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"The programme adopted by German Social Democracy at the Party Congress in Erfurt (14th - 20th October 1891) is divided into two parts: one general, theoretical part which deals with the principles and the final aims of Social Democracy and into one practical part which contains the demands which Social Democracy as a practical party makes on present day society and the present day state in order to initiate the achievement of our goals. We are only concerned with the first, the general part here. This part again separates itself in three sub-parts: (1) a characterisation of present-day society and its development. From this we conclude: (2) the final aims of Social Democracy and (3) the means which can and will lead to the realisation of these aims." (Karl Kautsky)

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
- "Rjevan" for Kautsky translations


INTRODUCTION


Not long ago, politically correct "anti-capitalist" spontaneity arose in response to the "globalization" phenomenon. During that time, the various circle-sects forming the traditional "anti-capitalist" left jumped onto the bandwagon with mere oppositional slogans. Since the fading opposition, at least some, if not many, of the former "anti-globalization" protesters have actually become "entrepreneurs" and corporate managers. What went wrong?

These days, the regrouping national labour movements are moving ahead of the circle-sects, linking up with one another without circle-sect participation. What is wrong here?

Simply put, the various circle-sects have, long ago, allowed the discredited economism to strike back with a vengeance, thereby making us look dishonest, all the while adhering to an extended, overly philosophical set of "principles." Our organizations have forgotten our common historic purpose.

To quote a most politically incorrect revolution  who in turn quoted a shunned theoretician who was in fact his most influential theoretical mentor (by far),  a preferably common organization is "not confined to simple service to the working-class movement: it represents 'the combination of socialism and the working-class movement' (to use Karl Kautsky's definition which repeats the basic ideas of the Communist Manifesto); the task [...] is to bring definite socialist ideals to the spontaneous working-class movement, to connect this movement with socialist convictions that should attain the level of contemporary science [...]"

A second task for our preferably common organization is, to quote another work from the same period,  to represent the interests of the movement as a whole [...] and to safeguard its political and ideological independence." Without this combination, "the [spontaneous] working-class movement becomes petty and inevitably becomes bourgeois. In waging only the economic struggle, the working class loses its political independence; it becomes the tail of other parties and betrays the great principle: 'The emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves.' In every country there has been a period in which the working-class movement existed apart from socialism, each going its own way; and in every country this isolation has weakened both socialism and the working-class movement. Only the fusion of socialism with the working-class movement has in all countries created a durable basis for both."

Undoubtedly, to quote yet another work from the same period,  the fusion of socialism with the working-class movement (this sole guarantee of a strong and truly revolutionary movement) is no easy matter, and it is not surprising that it is attended by vacillation of every kind." One of the reasons for the difficulty and vacillations is the lack of programmatic clarity. Years later, this revolutionary would proclaim rather hastily that "without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement." In between this notorious sound bite, however, is the need for a revolutionary program, the popularization of revolutionary theory: **Without a revolutionary program, there can be no revolutionary movement!**

- Invitation to class-strugglist "anti-capitalists" of most trends: class-strugglist anarchists (not hooligans) and left-communists reconsidering strategy, worker-communists (Hekmatists), class-strugglist pareconists or participatory socialists, class-strugglist market socialists (radical "economic democracy" advocates like David Schweickart), traditional Marxists, etc.

CHAPTER 1: OF PROGRAMS, PRESENTATION, AND GAME THEORY

"The programme adopted by German Social Democracy at the Party Congress in Erfurt (14th - 20th October 1891) is divided into two parts: one general, theoretical part which deals with the principles and the final aims of Social Democracy and into one practical part which contains the demands which Social Democracy as a practical party makes on present day society and the present day state in order to initiate the achievement of our goals. We are only concerned with the first, the general part here. This part again separates itself in three sub-parts: (1) a characterisation of present-day society and its development. From this we conclude: (2) the final aims of Social Democracy and (3) the means which can and will lead to the realisation of these aims." (Karl Kautsky)

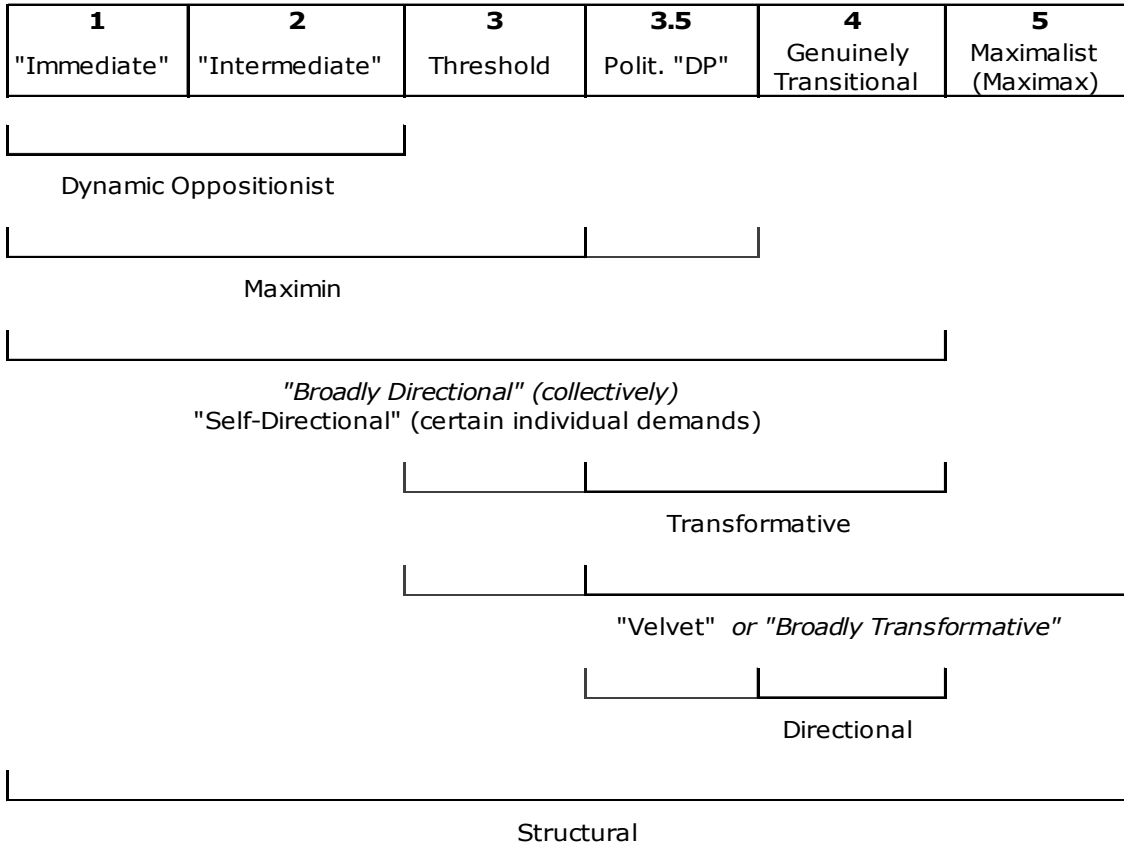
With these succinct words, Karl Johann Kautsky – the leading theoretical authority in the Second International (or at least in its Marxist wing) – began his authoritative commentary on the historic Erfurt Program of the international proletariat's first vanguard party, the then-Marxist Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (SPD). With these same words begins this programmatic thesis on the necessity of having a formal yet basic and modern program for us, the class-strugglist left ("the far left"), starting with a summary section from my earlier work, *The Class Struggle Revisited*.

Program of a New Type: Of Dynamism, Direction, Opposition, and Transformation

"So long as socialist production is not kept consciously in view as its object, so long as the efforts of the militant proletariat do not extend beyond the framework of the existing method of production, the class-struggle seems to move forever in a circle. For the oppressive tendencies of the capitalist method of production are not done away with; at most they are only checked." (Karl Kautsky)

Since revolutionary, pseudo-revolutionary, and "revolutionary" constitution-reformist tendencies within the Class-Strugglist Social Labour organization will coexist side by side, both the minimum-maximum program originally laid out by Marx in the Communist Manifesto and the less prominent "transitional" sloganeering of Trotsky in the late 1930s need to be replaced by a program of a new and more dynamic type. The non-revolutionary tendencies will have a very different interpretation of "maximum demands" so as to exclude the possibility of extralegal "revolution" (specifically traditional armed "revolution," and perhaps even a euphemistically "well-defended" version of Rosa Luxemburg's suggestion of mass strikes). Furthermore, they will have a more narrow interpretation of "minimum demands" so as to coincide with the "maximum demands" of modern "social-democrats" (**minimalists who, being against basic PNNC principles and other principles upheld by even constitution-reformists, are to be kept out of the Class-Strugglist Social Labour organization**) and not with some of the more radical "minimum demands" outlined or implied in the Communist Manifesto, most notably the demand for nationalization of industrial capital. Without this replacement, the coexistence of different interpretations of "minimum demands" and "maximum demands" will only obstruct the struggle for working-class independence through confusion.

So what kind of program should the Class-Strugglist Social Labour organization have? Because of the increased information content level in today's society, there needs to be a shift away from reductionist tendencies towards binary thinking. As detailed in Chapter 2, capitalism has not simplified class relations. Similarly, the program should address three or more types of demands, and in fact there are at least six types of demands:



For the sake of non-reductionist simplicity this thesis will group them into three: maximalist demands, transformative demands, and lesser demands that are nevertheless structural, oppositionist, and directional to varying degrees.


Because the fulfillment of the aforementioned lesser demands should not rely on coalitionist politics (hence the intransigent opposition), they should, at a very dynamic "minimum," coincide with the "maximum demands" of modern "left social-democrats" and include, to the chagrin of those subscribing to Trotskyist revisionism, both the bulk of "transitional" sloganeering around mainly economic issues and **the bulk of political demands that pertain directly to the conquest of ruling-class political power**. In as many countries as possible, the Class-Strugglist Social Labour organization should demand, **to begin with** (among other demands, including more ambitious yet oppositionist demands later on, hence "dynamic"):

- 1) **A truly reduced workweek** (32 hours, for example, and not 35 as in France). Already this demand surpasses the "maximum demands" of most modern "social-democratic" economists! According to the primarily single-issue Work Less Party in Canada (better marketed as "Work Less, Do More"), **this modern version of the historic struggle for the eight-hour workday**: reduces society's environmental footprint, reduces unemployment, promotes an increase in cultural activities and social life in general, and especially **promotes an increase in real political activity (both civic participation and heightened political activism as the bases of basic participatory democracy)** at the expense of "politics" as, in the words of the *Weekly Worker's* Mike Macnair, "a consumer good supplied by professional and semi-professional politicians who offer various competing 'brands' [...]"
- 2) Full, lawsuit-enforced freedom of **class-strugglist** assembly and association, even within the military, **free from anti-employment reprisals, police interference such as from agents provocateurs, and formal political disenfranchisement**.
- 3) The expansion of "gun rights" (the right to bear arms and to self-defense in general), including **the formation of people's militias along the bourgeois-capitalist Swiss model**, thereby going beyond the recent District of Columbia vs. Heller case in the Supreme Court of the United States and even the rhetoric of the National Rifle Association, the most influential gun lobby group in the world.

- 4) The expansion of local autonomy for equally local development through participatory budgeting and oversight by local assemblies, as well as through unconditional economic assistance (both technical and financial) for localities seeking to establish local currency alternatives to government money.
- 5) The institution of proportional representation in the various legislatures (**preferably, for historically significant reasons explained in Chapter 5, of the closed-list variant that allows mere parties to arbitrarily appoint to and remove from legislatures the party-affiliated legislators**, based on their submission to party decisions and on the need to combat degenerative personality politics), with the “average workers’ wage” principle for **legislator compensation being based or slightly lower than the median equivalent for professional and other skilled workers**.
- 6) The institution of ever-progressive measures against the anti-meritocratic, ruling-class inheritance of wealth in general and especially of productive and other non-possessive property, measures which include the abolition of all remaining nobilities.
- 7) Socio-income democracy through direct proposals and rejections, at the national level, regarding tax rates on all types of income, **including the ability to raise upper tax rates**.
- 8) The application of not some but all economic rent of land, by first means of land value taxation, towards exclusively public purposes, such as the abolition of all indirect taxation and other class-regressive taxation based on labour and on consumer goods and services – as opposed to the indirect taxation of capital that was proposed by economists John Maynard Keynes and James Tobin (to a lesser extent).
- 9) Guarantees of a real livelihood to all workers – **based on the aforementioned workweek** and beyond bare subsistence minimums – and for equivalent unemployment and work incapacitation provisions, including the universalization of annual, non-deflationary adjustments for all non-executive remunerations, pensions, and insurance benefits to at least match rising costs of living (not notorious government underestimations due to faulty measures like chain weighting, or even underhanded selections of the lower of core inflation and general inflation).
- 10) The institution of income-based or preferably class-based affirmative action (the former being tied to the erroneous “liberal-progressive” definition of “class”), especially in the sphere of education.
- 11) The mandatory private- and public-sector recognition of professional education, other higher education, and related work experience “from abroad,” along with the international standardization of such education and the implementation of other measures to counter the underemployment of educated immigrants.
- 12) The abolition of all copyright, patent, and other intellectual property laws, as well as of all restrictions on the non-commodity economy of peer-to-peer sharing, open-source programming, and the like.
- 13) The genuine end of “free markets” – including in unemployment resulting from workplace closures, mass sackings, and mass layoffs – by first means of non-selective encouragement of, and unconditional economic assistance (both technical and financial) for, pre-cooperative worker buyouts of existing enterprises and enterprise operations.
- 14) **Full independence of the mass media from concentrated private ownership and control** by first means of workplace democracy over mandated balance of content in news and media production, heavy appropriation of economic rent in the broadcast spectrum, unconditional economic assistance (both technical and financial) for independent mass media cooperative startups – especially at more local levels, for purposes of media decentralization – and anti-inheritance transformation of all the relevant mass media properties under private ownership into cooperative property.

In addition, the United States is a rather odd bourgeois-capitalist nation in that its central bank is to some extent privately owned and controlled, namely by the member banks. Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution states:

The Congress shall have Power [...] To coin Money, regulate the Value thereof, and of foreign Coin, and fix the Standard of Weights and Measures [...]

Does the Federal Reserve System enacted in 1913, in spite of the lack of Supreme Court rulings on its constitutionality (by bourgeois standards, ) go against this section of the constitution? Said “libertarian” entrepreneur Frederick Mann:

Although there has never been a court case that challenged the legality of the Federal Reserve System, there was a challenge to the National Recovery Act or NRA, which was ruled unconstitutional. The U.S. Supreme Court – Schechter Poultry v. U.S., 29 U.S. 495, 55 U.S. 837.842 (1935) – ruled that, “Congress may not abdicate or transfer to others its legitimate functions.” Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution states, “The Congress shall have power... to coin money, regulate the value thereof...” By passing the Federal Reserve Act, Congress abdicated and transferred to the Federal Reserve bankers its

*constitutionally legitimate function of issuing and controlling money. **If the Supreme Court ruling on the NRA is applied to the Federal Reserve System, the unconstitutionality and illegality of the Fed becomes obvious.***

With this in mind, the demands to take into public ownership the Federal Reserve, extend this ownership to the entire financial services industry (thus creating a public monopoly), and abolish the massive, multi-trillion dollar government liabilities – owed to rent-seekers and other parasites within the bourgeoisie and petit-bourgeoisie – would be nation-specific demands that are structural and oppositionist.

Those demands that are transformative should coincide with the political demands and non-revolutionary economic demands that collectively require a very directional break from bourgeois capitalism. On the political aspect, this means the fulfillment of the most political of the radical demands outlined above, the fulfillment of the following demands, and more (perhaps much more):

- 1) The systematic combination of all legislative and executive-administrative functions such that, for example, legislative bodies would be working bodies.
- 2) The replacement of judges altogether by jury sovereignty.
- 3) The elimination of *de facto* non-ownership disqualifications for political and related administrative offices, as opposed to ownership qualifications (in case workers decide to turn the tables on the ousted upper classes).
- 4) The “average workers’ wage” principle, along with immediate recall in cases of abuse of office, would have to be extended towards all political and related administrative offices.

For those subscribing to Trotskyist revisionism on the mainly economic aspect, transformative demands would include whatever “transitional” sloganeering is left over, such as full and comprehensible transparency in all governmental, commercial, and other related affairs (not just the abolition of “business secrets”). Moreover, such demands would include other key economic demands, most notably the equal obligation for all able-bodied individuals, including those of the ousted upper classes, to work. Much like the not-so-dynamic Erfurt Program of the German Social-Democratic Party in 1891 and the “revolutionary” coating added by Karl Kautsky in 1892, the revisionist notion of the Trotsky’s program being “re~~visionary~~” suffers from “apocalyptic predestinationism” (in Trotsky’s words, “the death agony of capitalism”).

One particular transformative demand that has emerged with the development of information-communication technology is the demand for “socioeconomic democracy” as advocated by Robley George in *Socioeconomic Democracy: An Advanced Socioeconomic System*. In its narrowest form, there is some form of both “universal guaranteed personal income” and “maximum allowable personal wealth” that is democratically established and adjusted by society as a whole. Within the context of this thesis, this establishment, through class-conscious participation (as opposed to representation), would go beyond the minimum demand in the Communist Manifesto for “a heavy progressive or graduated income tax.”

With this linguistic clarity established for the Class-Strugglist Social Labour organization’s program, what about the prospects for unity of action within the organization? While there will be obvious deficiencies in this organization’s unity (especially on transformative versus maximalist demands, and **even the exclusive promotion of maximalism by various broad ec~~on~~omists in the organization**), Lenin had this to say about the “Unity Congress” of the RSDLP in 1906, which saw the formal reunification of the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks:

We must work hard to build up an organisation that will include all the class-conscious Social-Democratic workers, and will live its own independent political life. The autonomy of every Party organisation, which hitherto has been largely a dead letter, must become a reality. The fight for posts, fear of the other “faction”, must be eliminated. Let us have really united Party organisations, in which there will only be a purely ideological struggle between different trends of Social-Democratic thought. It will not be easy to achieve this; nor shall we achieve it at one stroke. But the road has been mapped out, the principles have been proclaimed, and we must now work for the complete and consistent putting into effect of this organisational ideal.

We think that an important ideological result of the Congress is that there is now a clearer and more definite line of demarcation between the Right wing and the Left wing in Social-Democracy. There is a Right and a Left wing in all the Social-Democratic parties in Europe; and their existence in our Party has been evident for a long time. A more distinct line of demarcation between the two, a clearer definition of the points of disagreement, is essential for the healthy development of the Party, for the political education of the

proletariat, and for the checking of every inclination of the Social-Democratic Party to stray too far from the right path.

Presentation and Game Theory

- Presentation and Game Theory (conciseness vs. overly lengthy programmatic documents, agreement vs. “acceptance”)
 - o “Class-Strugglist Social Labour”: named in accordance with the basic principles established in Chapter 3
 - o Already pasted above: “Immediate”-“Intermediate”-Threshold-“Velvet”-Transformative-Maximalist
 - o Game theory: minimin, minimax, maximin, and maximax
 - Inspiration: <http://www.workersliberty.org/story/2008/10/16/minimax-and-transitional-demands>
 - o “Even though we communists see the need for a farther reaching and comprehensive platform to address all the objective needs and desires of the working class, we also understand that it is necessary to prioritize certain demands that speak directly to the crisis facing working people [...]”
 - http://www.comunistleague.us/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=47&Itemid=61

The rest of this programmatic thesis, building on the foundations set in *The Class Struggle Revisited* (as quoted above), elaborates upon the four parts of a formal program for Class-Strugglist Social Labour as an organization, again as highlighted by Kautsky: “a characterisation of present day society and its development,” the “final aims” of Class-Strugglist Social Labour, “the means which can and will lead to the realisation of these aims” and, yes, how to make the means and initiation of achieving the final aims most effective – “**kept consciously in view**” – as opposed to lesser degrees of effectiveness that make the class struggle “move forever in a circle.”

CHAPTER 2: THE DEVELOPMENT OF CAPITALISM

Modern Class Relations

- Class relations
 - o Control -> Management (planning, organizing, directing, controlling)
 - More on framework problems in a later chapter
 - o Worker issues: “low wage/high debt” model
 - <http://linchpin.ca/content/Economy/Debt-Exploitation-Coming-Economic-Crisis>
 - http://21stcenturysocialism.com/article/the_return_of_the_prophet_01780.html
 - o Further exploration of “Class #2” re. **dispossessed yet unproductive labour** (term used to describe full-time nannies and such)
 - o Bourgeois issues: consumptionism / consumption fetishism
 - o Fundamental Marxian Theorem
 - Definition: Labour is exploited if the labour-hours embodied in the commodities workers buy is less than the labour-hours the workers expend to earn the wages with which they buy those commodities.
 - Theorem: In an economy in which some type of labour appears directly in each commodity, then: if all rates of exploitation are positive, the profit rate is positive; and if the profit rate is positive, at least one rate of exploitation is positive.
 - <http://robertvieneau.blogspot.com/2008/02/profits-resulting-from-exploitation-of.html>
 - Me: Overall, labour is exploited by the propertied classes, at various rates, when the labour-time embodied in the goods and services workers buy is less than the labour-

time the workers expend to earn the wages with which they buy those products, because without these rates of exploitation, rates of profit cannot be positive.

