

## **Convinced**

Jason Bradford has convinced me. Local economies walled against the world are superior to globalization and free trade. Down with the division of labor!

But I can't understand why Bradford doesn't go further. If self-sufficient localities are good, then self-sufficient households are even better. Why should the Bradford family buy a product from Jones across town when it could make the product itself and maintain stable household employment?

I can't wait to return to the harmony with nature, the comforts, and the long healthy lives primitive men enjoyed. I am especially excited by the prospect of having my core values dictated to me by someone else.

Sheldon Richman  
Conway, Arkansas

## **Reply to Convinced**

I am not sure where Mr. Richman got the idea that economic localization means the end of the "division of labor." Perhaps he is imagining an anarchistic hunter-gatherer society where the division of labor is fairly small. I've seen those, but don't propose them here.

Maybe I can help by giving some examples of what I'd like to do, and what the "Jones across town" can do to help me. I'd like to be a farmer. To be a farmer I need tools. Maybe Mr. Jones is good at making and repairing tools. We could relate to each other economically. Maybe Mrs. Jones likes to process food. She could add value to my crops. Stable household employment sounds great to me!

Perhaps Junior Jones can fix shoes. I actually have two fine pairs of boots with soles that need replacement. To get these repaired I drove 25 miles away to find a cobbler who works only 2 days a week, and I turned up on an off day. Consider the waste of my time, the energy required to get there and back, and the possible loss of use of these boots for want of local skilled labor.

I am sure Willits once had shoemakers, but why no longer? It is the flood of cheap imports and the local economic erosion this causes. Imports are cheaper due to low labor costs in countries with huge populations of desperate people, low energy costs to transport goods anywhere in the world, and lack of concern for the environment.

The sarcasm with which Mr. Richman refers "to return to the harmony with nature," says plenty. He doesn't accept the economic model I use, where nature is the provider of our material wealth and the processor of our wastes. In Mr. Richman's model, nature is an ignored "externality." This is a simplistic view of the world, incredibly hubristic, and downright dangerous.

I'd like to ask what values Mr. Richman has since he implies he doesn't agree with mine. I simply want to act responsibly towards my family, my community and the Earth that

supports me. I want the freedom to apply my ingenuity to solve problems, and to encourage my friends and neighbors to liberate their talents. At a minimum, I want the security of knowing where my food and energy comes from, since without these I wouldn't last long. I am willing to work very hard to help make this happen, and expect the same from others.

Honestly, how would those values go over in Conway, Mr. Richman? Are we really so far apart?

Jason Bradford