquers

Corporatocracy creates classes of haves and have-nots, while it creates cultures of division. At the same time, the nation-state seeks to make one national culture, one national identity, and often one religious community. Both come from centralization of social systems. Decentralization leads to pluralism and self-rule, whereas centralization seeks rule by a few, through coercion and conformity.

As we are divided up based on our control of capital, we are divided along racial, religious, gender, sexual orientation, and many other identities, not in an embrace of diversity and pluralism, but in the form of conflict as minority groups are oppressed and alienated by two systems that alienate us and the culture of a whole social structure built on inequality and centralization. Discrimination and hate arise from the culture of authoritarianism, of centralization; expressed in institutions, even if they are not formed from those institutions. Racism, for example, is not just an economic or a nation-state question, but it comes out in these systems and is perpetuated by them.



This conflict is expressed in discrimination and domination in the courts, laws, law enforcement, workplaces, and in our own homes. The tendencies of centralization permeate every facet of our culture and we often don't notice when it affects our psychology, but it's deeply woven into our psyche, with domination and prejudice. Every community and every cultural identity is a nation and nations need self rule to be free. Under the centralized state and corporatocracy, nations can never be free and conflict will only increase.

The culture of centralization runs so deep that we seek to dominate the environment. As corporations plunder natural resources without regard to the long term effects on human life and habitat, especially for poorer communities, it's not just an effect of a profit machine, it's part of the same culture of domination that comes from centralization. Corporatocracy exploits and commodifies the Earth, just as it does people. We need these resources to be held in smart management, for long-term use, and we need healthy ecosystems to survive, which are endangered and destroyed by corporatocracy and a culture of exploitation.

The Mathematics of Democracy

A decision-making body is part of a cycle of inputs-processes-outputs. The inputs are the will of individuals and communities within the sphere of the democratic system in question, however those inputs may be collected by the system (e.g. votes, petitions, letters, polls, etc.).

If a person could make a decision, just for herself, without any outside coercion, it would be a democracy of one. Her inputs are completely consistent with the outputs of the system of her decision-making, for herself. It's a perfect consensus and majority of one. The smallest possible decision-making unit is the individual and this is the purest democracy, where it's possible. If a person can enjoy individual liberties, to the greatest degree



possible, this person's decision-making is the very epitome of democracy. Of course, much requires decisions by and for more than one person, in a society.

If we consider a democracy of three people and two people vote in favor of one thing, but the third wanted something else, the third person's will is not represented by democracy. The will of the majority doesn't benefit the third person, so for her, the inputs are not consistent with the outputs of this system. Despite this, democracy is the mathematics of making the outputs consistent with the inputs for the most people possible within the decision-making system. In the case of three people, it's small enough that it's direct democracy, it's participatory democracy. It's a congress or parliament of three.

If two of the three voted for one of the three to make the decision for all three, it would be representative democracy and the process would be a step removed from the inputs, making the outputs more likely to be inconsistent with the inputs. The inputs may not even be expressed, if the three only voted for the one decision-maker, but had no other communication with the decision-maker, who would then simply be guessing their will, or may decide in a way that has nothing to do with whether it's consistent with the will of the majority.

A majority of 100 people or a majority of 1,000 people may have the same will, but the minority inputs may be much larger with the larger number of people. In a majority of 100, perhaps there is a minority of 10%. In this case, that's only ten people. In the case of 1,000, a minority of 10% is a hundred people, who are not benefited by the process. On a smaller scale, however, what is the minority of the 1,000 may be the very 100 people who were otherwise the minority vote, but a majority of it was a vote for just that segment.

The larger the population within a democratic



system, for a given vote, more people are likely to not have their will expressed by the outputs of that system. The smaller the population within a democratic system, fewer people are alienated as a minority vote.