Global Macro-Capitalism

- CSR outline plus distinguish trade capital from finance capital proper

Immiseration of Labour: Disproportionate

"If the owner of labour power works today, tomorrow he must again be able to repeat the same process in the same conditions as regards health and strength. His means of subsistence must therefore be sufficient to maintain him in his normal state as a labouring individual. His natural wants, such as food, clothing, fuel, and housing, vary according to the climatic and other physical conditions of his country. On the other hand, the number and extent of his so-called necessary wants, as also the modes of satisfying them, are themselves the product of historical development, and depend therefore to a great extent on the degree of civilisation of a country, more particularly on the conditions under which, and consequently on the habits and degree of comfort in which, the class of ["free"] labourers has been formed. In [distinct contrast] therefore to the case of other commodities, there enters into the determination of the value of labour power a historical and moral element." (Karl Marx)

One more related thing to consider in all of this is the misunderstood concept known as the immiseration of labour, along with the language associated with it. Not long ago, ultra-conservatives in the United States talked of "the death tax" as a fear-mongering description for the estate tax. Meanwhile, the immiseration of labour has been dullishly described, until now, as being either absolute very long ago or as being relative since then. The possibility that the early 20th-century folklore of Italian socialists naming their sons Lassalo and their daughters Marxina was actual history suggests the agitational and organizational impact of the long-forgotten Ferdinand Lassalle on the working class of his day, as noted by historian Lars Lih:

Many features of Lassalle's programme, tactics and organisation were rejected by German Social Democracy as the years went by [...] Yet his current absence from historical memory must distort our view of Social-Democratic activists such as Lenin, for whom Lassalle was a hero even after all the criticisms were accepted. Lassalle put the political strategy adumbrated in the Communist Manifesto on the map. He caught two essential features of that strategy: the emotional appeal of the call to a historical mission and the organisational implications of preparing the workers to carry out that mission. He can indeed be called the first Social-Democrat.

In his campaign against anti-political sentiments among proponents of cooperatives and labour union activity, Lassalle popularized the subsistence theory of wages – inspired by the ideas of the ultra-reactionary demographer Thomas Malthus, but also by some observations by the economist David Ricardo – which stated that the competitive nature of the labour market would drive real wages (and, these days, both salary and contract equivalents) all the way down to subsistence levels in order to keep the population constant. This "Iron Law of Wages" even appeared in the Gotha Programme – and was naturally criticized by an acerbic Marx:

"Starting from these basic principles, the German Workers' party strives by all legal means for the free state and socialist society; the breaking of the iron law of wages by the abolition of the system of wage-labour, the abolition of exploitation in every form, the removal of all social and political inequality."

I shall return to the "free" state later.

So, in future, the German Workers' party has got to believe in Lassalle's "iron law of wages"! That this may not be lost, the nonsense is perpetrated of speaking of the "abolition of the wage system" (it should read: system of wage labor), "together with the iron law of wages". If I abolish wage labor, then naturally I abolish its laws also, whether they are of "iron" or sponge. But Lassalle's attack on wage labor turns almost solely on this so-called law. In order, therefore, to prove that Lassalle's sect has conquered, the "wage system" must be abolished "together with the iron law of wages" and not without it.

It is well known that nothing of the "iron law of wages" is Lassalle's except the word "iron" borrowed from Goethe's "great, eternal iron laws". The word "iron" is a label by which the true believers recognize one another. But if I take the law with Lassalle's stamp on it, and consequently in his sense, then I must also take it with his substantiation for it. And what is that? As Lange already showed, shortly after Lassalle's death, it is the Malthusian theory of population (preached by Lange himself).

Marx's valid rebuttal of the Malthusian background of the "Iron Law of Wages" and his reference to sponges notwithstanding, Capitalism – or much more accurately called "bourgeois-fied commodity production" – has developed over enough centuries to crystallize Marx's concept of the immiseration of labour into an "iron law." Also, just for additional agitational effect, the "relative" immiseration or impoverishment of labour should henceforth be referred to as "disproportionate."

It is often said by economists who are apologists of the bourgeois status quo that "a rising tide lifts all boats." Indeed, more and more people are lifted from absolute poverty in the broader sense. Note, however, the word "absolute." In the "trickle-down" best of times, workers' incomes do not rise as rapidly as the incomes of the bourgeoisie and of other non-worker classes above, and may be offset by rising inflation – hence the antiquated terminology "relative immiseration." Not so coincidentally, Kautsky alluded to this in his outstanding *The Road to Power*.

Wages follow price movements, but slowly and only to a certain degree. The possessor of labor power gains more in declines of price and loses more with rising prices than buyers of other products. His standpoint in the goods market is in antagonism to that of the sellers. In spite of the fact that he produces all and consumes but a portion of his product, his standpoint is that of the consumer and not that of the producer. His product does not belong to him, but to his exploiters, the capitalists.

In regards to products not belonging to worker-consumers, over the past few decades, the credit system has expanded rapidly due to the growing worker-consumer debt slavery (although direct labour is not demanded as a means to pay off these debts) but this expansion also increases interest and related costs for worker-consumers, eating away at the rise in workers' incomes. Also, downward pressure on workers' incomes coming from the prospect of unemployment occurs when rates of industrial and non-industrial profit fall, on top of the usual inflationary concerns – thus, to quote the program of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, leading "still more rapidly to the relative and sometimes to the absolute deterioration of the condition of the working class." In regards to decreases in rates of non-industrial profit, specifically, there can be increases in the usually bothersome collection calls and also in mortgage foreclosures. This results in the diversion of much of workers' incomes towards consumer and mortgage debt payments. Only when a rare depression occurs does the immiseration of labour become universally absolute, as workers' incomes are driven downward towards subsistence levels (but not in order to keep the population constant); even in the medium run, the illusion of real workers' incomes increasing due to more downward spirals in consumer prices cannot offset earlier periods of inflationary immiseration.

What are the transnational or global ramifications of the above? There have been times wherein certain bourgeois-capitalist states have somehow "escaped" this "iron law," or have there? Throughout the history of capitalism itself, such "escapes" by the more developed states (read: miniscule immiseration) have come at the expense of less developed ones, as noted above regarding "global macro-capitalism." Programmatically speaking, an analysis of capitalism and its development like the one in this chapter – in terms of class relations, immiseration, and "global macro-capitalism" – should lead straight to the transformative demands that cannot be realized within bourgeois-fied commodity production, demands which actually serve best as a conclusion to all of this and not as a sort of "bridge" between basic principles and lesser demands.

Transitional Sloganeering, Transformations, and Directional Demands

"Such a perspective is necessary so that when a struggle is waging around initial demands and is finding the ear of wider layers of workers and building a fight, then other, more ambitious, demands can be raised. Then, when these are being fought for, other, still more ambitious, proposals can be put. Eventually such a 'step-by-step' approach might lead to the raising of transitional measures if the necessary pre-conditions are present. Trotskyists claim that transitional demands provide the bridge between immediate struggles and socialist revolution; in fact they will rarely provide any such connection. Instead we will usually need a bridge, or a series of bridges, to the bridge. Only then can we cross it." (Alistair Mitchell)

In my earlier work, I deemed Leon Trotsky's specific "transitional" approach to be very problematic, to say the least. When formulating *The Transitional Program*, Trotsky had two questions in mind, not one:

- 1) How can the gulf between the “left social-democratic” reform demands and the revolutionary maximum demands be overcome?
- 2) What is the best approach to bridge the gulf between the “left social-democratic” reform demands and the revolutionary maximum demands?

Shortly before her martyrdom, Rosa Luxemburg offered a similar answer to the first question:

Our program is deliberately opposed to the standpoint of the Erfurt Program; it is deliberately opposed to the separation of the immediate, so-called minimal demands formulated for the political and economic struggle from the socialist goal regarded as a maximal program. In this deliberate opposition [to the Erfurt Program] we liquidate the results of seventy years' evolution and above all, the immediate results of the World War, in that we say: For us there is no minimal and no maximal program; socialism is one and the same thing: this is the minimum we have to realize today.

And less than a decade after her martyrdom, one August Thalheimer offered a similar answer to the second question:

Now we come to the question of transitional slogans in general, and to the question whether transitional slogans may be propagated in non-acute revolutionary situations.

[...]

Transitional slogans in the sense of the tactical theory of the Third Congress of [the Communist International] are, by their nature, as by the period of their use, something else. They are slogans which in the course of the struggle for power, that is, in an acutely revolutionary situation, are taken up and partially realised, even before the working class has established its state power, but where it is already capable, in a number of areas, if not yet in a centralised form, of weakening capitalist rule in the factories and the bourgeois state power, and of strengthening its own class power. The implementation of these measures against the resistance of the bourgeoisie, the attempt to extend them, unfolds the question of power in its full extent. The resistance of the bourgeoisie poses for the working class the alternative: either to wholly lose the partial gains again or to continue advancing further.

[...]

One has simply allowed oneself to be led astray by the common word 'transitional' in the expressions transitional measures in the sense of the Communist Manifesto and transitional slogans in the sense of the Third Congress. In the one and the other case it concerns in essence different transitions and therefore different periods of struggle. In the one case it means measures of the victorious proletarian revolution, in the other case slogans and actions of the working class struggling for power. **If I envisage only the word 'transition', without considering from what to what is the transition, then the change of the socialist society into the communist is also a 'transition' with corresponding transitional measures, slogans and phenomena.**

As noted in my earlier work and in Chapter 1, the ten-point program outlined in the Communist Manifesto, while allegedly transitional back in the day, is to a large extent modest or "minimal" by modern standards – although the “equal liability of all to work” remains a transitional measure primarily against “those who acquire anything [but] do not work” and secondarily against those whose incomes are derived from unproductive labour on their own part. Meanwhile, Thalheimer’s and Trotsky’s common answer to the second question that the latter had in mind was, at best, rather mixed. Their usage of the word “transitional” scared away workers from struggling for numerous reforms of a primarily economic nature such that, to quote the latter’s remarks on the sliding scale of wages, it would be “easier to overthrow capitalism than to realise this demand under capitalism. Not one of our demands will be realised under capitalism. That is why we are calling them transitional demands.” Nowadays, however, many businesses offer pay raises on the basis of some sort of cost-of-living adjustment. On the other hand, the call to abolish “business secrets” and information asymmetry more generally may (in a very qualified sense) still be valid, simply because of the competitive business environment and because of bourgeoisie-worker relations.

[Note: From my own perspective, I would like to link this demand to both the efficient capital market hypothesis and definition of “fair market value” as applied to bourgeoisie-worker relations. In regards to the former link, the efficient capital market hypothesis states that no one can “outperform the market” (relative to share prices) on a consistent basis by using financial and other information already known to the broader

capital markets. In broader terms, this hypothesis deals with the relationship between financial information and share price (hence “efficiency”). Numerous studies have suggested problems with this hypothesis, particularly with stronger assertions of efficiency, namely due to the issue of insider trading. In regards to the latter link, the lengthy legal definition of “fair market value,” as applied to bourgeoisie-worker relations, is... the highest price available, expressed in terms of cash or cash equivalent, for an arm’s length transaction on an open, unrestricted market between informed, prudent parties, with none of the parties acting under compulsion. Of course, there is a pro-bourgeoisie information asymmetry regarding the value of labour, and most workers are compelled to work in order to earn a living.]

Very recently, various “anti-capitalist” social movements have suggested going past Trotsky’s “transitional” sloganeering (which included threshold demands) and back to Marx, using instead just “directional” or genuinely transitional demands. One post-modernist radical, Ben Trott (the similarity of his surname to Trotsky’s being coincidental), has followed the line of thinking presented by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri in their excessively post-modernist book *Empire*, which is rife with academic jargon. These transformative demands, either combined or even individually, would necessitate a revolutionary departure from capitalist social relations – at least according to Trott. Consider, for example, the popular post-modernist call for unconditional basic income, which should not depend on legal status and which requires global implementation in sufficient monetary quantities “to ensure that income becomes permanently de-linked from productivity.” Undoubtedly this is inspired by the communist axiom “from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs” that has been raised since 1840 by one Louis Blanc (and not by Marx in 1875), but this demand can – as suggested by the monetarist Milton Friedman – be implemented under any form of capitalism, especially at the expense of privatizing social benefits! Paul Cockshott, a co-author of *Towards a New Socialism*, criticized this rather *lumpen* demand (not a proletarian one) from the underrated perspective of wages and salary/contract equivalents:

At present in most capitalist countries unemployed workers get social security payments which are set at around the bare subsistence minimum. This sets a floor below which wages can not fall, since unemployed people are not going to be willing to give up a subsistence dole for a less than subsistence wage.

If a basic income scheme were introduced in a capitalist economy the basic income provided would again be a bare subsistence minimum. Then, however, it would be worthwhile for a worker to take on a job that paid half the subsistence wage since she would still be getting her basic income and would end up with somewhere between 1 and 1 and a half times the subsistence minimum after tax. But if the employers could hire labour at a net cost to themselves of half subsistence, this would be used to drive down the wages of those already in work.

The net result would be to drive wages lower than the minimum to which they can at present be driven.

All in all it is a very dangerous proposition for the working class but makes good sense from the standpoint of capitalist liberalism.

What, then, of other demands that should necessitate a revolutionary departure from bourgeois-fied commodity social relations? Hardt, Negri, and Trott suggested another transformative demand worth considering in the sphere of freedom of movement:

Further examples of directional demands could focus on migration, its movements and struggles: ‘For the Right to Remain’, ‘For the Right to Legalisation’, ‘Close All Detention Centres’, or even ‘For the Right to (Equal) Rights’.

Notwithstanding the failure to consider both a globalized and upward equal standard of living for equal or equivalent work to be realized on the basis of real purchasing power parity, on the one hand, and a transnationally entrenched bill of workers’ rights (both political and economic) on the other, this is a very timely transformative demand, when considering the scapegoating of immigrants that arises as a result of the increased mobility of labour on a global level, the overly lengthy processing of immigration documents by the various states, and the frequent underemployment of immigrants (if not illegal compensation below subsistence levels). Since the aforementioned “anti-capitalist” social movements have not fully developed the “directional” programmatic development, a few more transformative demands will be considered, both raised (thankfully) by Marxists.

Given the recent hysterical fuss being made in the various bourgeois media outlets about corporate welfare measures aimed at the financial measures industry, with many going to the point of reciting “Step Five:

centralization of credit in the hands of the state” (quoting the Communist Manifesto in a woefully ignorant manner), it is timely indeed to revisit a similar demand made in *The Transitional Program*:

In order to create a unified system of investments and credits, along a rational plan corresponding to the interests of the entire people, it is necessary to merge all the banks into a single national institution. Only the expropriation of the private banks and the concentration of the entire credit system in the hands of the state will provide the latter with the necessary actual, i.e., material resources – and not merely paper and bureaucratic resources – for economic planning.

The expropriation of the banks in no case implies the expropriation of bank deposits. On the contrary, the single state bank will be able to create much more favorable conditions for the small depositors than could the private banks. In the same way, only the state bank can establish for farmers, tradesmen and small merchants conditions of favorable, that is, cheap credit. Even more important, however, is the circumstance that the entire economy – first and foremost large-scale industry and transport directed by a single financial staff, will serve the vital interests of the workers and all other toilers.

However, the state-ization of the banks will produce these favorable results only if the state power itself passes completely from the hands of the exploiters into the hands of the toilers.

For this demand to become genuinely transitional, as opposed to the Marx’s more reform-oriented “The whole of Germany shall be declared a single and indivisible republic [...] A state bank, whose paper issues are legal tender, shall replace all private banks” (shortly after publishing the Communist Manifesto), it should be extended to the transnational level. **The monopolization of all central, commercial, and consumer credit in the hands of a single transnational bank under absolute public ownership (and thus greater public management over that specific form of credit known as M0, M1, M2, and the entire money supply generally), while transformative, also facilitates the fulfillment of at least two other transformative demands, one more obvious than the other: the outright suppression of all public debts (though historically possible on its own in less financialized bourgeois societies) and the end to imperialist conflicts generally, not just wars, as vehicles for capital accumulation.**

[Note: The aforementioned monopolization also precludes acts of legalized predatory lending, predatory account fees, and predatory financial practices more generally towards the working class, as well as allows for the overt, subtle, and covert suppression of the excessive capital mobility associated with capital flights. However, I am not sure if the preclusion is something transformative or in fact something achievable within bourgeois-fied commodity production.]

One more transformative demand should be considered, and this absolutely necessitates a revolutionary transition away from even petty-capitalist social relations: **The recognition in law that human labour, both manual and manual, and its technological, labour-saving equivalent are the only non-natural sources of value production (as established by Adam Smith, David Ricardo, and Karl Marx) – through the extension of litigation rights to include class-action lawsuits and speedy awards of punitive damages against all private employers who extract any sort of surplus value and related surplus labour from their workers.** Ironically, it was the market-socialist Oskar Lange who stated that, if workers do not move immediately to transform the economy, society would become socialist only in name. This is especially true when workers as a future ruling class deal with the petit-bourgeoisie with proverbial swords of Damocles such as this hanging above the latter, as Lenin noted in 1918:

The petty bourgeoisie oppose every kind of state interference, accounting and control, whether it be state capitalist or state socialist. This is an absolutely unquestionable fact of reality, and the root of the economic mistake of the “Left Communists” is that they have failed to understand it. The profiteer, the commercial racketeer, the disrupter of monopoly – these are our principal “internal” enemies, the enemies of the economic measures of Soviet power [...] We know that the million tentacles of this petty-bourgeois hydra now and again encircle various sections of the workers, that [...] profiteering forces its way into every pore of our social and economic organism. Those who fail to see this show by their blindness that they are slaves of petty-bourgeois prejudices.

CHAPTER 3: BASIC PRINCIPLES

“For there can be no mass party, no party of a class, without full clarity of essential shadings, without an open struggle between various tendencies, without informing the masses as to which leaders and which organisations of the Party are pursuing this or that line. Without this, a party worthy of the name cannot be built, and we are building it.” (Vladimir Lenin)

For those subscribing to the textbook interpretations of Lenin, the above was written in 1907, when “democracy” was emphasized over “centralism.” Regardless, the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party functioned on a number of basic principles. This idea of real unity around basic principles has been lost amongst the various circle-sects (be they Marxist, class-strugglist anarchist, pareconist, or whatever), each with extended “principles” (tactics and historical questions) and each – even with their sorry states today – willing to engage only in half-hearted unity with one another through “workers’ united fronts.” Worse, this has resulted in a rise of individual activism and a further diseconomy of scale. This modern equivalent of the local circle spirit that predated the existence of the RSDLP must be put to an end.

The number of agreed-upon (not just “accepted”) basic principles for the modern era can, in my opinion, be counted in one hand – even if the democracy question posed in Chapter 5 yields an additional basic principle agreed to by everyone after the fourth basic principle of *partiinost* in Chapter 4.

Class Strugglism

“And now as to myself, no credit is due to me for discovering the existence of classes in modern society or the struggle between them. Long before me bourgeois historians had described the historical development of this class struggle and bourgeois economists, the economic economy of the classes.” (Karl Marx)

In 1852, Marx emphasized that the socially scientific concept of class struggle was not something that he discovered. Indeed, Lenin read the above and commented in *The State and Revolution*.

It is often said and written that the main point in Marx's theory is the class struggle. But this is wrong. And this wrong notion very often results in an opportunist distortion of Marxism and its falsification in a spirit acceptable to the bourgeoisie. For the theory of the class struggle was created not by Marx, but by the bourgeoisie before Marx, and, generally speaking, it is acceptable to the bourgeoisie. Those who recognize only the class struggle are not yet Marxists; they may be found to be still within the bounds of bourgeois thinking and bourgeois politics. To confine Marxism to the theory of the class struggle means curtailing Marxism, distorting it, reducing it to something acceptable to the bourgeoisie. Only he is a Marxist who extends the recognition of the class struggle to the recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Unfortunately, like the Smithian- and Ricardian-derived labour theory of “non-price” value (**in actual fact a more detailed theory taking into account both nature and labour-saving technology created and/or operated through human labour, as acknowledged by “late Marx” himself and contrary to the apologists for private capital’s supposed role in value production**), an undistorted understanding of the concept of class struggle, without the vulgarity of class-based conspiracies to exploit labour, is one of many things that the apologists of the bourgeois status quo would rather sweep under their dirty rug.

The history of the bourgeois intellectual struggle against this particular concept of theirs started with the “evolutionary socialists” and their pioneering theoretician, Eduard Bernstein. Towards the end of the 19th century, he attacked the concept of class struggle. A little over 20 years later, the superstitious notion of cross-class unity found for itself the first of many hosts: colonial fascism! Today, its host can be found amongst the highly emotional national-chauvinists who shout “class warfare” when even the liberal class divide (based on income) is brought up by the politically correct “progressives” and “social-democrats” – the latter with their host of “socialist,” “democratic-socialist,” “social-democratic,” “labour” and “worker” parties – who themselves reject the concept of class struggle in favour of more abstract, ivory-tower notions like “class conflict” and of mere “identity politics” based on ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and so on.

On the more “revolutionary” side, historically, were bomb-throwing “revolutionaries” (insurrectionary anarchists and others who predated class-strugglist anarchism) who preferred their euphemistic “propaganda of the deed.” Today, this extremely anti-political hooliganism can be found amongst those throwing Molotov cocktails at protest events, and complementing them would be equally anti-political lifestyleists who prefer “revolutionary” individual lifestyles at the expense of the class struggle.

Therefore, the first basic principle around which to unite is the unequivocal agreement with (as well as conscious political participation in) this fundamental statement in the Communist Manifesto, which can no longer be taken for granted:

The [written] history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes [...] The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones.

Social Labour

“The economic emancipation of the working class will be achieved only by the transfer to collective ownership by the working people of all means and products of production and the organisation of all the functions of social and economic life in accordance with the requirements of society. The modern development of technology in civilised societies not only provides the material possibility for such an organisation but makes it necessary and inevitable for solving contradictions which hinder the quiet and all-round development of those societies.” (Georgi Plekhanov)

With the development of bourgeois-fied commodity production, it is no longer sufficient to advocate, in the words of Georgi Plekhanov (the “father” of Russian Marxism who, in my opinion, was a poor man’s Kautsky), “the transfer to collective ownership by the working people of all means and products of production and the organisation of all the functions of social and economic life in accordance with the requirements of society” (the latter dealing specifically with the consumer goods and services market, which predates capitalism).

For example, consider the modern “pension fund socialism” which I commented on in my earlier work, quoting an article by Joe Guinan in *The Voice of the Turtle*:

To take America as the most dramatic example, in 1974 U.S. pension funds had a portfolio of about \$150 billion, compared with a total list price for the stock market of under \$500 billion, representing 30 percent of the total value of listed companies. Explosive growth during the 1980s and 1990s resulted in a capital pool, by 1998, of \$7 trillion of workers' pension fund savings, or 45 percent of all publicly traded equity in the United States. It is not uncommon for occupational pension schemes to have a fund of far, far greater worth than the companies that actually run them. Worldwide, pension funds had a global value of \$13 trillion in 1999. Here we have the elephant in the living room, the 800-pound gorilla (add sufficiently impressive animal metaphors to taste) loose in the financial heart of corporate capitalism.

[...]


*'Pension Fund Socialism' – the term – first entered the political lexicon back in the 1970s when Peter Drucker, the relatively enlightened philosopher of management, wrote *The Unseen Revolution*, in which he began to fret and ponder the implications of this rise of 'labour's capital.' His book made the bizarre claim that "if 'socialism' is defined as 'ownership of the means of production by the workers' - and this is both the orthodox and the only rigorous definition - then the United States is the first truly 'Socialist' country."*

Like employee share purchase plans, this “pension fund socialism” is, at the present time, merely a tool for big businesses to obtain additional financial leverage on the collective back of the working class, all the while continuing the exploitation of labour (so much for the “Third Way” property distributism advocated by some Roman Catholics of petit-bourgeois background). Factual management and even significant-influence ownership still remain with the bourgeoisie.

Meanwhile, technological developments have swept aside the so-called “socialist calculation debate” regarding management (and also responsibility, contrary to the ignorant claims that the goals of the class-strugglist left encourage laziness) over the consumer goods and services market, “realistic” opponents of which actually defend the capitalism-specific, not-so-efficient markets of labour and capital (“weak-form efficiency” at best for the latter under bourgeois-fied commodity production, for those familiar with the efficient capital market hypothesis). Nevertheless, systemic worker management and not systemic collective worker management facilitates political unity with proper, class-strugglist market socialists.


Therefore, the second basic principle around which to unite is the systemic establishment of worker management (i.e., planning, organization, direction, and control) and responsibility over an all-encompassing participatory economy – free from surplus labour appropriations by any elite minority, from dispossession of the commons and more in the form of private ownership relations over productive and other non-possessive property, from all forms of debt slavery, and from all divisions of labour beyond technical ones (overspecialization) – as a very realistic but basic means to end the exploitation and alienation of human labour power in productive labour and of humanity as a whole.

Class-Strugglist Social Labour: Transnational Emancipation

“At the founding of the International, we expressly formulated the **bat** y: The emancipation of the working class must be the work of the working class itself.” (Frederick Engels)

With historical hindsight there is more than one aspect of this famous slogan. However, this was originally a rejection of emancipation being the act of other classes. Even Lenin recognized this in his draft programme of the RSDLP, written in 1902:

The emancipation of the workers must be the act of the working class itself. All the other classes of present-day society stand for the preservation of the foundations of the existing economic system.

In 1966, the Marxist Hal Draper wrote *The Two Souls of Socialism*,  which he used the term “socialism from above” to describe real or imaginary emancipation attempts coming from other classes. In the case of the both the bourgeoisie and petit-bourgeoisie, they have their “socially responsible” but ultimately paternalistic private philanthropists and lesser-evil legislation (and regulation), the latter being enacted usually by “social-democratic” or “social justice” welfarists in the interests of “stakeholders,” and as part of a broader culture of legalism. Moreover, introduced earlier was a form of distributism, the “Third Way” property distributism advocated by some Roman Catholics of petit-bourgeois background. This, however, is only part of a **spectrum of petit-bourgeois egalitarianism and other economic radicalism that can range from radical equality of opportunity through equal private ownership relations over all productive and other non-possessive property, despite the need to properly tackle the inheritance problem, all the way to the obsession with egalitarianism found in 18th- and 19th-century French socialism – in the form of equality in outcomes regardless of need**, hence the ignorant but historic conflation of this with Marx’s political economy.

Elsewhere stand obviously the not-so-emancipatory paths of more classes. In the case of those who, on a class basis, do not develop society’s labour power and its capabilities but are non-dispossessed, such mainly “middle-income” and really self-employed service providers have their politics of provincialism, localism, and ever-atomizing individualism. In the more socially productive and progressive case of Michael Albert’s coordinators (who are dispossessed), they have their scientific managers and social engineers.

In modern times, the slogan is used against vulgar “vanguardists” and their philosophical or conspiratorial circle-sects, as well as against labour bureaucrats, countering the notion that worker-class emancipation can be the act of a tiny minority – and thus not rely on the participation of a highly class-conscious working class (much less one that is highly organized and especially independent in both political and ideological respects). One lesser-known aspect of this slogan is directed against spontaneist “revolutionaries” and Bernstein’s “evolutionary-socialist” heirs. Both groups, in their vulgar materialism and organizational defeatism – sometimes to the point of establishing what American feminist Jo Freeman called “tyrannies of structurelessness” – leave the emancipation of the working class to mere material conditions and, when fashionable, to mere identity struggles and Not-In-My-Back-Yard (NIMBY) amateurism. In doing so, they facilitate class conciliation. The least known aspect of this slogan, as explained further in the next chapter, can be used against emphasizing particular divisions within the working class, most notoriously factory labour, as the sole “revolutionary agent” or “revolutionary subject.”

Therefore, a clearer declaration that would summarize the three basic principles covered in this chapter – those of Class-Strugglist Social Labour – would be this: The transnational emancipation of the working class and of labour power itself can only be brought about by the movement of the working class itself, hence “for itself”: highly class-conscious, collectively organized, and independent both politically and ideologically.

CHAPTER 4: THE “PARTY” QUESTION AND *PARTIIINOST*

“In order for the socialist and the worker movements to become reconciled and to become fused into a single movement, socialism had to break out of the utopian way of thinking. This was the world-historical deed of Marx and Engels. In the Communist Manifesto of 1847 they laid the scientific foundations of a new modern socialism, or, as we say today, of Social Democracy. By so doing, they gave socialism solidity and turned what had hitherto been a beautiful dream of well-meaning enthusiasts into an earnest object of struggle and [also] showed this to be the necessary consequence of economic development. To the fighting proletariat they gave a clear awareness of its historical task and they placed it on a condition to speed to its great goal as quickly and with as few sacrifices as possible. The socialists no longer have the task of freely inventing a new society but rather uncovering its elements in existing society. No more do they have to bring salvation from its misery to the proletariat from above, but rather they have to support its class struggle through increasing its insight and promoting its economic and political organizations, and in so doing bring about as quickly and as painlessly as possible the day when the proletariat will be able to save itself. The task of Social Democracy is to make the class struggle of the proletariat aware of its aim and capable of choosing the best means to attain this aim.” (Karl Kautsky)

With this profoundly true and important paragraph, the merger formula of the revolutionary social democracy of the late 19th century and early 20th century, also the central theme of my earlier work and arguably even of this programmatic thesis, Karl Johann Kautsky summarized the fourth basic principle of Class-Strugglist Social Labour to be agreed upon. This principle of what can be called “partyism” touches upon numerous subjects, from consciousness and spontaneity to class independence to organization and bureaucracy to geography to revolutionary strategy.

Linguistically, it should be noted that the German language does not have an exact translation for “working class,” “workers movement,” or “workers party.” The English language does not combine nouns together, such as *Arbeiterklasse*, *Arbeiterbewegung*, or *Arbeiterpartei*, as easily. However, as the historian Lars Lih noted, the word *Arbeiter* was fundamental to the aforementioned revolutionary social democracy. The use of the term “worker class,” especially in contrast to “labour,” will be clearer later on in this chapter.

Crises of Various Types of Consciousness: Revisiting False Consciousness and Ideology

“The vehicle of science is not the proletariat, but the [...] intelligentsia; modern socialism arises among individual members of this stratum and then is communicated by them to proletarians who stand out due to their intellectual development, and these then bring it into the class struggle of the proletariat where conditions allow.” (Karl Kautsky)

One of the “scandalous passages” in *What Is To Be Done?* dealt with the subject of consciousness or awareness from a sociological perspective. The historian Lars Lih has shown that the controversy was in the emphasis and not the passage as a whole. **The proper emphasis is not in the glorification of the intelligentsia, but in those educated proletarians (such as this author at the time of writing) who bring revolutionary theory into the class struggle of the proletariat. More importantly, the class movement referred to in Kautsky’s words is by no means the class as a whole!**

In my earlier work, I gave a contemporary answer to how the “vehicle of science” has changed:

- 1) *Only those workers who, under initial conditions (the relative absence of open class struggle), support radical or revolutionary change due to their education are capable of “spontaneously” leaving behind underclass or petit-bourgeois false consciousness. All others (“the proletarian masses”), according to Kautsky, “still vegetate, helpless and hopeless” through having little free time or through being unemployed.*
- 2) **Since both bourgeois and petit-bourgeois intellectuals are ancient relics, the “spontaneous” development and proliferation of specifically revolutionary class consciousness is left to the modern equivalent and even more: professional and some clerical workers, as well as those in the “class of flux.”**
- 3) *When the process of introducing specifically revolutionary class consciousness to the proletarian masses and even radicalized workers begins, it is done most effectively (since there are less effective means) when the organized vanguard acts “not as ordinary workers, but as socialist theoreticians.”*

This third point is “profoundly true and important,” because modern “vanguard” circles today act as “ordinary workers” in trying to spread specifically revolutionary class consciousness. This is the main reason why they have been ineffective!

However, because of the third point, the genuine class separation that existed between the non-proletarian intellectuals and the proletarian masses has been replaced by an artificial “theory gulf” between different groups of proletarians, so to speak. Socialist theoreticians, especially those without direct experience in either the immediate worker struggles or the open class struggle later on, can overcome this gulf by connecting their dynamic-materialist knowledge with the material conditions of the proletarian masses as a whole, thereby finding real expression of the newfound knowledge.

What I said above addresses in fact two types of consciousness, one of which pertains to “the struggle for socialism.” For anti-economist reasons explained below, in the next chapter, and in the Appendix B commentary on the forgotten story of syndicalism, the two types of consciousness should be addressed separately.

In her book *Rebuilding the Left*, Marta Harnecker did note another aspect of confusion on the question of consciousness:

*I find it difficult to argue against these statements that history has confirmed. **I think the problem arises when we identify socialist consciousness with class consciousness.***

[...]

I find it necessary, therefore, to distinguish three levels of consciousness in the working class:

Spontaneous or naïve consciousness is consciousness necessarily deformed by the effects of the ruling ideology, and most of Althusser’s reflections on ideology as deformed knowledge of reality are applicable to this type of consciousness. It is typical, as Sanchez Vazquez says, of a class society in the past, when the working class knew only of economic class practice.

Class consciousness – the very existence of which implies a distancing from bourgeois ideology – is no longer a factor of cohesion for the dominant system but one of antagonism and is not necessarily deformed. This is the consciousness acquired when the class struggle takes on a political dimension, but this consciousness is still not socialist, in as far as it represents resistance to the situation of exploitation rather than a proposal for an alternative to do away with it.

Enlightened class consciousness or socialist consciousness is that class consciousness enlightened by Marxist science.

[...]

*To conclude, I think that **it is correct to say that socialism, as scientific theory, cannot arise solely from the practice of the labour movement but needs to be imported from without.** On the other hand, I think that the acquisition of class consciousness is indeed linked to social practice, to the class struggle.*

But is this separate definition of class consciousness correct? It is simply too broad, ranging from “resistance to the situation of exploitation” to “distancing from bourgeois ideology.” In fact, **“resistance to the situation of exploitation” can be and has been interpreted in a way that counters the premise that every open class struggle is a political struggle**, and one such way can be found in the forgotten story of syndicalism.

Suggested below are at least four different types of consciousness, and how they relate to the class movement and even to the class as a whole:

- 1) **Naïve consciousness is the more proper term to use than spontaneous consciousness, since spontaneity already spans across all kinds of consciousness.** Here one can find the usual labour disputes (not “struggles”) around wages, hours, and conditions. One can also find populist rhetoric from economic populism of the lowest common denominator (pertaining to tax-and-spend politics, subsidies, business regulations, monetary policy, and international trade) up to the point of outright demagoguery, all based on underclass or petit-bourgeois pretensions. Not-In-My-Back-Yard (NIMBY) amateurism, so-called “identity politics” based on race, gender, etc. and “Green politics” based

on countering pollution can be found here, as well. Overall, the “social-democratic” or “social justice” interpretation of “class consciousness” prevails here, and this naïve consciousness emerges from the class as a whole, with no class movement involved.

2) So-called “socialist consciousness,” or the consciousness pertaining to “the struggle for socialism,” is at the furthest end apart from naïve consciousness, and as mentioned above, is something that can emerge from inside the class but is also something that originates outside any class movement. **It should be noted that “outside the class as a whole” means coming from sources like tenured professors with subordinate research staff – the former being coordinator intellectuals, once the elite of the old petit-bourgeois intelligentsia, and not proletarians.**

3) Political consciousness is something identified mainly in discussions on the lack thereof. For example, today’s deficit of political consciousness or awareness is one of a few obstacles preventing ordinary people from being more politically active beyond marching every few years to that woefully limited political venue that is the ballot box. Even then, there is more talk about the voter cynicism towards all electoral parties that has been translated into ever-ineffective abstentions, thus threatening the legitimacy of the entire bourgeois “liberal-democratic” project. **In some cases political consciousness can be identified in discussions on clear signs, such as communal politics in Venezuela or voter awareness of numerous national issues in Bolivia.** In extreme cases, political consciousness is the type of consciousness referred to by the anarchist likes of Mikhail Bakunin when they are obsessed with provoking mass action by any means necessary. Almost like with “socialist consciousness,” political consciousness generally comes from outside any class movement, but again the question is: **How much political consciousness can come from inside the class as a whole, and how much must come from the outside?**

4) **Full class consciousness or revolutionary class consciousness stems from political consciousness, since every open class struggle is a political struggle, and is defined in the goals of “proletarian parties” mentioned in the Communist Manifesto, especially the third goal:** the transformation of the working class in itself into a class for itself, the establishment of worker-class hegemony at the expense of bourgeois hegemony, and **the implementation of minimum programs like the one in the next chapter** – whereby individual demands could easily be implemented without eliminating the bourgeois state order, but **whereby full implementation would mean that the working class will have expropriated ruling-class political power in policymaking, legislation, execution-administration, and other areas.** Because the first type of consciousness contains the aims of so-called “bourgeois workers parties” that lay claim to “Labour” or “Social-Democratic” or even “Democratic Socialist” labels, no such parties aspire towards the goals that mark full or revolutionary class consciousness, no matter how distinct this is from “socialist consciousness.” **Organized expression of this form of consciousness is precisely a genuine worker-class movement, where “worker-class” is used instead of “working-class” to emphasize the merger of worker demographics and elucidated class issues!**

One Joe Craig put that last point on worker-class movements vs. mere “labour movements” another way in his review of Lih’s book:

The task isn’t to merge Marxism to the existing workers movement because that movement cannot even carry out the most elementary and immediate tasks of defence of working class interests. As we have said, this is not just a question of replacing bad leaders with good ones.

Secondly the merger must not be with what has in the past, and still is now, most often paraded as socialism. So the history of the twentieth century begs the question – what socialism are we talking about? Certainly not that of Stalin or Mao or even Castro. The liberatory core of Marxism needs restating, not debased into reformism.

Fetishizing Decentralized Social Movements and So-Called “Spontaneity”

“People talk about *stikhiinost*. But the *stikhiinyi* development of the worker movement goes precisely to its subordination to bourgeois ideology [...] because the *stikhiinyi* worker movement is *tred-iunionizm*, is *Nur-Gewerkschaftlerei* – and *tred-iunionizm* is precisely the ideological enslavement of the workers by the bourgeoisie.” (Vladimir Lenin)

This particular rendition of another one of the “scandalous passages” in *What Is To Be Done?*, courtesy of historian Lars Lih and his lengthy analysis of the historical context of that pamphlet, better illustrates the history of “spontaneity,” back then in the form of so-called “trade unionism.” Before continuing, his remarks on translation problems should be reiterated:

"Spontaneity" seems like a plausible translation of *stikhiinost* because both words revolve around lack of control - but ***stikhiinost* connotes the self's lack of control over the world**, while spontaneity connotes the world's lack of control over the self. Thus, our attitude to *stikhiinost* is usually hostile, or at least wary, while our attitude toward spontaneity is usually positive.

Lih also commented on the first form of *stikhiinost* in the history of worker movements, specifically in the German worker movement itself:

The technical term within [German] Social-Democratic discourse for the effort to keep the worker-class struggle free from socialism was Nur-Gewerkschafterei, "trade-unions-only-ism."

This *ted-iunionizm* of a distinctly "yellow" type ("yellow" referring to cross-class coalitionism and the fetish for mere collective bargaining, as opposed to "orange" and "red") is the prevalent ideology of the trade union movement today, ranging from the organizational enslavement of the AFL-CIO to the "Democratic" Party in the United States to similar relationships in the United Kingdom and its liberal "Labour" Party, as well as to similar relationships nurtured by the emerging, trans-Atlantic Workers Uniting union (the name of the planned union discussed in my earlier work's section on union globalization).

What, then, does collective bargain-ism (note the usage of English here, given the extremely narrow scope of this term when compared to "trade unionism") share with "horizontalism," the "movement of movements" phenomenon, other tyrannies of structurelessness, the fetish for the structure of today's non-government organizations (NGOs), and other forms of what should be called "social-movements-only-ism"? Consider once more the post-modernist radical Ben Trott, himself indicating the end result (shared by the various, naïve worshippers of *stikhiinost*, himself included):

Simultaneously, the 'movement of movements' finds itself in crisis too. We would seem to have run up against our own limits. The current cycle is drawing to an end; entering a 'downturn', if not necessarily quantitatively, then certainly qualitatively. The movements' beginnings (the time when 'we were winning') were characterised by a tremendous celebration of our 'unity in diversity' [...] However, a movement as broad and contradictory as ours was always going to have to ask (and try to answer): 'Walking where, actually?' and 'What sort of world?' [...] If the challenge, then, is to move beyond a relatively uncritical celebration of unity in diversity, without slipping back into the 'old' (tried, tested and failed) ways of doing things, surely the question is as follows: How do we set in motion a process by which one group (most often, but not always, a party) is no longer able to dominate all the others, seeking to remake them in its own image; and where, at the same time, we are able to move beyond merely existing indifferently alongside each other?

It is for this reason that "directional" demands, in order to be properly articulated, can neither "emerge from, and are taken up by, the movement of antagonistic subjectivities" (whatever that post-modernist jargon at the end means) nor "seek to open up unlimited and undetermined possibilities for another world" by rejecting "the teleology of Hegelian and Leninist Marxisms" and "predetermined destinations." The latter, ill-informed suggestion is rejected in the latter two transformative demands raised in Chapter 2 (and especially in the highlighted text below):

- 1) The suppression of all public debts outright and of the excessive capital mobility associated with capital flights, the end to imperialist conflicts (not just wars) as vehicles for capital accumulation, and the preclusion of all acts of legalized predatory lending to the working class – all by first means of monopolizing all commercial and consumer credit in the hands of a single transnational bank **under absolute public ownership**; and
- 2) The extension of litigation rights to include class-action lawsuits and speedy awards of punitive damages against all private employers who extract **any sort of surplus value from their workers**, thereby recognizing in law that human labour (both manual and manual) and its technological, labour-saving equivalent are the only non-natural sources of value production (as established by Adam Smith, David Ricardo, and of course Karl Marx).

One more note must be made, and it is with regards to that last form of "social-movements-only-ism" that makes a fetish out of the structure of today's NGOs. A highly critical article appeared in the September-October 2008 edition of *International Socialist Review* (a Cliffite magazine in the United States) titled "Funding for activists, and the strings attached":

The rise of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the non-profit sector in the developing world has been the subject of several studies over the last twenty years. Revolutionaries have taken a highly critical

view of this phenomenon, and this interpretation seems to be gaining credence in the broader radical left.