Taking the example of 1,000 people voting for something, this could even be taken not as a binary vote, but perhaps there are 3 choices. If 40% vote for one choice, 35% for another, and 25% for the third choice, then a majority vote of all 1,000 people actually is an expression of the will of a minority and 60%, the majority, do not have their will expressed by the outputs of the democratic system.

Suppose, however, that the 1,000 people were organized into smaller voting groups of 100 each. In this case, let's say that 4 of the groups voted with an average of 87.5% vote in favor of the first choice, 4 of the groups voted in favor of the second choice with 62.5% vote, and two groups voted for the third choice with 75%. If these ten groups are autonomous, the majority will is expressed better than a singular decision for all ten groups.

A democratic republic that makes decisions for millions of people will inevitably represent a small minority. If the democratic republic has the myriad of other issues that create a disconnect between the inputs and the processes, such as corruption, money in politics, or a one or two-party system, then this disconnect becomes greater.

This is why a centralized state is rarely democratic, even as a democratic republic. A democratic republic, however, is more likely to be democratic than a dictatorship, of course. This is also why the more a decision-making process is decentralized, the more free and democratic it is, better expressing the will of more people.

Confederations of autonomous communities, where each are self-governed but united for trade, defense, shared resources, currency, or other



agreements; are the most decentralized forms of decision-making bodies. A Self-governed community can be in the form of an elected council, a neighborhood assembly, or as large as a city-state. The smaller are the decision-making bodies and their represented population, the more direct is the democracy.

Confederations of self-governed communities, where participatory democracy or small councils replace republics or dictatorships, are the key alternatives to centralized states.

Solutions for Today & Tomorrow

Mesh Mode

The spectrum of social systems is commonly described as right to left, but it's not. It's centralized to decentralized. In the economy, both Stalinism and corporatocracy are centralized. In government and even in social movements, there are tendencies towards authoritarianism as much as towards self-rule and pluralism, from "left" to "right."

On the centralization end of the spectrum, we have authoritarianism. Centralization is more control over systems in fewer hands. It is the maximum amount of decision-making, over the widest scale, by the fewest people. On the decentralization end of the spectrum, democracy and self-rule are parallels. Decentralization is the widest distribution of control, to the smallest possible decision-making units, each of which to the greatest degree of self-rule.

The smallest possible decision-making unit is the individual, followed by the family, the neighborhood, then the city, and so forth. Decentralization leads to individual liberties, diversity, pluralism, and participatory democracy.

Mesh is the mode of economic system and government that is decentralized to best serve the basic human needs of subsistence, protection, affection, understanding, participation, leisure, creation, identity, and autonomy; for the most individuals



as possible, as effectively as possible.

Like a mesh, each knot of a community or a workplace is tied together to form one, united net, each as equals in cooperation. The flow of decision-making is across a horizontal, grassroots, bottom-up structure that gains its strength from interdependence and mutual aid, rather than dependence and top-down force.

The state, ultimately, will be replaced with a confederation of self-governed communities. Where the state now rules over the bureaucratic machinery, in city councils, mayors' offices, state houses, governors, congress, etc.; the decision-making will be divided among communities.

Each community would decide its own affairs, in a neighborhood assembly and for each decision that involves more than one community, at each level (e.g. city, region, etc.), a powerless delegate will carry the vote to an assembly to form a majority vote of communities at each level. The assemblies send delegates to a confederal council to coordinate and carry out the policies that the assemblies decided, and to reconcile differences among them. The delegates are not policymakers like representatives in a republic, they simply express the will of the assemblies that chose them. The confederal councils are not policy-making, they are simply administrative.

The bureaucratic machinery of the state can be governed by these confederations. For example, Parks & Recreation might still function essentially as it does now, but policies are set by and they answer to neighborhood assemblies, instead of city council and the mayor's office. The standing military will be under the confederations of neighborhood assemblies. The military would be democratically organized, with officers elected both by the militia and by the citizens' assembly, and it would exist under the close supervision of the citizens' assemblies. Law enforcement will become more like fire departments, where police are called