Curiously, however, these studies have largely not been carried over into the developed (imperialist) countries, even though the role of non-profits is substantial. In the United States, “charitable” foundations control \$500 billion in assets, and there are over 830,000 registered non-profits, excluding religious organizations. **The national leadership of several social movements, for instance the antiwar movement, is effectively in the hands of NGOs.**

The “NGO-ization” of the U.S. Left has been a cause of distinct unhappiness—even dismay—amongst radical activists, but no accessible literature has attempted to address it. *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded* is a welcome initial contribution to the discussion, although it exhibits several serious weaknesses that must be criticized. The contributors [...] coin the term “non-profit industrial complex” (NPIC) to suggest the penetration of the non-profit sector by big business and the state.

[...]

The rise of the NPIC has allowed the neoliberal ruling class to achieve three interlocking goals: first, it has provided them with a monumental tax dodge; second, it has given cover for the retreat of the state from social welfare goals; third, it has increased the penetration of bourgeois ideology into all areas of social and political life—including the Left.

[...]

Also problematic are the solutions offered by the essays in Part III of [*The Revolution Will Not Be Funded*], which attempt to articulate alternatives to the NPIC model. All four essays in Part III endorse the anarchist program of “horizontality,” which situates the failures of the non-profits in their hierarchical, or “vertical,” decision-making structures.

[...]

Indeed, the concept of horizontality, which rejects the “old Left” notions of political program, political parties, and the centrality of class, enabled the rise of the NPIC. James Petras notes **“NGO ideology depends heavily on essentialist identity politics.”** Clarke elaborates: “[L]arge-scale social movements that once were ideologically and organizationally cohesive, fragmented amid a shift in the ‘themes’ of social mobilization [...] Lehmann argues, ‘In the place of large formal organizations, we find a myriad of small-scale dispersed movements engaged in an enormous variety of conflicts.’”

Without denying the problems of the “old Left,” or the tragedy of Maoist “party-building” efforts, it is beyond dispute that the fragmentation of the Left into the various “New Social Movements” helped foundation capital to co-opt it “piece by piece.” As Eric Tang writes, “These [New Social Movements] would [...] become the social justice silos that guided the funding strategies of philanthropic foundations.”

[Note: A better summary quotation of the aforementioned ISR article may be found here:
<http://www.revleft.com/vb/fetishizing-social-movements-t89791/index.html>]

In short, all these expressions of *stikhiinost*, the organizationally defeatist worship of the self’s lack of control over the world, is a dead end!

Class-Strugglist Labour: For the Politico-Ideological Independence of the Working Class

“Peaceful’ decades, however, have not passed without leaving their mark. They have of necessity given rise to opportunism in all countries, and made it prevalent among parliamentarian, trade union, journalistic and other ‘leaders’. There is no country in Europe where, in one form or another, a long and stubborn struggle has not been conducted against opportunism, the latter being supported in a host of ways by the entire bourgeoisie, which is striving to corrupt and weaken the revolutionary proletariat. Fifteen years ago, at the outset of the Bernstein controversy, the selfsame Kautsky wrote that should opportunism turn from a sentiment into a trend, a split would be imminent.” (Vladimir Lenin)

The aforementioned words, especially that last sentence, were written just after the outset of the mislabelled “First World War” by a Lenin who recalled earlier remarks made by a Kautsky who actually spoke against vulgar “centrism” – the advocacy of any sort of “unity for unity’s sake” (false unity) with class

accommodationists by, naturally, accommodating them. This is something that both “social-democratic” historians and “democratic-socialist” activists – and even most Marxists – ignore in portraying a consistently vulgar-centrist caricature of the leading theoretical authority in the Second International (or at least in its Marxist wing), as if he never succumbed to senility (which he certainly did when he descended into vulgar “centrism” and then renegacy).

It must be said that the concept of “class-strugglist labour,” which is for the politico-ideological independence of the working class, is ironically not a principle apart from class struggle, social labour, and class-strugglist social labour’s transnational emancipation. From the initial perspective of class struggle, the twin recognition that only human labour (both manual and mental) and its technological, labour-saving equivalent – only part of the “dead labour” of capital (in actual fact “undead,” given the context of Marx evoking the fictional Dracula) – can produce value apart from natural value production and that class struggles over these are, by far, the primary driving force of all written human history and of the modern world necessarily leads to at least one fork in the road: between siding with the numerous struggles of human labour and opposing such struggles for the sake of outright class conciliation (the usual “reformism”). Along the path of siding with the numerous struggles of human labour comes the inevitable maturity of realizing that they are most effective when conducted by a politico-ideologically independent working class steeped in its unified class consciousness and alternative yet institutional organization. From the ultimate perspective pertaining to the transnational emancipation of human labour power in terms of both the working class and work itself, emancipation has to start from somewhere in the working class itself. Some would prefer emancipation to start on the basis of economic determinism, otherwise known as “vulgar Marxism,” but this only leads to the narrow economism of focusing exclusively on mere labour disputes, other immediate economic struggles, and to the economic reductionism of reducing the dynamics of reality to exclusively economic factors.

Regarding the latter perspective, consider the history of factory committees in the Russian Revolution, as noted by Peter Rachleff of the Macalester College in Minnesota and quoted in my earlier work:

*Whereas the Soviets were primarily concerned with political issues, e.g., the structure of the government, the continuation of the war, **the factory committees dealt solely with the problems of continuing production within their factories.** Many sprang up in the face of lock-outs or attempted sabotage by the factory owners. **It was through these committees that workers hoped to solve their initial problems-- how to get production going again, how to provide for themselves and their families in the midst of economic chaos.** Many workers were faced with the choice of taking over production themselves or starving. Other workers who were relatively assured of employment were influenced both by the burst of activity which characterised the revolution and the worsening economic situation. If they were to remain secure, they had to have a greater say in the management of their factories. They realised that they needed organisations on the shop level to protect their interests and improve their situations.*

While very admirable in terms of going beyond the class-conciliationist collective bargain-ism of even the trans-Atlantic Workers Unioning, their rejection of political questions, which also forms the organizational basis of revolutionary syndicalism (an extreme form of “red” *tred-iunionizm*, in fact), compromised their class independence from even a Bolshevik party whose demographic would eventually be based more upon the petit-bourgeois peasantry and especially upon the “scientific management” coordinator class that was emerging from the czarist shackles on the technical and managerial intelligentsia, with Lenin as their own spokesperson:

*We must raise the question of applying much of what is scientific and progressive in the Taylor system [...] The Russian is a bad worker compared with people in advanced countries. It could not be otherwise under the tsarist regime and in view of the persistence of the hangover from serfdom. The task that the Soviet government must set the people in all its scope is – learn to work. **The Taylor system, the last word of capitalism in this respect, like all capitalist progress, is a combination of the refined brutality of bourgeois exploitation and a number of the greatest scientific achievements in the field of analysing mechanical motions during work, the elimination of superfluous and awkward motions, the elaboration of correct methods of work [...]** The possibility of building socialism depends exactly upon our success in combining the Soviet power and the Soviet organisation of administration with the up-to-date achievements of capitalism. We must organise in Russia the study and teaching of the Taylor system and systematically try it out and adapt it to our own ends.*

Therefore, while the concept of the transnational emancipation of human labour power facilitates the merger of social labour and the necessarily singular worker-class movement (again, the usage of “worker-class” instead of “working-class” puts emphasis on the merger of worker demographics and class issues), **the**

politico-ideological independence of the working class facilitates the merger of transnational emancipation and the numerous struggles of human labour, whether socioeconomic, sociocultural, or sociopolitical. While capable of achieving a vulgar merger between those struggles and grossly abstract forms of “socialism,” the various decentralized social movements, dubiously funded non-government organizations, trade unions, syndicates, factory committees, and even “vanguardist” circle-sects are all incapable of achieving the two detailed mergers mentioned above. What permanent organizational form or institutional form, then, can facilitate both these mergers and embody the worker class for itself? The historic International Workingmen’s Association, or First International, boldly repeated what Marx explicitly stated in the Communist Manifesto and restated repeatedly throughout his political life (up to and including his partial drafting of the program of the French Workers’ Party):

In presence of an unbridled reaction which violently crushes every effort at emancipation on the part of the working men, and pretends to maintain by brute force the distinction of classes and the political domination of the propertied classes resulting from it;

*Considering, that against this collective power of the propertied classes **the working class cannot act, as a class, except by constituting itself into a political party, distinct from, and opposed to, all old parties formed by the propertied classes;***

*That **this constitution of the working class into a political party is indispensable in order to ensure the triumph of the social revolution and its ultimate end – the abolition of classes [...]***

Class-Strugglist Labour: “Workers Only” Voting Membership vs. “Workerism”

“We face great and difficult battles, and must train comrades-in-arms who are resolved to share everything with us and to fight the great fight to the end.” (Karl Kautsky)

Central to the politico-ideological independence of the working class – the concept of “class-strugglist labour” – are the imperatives for the voting membership of the worker-class political party to consist of an exclusively proletarian demographic and, at the same time, take an intransigent position against sectoral chauvinism. Just a few years after writing his authoritative commentary on the historic Erfurt Program, Kautsky confronted a resolution proposed by one Georg von Vollmar (the German inspiration for the “socialism in one country” concept) that would have ended this proletarian separatism of the international proletariat’s first vanguard party and German worker class for itself, the then-Marxist Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (SPD). As noted **at sufficient length** by historian Gary Steenson of the California Polytechnic State University, this arose out of issues with the German peasantry:

Serious concern for the peasantry among social democrats began shortly after the end of the outlaw period when south German branches of the party realized that they had very nearly reached the saturation point of their popular appeal if they could not attract the votes of rural workers and small farmers. The issue was then further stimulated when, for the first time in German history, a political association of farmers, the Bund der Landwirte, was formed. The ability of this group to rouse political interests among small farmers and its severely anti-socialist stands-it was essentially a front organization for the very conservative large landowners of the East Elbe region of Prussia-served to force the issue on the SPD.

*Led by Georg von Vollmar, the south German forces gained sufficient support to get the 1894 Frankfurt party congress to pass a resolution calling for the adoption of an agrarian policy to be grafted onto the Erfurt program. Two things about the campaign particularly rankled Kautsky. One was the almost vituperatively anti-theoretical posture of the major proponents of the agrarian program. Over and over again these people scornfully rejected any theoretical objections to including peasants and small farmers among party membership and to making special programmatic concessions to try to win their votes. Quite naturally Kautsky resented this attack on his special bailiwick. **Kautsky also opposed the suggestion that the exclusively worker character of the party should be violated. This was contrary to what was for him the most important basic political principle of any socialist party.***

*For a time it seemed that perhaps Kautsky had chosen the wrong side on this issue because Bebel sided with Vollmar and the south Germans. **Actually Bebel had never been entirely happy with the exclusively worker party; he had tried to keep worker out of the name of both the SDAP and the SAPD to avoid offending possible non-worker followers.** But the issue did not come up again in the intervening period, largely because of the radicalizing impact of the anti socialist law. In 1894 Bebel was securely in control of the party, and the number of issues on which he lost at party congresses was very small.*

In the end, however, Bebel, not Kautsky, chose the wrong side this time. Even though a major theoretical dispute on the agrarian question preceded the 1895 Breslau congress at which the new policy was voted on, the issue was not so much one of facts and theories as it was an emotional one. At Breslau the agrarian commission selected the previous year presented its report to the delegates, and Kautsky offered a counter-resolution calling for the rejection of the commission's proposal. Vollmar was unable to attend the congress, so Bebel delivered the major attack on Kautsky's resolution, arguing primarily that even if the agrarian program was ineffective, it did not cost the workers anything, and it might win the party some new supporters.

Clara Zetkin and Kautsky both gave strong speeches in favor of preserving the proletarian purity of the party. Zetkin met with prolonged stormy applause when she closed her presentation with a stirring call for the party to reject the agrarian program and thereby **"hold firmly to the revolutionary character of our party."** Kautsky conceded that the new program might win the SPD some voters but added that such followers would only desert the party "at the decisive moment." He concluded with an emotional appeal to revolutionary solidarity: **"We face great and difficult battles, and must train comrades-in-arms who are resolved to share everything with us and to fight the great fight to the end."** Such entreaties got a sympathetic response from the delegates, most of whom shared the prejudice of urban dwellers against what Marx referred to in the Communist Manifesto as "the idiocy of rural life." **By a vote of 158 to 63, Kautsky's resolution passed.**

Kautsky, in his vigorous defense of proletarian separatism, undoubtedly recalled the remarks of the non-worker Frederick Engels regarding non-workers (specifically the petit-bourgeois intellectuals who existed before the long-past proletarianization of intellectual work through professionalization) and worker-class organization:

It is an unavoidable phenomenon, well established in the course of development, that people from the ruling class also join the proletariat and supply it with educated elements. This we have already clearly stated in the Manifesto. Here, however, two remarks are to be made:

First, such people, in order to be useful to the proletarian movement, must bring with them really educated elements. This, however, is not the case with the great majority of German bourgeois converts. Neither the Zukunft [fortnightly Berlin magazine] nor the Neue Gesellschaft [monthly Zurich periodical] has provided anything to advance the movement one step. They are completely deficient in real, factual, or theoretical material. **Instead, there are efforts to bring superficial socialist ideas into harmony with the various theoretical viewpoints which the gentlemen from the universities, or from wherever, bring with them, and among whom one is more confused than the other, thanks to the process of decomposition in which German philosophy finds itself today.** Instead of first studying the new science [scientific socialism] thoroughly, everyone relies rather on the viewpoint he brought with him, makes a short cut toward it with his own private science, and immediately steps forth with pretensions of wanting to teach it. Hence, there are among those gentlemen as many viewpoints as there are heads; instead of clarifying anything, they only produce arrant confusion – fortunately, almost always only among themselves. **Such educated elements, whose guiding principle is to teach what they have not learned, the party can well dispense with.**

Second, when such people from other classes join the proletarian movement, the first demand upon them must be that they do not bring with them any remnants of bourgeois, petty-bourgeois, etc., prejudices, but that they irreversibly assimilate the proletarian viewpoint. But those gentlemen, as has been shown, adhere overwhelmingly to petty-bourgeois conceptions. In so petty-bourgeois a country as Germany, such conceptions certainly have their justification, but only outside the Social-Democratic Labor party. If the gentlemen want to build a social-democratic petty-bourgeois party, they have a full right to do so; one could then negotiate with them, conclude agreements, etc., according to circumstances. But in a labor party, they are a falsifying element. **If there are grounds which necessitates tolerating them, it is a duty only to tolerate them, to allow them no influence in party leadership, and to keep in mind that a break with them is only a matter of time.**

As I said in my earlier work, the "time" was in 1879! In the time since, petit-bourgeois elements within the various Marxist parties – revolutionary and otherwise – had the tendency to "serve" in a leadership capacity, leaving the working-class rank-and-file to do all the grunt work. The Bolsheviks, for all their real and alleged links to the working class, were no exception!

On the other hand, there is the ever-looming danger of sectoral chauvinism, especially manual “workerism” and **fetishizing factory labour as the glorious “revolutionary agent”** or “revolutionary subject,” based on a key misreading of *Das Kapital*. This “workerism” ranges from “mere” theoretical errors to the fetish for manual work itself on the part of some *de facto* cults posing as political sects – as a result of grave theoretical errors. One such “mere” theoretical error was made by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, the co-authors of *Empire* (hailed by utopian New Left academics as a 21st-century Communist Manifesto but criticized by Marxists), as noted by Finn Bowring:

*The real interests of the mass worker, however, are now represented by groups opposed to reformist trade unions and the Communist Party. **This era marks the rise, in Italy, of the 'operaismo' movement (literally, 'workerism'), which in 1973 dissolved (or evolved) into 'autonomia'.***

[...]

There is a massive expansion of tertiary labour, as activities regarded by Marx as 'unproductive' moments in the circulation of capital--communication and media, transport, education, health and social care, finance, advertising, entertainment and the production of culture--become extensively regulated by the wage relationship.

Most of those who are familiar with Marxist theory are unaware of the fact that, in the manuscript for the third volume of *Das Kapital* (not the finalized compilation by Engels), Marx suggested that the divide between “productive” and “unproductive” labour was becoming more blurred even in his own time, due to the extension of value production from mere physical goods into services (notwithstanding the continued existence of a class divide between a “middle-income” professional worker and, for example, a police officer or a really self-employed service provider). This extension is the natural result of the ever-expanding division of labour, as commented upon by Adam Smith himself. Continuing with Bowring:

The hegemonic form of work in the new post-industrial economy is 'immaterial labour'--'labour that produces an immaterial good, such as a service, knowledge, or communication' (Hardt, 1999: 94). *'Today productivity, wealth, and the creation of social surpluses take the form of co-operative interactivity through linguistic, communicational, and affective networks.'* (Hardt & Negri, 2001: 294) *This work ranges from the manipulation and analysis of computer symbols to the 'affective labour' of human communication and interaction. Service industries involving the creation and manipulation of affects are no less immaterial, according to Hardt, in the sense that the products they create are intangible: 'a feeling of ease, well-being, satisfaction, excitement, passion--even a sense of connectedness or community'. 'What affective labour produces are social networks, forms of community, biopower.'* Consequently, *'the instrumental action of economic production has merged with the communicative action of human relations'*. (Hardt, 1999: 96)

[...]

*The new class subject that emerges in this society is, in Negri's view, the 'social worker' (operaio sociale), sometimes translated as 'socialised worker' or 'diffuse worker'. This term is used to convey the fact that the productive capacities of the workers are embedded in, and work directly on, social networks of communication and cooperation which spread well beyond the domain of the factory: hence also the term 'social factory', which was employed by a number of Italian Marxists and feminists in the early 1970s. **In the 1990s, Negri and Hardt defined the social worker--though they increasingly began to use the term 'multitude' instead--as 'characterised by a hybrid of material and immaterial labouring activities linked together in social and productive networks by highly developed labouring co-operation'** (Hardt & Negri, 1994: 274). *The productive abilities of these workers are not the exclusive result of formal or occupational training, but are increasingly a self-acquired prerequisite for informal participation in the world of everyday life. In Maurizio Lazzarato's account, capital today draws on a 'basin of immaterial labour', which continually 'dissolves back into the networks and flows that make possible the reproduction and enrichment of its productive capacities'. Consequently, 'it becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish leisure time from work. In a sense, life becomes inseparable from work.'* (Lazzarato, 1996: 137-8)*

When *Empire* was written in 2001, Hardt and Negri farcically repeated the two-class model popularized by the Communist Manifesto, and the concept of “multitude” was expanded to include albeit-destitute petit-bourgeois elements (peasants in less developed nation-states). **In short, manual “workerism” and any other form of sectoral chauvinism inevitably leads to the exact opposite of the politico-ideological independence of that class of manual, clerical, and “middle-income” professional workers – the proletariat!**

Real Parties as Real Movements and Vice Versa: Alternative Culture and Bureaucracy Revisited

"Social Democracy is the party of the militant proletariat; it seeks to enlighten it, to educate it, to organise it, to expand its political and economic power by every available means, to conquer every position that can possibly be conquered, and thus to provide it with the strength and maturity that will finally enable it to conquer political power and to overthrow the rule of the bourgeoisie." (Karl Kautsky)

In my earlier work, I revisited Lenin the activist's emphasis on national newspapers replacing the newspapers produced by the Marxist circle-sects that preceded the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party. I also wrote that, with the Internet and the proliferation of blogs and atomized Internet news services but with an Internet "market" of millions of working-class people (and not just a few thousand within the emerging Russian working class), **it is crucial to have a singular revolutionary news service** encompassing news coverage, analysis, and both bulletin and video discussions. **This media singularity indicates an anti-sectarian commitment to work with others on the class-strugglist left** like class-strugglist pareconists, class-strugglist market socialists, and similar tendencies within an overall organization with party ambitions, not just within some "workers' united front."

Precisely because Lenin was inspired by the then-Marxist Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (SPD), a singular revolutionary news service might not be enough. As noted by historian Lars Lih:

The single most impressive feature of this agitation machine was the party press. In 1895 there were 75 socialist newspapers, of which 39 were issued six times a week. These newspapers catered to a broad variety of workers. There were newspapers for worker cyclists and worker gymnasts, for teetotaling workers and even for inkeepers. By 1909 the total circulation was over one million, a figure that implies a great many more actual readers. But the printed word was embedded in an even wider context of the face-to-face spoken. Social-Democratic agitation was carried on by public meetings, smaller conferences for the party militants and agitation by individual members.

Granted, the singular revolutionary news service with news coverage, analysis, bulletin discussions, and video discussions could be customizable to tailor the interests of such segmented audiences, but the bigger question posed by this historic agitation machine and more was the bureaucracy involved. Continued:

*Nor did the SPD confine itself to political propaganda and agitation. The Social-Democratic movement in Germany consisted of a wide range of institutions that attempt to cover every facet of life. Party or Party-associated institutions included trade unions, clubs dedicated to activities ranging from cycling to hiking to choral singing, theatres and celebratory festivals. The broad scope of the movement's ambitions justifies the title of Vernon Lidtke's classic study *The Alternative Culture*. Looking just at Lidtke's index under the letter 'W', we find the following: workers' athletic clubs, workers' chess societies, workers' consumer societies, workers' cycling clubs, workers' educational societies, workers' gymnastic clubs, workers' libraries, workers' rowing clubs, workers' samaritan associations, workers' singing societies, workers' swimming clubs, workers' temperance [anti-alcohol] associations, workers' theatrical clubs, workers' youth clubs.*

The reader will have noticed the repetition of the word 'worker'. This observation leads us to the central importance of the word Arbeiter, 'worker', as the symbolic core of the SPD model.

I wrote in my earlier work that **historically influential worker-class movements have always gone beyond mere "labour movements" ("yellow" trade unions) in their organization**. Politically they also went beyond electoral gimmicks, in which the "parties" became little more than electoral machines complemented by fundraising dinners and protest activism. At their disposal were all the impressive institutions mentioned above, workplace committees, humanitarian organizations such as the International Red Aid, poetry clubs, child care centers, and even funeral homes – all of which provided both an alternative social network and an alternative culture, thus culminating in a state within a state. I also made reference to Hezbollah – and its four hospitals, twelve clinics, twelve schools, two agricultural and training centers, and even garbage collection services as reported in 2006 by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs – along with one-time support for the organization's social development by Massachusetts ex-governor Mitt Romney. The Black Panthers too made an attempt at an alternative culture, but on a much smaller scale. Even the Communist League of Marx and Engels themselves, whose understanding of a "political party" had yet to be taken to a higher, more institutional level through the SPD model, had a small alternative culture encompassing athletic sports and social entertainment. **Ultimately, given recent declines in both the "welfare state" and the "charity state" (state aid for charities aside from tax**

exemptions and donor tax deductibility) across many bourgeois states, alternative culture as a strategic means of political-ideological independence for the working class should be reconsidered.

[Note: For-profit cooperatives were also organized, but were many times organized in the wrong sectors of the economy, such as in financial services. Cooperative banking and mutual insurance still extracted economic rent in the classical sense from society as a whole, but more on this in later commentary. The point is that the inclusion of cooperatives in organizing an alternative culture is debatable.]

Of course, with this reconsideration comes the question of bureaucracy and its relation to the state. According to traditional thinking, massive bureaucracies breed opportunism, contentment with the status quo, and so on. On the one hand, being in a position to enact legislation is nothing without support from the bureaucratic organs of state administration that execute them, and trying to get enough support from such established organs to enact the kind of change described in this work is pointless. **On the other hand, the Bolsheviks themselves found out that smashing those organs – in the manner of “all power to the soviets” – without a preexisting organized alternative (albeit due to czarist repression and not a rejection of the SPD model) only freed the “scientific management” coordinator class that was emerging from the czarist shackles on the technical and managerial intelligentsia (the more so if the smashing is done out of mass spontaneism, like in France during the May 1968 wildcat strikes or as expressed by fetishes for workers’ councils).** If the existing bureaucratic organs of state administration are a dead end, and inevitable spontaneist reliance upon specific coordinator individuals from smashed state bureaucracies another dead end, **what is the realistic alternative other than to establish, on a very permanent basis, an in-house bureaucracy as a means of preparatory organization?**

Grigory Zinoviev and the rest of the increasingly sectarian Communist International lot offered a nutty answer, promoting the notion that worker-class emancipation could be the act of a tiny minority (also known as substitutionism) which did not rely on the participation of a highly class-conscious working class, much less one that is highly organized and especially independent in both political and ideological respects:

Only after the proletarian dictatorship has wrested out of the hands of the bourgeoisie such powerful media of influence as the press, education, parliament, the church, the administrative machine and so on, only after the defeat of the bourgeois order has become clear for all to see, only then will all or almost all workers start to enter the ranks of the Communist Party.

If one were to go down the nutty road of Blanquist elitism, there should at least be organized funerals and other services for the working poor amongst the workforce, like what the Blanquists of the Paris Commune organized! In going beyond such nutty amateurism, Lih concluded on the “vanguard party” concept that:

*As we set about the task of rediscovering Lenin's actual outlook, the terms 'party of a new type' and 'vanguard party' are actually helpful – but only if they are applied to the SPD as well as the Bolsheviks. **The SPD was a vanguard party**, first because it defined its own mission as 'filling up' the proletariat with the awareness and skills needed to fulfill its own world-historical mission, and second because the SPD developed an innovative panoply of methods for spreading enlightenment and 'combination.'*

In short, real parties are real movements and vice versa! The spontaneous outbreak in France during May 1968 was no real movement at all, and neither today's electoral machines nor self-proclaimed “vanguard parties” are real parties.

On a practical note, the singular revolutionary news service with news coverage, analysis, bulletin discussions, and video discussions – even when customizable to tailor the interests of segmented audiences – is definitely not enough. One Mike Macnair made a profoundly true and important video remark regarding his book *Revolutionary Strategy: Marxism and the Challenge of Left Unity* when he declared:

You have to be a Kautskyan on the question of organizing in “Educate, Agitate, Organize!” as opposed to “Agitate, Agitate, Agitate!” to get to the point of having a mass workers' party which can possibly pose the question of power.

Complementing and parallel to the singular revolutionary news service as an educating and agitating embryo should be organized food banks and pantries, as well as clothing banks, as an embryo of alternative culture and as a general organizing embryo. The food pantries and the food banks as distributors to those pantries are not the same as soup kitchens feeding beggars and other lumpen elements, since food pantries are for primarily the working poor amongst the workforce to get groceries and ingredients to prepare food on

their own. **A “non-profit business model” – with strategic conclusions from appropriate strategic analysis frameworks for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and multiple competitive forces (like suppliers, new entrants, and substitute services) – needs to be drafted for an alternative culture that can counter all threats** like bourgeois and petit-bourgeois philanthropy, yet also thrive despite lack of donor tax deductibility and attached controversies with political donations, despite potential lack of tax exemptions, and despite other means of bourgeois co-option or intimidation for the sake of “manufactured dissent.”

Sociopolitical Syndicalism as Additional Partyism

“The ideal organisation is the unification of all proletarian parties, the political societies, the trade unions, the co-operatives, as equal members, not of a Labour Party without a programme, as is at the present the case in England, but of a class-conscious, all-embracing Social-Democracy.” (Karl Kautsky)

Historically and today, so-called “bourgeois workers parties” that lay claim to “Labour,” “Social-Democratic,” or even “Democratic Socialist” labels reject the imperatives for their respective voting memberships to consist of an exclusively proletarian demographic and for combating sectoral chauvinism, and in so doing obstruct politico-ideological independence for the working class. Unfortunately, so have many parties that claim to be on the class-strugglist left, such as the official Communist parties. **Their common answer is to create “organic links with the working class”** – in the form of a labour party whose supreme bodies allot bloc votes to affiliated trade unions (which are usually “yellow,” but some can “orange” or “red”), or in the form of a “vanguard party” with a disproportionate number of the membership engaged in trade union activism. As Kautsky argued in 1909, neither sects nor gross overestimations of “class parties” that are mere labour parties are the answer.

In September 2010, Sarah Morris and Gavin Jones reported on the rotten condition of one end of the “organic links with the working class,” the trade unions:

*So far, though, the most remarkable thing in this age of austerity is just how few strikes there have been and how weak and ineffective unions have proved. In many ways, Europe's workers are among the best protected in the world. When the temples of capitalism fell two years ago, some pundits dug out old copies of Marx and predicted the return of unions and worker power. But the crisis has laid bare a truth partially hidden during the boom years: **Europe's unions are less powerful, less influential, and less relevant than they have been for decades.***

*"In Europe generally there is a feeling that unions are facing a crisis," says Charles Powell, history professor at the CEU-San Pablo University in Madrid. "It's a question of identity as well. **What sort of movement should they be? Should they be exclusively geared to obtaining improvements for their members? Should they have a say in broader issues like the environment?**"*

[...]

*One of the reasons for the drop in militancy is obvious: **fewer people belong to unions now than two or three decades ago.** Figures on membership are hard to find, but the statistics that do exist clearly show a downward trend.*

[...]

A person turning 20 in Spain today may be part of a generation that ends up worse off than the one before it, reversing the long-term trend. Twenty- and thirty-something Spaniards resent the fact that the only jobs they can get are on temporary contracts -- which offer fewer rights than permanent positions.

Rather than looking to the unions as the answer, though, Spain's young see them as part of the problem: one piece in a sclerotic system that protects older workers and shuts the young out.

That's especially true when it comes to the public sector, which is the real stronghold of unionism in Europe today. Up to a quarter of Spain's two mainstream unions -- the CCOO, which was the union of the now defunct Spanish communist party, and the UGT, seen as close to Spain's Socialist party -- derive their membership from the state sector.

Unions in the public sector neglect workers on short contracts and focus exclusively on those who have secured "a job for life", complains Luis Gutierrez Fernandez-Tresguerres, 33, who as a librarian at

Oviedo University enjoys a permanent contract himself. "They should defend the interests of the vulnerable."

[...]

A longtime unionist, [fifty-six year-old Silena] Trentin sees a bleak future for organized labor in Italy, as **traditional industries are replaced by services and more and more jobs are offered on temporary contracts with few protections**. "Years ago when the union reps said 'Everybody out!', everybody got up and walked out. Now, even when we weren't being paid, a lot would stay put and say: 'Why, what's happened?' It's incredible, now people are willing to even work for nothing."

Could that change? Will hard times in Europe lead to stronger unions, a rebirth of the labor activism? "Potentially, yes. They have nowhere to go but up," says historian Powell in Madrid. **"If they do succeed in finding a voice which is relevant, the danger of course is that they move in a much more competitive environment now. You have NGOs, the green movement.** It's a much more competitive world for them as organizations than it was in the '70s. People have other institutions to turn to."

Since these increasingly ostracized organs of collective bargain-ism that are "yellow" trade unions have a tendency to tail bourgeois or petit-bourgeois movements, **they might as well tail the NGOs, the green movement, and the "new populism"** advocated by Dan Atkinson and Larry Elliott in their 2008 work *The Gods That Failed: How Blind Faith in Markets Has Cost Us Our Future*. As noted critically by one Peter Taaffe in *The Socialist*, a British Marxist newspaper:

The solution of the authors to the present dire situation, both in Britain and worldwide, is a "new populism". To some extent, they wish to go "back to the future" by introducing restrictions on finance capital. They also want measures for the "protection and strengthening of an independent middle class". They maintain that "social stability and tranquility are more important than market efficiency or shareholder value". They, in particular, want to reintroduce controls on capital and the movement of capital.

[...]

Commendably, Atkinson and Elliot want to "build alliances with the remnants of organised labour". **The choice of the term "remnants" clearly implies that the labour movement would be the tail end of a broad 'movement', largely centred in the 'middle class'.**

Already, in fact, this tailing has happened in the form of the new phenomenon that is "social movement unionism" – linking collective bargain-ism with "horizontalism," the "movement of movements" phenomenon, the fetish for the structure of today's non-government organizations (NGOs), and so on. According to Jeremy Reiss, the basic premise is that mere "labour movements" ("yellow" trade unions) should "partner with other social movements – peace, feminists, immigrant rights, and environmentalists, among others – and look beyond its bread and butter issues of wages and working conditions." All of these avoid meaningful interaction with political party activity, and moreover:

Unions, at times, do partner with other social movements. But respondents overwhelmingly indicated that, at times, these relationships are more "strategic collaborations" for single-issue campaigns. Issues such as wages and working conditions remain labour's core goals rather than goals integrated into a broader public policy strategy for progressive reform.

I wrote in my earlier work that **another way of going beyond mere "labour movements" is more radical unionism**, which can be "orange" but which should preferably be "red." In 1905, the "red union" Industrial Workers of the World was formed, and among the first organizers were Daniel De Leon and Eugene Debs, though later notable members included James Connolly, Paul Mattick, and even Noam Chomsky. The syndicalist purpose of the IWW was to create "one big union" for workers the world over. In 2004, it established the IWW Starbucks Workers Union, which is notable considering the current popularity of the "Starbucks" brand of coffee. In September 2010, it established the IWW Jimmy Johns Workers Union for attempts at unionizing the service precariat ("precarious" plus "proletariat" to describe in the main the conditions of the newest, cross-sectoral, and growing part of the young, midlife, and senior worker demographics) working at the Jimmy Johns franchise chain of gourmet sandwich restaurants. However, since it has always refused to address even political questions in general, it has never become a real party-movement. **Contrast the apolitical IWW with the politicized All-Workers Militant Front (Panergatiko Agonistiko Metopo, or PAME), a radical union in Greece with equally radical political affiliations** – the union that is openly affiliated with the only official Communist party that has embraced pro-Stalin "Anti-

Revisionism"; in October 2010 PAME helped organize a one-day political strike against fiscal cutbacks ("austerity") on the part of the Greek government.

Consistent with my earlier work's suggestions on proper language and neologisms (new terms) as a means of building a worker-class movement, one new term needs to be introduced that emphasizes "red" economic struggles, lessons learned from "social movement unionism," and especially mass action around political questions, yet gets past the manual "workerism" implied in the "revolutionary" or "socialist" industrial unionism of the IWW and of De Leon, respectively: **sociopolitical syndicalism**. Unlike previous forms of trade unionism or syndicalism, **the sociopolitical syndicate would be a real party-movement, in that real parties are real movements and vice versa**. In conjunction with an official party-movement, it would be capable of organizing mass action around political questions, alternative mass media, an alternative culture including quasi-proletarianized legal services in labour law, and all the related in-house bureaucracy as a means of preparatory organization for realistically replacing the existing bureaucratic organs of state administration. Unlike an official party-movement, it would have a much closer relationship with strike activity and not even tactically participate in modern elections. In all the remaining details, the sociopolitical syndicate would resemble an industrial union as envisioned by De Leon (however wrong he may have been on the role of official political parties) and elaborated upon by one Martin Sayles **at sufficient length**:

What makes the RIU revolutionary is its ability to go on the offensive, to move from simply fighting for better wages and working conditions to challenging the power of the capitalists and their managers. It does this through allowing working people to organize and educate themselves about how to administer their workplaces and their communities.

[...]

This is where the industrial element of revolutionary industrial unionism comes in. As opposed to the craft and professional unions, which organize by job classification and trade, we organize by industry, from top to bottom. No worker is left out of the union, except by their own choice. And even in those instances, the RIU nevertheless makes all efforts to build bonds of solidarity and unity with them.

[...]

By bringing all workers together into One Great Union, the ability of the capitalists and their managers to "whipsaw" – to pit one group of workers against another in a race to the bottom – is non-existent. Strikes and other types of labor actions would no longer be isolated; the One Great Union would see to it that picket lines – even informational ones! – are honored by all workers. And attempts to use the bosses' courts to shut down workers' action would be meaningless and unenforceable.

The exploiters would no longer be able to point out the window to an army of unemployed workers and say to a worker demanding better, "If you ask for more, I'll just fire you and hire one of them." This is because unemployed workers are our brothers and sisters, too, and are welcome in the One Great Union.

Out of the Units and Locals of the RIU comes the workplace committee. If the One Great Union itself is the heart of revolutionary industrial unionism, then the workplace committee is its soul [...]

Because the One Great Union includes all workers, including temporary and contract employees (provided they are workers), and seeks to include, at the very least, the voice of all workers at a facility, all working people find their interests in those [chosen] to serve as a part of a workplace committee.

In the period before the defeat of capitalism, the role of the workplace committee is primarily educational. Its role is to prepare workers for the day when they take control of production and distribution. In the transition from capitalism to the classless communist society, the workplace committee functions as the focal point for the reorganization and reconstruction of production and distribution.

[...]

*Economic reconstruction is itself only part of the mission of revolutionary industrial unionism. **The RIU also has a central role in the political reconstruction of society after the defeat of capitalist rule.** Those same Units and Locals of the One Great Union that [choose] their fellow workers to be a part of the workplace committees to coordinate and control the economy will choose which of their brothers and sisters they want to serve in the workers' councils to coordinate and control the new state and government [...]. This is because, as the workers' councils are organized and develop, they can begin to take over the administration of services that most people look to the capitalist government to provide.*

Throughout history, ruling classes on the verge of revolutionary overthrow suffer systemic breakdowns that undermine their own ability to reassert control. **Often times, one of the key failures of a revolutionary movement in this period is its unwillingness or inability to become an alternative source for essential services.** That hesitation reduces the battle for control of society to a contest of brute force – a contest that the sitting class in power often wins.

However, when a revolutionary movement provides that alternative source, they begin to starve the ruling class, its government and state, of key resources – not simply money (through tax withholding) or human resources (through strikes and other labor actions), but also the culture of reliance that the institutions of class rule rely on to maintain their power.

[...]

Daniel De Leon's theory of socialist industrial unionism is the basis of our strategy, and the work he and the [Socialist Labor Party] did at the beginning of the last century is much of the inspiration for what our Party wishes to accomplish [...] **It is De Leon's theory that most self-described socialists and communists get their own generally vague concepts about workers' councils and workers' control of production. It was the SLP's work in De Leon's time that inspired the formation of the Industrial Workers of the World and Workers' International Industrial Union [...]** It is here that revolutionary industrial unionism differs from De Leon's theory. With the incorporation of the workplace committee and workers' councils into the overall structure, RIU represents, in our view, and advance from De Leon's specific writings on socialist industrial unionism, while also keeping with the spirit and sense of his method and concept.

Transnational Organization, Modern *Partiinost*, and Programmatic Centrality

"Looking back a few years later, the Bolshevik M. Liadov defined the heart of Bolshevism in 1904 as the defense of *partiinost*, a word that in this era can be defined as 'acting as befits a modern political party'. A historian of French socialism calls Jules Guesde's Marxist party 'the first modern political party' in France because it had the following characteristics: 'a large national base, an annual national congress, an executive committee, a programme, and an insistence of discipline'. This also defines what the Bolsheviks meant by *partiinost*." (Lars Lih)

Contrary to the later similarity of *partiinost* ("partyism" or "partyiness") in the mid-to-late Soviet era with liberal-bourgeois political correctness in Western countries, the *partiinost* of three Internationals in the early 20th century best exemplified politico-ideological independence for the working class, the condition of being a class for itself. For example, within the original Socialist International or Second International, **one of the national parties officially dubbed itself a mere section**: the Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière (SFIO), or the French Section of the Workers International. It was most likely this example of the French worker class for itself that inspired the likes of Italian Marxist Amadeo Bordiga during his time in the Communist International or Comintern:

From the out-break of World War I in 1914 to 1926 the Italian Left gave its contribution to the reconstruction of the world party, and it waged a struggle, increasingly defensive, to make this party into a truly effective organ which could realise the aims it had given itself. After 1926 our current was struck by the blows of the counter-revolution in full force, manifested both in the Stalinist persecution as well as in bourgeois repression, whether fascist in Italy or democratic in France. At the same time it found itself increasingly isolated from the currents which on the international level took a position more or less opposed to Stalinism and its liquidation of the revolutionary party.

In my earlier work, I pointed to the Comintern as that world party, under which Bordiga led a "Communist Party of Italy, Section of the Communist International," but the word "reconstruction" is in fact a reference to centralist interpretations of the Second International itself, and even in the very early 1920s the Comintern itself became more and more an infantile, nutter-ish yet federated fan club for the Soviet government and corresponding Communist Party, losing its connections with the working class under pretenses of "Bolshevization."

Indeed, strictly speaking of politico-ideological independence for the working class, the closest to a durable third worker-class International and the most relevant International was the short-lived International Working Union of Socialist Parties (IWUSP) formed in 1921, derisively called the "Two and a Half International" by an increasingly out-of-touch Comintern. This "centrist" International acknowledged realistically that any revolutionary period which had arisen in Europe just before the war and which lasted a few years into the

Russian Revolution had receded; mass hostilities towards bourgeois regimes, majority political support (not just electoral support) for such hostilities towards parties even more hostile towards those regimes, and instability within the organs of those regimes were absent. Among the mass parties of this International were: the SFIO itself, the main Social-Democratic parties in Austria and Switzerland, the Spanish Socialist Workers Party, and what some in today's Die Linke (The Left party in Germany) called "an outstanding role model for left politics today" which "paid attention to the daily demands and needs of workers without yielding its claim to revolutionary, anti-capitalist politics" – the regrouped German working class for itself in the form of the Unabhängige Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany, or USPD). **Unlike the Comintern and its sectarian spin-offs, the short-lived IWUSP retained the most realistic yet most important lesson from the Second International on real parties being real movements and vice versa, as discussed earlier.**

Contemporarily speaking, the basic principle of transnational emancipation would be ineffective without the corresponding party organization, even at the point of civil disobedience. **Indeed, a third worker-class International, or Internationale Klassenkämpferische Sozial Arbeit (International Class-Strugglist Social Labour), should not be sought because of the bankruptcy of internationalism or, more precisely, inter-nationalism.** Inter-nationalism even in its worker-class form presupposes the indefinite existence of nation-states and the **interaction between these nation-states**, while nationalism itself has become bankrupt through Balkanization. Despite the positions of Marx and Engels on national self-determination and some post-bourgeois co-existence of nation-states, the world has become too small to assert like the Communist Manifesto does that "the struggle of the proletariat with the bourgeoisie is at first a national struggle," that "the proletariat of each country must, of course, first of all settle matters with its own bourgeoisie [...] must rise to be the leading class of the nation, must constitute itself the nation," and that the proletariat "is so far, itself national, though not in the bourgeois sense of the word." As Bordiga himself and his immediate comrades realized after the mislabelled "Second World War," **it is simply necessary to go beyond the very concept of nations, hence trans-nationalism and trans-national organization.**

While the end form of transnational organization is unitary, some forms of federalism can keep this end form consciously in view as the desired one. One of the organizational levels immediately below the transnational organization could be one spanning an entire geological continent or a large portion of it, with lower levels unambiguously subordinated to this. For example, the *Weekly Worker*, a British Marxist newspaper, always raises the slogan "Towards a Communist Party of the European Union" on its masthead. Another organizational level immediately below the transnational organization could be one spanning an entire geological subcontinent, again with lower levels unambiguously subordinated to it. Such would be the case with Western Asia or the commonly called "Middle East," as well as with Central America and the Caribbean put together. Yet another organizational level immediately below the transnational organization could be one within two or more geological continents, again with lower levels unambiguously subordinated to it. Such would be the case with Southeast Asia and the two geological continents of Oceania put together, as well as with area approximating the former Soviet Union but somewhat larger (most likely including all Uyghur and Altay territories, also likely including key inroads into Poland and other smaller areas of Eastern Europe, and less likely including the case of Finland like in the times before 1917).

Moreover, programmatic centrality, or the pairing together of "a programme and an insistence on discipline," is more important at the transnational level than it ever was at mere national levels. Historically, the sixteenth of the twenty-one conditions of admission to the Comintern was aimed at correcting the practical non-enforceability of certain resolutions of the Second International. Two of the most notable resolutions were the "International Rules of Socialist Tactics" of 1904, which banned cross-class coalitionism (most notably coalitions with bourgeois parties at least at the national level) and the anti-war Basel Manifesto of 1912, which called for affiliates to "exert every effort in order to prevent the outbreak of war by the means they consider most effective, which naturally vary according to the sharpening of the class struggle and the sharpening of the general political situation," and to "utilize the economic and political crisis created by the war to arouse the people and thereby to hasten the downfall of capitalist class rule."

Contemporarily speaking, programmatic centrality means that executive councils and bureaus at the transnational level should issue binding programmatic resolutions regarding the six or more types of demands (immediate, intermediate, threshold, transformative, directional, and maximalist) identified earlier in Chapter 1, and **have the ability to enforce them** upon all member organizations based somewhat on the old Lassallean rhetoric of "strict centralization" and "democratic centralization," **while practically speaking allow grandfather clauses on enforceability for newly admitted member organizations** caught with their proverbial pants down in cross-class ruling coalitions – subject to the limitation of **having a non-voting status on deciding these resolutions until they are clearly in opposition.** Outside of the grandfather clauses, those sections of national party organizations and even whole national party organizations that are

found to be in violation of the binding programmatic resolutions would be subject to substantive disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion. As noted in my earlier work, a more extreme application of programmatic centrality came in the form of Bordiga's suggestion that the newly-formed Soviet Union be ruled directly by all member organizations of the Comintern, in direct contrast to the Comintern being a federated fan club for the Soviet government and corresponding Communist Party.

Modern *Partiinost* as Revolutionary Centrism

But why is all this "revolutionary centrism"? Didn't revolutionary Marxists deride "centrism" just before the European bloodbath from 1914 to 1918? Rosa Luxemburg may have, but not Lenin:

The difference between the conceptions "Marxist centre" (= independent policy, independent ideas, independent theory) and "Marsh" (= wavering, lack of principle, 'turn table' ("Drehscheibe"), weathercock).

I shall conclude this chapter and transition to the next with a very lengthy quote, or rather a series of quotes, from Mike Macnair's profoundly true and important series of articles (now compiled into the book *Revolutionary Strategy: Marxism and the Challenge of Left Unity*) dating back to 2006 in the *Weekly Worker*:

Down to 1914, Russian Bolshevism was a tendency within the centre, not a tendency opposed to it [...] *Without the centre tendency's international unity policy there would have been no RSDLP; without the lessons the Bolsheviks learned from the international centre tendency, there could have been no mass opening of the Bolshevik membership in 1905, no recovery of the party's strength through trade union, electoral and other forms of low-level mass work in 1911-14, and no Bolshevik political struggle to win a majority between April and October 1917.*

[...]

*It is important to be clear that the movement that the centre tendency sought to build was not the gutted form of the modern social-democracy/Labourism, which is dependent on the support of the state and the capitalist media for its mass character. **The idea was of a party which stood explicitly for the power of the working class and socialism. It was one which was built up on the basis of its own resources, its own organisation with local and national press, as well as its own welfare and educational institutions, etc.***

[...]

The centre's strategy of patience was more successful than the other strategies in actually building a mass party. *Its insistence on the revolution as the act of the majority, and refusal of coalitionism, was equally relevant to conditions of revolutionary crisis: the Bolsheviks proved this positively in April-October 1917, and it has been proved negatively over and over again between the 1890s and the 2000s. However, because it addressed neither the state form, nor the international character of the capitalist state system and the tasks of the workers' movement, the centre's strategy proved to collapse into the policy of the right when matters came to the crunch.*

[...]

The Kautskyans were right on a fundamental point. Communists can only take power when we have won majority support for working class rule through extreme democracy. 'Revolutionary crisis' may accelerate processes of changing political allegiance, but it does not alter this fundamental point or offer a way around it. There are no short cuts, whether by coalitionism or by the mass strike.

The present task of communists/socialists is therefore not to fight for an alternative government. It is to fight to build an alternative opposition: one which commits itself unambiguously to self-emancipation of the working class through extreme democracy, as opposed to all the loyalist parties.

[...]

Imitating the Russians was not utterly disastrous, as attempts to imitate the Maoists in more developed countries were in the 1960s and 1970s. This is attributable to the fact that most of what the Russians endeavoured to teach the Comintern in 1920-23 was in fact orthodox Kautskyism, which the Russians had learned from the German SPD.

[...]

In this sense 'Kautskyism' means the struggle for an independent workers' party, intimately linked to independent workers' media, trade unions, cooperatives and so on, and for - at least symbolic - internationalism. On the other hand, it means the struggle against the ideas of short cuts to power that evade the problem of winning a majority, through coalitionism or 'conning the working class into taking power' via the mass strike. These are positive lessons for today's left.

[...]

This strategic orientation demands patience. The fundamental present problem is that after the failures of the strategies of the 20th century, in the absence of a Marxist strategic understanding, most socialists are socialists by ethical and emotional commitment only. This leads to the adoption of 'get-rich-quick' solutions that enter into the capitalist politicians' government games.

This is the trouble with ideas that the LCR should join a new gauche plurielle project rather than addressing seriously the question of unity with Lutte Ouvrière; with Rifondazione's decision to participate in the Prodi government; with Die Linke's participation in a coalition with the SPD in Berlin [and Brandenburg]; with the SSP's orientation to an SNP-led coalition for independence; with Respect. The result is not to lead towards an effective workers' party, but towards another round of brief hope and long disillusionment

*A different sort of impatience is offered by those who split prematurely and refuse partial unity in the hope of building their own 'Leninist party': the Sozialistische Alternative's split orientation in the process of formation of Die Linke; the splits of the Socialist Party and Workers Power from the Socialist Alliance; and so on. **We find that, although these sects sell themselves as 'revolutionary', when they stand for election either to parliaments or in unions their policies are broadly similar to the coalitionists. They are still playing within the capitalist rules of the game.***

The left, in other words, needs to break with the endless series of failed 'quick fixes' that has characterised the 20th century. It needs a strategy of patience, like Kautsky's: but one that is internationalist and radical-democratic, not one that accepts the existing order of nation-states.

CHAPTER 5: THE DEMOCRACY QUESTION

"[Political freedoms] mean light and air to the proletariat, and whoever lets them wither or withholds them – or whoever keeps the proletariat from the struggle to win these freedoms and to extend them – is to be reckoned among the proletariat's worst enemies, no matter how much love he feels or pretends to feel for the proletariat, no matter if he calls himself Anarchist or Christian-Socialist or whatever. Just like its outspoken enemies he, too, harms the proletariat and it does not matter if he does so because of malice or just because of ignorance. He has to be fought in just the same way as the recognised enemies of the proletariat." (Karl Kautsky)

Once upon a time, parliamentarism was progressive. Because parliamentary oratory was more prestigious back then, the parliamentary forum was a crucial way for political parties to spread their messages. Key to the prestige of this parliamentary oratory was the right of any ordinary parliamentarian to demand answers on any topic from cabinet ministers, thereby giving parliamentary minorities nationwide hearings for their opposition to the government. The exposure of corruption and scandal, often through obtaining key documents from sympathizers in the government bureaucracy, could have easily been augmented by parliamentary oratory, which in turn would have been reported by the newspapers of the day, regardless of political leanings. This "once upon a time" was, according to historian Lars Lih, during the Marxist period of the Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (SPD).

What has happened since then, to both parliamentarism and "representative democracy" in general?

Parliamentarism and "Social Fascism" Revisited

"Let us take also Kautsky's book on parliamentarism and legislation by the people. There we find that the conclusions drawn by the Marxist theoretician coincide with the lessons learned from many years of practical experience by the workers who organised 'spontaneously.' Kautsky strongly protests against Rittinghausen's primitive conception of democracy; he ridicules those who in the name of democracy demand that 'popular newspapers shall be edited directly by the people'; he shows the need for professional journalists, parliamentarians, etc. [...]" (Vladimir Lenin)

I will admit that, in my earlier work, I was too hasty in my assessment of Kautsky's pre-renegacy reductionism on the question of parliamentarism. According to an anecdote of historian Lars Lih:

Besides the Erfurt Programme, the principal text for my reconstruction of Kautsky's outlook is Parliamentarism (1893), cited directly by Lenin in WITBD as an authority for some of his key arguments. This book really has been totally forgotten (the copy I read was one of the hardest to obtain and most decrepit of the text I consulted for this commentary) [...] We should not anachronistically see Kautsky defending parliamentary democracy as opposed to, say, soviet democracy. What Kautsky means by "parliamentarism" in the 1890s is essentially representative democracy. As such, it cannot really be opposed to soviet-style democracy, itself a form of representative democracy.

However, the notion that representative decision-making can only be on an electoral basis is reductionist, a point that was made in my earlier work and one that will be revisited later in this chapter.

"Broad Economism"

"Occasionally someone has attempted to oppose the political struggle to the economic, and declared that the proletariat should give its exclusive attention either to the one or the other. The fact is that the two cannot be separated. The economic struggle demands political rights, and these will not fall from heaven. To secure and maintain them, the most vigorous political action is necessary." (Karl Kautsky)

In the introduction, I mentioned that "the various circle-sects have, long ago, allowed the discredited economism to strike back with a vengeance." For the Marxist reader, the first specifically revolutionary identifier of economism as an obstacle to class-strugglist politics was, historically speaking, not Lenin, but his theoretical mentor – specifically through standing the anti-economist Ferdinand Lassalle on his feet with those aforementioned words in his authoritative commentary on the Erfurt Program. For the reader who is unfamiliar with the word "economism," Lenin gave a good summary of a narrow form of this in 1916:

*The old Economism of 1894–1902 reasoned thus [...] capitalism has triumphed in Russia. Consequently, there can be no question of political revolution. **The practical conclusion: either "economic struggle be left to the workers and political struggle to the liberals"** – that is a curvet to the right – or, instead of political revolution, a general strike for socialist revolution. That curvet to the left was advocated in a pamphlet, now forgotten, of a Russian Economist of the late nineties.*

[Note: It would appear that Lenin was less kind to the mass strike strategy, from Bakunin to Luxemburg to today's Left-Communists and "Transitional Program" circle-ists – Trotskyists – than Mike Macnair was as quoted at the end of Chapter 4. As indicated in my earlier work, however, the full range of "direct action," from mass strikes to publicized civil disobedience, does have its place in the revolutionary process.]

Looking further back, hints of this narrow economism (significant ones, but hints nevertheless) were re-identified within German social democracy during the era of the Anti-Socialist Laws that preceded the Erfurt Program. Consider the oratorical words of one Wilhelm Liebknecht, a revolutionary (and I stress "revolutionary") social-democrat:

The question as to what position Social-Democracy should occupy in the political fight, can be answered easily and confidently if we clearly understand that socialism and democracy are inseparable. Socialism and democracy are not identical, but they are simply different expressions of the same principle; they belong together, supplement each other, and one can never be incompatible with the other. Socialism without democracy is pseudo-socialism, just as democracy without socialism is pseudo-democracy. The democratic state is the only feasible form for a society organized on a socialist basis.

All enemies of the bourgeoisie agree with the negative aspect of socialism. Wagener and Bishop Ketteller, the Catholic clergy in the Austrian Reichsrat, the Protestant squires of the Prussian model state – they all

condemn the bourgeoisie just as loudly as the most radical Socialist, using the same slogans. This shows that in itself **the fight against the bourgeoisie is not necessarily democratic, but can arise from the most reactionary motives**. Here we are faced immediately with the necessity of emphasizing not only the negative side of socialism but also its positive side, which distinguishes us from those reactionaries; and, above all, of waging a political fight in addition to the social fight, and of marching in its front ranks at that. **We call ourselves Social-Democrats, because we have understood that democracy and socialism are inseparable. Our programme is implied in this name. But a programme is not designed to be given merely lip-service and to be repudiated in action. It should be the standard which determines our conduct.**

If we restrict ourselves to the social struggle, or pay insufficient attention to the political battles, we run the risk that our enemies will make use of the existing class antagonisms, and in accordance with the maxim [divide and conquer] flirt sometimes with the bourgeoisie against the workers, sometimes with the workers against the bourgeoisie.

Looking even further back, the Communist Manifesto identified one particular “socialism” that was similar. Notwithstanding the eventual succumbing to cross-class, coalitionist “compromise” by the majority of the international social-democratic movement, the father of the revolutionary martyr Karl Liebknecht had, from today’s perspective, provided the historical link between the “socialist” economists and what the Manifesto identified as “True Socialists”:

The fight of the Germans, and especially of the Prussian bourgeoisie, against feudal aristocracy and absolute monarchy, in other words, the liberal movement, became more earnest.

By this, the long-wished for opportunity was offered to “True” Socialism of confronting the political movement with the Socialist demands, of hurling the traditional anathemas against liberalism, against representative government, against bourgeois competition, bourgeois freedom of the press, bourgeois legislation, bourgeois liberty and equality, and of preaching to the masses that they had nothing to gain, and everything to lose, by this bourgeois movement. German Socialism forgot, in the nick of time, that the French criticism, whose silly echo it was, presupposed the existence of modern bourgeois society, with its corresponding economic conditions of existence, and the political constitution adapted thereto, the very things those attainment was the object of the pending struggle in Germany.

To the absolute governments, with their following of parsons, professors, country squires, and officials, it served as a welcome scarecrow against the threatening bourgeoisie.

While hinted at above, **the genuine political struggle is, at the present time, obscure to almost everyone**. The class-conciliationist “social-democratic” left interprets “the political struggle” to refer to mere “social issues” – like “identity politics” based on race, gender, etc. and “Green politics” based on countering pollution – and “the economic struggle” to mean economic populism of the lowest common denominator (pertaining to tax-and-spend politics, subsidies, business regulations, monetary policy, and international trade) and collective bargain-ism on the side. Meanwhile, most of the class-strugglist left interprets “the political struggle” to mean “the struggle for socialism” (**note the 20th-century shift from economic to political**) and “the economic struggle” to mean all facets of merely immediate worker struggles, including trade-union struggles and other mere labour disputes. However, as noted by the *Weekly Worker’s* Jack Conrad in 2006 in much less generous terms:

As an aside, it is worthwhile here, once again, dealing with that term ‘economism’. Naturally economists, including those mentioned above, define economism in a particularly jejune fashion. That way, in their own minds at least, they have to be found completely innocent of the ugly charge. Hence the plaintive cry. ‘I can’t understand why you in the CPGB call us economists’. If I have heard it once, I have heard it a thousand times.

Below are four specially selected, but representative, examples of economism self-defined; it is a self-replicating Hydra.

1) *Let us begin with Tony Cliff’s decoy of a definition: “Socialists should limit their agitation to purely economic issues, first to the industrial plant, then to inter-plant demands, and so on. Secondly, from the narrow economic agitation the workers would learn, through experience of the struggle itself, the need for politics, without the need for socialists to carry out agitation on the general political and social issues facing the Russian people as a whole.”*

2) Next an 'official communist' dictionary definition: "Its proponents wanted to limit the tasks of the working class movement to economic struggle (improving labour conditions, higher wages, etc). They held that political struggle should be waged by the liberal bourgeoisie alone."

3) The International Socialist Group's Bob Jenkins can speak as the head of orthodox Trotskyism: economism is "orientating to daily trade union struggles" and this "leads them to underestimate the important new political issues and movements unless they are to be found in the unions".

4) Finally we turn to the AWL's Pete Radcliff for a definition from unorthodox Trotskyism: "Economism was the term Lenin used to describe the politics and approach of revolutionaries who exclude themselves from the political struggle ... and merely concentrated on trade union agitation."

Wrong, wrong, wrong, wrong. Even against the "old economism" of 1894-1902, Lenin fielded the term in the "broad sense". The principal feature of economism is lagging behind the spontaneous movement and a general tendency to downplay the centrality of extreme democracy.

In light of the modern social corporatism employing parliamentarism, it is not surprising in the least that the 750th issue of the aforementioned newspaper featured an article by the politically non-aligned Lars Lih himself (on, among other things, pre-renegade Kautsky as an "honorary Bolshevik"), in which this poignant statement against broad economism was made:

I think that the socialist attitude toward political freedom needs serious attention. In my book, I stress the primordial importance of political freedom as a goal for Lenin and the Bolsheviks. But this is only half the story. The main reason the Russian social democrats wanted political freedom was to be able to spread their own version of the truth. When they got into a position of 'state monopoly campaignism', their drive toward political freedom turned (dialectically?) into its opposite: lack of political freedom for their opponents now helped them spread their own version of the truth.

And this is not just some Asiatic deviation of the Russian Bolsheviks. On the contrary, **European socialism as a whole was skeptical about the benefits of political freedom in bourgeois society and did not really see much need for political freedom in socialist society.** And their skepticism was, of course, highly justified, then as it still is today. So the solution is not just to say, 'Let's recognise the importance of political freedom.' The proper attitude to adopt is a complex and difficult issue. But from where I sit I cannot see any real grappling with the problem.

Finally, even a select few class-conciliationist "social-democrats" are **grasping the picture by realizing the genuine political struggle**, like Stefan Berger. Towards the conclusion of his *Communism, Social Democracy and the Democracy Gap*, he commented:

In what arguably amounts to the most spirited defence of the ambitions of the European left and, at the same time, the most trenchant critique of its failures, Geoff Eley has recently argued from a Marxist perspective that, 'by identifying "the Left" not with socialism but with a more capacious and exacting framework of democracy, in all its appropriate social, economic, cultural and personal dimensions, the disabling implications of the crises of socialism during the last third of the twentieth century might be brought under control.' In my view this is fundamentally correct and represents the most fruitful perspective from which to write the history of the left today [...]. **The history of the left as motor of democratic advances in the 19th and 20th centuries 'needs to be recovered and given its due.'** It has to be recovered precisely because the left has always underplayed that aspect of its history as one part in the greater struggle to either tame or overcome capitalism [...]. **A thorough discussion of democracy though, in my view, needs to be disentangled from debates about socio-economic systems.**

Participatory Democracy and the Direct Democracy Question

"Instead of deciding once in three or six years which member of the ruling class was to misrepresent the people in Parliament, universal suffrage was to serve the people [...]" (Karl Marx)

Inspired by Marx's musings on the Paris Commune, awhile back I was fortunate to have found *A Space for Participatory Democracy?*, a blog by sociologist Mark Frezzo of the Florida Atlantic University. Notwithstanding elements of what could be perceived as an overemphasis on decentralization and stikhiinost, he noted the following:

*For the moment, it is sufficient to not that **participatory democracy attempts to move beyond the most significant debate in the history of the left – the debate between advocates of “reform” (social democrats favoring the parliamentary path to power) and proponents of “revolution” (communists favoring the seizure of the state apparatus).** Notwithstanding profound differences in organization and doctrine, these two approaches – often termed “evolutionary” and “revolutionary” socialism respectively – share an emphasis on party politics and a vision of the state as the primary agent of social transformation.*

Present in embryonic form at the founding of the International Workingmen’s Association in 1864 and reaching their mature articulations with the Great Schism in the working-class movement in 1919-1920, these two tendencies defined the trajectory of the left through the Great Depression, the Second World War, the postwar reconstruction, and the peak of US hegemony (1945-early 1970s). However, things began to change in the crisis of the 1970s – a crisis that afflicted Keynesian welfare states in the First World, state socialism in the Second World, and developmental states – whether “bourgeois,” “non-aligned,” or “socialist” – in the Third World. As transnational corporations began to break out of the straitjacket of regulation (culminating in the post-Fordist regime of production), left and center-left parties began to give up on the Keynesian management of capitalism. Over time, the implementation of neoliberal policies created – as an unintended consequence, to be sure – a space for community groups, grassroots movements, NGOs, and other “civil society actors.” This is where the story became interesting. Stay tuned.

One of the central premises behind participatory democracy is parallelism relative to pseudo-representative organs, electorally representative organs, and even genuinely representative organs (again, representation as a concept will be elaborated upon later). For all the traditional emphases on “checks and balances,” parallelism is much more effective. A crude example of parallelism is the concept of dual power between increasingly delegitimized state institutions and alternative institutions. Historically, the WWI-era Provisional Government in Russia was in direct competition with workers’ councils, or soviets, for legitimacy.

Dual power, however, does not address parallelism relative to electorally representative organs, let alone genuinely representative ones. The parallelism of soviets and factory committees was not a form of dual power, since the former organs had just been legitimized by the Bolshevik-led provisional coalition government (provisional until the Soviet constitution of 1918). Add to the mix tenants’ block committees (as opposed to traditional homeowners’ associations), and one finds a much richer parallelism than the one presented by dual power.

The full range of parallelism enables a key observation by Marx on the Paris Commune to be realized once more: the combination of legislative and executive-administrative power within the same organ. Since politicians have proven to be no more competent than “the mob” in specific matters requiring technical knowledge (and in many cases less competent), this combination would abolish the legislative status quo that is based on the French verb *parler* (“to talk”): parliamentarism.

One key question posed by participatory democracy is the revival of direct democracy (made possible precisely by the existence of highly developed and proper political parties, not in spite of them, noted Kautsky). Said the Russian Marxist Georgi Plekhanov in 1883:

The socialist revolution simplifies all social relationships and gives them a purpose, at the same time providing each citizen with the real possibility of participating directly in the discussion and decision of all social matters. This direct participation of citizens in the management of all social matters presupposes the abolition of the modern system of political representation and its replacement by direct popular legislation.

Although society has become too complex for the whole range of political decisions to be made by potentially time-consuming direct popular legislation, modern communication technology has made possible the revival of the ancient Greek body known as the Assembly, wherein any citizen (albeit exclusive of the female gender and the slave class status, but never exclusive of the remaining non-owners of property) was able to attend, make political speeches, and vote on decisions being discussed. The issues being discussed, of course, would have to be major ones, such as taxation levels and budgetary affairs (both discussed in Chapter 6), and even the age-old questions of war and peace. One suggested model in recent years has been dubbed “Handivote,” in which direct popular legislation can be made accurately and anonymously over any phone device. Under this model, there would be more available voting options than mere Yes/No votes, though it would be possible to have as the winning option that which beats every other voting option in a pairwise contest, thereby applying one form of the so-called “Condorcet method” in political science (originally designed for electing candidates).

The remaining range of political decisions would be left to specialized organs with combined legislative and executive-administrative power over their respective, parallel jurisdictions. How they are composed, and how the concept of representation must be redefined, and what key jurisdictional parallelism must exist, are the subjects of the next two sections.

The Demarchy Question and Representation vs. Delegation

“I mean, for example, that it is thought to be democratic for the offices to be assigned by lot, for them to be elected oligarchic, and democratic for them not to have a property-qualification, oligarchic to have one; therefore it is aristocratic and constitutional to take one feature from one form and the other from the other, from oligarchy that offices are to be elected, and from democracy that this is not to be on a property-qualification.” (Aristotle)

Notwithstanding radical republican objections (to be elaborated upon later), the “democracy question” cannot be fully resolved at all without going past Marx himself by giving due consideration to the question’s Greek origins. In his usage of the philosopher Immanuel Kant to read Marx and vice versa, Kojin Karatani wrote this profoundly true and important historical lesson in the *Transcritique*:

*There is one crucial thing we can learn from Athenian democracy in this respect. The ancient democracy was established by overthrowing tyranny and equipped itself with a meticulous device for preventing tyranny for reviving. **The salient characteristic of Athenian democracy is not a direct participation of everyone in the assembly, as always claimed, but a systematic control of the administrative power. The crux was the system of lottery: to elect public servants by lottery and to surveil the deeds of public servants by means of a group of jurors who were also elected by lottery [...] Lottery functions to introduce contingency into the magnetic power center. The point is to shake up the positions where power tends to be concentrated; entrenchment of power in administrative positions can be avoided by a sudden attack of contingency. It is only the lottery that actualizes the separation of the three powers. If universal suffrage by secret ballot, namely, parliamentary democracy, is the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, the introduction of a lottery should be deemed the dictatorship of the proletariat.***

Complementing the Assembly in ancient Greece was the Council of 500, which served as the full-time government. This council was formed not by elections at all, but by the random selection (*kleros* in Greek) of 500 citizens on an annual basis. Such citizens could be selected to serve only twice in their lifetime, for a grand total of two years! So much for non-participatory careerism and bureaucratic excesses!

The same principle of random selection was applied to the legal system, at the apex of which stood the historical high point of universal, full adjudication by commoner jury, the judge-free People’s Court. The enormous size of the peasant-dominated People’s Court, anytime from 500 jurors to well over a thousand, served as protection against bribery. Elections, albeit not of the type where the winning candidate was determined by the first ballot drawn randomly from the ballot box (random balloting, or more accurately somewhat-random balloting as explained below), were reserved mostly for generals, given the need for experience and specialized military knowledge.

A modern implementation of this kind of representation would be indeed on a statistical basis, as opposed to the blatant misrepresentation of age groups, gender groups, ethnicity groups, and certainly classes, all resulting from the bourgeois combination of universal suffrage and elections. The present misrepresentation is compounded by the time wasted on patronage, nepotism, and general questions of personalities (which even somewhat-random balloting cannot avoid) – time that could have been better spent discussing and deciding upon issues. Although arguments can be made against pure random selection, they are ineffective against random selections based upon candidates meeting certain technical criteria. These qualified random selections would most certainly be applied to many specialized councils, such as one, for example, that has jurisdiction over an entire public health care system.

What about abusive officials in a modern demarchy, then? Contrary to potential claims by radical republicans, **the ability to recall any official immediately (not to mention popular recall of legislation) is by no means the exclusive property of that oligarchic principle known as elections**, since many bourgeois states do not have this at all (and, in exceptional cases, limit it to the point of uselessness). It is in fact much closer to the concept of jurors collectively deciding upon a verdict. Parallelism can be applied here in the form of multiple avenues of recall: from popular recall, from universal and full adjudication by commoner jury sanctioning representatives who violate popular legislation, from lower representative bodies, from political parties, and so on. Also, this ability should be extended to jurors themselves and other

legal officials since, as Marx noted, judicial bodies are less independent than depicted in the high halls of liberal idealism:

The judicial functionaries [are] to be divested of that sham independence which had but served to mask their abject subserviency to all succeeding governments to which, in turn, they had taken, and broken, the oaths of allegiance. Like the rest of public servants, magistrates and judges [are] to be [...] responsible, and revocable.

It should be noted that the advocacy of random selections replacing all elections, along with immediate recallability from any of multiple avenues, is nevertheless presented more within the framework of representation (of a statistical kind) than within the framework of delegation. Under the present circumstances, delegation would result in many popular recalls of those presenting any form of substantive policy or administrative changes, whether they're revolutionary, progressive, or even reactionary. Public officials would in essence be sitting ducks, and political programs could not be implemented. **In more extreme forms, delegation would allow recallability on the basis of politico-cultural opposition to delegates having facial piercings or inappropriately funky hair, the kind of personalized mob rule that participatory democracy, demarchy, etc. should avoid.**

The Material Separation of State Politics from Regular Socioeconomic Politics

"But the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery, and wield it for its own purposes." (Karl Marx)

Class-strugglist anarchists differ from typical Marxists on the question of the state, among other questions. A synthetic definition of the state was provided, but what is the basis for this synthetic definition? Continuing with Marx's account of the Paris Commune:

The centralized state power, with its ubiquitous organs of standing army, police, bureaucracy, clergy, and judicature – organs wrought after the plan of a systematic and hierarchic division of labor – originates from the days of absolute monarchy, serving nascent middle class society as a mighty weapon in its struggle against feudalism. Still, its development remained clogged by all manner of medieval rubbish, seigniorial rights, local privileges, municipal and guild monopolies, and provincial constitutions. The gigantic broom of the French Revolution of the 18th century swept away all these relics of bygone times, thus clearing simultaneously the social soil of its last hindrances to the superstructure of the modern state edifice raised under the First Empire, itself the offspring of the coalition wars of old semi-feudal Europe against modern France.

*During the subsequent regimes, the government, placed under parliamentary control – that is, under the direct control of the propertied classes – became not only a hotbed of huge national debts and crushing taxes; with its irresistible allurements of place, pelf, and patronage, it became not only the bone of contention between the rival factions and adventurers of the ruling classes; but its political character changed simultaneously with the economic changes of society. At the same pace at which the progress of modern industry developed, widened, intensified the class antagonism between capital and labor, **the state power assumed more and more the character of the national power of capital over labor, of a public force organized for social enslavement, of an engine of class despotism.***

What is not mentioned here is centralized state power in slave societies (whether in Europe, the Middle East, China, or elsewhere) or a similar role for the state structures of the much smaller feudal fiefdoms in medieval Europe and Japan. What is also not mentioned is the absence of state structures in the pre-capitalist societies of Native America, despite the civil-society hierarchies present in those societies and gender-based division of labour based on regular males, regular females, and "social males" (lesbians who were tasked with male social functions in their societies).

With these insights, along with the clear emergence of the "bureaucratic" coordinator class in the Soviet Union and then in Western capitalist countries, it can be said that **the state is first and foremost the sum of the repressive instruments for the rule of minority classes – and a very private and not public one according to Kantian reasoning.**

While civil-society functions like the building and maintenance of roads can be performed publicly but independent of a state apparatus, they are performed nevertheless by most states historically, with the effect of obscuring their primary function. Consider the emergence of the world's first "welfare state" in the Germany of the 1880s: in order to counter the growing influence of the German worker movement under the

banner of the (flawed) Gotha Program, the Junker landlord regime headed by Bismarck pushed forward the Health Insurance Bill in 1883, the Accident Insurance Bill in 1884, and the Old Age and Disability Insurance Bill in 1889.

To end this obscurement, therefore, there should be **a material separation of high politics, security politics, and all other related state politics from regular socioeconomic politics through the transference of the latter jurisdiction to sovereign socioeconomic governments directly representative of ordinary people.** Thus, the separation of powers can exist in wrong ways – as is the case with the bourgeois separation of legislative and executive-administrative functions, or with the bourgeois premise of governmental cohabitation (presidential control over high politics and prime ministerial control over domestic policy) – or in the right way, in accordance with the participatory-democratic premise of parallelism.

While the mention of direct representation (inclusive of immediate recall) avoids the debate between demarchy and radical republicanism, it is nevertheless crucial as a reminder of historical precedents – even corporatist ones. In the new Soviet republic, there were factory committees and federal-level economic councils. Sidney Webb and Beatrice Webb, two British Utopian Socialists without much awareness of the nature of the state, nonetheless advocated a single parallel Social Parliament based on geographic constituencies, to be responsible for economic management as well as for “welfare state” and other civil-society functions. Numerous Weimar Social-Democrats, including Rudolf Hilferding, toyed with the formation of economic parliaments based on labour, managerial, and consumer sectors of the population coming together – but nevertheless, like the Soviet precedent, subordinated to the main parliament. Adolf Hitler himself once wrote an unfulfilled political measure about how, “before everything else, the trades unions are necessary as building stones for the future economic parliament, which will be made up of chambers representing the various professions and occupations” – undoubtedly based on the corporatism of the short-lived Italian Regency of Carnaro, a heavy influence on Benito Mussolini’s fascism. Then, of course, came the Western European corporatist model, whereby representatives of government, businesses, and unions met together on a regular basis and jointly determined economic policy. Except for the Soviet precedent, the common goal of these precedents was in line with Marx’s observation of a new class-conciliationist phenomenon in the 1850s:

*As against the coalesced bourgeoisie, a coalition between petty bourgeois and workers had been formed, the so-called Social-Democratic party [...] A joint program was drafted, joint election committees were set up and joint candidates put forward. The revolutionary point was broken off and a democratic turn given to the social demands of the proletariat; the purely political form was stripped off the democratic claims of the petty bourgeoisie and their socialist point thrust forward. Thus arose Social-Democracy [...] **The peculiar character of Social-Democracy is epitomized in the fact that democratic-republican institutions are demanded as a means, not of doing away with two extremes, capital and wage labor, but of weakening their antagonism and transforming it into harmony.***

The most obvious concern to arise from this demand pertains to gray areas and the extent that regular socioeconomic politics can really be separated from the truly statist politics and the related state secrecy culture. Mentioned above was the responsibility of building and maintaining roads, with the broader concern involved being infrastructure. However, even before the rise of terrorism associated with political Islam, bourgeois governments included infrastructure questions in state security policy. Another aspect of state security is the military-industrial complex, even that part which deals merely with the notorious but profitable arms trade. Therefore, the concept of materiality is thus borrowed from the profession of auditing (dealing with the quantitative and qualitative significance of amounts, transactions, discrepancies, and disclosures), since in all material respects, most of the civilian economy has little to do with state security. For example, it would be ludicrous to suggest that residential area roads are a state security concern!

Another concern is the possibility of opting out of paying taxes for certain things. On the one hand, there is the legal theory of conscientious objection to military taxation, whereby pacifists and others can refuse their tax money to be allocated to military spending. On the other hand, individualistic proprietarians would want similar status for their conscientious objection, thereby not paying into and benefitting from the sovereign economic governments (especially those in charge of the “welfare state”); income thresholds for opting out may be a partial solution for this concern.

Although this demand would end the obscurement between proper state functions and civil-society functions, how is this in accordance with the principle(s) of social labour? In 1917, Lenin made a distinction between the two kinds of functions – notwithstanding the absence of a “welfare state” in pre-Soviet Russia:

*This brings us to another aspect of the question of the state apparatus. In addition to the chiefly "oppressive" apparatus – the standing army, the police and the bureaucracy – the modern state possesses an apparatus which has extremely close connections with the banks and syndicates, an apparatus which performs an enormous amount of accounting and registration work, if it may be expressed this way. **This apparatus must not, and should not, be smashed. It must be wrested from the control of the capitalists; the capitalists and the wires they pull must be cut off, lopped off, chopped away from this apparatus; it must be subordinated to the proletarian Soviets; it must be expanded, made more comprehensive, and nation-wide. And this can be done by utilising the achievements already made by large-scale capitalism (in the same way as the proletarian revolution can, in general, reach its goal only by utilising these achievements).***

Thus, at least a large part of social labour would be planned and distributed by the sovereign socioeconomic governments.

On the principle of class struggle and the distinction between the more well-known, economic but traditional interpretation of "class warfare" and the Marxist definition of class struggle as being political, there is too much emotional attachment to glorified strike committees (better known as workers' councils, or soviets) as the allegedly definitive organs of ruling-class power for the working class – undoubtedly rooted in the organizational defeatism that is *stikhiinost*. Although the Russian soviets of 1917 were not glorified strike committees, because of their size they soon ceased to be working bodies, with their executive-administrative functions being carried out by executive committees and by the equivalent of bourgeois cabinets known as the Council of People's Commissars (Russian: *Sovet Narodnykh Kommissarov – Sovnarkom*). **Moreover, unlike parliaments, cabinets or even the combined legislative-executive-administrative council of the Paris Commune, the soviets – like glorified strike committees – did not meet in continuous session to at least hold subordinate bodies to account, instead meeting once every few months at best. This is why, historically, the slogan "all power to the soviets" is ultimately an infantile sham; no emergence of glorified strike committees have posed the question of dual power except where such councils have been created and coordinated by political parties. Glorified strike committees dare not become government organizations!**

Non-Class-Based Approaches to Participatory Democracy

"That is why the merging of the democratic activities of the working class with the democratic aspirations of other classes and groups would weaken the democratic movement, would weaken the political struggle, would make it less determined, less consistent, more likely to compromise. On the other hand, if the working class stands out as the vanguard fighter for democratic institutions, this will strengthen the democratic movement, will strengthen the struggle for political liberty [...] We said above that all socialists in Russia should become Social-Democrats. We now add: all true and consistent democrats in Russia should become Social-Democrats." (Vladimir Lenin)

From Chartism in Britain to worker-class demands for universal suffrage to "all power to the soviets," history has shown that the working class is in the best position by far to struggle for participatory democracy. While disparities in typical campaign financing and in access to lobby groups might be discussed, one key aspect of the "battle of democracy" that is never fully discussed among "democratic theory" academics and other ultra-democratist non-workers who are fed up with so-called "liberal democracy" is the Chartist demand regarding legislator pay. Without this demand, political positions would be filled only by those of the propertied classes, namely the bourgeoisie and petit-bourgeoisie. The Paris Commune took this a step further:

From the members of the Commune downwards, the public service had to be done at workman's wage.

In hindsight, this was a primitive yet bold attempt at applying agency theory to the realm of politics and civil administration: **aligning the interests of "agent" officials with the interests of the "principal" population as a whole by means of aligning standards of living.** Nowadays, many public officials (and most politicians) have so-called "second jobs" (petit-bourgeois or even bourgeois business activities) that distance them from dealing with the population at large, and abuse their public expense allowances to the point of increasing them in disproportion to pay increases for ordinary workers at large. A modern alignment of standards of living should be based on the median standard of living for professional and other skilled workers, since the statistical mean allows a small minority of high earners to skew the number upward, and should take into consideration expense allowances and related issues.

On a more general note, other classes are not as enthusiastic about participatory democracy. As a class, coordinators prefer scientific management and social engineering. However, since these would-be technocrats share the same ownership relationship to the means of (societal) production as the proletariat, this class tends to be not so vocal about it, and in fact qualified random selections can partially realize their preferences. In the case of those who, on a class basis, do not develop society's labour power and its capabilities, such mainly "middle-income" and really self-employed service providers form the demographic core of those who rant against "mob rule" (and even use the word "democracy" pejoratively in their rants) and praise liberal republicanism – the supposed mixture of rule by the majority or *demos*, by the best few or *aristoi*, and by the one or *monos*, as opposed to even radical republicanism – mainly because their ever-atomizing individualism inhibits them from politically interacting with society as a whole.

Class-Strugglist Democracy and the Demarchic Commonwealth

"But much more important for Marxist thought is Aristotle's account in Books 3-6 of the *Politics* where he defines democracy as the rule of the poor over the rich whom they can outnumber in the Assembly. *Demokratia* is taken to be class rule rather than popular government, and *demos* is understood in the sense of the common people, not the whole of the people as Perikles, Demosthenes, and other Athenians preferred to believe." (Mogens Herman Hansen)

The Greek word *demokratia* is a much more emphatic word than "democracy" in two very personal ways. First, I considered substituting the word "democracy" in the title of this chapter section and in other areas of this work with this Greek word. Second, upon reading the word *demokratia* for the very first time, I initially regretted not having used it at all, much less commented on it, in my earlier work. Does the word *demokratia*, unlike "democracy" and its politically correct connotations, actually present its own separate challenge to overcoming the crisis of theory regarding strategy and tactics (thereby meriting a separate chapter in that work)? In 2005, however, the British left-wing reformist Tony Benn noted that *demokratia* meant merely "people power" (implying the possibility of elites leaning upon it at times) and not "rule by the people" – demarchy. Regardless of the answer to this question, I decided against using that word and especially the *-kratia* suffix, given the sufficiency of the term "class-strugglist democracy."

"Class-strugglist democracy" also has the two-fold advantage of expressing the full range of parallelism necessitated by participatory democracy (both in terms of so-called "dual power" and parallelism amongst different organs of participatory democracy) and suggesting the contention for power by more than two classes, including: coordinators, small-businessmen or petit-bourgeoisie, at least one class of semi-workers not developing society's labour power and overall capabilities (lawyers, judges, and police officers in one group, the really self-employed in another group, and unproductive workers such as full-time nannies in yet another group), and the various underclasses (the proper lumpenproletariat, the lumpenbourgeoisie, and the lowest class of beggars, chronic drug addicts on the streets, other homeless people, unemployables, and welfare cheats – the lumpen).

On the latter advantage, the contention for power can even be made by more than two class coalitions. The proletariat-led coalition in an imperialist power might include all the dispossessed classes: the coordinators (because they too are estranged from owning the means of production), the proper lumpenproletariat (preferring legal work to illegal work), and those dispossessed elements which nevertheless perform unproductive labour. The bourgeoisie-led coalition might include lawyers, judges, and police officers. Meanwhile, that underrated coalition led by the petit-bourgeoisie, which has formed the socioeconomic base for fascist movements, has included the really self-employed, the lumpenbourgeoisie, and the lumpen.

That aside, I now refer back to the profoundly true and important musings in Mike Macnair's *Revolutionary Strategy* on the long-lost minimum program of Marx himself, despite the radical republicanism of electing all officials:

This understanding enables us to formulate a core political minimum platform for the participation of communists in a government. The key is to replace the illusory idea of 'All power to the soviets' and the empty one of 'All power to the Communist Party' with the original Marxist idea of the undiluted democratic republic, or 'extreme democracy', as the form of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

[...]

Without commitment to such a minimum platform, communists should not accept governmental responsibility [...] To accept governmental responsibility as a minority under conditions of revolutionary

crisis is, if anything, worse than doing so in 'peaceful times': a crisis demands urgent solutions, and communists can only offer these solutions from opposition.

This merely confirms what Engels wrote in his critique of the Erfurt Program's lack of any mention of a "democratic republic":

*If one thing is certain it is that our party and the working class can only come to power under the form of a democratic republic. **This is even the specific form for the dictatorship of the proletariat**, as the Great French Revolution [of 1871] has already shown. It would be inconceivable for our best people to become ministers under an emperor [...]*

However, since what is suggested in this work rejects both liberal and radical republicanism, what should replace the "democratic republic" and "soviet power"? Fortunately, Engels himself suggested a term that has the potential to address class-strugglist anarchist criticisms of coordinated "workers' states":

We would therefore suggest that Gemeinwesen be universally substituted for state; it is a good old German word that can very well do service for the French 'Commune.'

The minimum program for the emergence of this demarchic "Commonwealth" surpasses broad economism by aiming for multiple struggles:

- 1) A two-fold political struggle of a minimum-maximum character, with politico-ideological independence for the working class as the immediate aim, and with the demarchic commonwealth fully replacing the repressive instruments for the rule of minority classes – the state – as the aim later on;
- 2) Economic struggles of a minimum-maximum character, with economic struggles promoting politico-ideological independence for the working class as an immediate aim, and with economic struggles directly for social labour later on – **since the struggle for this "socialism" is indeed economic and not political**; and
- 3) Peripheral sociocultural struggles of a minimum-maximum character around various issues, such as "identity politics."

To tie this and the preceding commentary on participatory democracy and class issues together, listed below are demands based on the struggles of politico-ideologically independent worker-class movements in the past (the list of which is more comprehensive than the one provided by Macnair). Taking into account modern developments and critiques, the consistent advocacy of this core of a minimum program for political power – as opposed to the more common and orthodox "minimum program" for continued opposition even after complete fulfillment – emphatically solves the problem of broad economism throughout the class-strugglist left by being much greater than the sum of its political and economic parts. While individual demands could easily be fulfilled without eliminating the bourgeois state order, **the complete, consistent, and lasting implementation of this minimum program in the pre-orthodox sense (as formulated by Marx himself) would mean that the working class will have captured the full political power of a ruling class, thus establishing the so-called "dictatorship of the proletariat"**:

- 1) All assemblies of the remaining representative democracy and all councils of an expanding participatory democracy shall become working bodies, not parliamentary talking shops, being legislative and executive-administrative at the same time and not checked and balanced by anything more professional than universal, full adjudication by commoner jury that dispenses with judges altogether. The absence of any mention of grassroots mass assemblies is due to their incapability to perform administrative functions on a regular basis. Also, this demand implies comprehensive codification and periodic re-codification of laws and also general simplification of the legal system as a whole, again dispensing entirely with that oligarchic and etymologically monarchic legal position of Judge and at least curtailing that legalese-creating and overly specialized position of Lawyer.
- 2) All political and related administrative offices shall be assigned by kleros (random selection or lot) as a fundamental basis of the demarchic commonwealth. This is in stark contrast to elections for all such public offices, the central radical-republican demand that completely ignores electoral fatigue. With this demand comes the possibility of finally fulfilling a demarchic variation of that one unfulfilled demand for annual parliaments raised by the first politico-ideologically independent worker-class movement in history, the Chartist movement in the United Kingdom.
- 3) All political and related administrative offices, and also the ability to influence or participate in political decision-making, shall be free of any formal or de facto disqualifications due to non-ownership of non-possessive property or, more generally, of wealth. The Chartists called similarly for "no property qualification for members of Parliament – thus enabling the constituencies to return the man of their

choice, be he rich or poor.” While the struggle against formal property qualifications was most progressive, even freely elected legislatures are almost devoid of the working poor, especially those who are women. Moreover, this is in stark contrast to disparities in typical campaign financing and in access to lobby groups. Unlike the Chartist demand, by no means does this demand in the grammatically double negative (“disqualifications” and “non-ownership”) preclude the very illiberal disenfranchisement of the bourgeoisie – and other owners of the aforementioned types of property – as one of the possible measures of worker-class rule. In fact, not only did the original Soviet constitution deprive voting rights from the bourgeoisie and others even on more functional criteria such as hiring labour for personal profit, but agitators from the lower classes in the French Revolution demanded the limitation of the right of suffrage to those classes only.

4) All jurisdiction over regular socioeconomic politics shall be materially transferred to sovereign socioeconomic governments directly representative of ordinary people – separate from structures responsible for high politics, security politics, and all other related state politics. Once more, the separation of powers can exist in the wrong way, as is the case with the bourgeois separation of legislative and executive-administrative functions, or in the right way, in accordance with the participatory-democratic premise of parallelism. Also, associated with truly statist politics is the culture of state secrecy, something that permeates regular socioeconomic politics under present societies.

5) All political and related administrative offices shall operate on the basis of occupants’ standards of living being at or slightly lower than the median equivalent for professional and other skilled workers. On the one hand, formulations that demand compensation for such public officials to be simply no more than “workman’s wage” fail to take into account the historic worker-class demand for legislators to be paid in the first place, first raised by the worker-class Chartists, “thus enabling an honest tradesman, working man, or other person, to serve a constituency, when taken from his business to attend to the interests of the country.” On the other hand, even freely elected legislators, many of whom have “moonlighting” or additional sources of income through businesses or unproductive public speeches, tend to increase their collective level of expense allowances beyond the median equivalent associated with professional work. A combination of appropriate pay levels and expense allowances, mandated loss of other occupations (since these offices should be full-time positions), employment transition programs for occupants leaving office, and other measures can fulfill this demand.

6) All political and related administrative offices shall be subject to immediate recall from any of multiple avenues, especially in cases of abuse of office. Recall can be fulfilled effectively under a radical-republican system of indirect elections and hierarchical accountability, as opposed to the current system of direct electoralism (based on mass constituencies) which requires significant numbers of constituents to sign recall initiatives. Nevertheless, additional avenues are necessary, such as from full adjudication by commoner jury sanctioning representatives who violate popular legislation, and from political parties. Like two of the preceding demands, this demand is best fulfilled when all such public offices are assigned by lot, thereby minimizing interpersonal political connections.

7) There shall be an ecological reduction of the normal workweek even for working multiple jobs – including time for workplace democracy, workers’ self-management, broader industrial democracy, etc. through workplace committees and assemblies – to a participatory-democratic maximum of 32 hours or less without loss of pay or benefits but with further reductions corresponding to increased labour productivity, the minimum provision of double-time pay or salary/contract equivalent for all hours worked over the normal workweek and over 8 hours a day, and the prohibition of compulsory overtime. In addition to the extensive analysis provided in the next chapter, it must be noted that proposals for an eight-hour day were made but not implemented within the Paris Commune, and that the development of capitalist production is such that time for workplace democracy, workers’ self-management, broader industrial democracy, etc. should be part of the normal workweek and not outside of it.

8) There shall be **full, lawsuit-enforced freedom of class-strugglist assembly and association for people of the dispossessed classes, even within the military, free especially from anti-employment reprisals, police interference such as from agents provocateurs, and formal political disenfranchisement**. If one particular demand could neatly sum up the struggle for the politico-ideological independence of the working class – before and even just after having captured the full political power of a ruling class – it is this one by far.

9) There shall be an expansion of the abilities to bear arms, to self-defense against police brutality, and to general self-defense, all toward enabling the formation of people’s militias based on free training, especially in connection with class-strugglist association for people of the dispossessed classes, and also free from police interference by the likes of agents provocateurs. The aggressive advocacy of this demand separates class-strugglists from the most obvious of cross-class coalitionists, even if the likes of Bernstein pushed for this demand in less formal workers’ action programs.

10) There shall be full independence of the mass media from concentrated private ownership and management by first means of workplace democracy over mandated balance of content in news and media production, heavy appropriation of economic rent in the broadcast spectrum, unconditional

economic assistance (both technical and financial) for independent mass media cooperative startups – especially at more local levels, for purposes of media decentralization – and anti-inheritance transformation of all the relevant mass media properties under private ownership into cooperative property. Although this is an applied combination of more general demands that are in and of themselves not necessary for workers to become the ruling class, a comprehensive solution to the mass media problem of concentrated private ownership and management (not to mention bourgeois cultural hegemony as discussed by the Marxist Antonio Gramsci) is a necessary component of any minimum program in the pre-orthodox sense.

11) **All state debts shall be suppressed outright.** Unlike the more transformative suppression of all public debts on a transnational scale, the minimum character of this demand was long established by the historical precedent of the 19th-century imperialist powers periodically going into debt to fund their wars and then defaulting upon them on an equally periodic basis.

12) **All predatory financial practices towards the working class, legal or otherwise, shall be precluded** by first means of establishing, on a permanent and either national or multinational basis, a **financial monopoly without any private ownership or private management whatsoever** – at purchase prices based especially on the market capitalization values of insolvent yet publicly underwritten banks – with such a public monopoly on money supply management inclusive of the general provision of commercial and consumer credit, and with the application of “equity not usury” towards such activity. The usage of the word “multinational” instead of “transnational” signifies the minimum character of this demand, given the multinational structure of the European Union and given that, as mentioned earlier, a single transnational equivalent should put to an end the viability of imperialist wars and conflicts more generally as vehicles for capital accumulation.

13) There shall be overt, subtle, and covert enactment of **explicitly confiscatory, despotic measures against all capital flight of wealth, investment strikes, and other elitist economic blackmail**, whether the related wealth belongs to economic rebels on the domestic front or to foreign profiteers. Ultimately, the flight of gold from Parisian banks by those in control over same banks weakened the workers of 1871 Paris and financed the ruthless suppression of the Paris Commune.

[Note: Due consideration must, of course, be given to other political issues crucial to the beginning of worker-class rule, such as public monopoly over foreign trade, local autonomy, and the full or partial addressing of certain transformative issues like governmental transparency and genuine freedom of movement.]

Practical Issues and Revisiting the Party Question

In the previous chapter, the rhetorical question about specific organization – mass alternative institutionalization and bureaucracy – in relation to preparation was asked: If the existing bureaucratic organs of state administration are a dead end, and inevitable spontaneist reliance upon specific coordinator individuals from smashed state bureaucracies another dead end, what is the realistic alternative other than to establish, on a very permanent basis, an in-house bureaucracy as a means of preparatory organization?

As Mike Macnair put it another way in an older article:

*The consequence is that the workers' movement needs to work out the institutional forms which will make a professional bureaucracy answerable to the lay members. It needs to work that out in the existing organisations of the working class. It needs to learn how to control power. **It needs to develop institutions that go far beyond the thin, impoverished parties of today, which do not address different aspects of the cultural life of the class. Within this network or web of institutions under capitalism the proletariat needs to learn how to create its own power over its full-time apparatus.***

*In that sense it remains the case that State and Revolution has absolutely fundamental lessons for us. It is just that those lessons are not those imagined by the left and council communists and more recently the spontaneists and the 'councillist' Trotskyists who fetishise the soviet form. The lesson is not that soviet power is the magic wand which lets the proletariat take the power. **It is that the proletariat needs to begin to develop power over its full-timers under conditions of bourgeois rule – in its own institutions, in its own organisations – if it is to be in a position to take the power from the bourgeoisie and create a state which is actually answerable to the working class, rather than one which becomes a state for itself, like the Stalinist regime.***

In concluding this chapter, it is only natural to link the democracy question to *partiinost* regarding an official party-movement and a sociopolitical syndicate, and to do so in a very practical manner. Areas of concluding discussion and application are:

- 1) The kind of internal party institutions to be established;
- 2) The paradox of revolutionary careerism;
- 3) Aligning parliamentary activity and campaign diversification with programmatic centrality;
- 4) Publicized discussive unity in relation to political and demographic diversity; and
- 5) Demarchy in relation to the first and fourth points above.

For too long have political parties organized committees and commissions as their internal institutions. This is but a reflection of their increased focus on electoral campaigns, fundraising dinners, and protest activism. Only the main political party committee and lower-level equivalents are permanent. Much of the class-strugglist left from the time of Lenin to the present day had and have even twisted the word “bureau” in their anti-bureaucracy fetishes, transforming it into small leadership organs for political issues (hence Politburos) and in some instances for general organization (hence Orgburos). A shift is required in favour of permanent or quasi-permanent organizations, hence institutions. Precisely because of this requirement, **there should be, instead of workers’ councils formed spontaneously, those formed as purely party organizations.** This new form of workers’ councils, such as a Central Workers Council akin to the Communal Council of the Paris Commune in 1871, should replace the main political party committee and lower-level equivalents, **such that “all power to the workers’ councils” would be yet another profoundly true and important acknowledgement that only real parties hold durable power.** Likewise, there should be proper bureaus instead of bureaucratic commissions, so instead of something like a central auditing commission, there should be a Central Audit Bureau which assesses “the expeditious and proper handling of affairs by the [party], and audits the [party’s] treasury accounts and enterprises,” to quote the old *Rules of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union* as adopted by the 22nd Congress of the CPSU in 1961 – and as examined later in this concluding discussion. This proper bureau, with its anti-spontaneist bureaucratic procedure, would exist alongside the **proper bureaus responsible for the alternative culture, with their own anti-spontaneist bureaucratic procedures.** On a less institutional note, revolutionary conventions like those in the French Revolution or that called for by some Bolshevik and non-Bolshevik revolutionaries, in opposition to bourgeois and other non-worker constituent assemblies, might have to be replaced by party equivalents.

With the aforementioned institutionalization and bureaucracy (as well as anti-councilism in relation to spontaneous workers’ councils seizing power) comes the paradox of revolutionary careerism. The main demand related to this is the one tying occupants’ standards of living being at or slightly lower than the median equivalent for professional and other skilled workers. **There simply cannot be a worker-class movement where the grunts are paid poverty salaries (or at least not paid living-wage salaries) while the charismatic figures and the mainly academic gurus enjoy the same privileges as the middle and perhaps even higher-level *tred-iunionisty* – well beyond per diems, gas allowances and certain other kinds of trip expense allowances.** One aspect of revolutionary careerism that is less related to employee compensation is the problem of scheduling. The work cultures of student politicians and tenured professors, limited to weekdays, are incompatible with working-class interaction, and there is a dire need to hold both political and cultural meetings with workers on both weekends and holidays. **To offset any perceived overtime in weekend and holiday meetings, the normal workweek for all the revolutionary careerists could be reduced without loss of pay or benefits.**

In my earlier work, I wrote a few things about parliamentary and municipal politics:

- 1) That no illusions be held about conducting class struggle within parliamentary or typical municipal organs;
- 2) That the executive branch has accumulated more power in both its legislatively accountable sectors and its legislatively non-accountable ones;
- 3) That minimum demands in both the more radical, pre-orthodox sense and the less radical, orthodox sense can be achieved by means of publicized civil disobedience, demanding from outside the aforementioned organs; and
- 4) That parliamentarism and municipal politics should be treated by workers with utter contempt through coordinated mass spoilage, as opposed to cynical but ever-ineffective abstention, which reinforces the bourgeois notion that abstainers are either stupid or content.

The last point is important, because political support is not the same as mere electoral support. The very point that real parties are real movements and vice versa indicates that more substantive political support can be found outside the ballot box. Besides, electoral support can entail strategic votes, questionable protest votes, votes for charismatic leaders who are more popular than their respective electoral machines, votes in accordance with family voting, crass tribalism such as that found in the British Labour Party, and other unreliable factors. When Engels stated in 1884 that universal suffrage was “the

gauge of the maturity of the working class [and] cannot and never will be anything more in the modern state," he should have stated that it was one gauge among better ones, such as spoiled balloting. As for revolutionary careerists and the intrigues of parliamentary or typical municipal organs, an immediate solution can be found somewhere between unprincipled opportunism and ever-crude abstentionism, in the mixture of **discussing social labour and nothing else (a tactic inspired by the DeLeonist tradition), semi-abstentionism by means of complete dedication to political office work in one's electoral district, and populist anti-establishment rhetoric (both anti-capitalist and anti-Government) by those same revolutionary careerists.** This mixture and other means of emphasizing the extra-parliamentary or extra-municipal party line – to quote Lars Lih once more – “programme and an insistence on discipline” **would help prevent the revolutionary careerists, no matter their charisma, from dishonouring the party's program by, for example, entering into cross-class ruling coalitions** – the “ministerialism” denounced back in the days of the Second International.

On the subject of party lines and achieving “unity in action, freedom of discussion and criticism,” **contemporary circumstances require nothing less than accessibility, flexibility, and political transparency.** This implies:

- 1) That audience access to intra-party discussions should include, as much as possible, the voting membership at large and even the working class within the general public, including by means of live mass-media and/or Internet coverage of intra-party discussions;
- 2) That intra-party decisions should be made, as much as possible, by the voting membership at large and also on the basis of preventing, not repressing, factionalism; and
- 3) That no restrictions should be made on publicizing, even outside limited party channels, those professional discussions on decisions that have already been made, hence publicized discussive unity.

Note, however, that the negative connotation of factionalism above is not the same as political diversity within a party, which can take on a number of more transparent forms, such as forums and horizontal networks, currents, platforms, and tendencies. Forums and horizontal networks can be organized by one or more current, platform, or tendency, as well as by the party as a whole, to promote particular issues, viewpoints, and debates, plus in the case of horizontal networks to focus on specific tactics like “No Platform” and other anti-fascist confrontations. Currents tend to be about particular systems, advocating things like so-called “Economic Democracy” and other forms of market socialism, participatory economics, and the more political Participatory Socialism (participatory economists advantageously raising socialist consciousness inside the working class but outside the class movement, while expressing their political rejection of the dead-end “democratic socialism” that puts parliamentarism above socialist aims, and also of the hyper-activist minority aims masked as “revolutionary socialism”). Platforms correspond to particular systems, particular worker demographics such as the working poor amongst the workforce and pensioners outside it (more on these two groups later), or lesser themes such as pro-labour reform, ecology, and civil rights – but are nevertheless bound, according to Nestor Makhno's works on anarchist platformism, at least by tactical unity, collective responsibility, and some form of federalism in between decentralization and centrality. Last but not least, tendencies are a step up from forums, currents, and platforms, with separate media in striving for an intra-party majority both politically and organizationally.

So what is factionalism, then, within an atmosphere of forums, currents, platforms, and tendencies? **Factionalism is characterized by its very contrast to publicized discussive unity.** As opposed to tendencies, factions and their culture of secrecy limit audience access to intra-party discussions, overemphasize representative voting and top-down appointments, exhibit unprofessional behaviour in striving to be a political and organizational majority (such as bullying or threatening to split unless their views are adopted across the board, or attempting to replace party media with their own), refuse to act in accordance with agreed-upon action, and abstain from presenting majority viewpoints in addition to their own. **It is no wonder why the anarchist Mikhail Bakunin and his immediate conspirators, despite their baseless and hypocritical charge of authoritarianism on the part of Marx, were expelled** from the International Workingmen's Association for maintaining the International Alliance for Socialist Democracy as a secret faction inside and outside the former, with its “rules or administrative regulations contrary to the General Rules and Administrative Regulations of the International Association.” Therefore, the best approach to factions vs. tendencies would be similar to the left-reformist “Eurocommunist” approach, as described by Macnair:

*The clearest cases are the French and Italian Communist Parties. **Such parties officially prohibit factions [and factionalism], but have them [and tendencies] de facto,** and are officially Bonapartist-centralist, but in practice allow a lot of leeway to the branches and fractions. They can actually be useful for the workers' movement and the development of class consciousness even if they have coalitionist politics*

which they cannot carry into practice (all of them between the 1950s and the 1970s) and even if they are small (like the old CPGB).

The only organs that should be allowed to have one or two factional characteristics under pressing circumstances (overemphasizing representative voting and top-down appointments, plus limiting audience access to intra-party discussions especially during politically revolutionary periods) are the Central Workers Council and its lower-level equivalents within the party.

Returning to the subject of horizontal networks and platforms in relation to particular worker demographics, despite the obstructive legacy of official labour parties whose supreme bodies allot bloc votes to affiliated and usually "yellow" trade unions, **the mechanism of bloc votes need not necessarily be dumped by either the official party-movement or the sociopolitical syndicate.** Consider the working poor amongst the workforce and pensioners outside it, for instance. Because of the present difficulties in mobilizing these insecure elements of the modern proletariat (not to mention the "yellow" neglect of these specific worker demographics), symbolic mechanisms can go a long way towards attracting their political support. This means bloc votes for their horizontal networks and platforms, in addition to existing individual votes. The Japanese Communist Party has seen a recent tide of support from younger people in the working poor, even if it has yet to adopt bloc votes for the newer supporters. In any event, so long as any disproportionate representation arising from bloc votes does not reach gross levels like those of the British Labour party, with its opportunistic disproportionate representation for members of Parliament and problematic disproportionate representation for affiliated trade unions, the danger of sectoral chauvinism can be avoided.

Since demarchy and centrality were discussed above in relation to workers' own institutions, how can they be applied to the party itself, especially in a more mature stage with more party councils and bureaus? The key problem is statistical representation; according to the Central Limit Theorem in probability theory, as the size of a sample of independent observations approaches infinity, as long as those observations come from a distribution with finite variance, the sampling distribution of the sample mean approaches a normal distribution. Practically speaking, in order to be representative of a broader population and to minimize sampling error, a sample size should be at least 25 to 30 units, though the bigger the sample, the more the statistical representation and the less the sampling error. Therefore, the political and organizational answer to this can be provided by an examination and critique of a historical party structure such as the one outlined in the *Rules of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union* as adopted and amended by the 22nd and 23rd Congresses of the CPSU in 1961 and 1966, respectively (since parties like the SPD have a similar structure):

- 1) Primary Party Organizations were composed of three or more party members, and met at least once a month. Where there were less than 15 party members, a secretary and deputy secretary were elected by conventional means. Otherwise, a bureau was formed. Whether the modern equivalent of such bureau has 25 or more members determines the applicability of random selection, but **smaller organs could still be elected on the basis of winning candidates being determined by the first vote(s) drawn randomly from the pool of votes** (assuming the absence of secret ballots). Again, this would not be totally random, and general question of personalities is something which even somewhat-random balloting cannot avoid.
- 2) Next were the Area, City, and District Party organizations. These had conferences which formed committees (lower "central committees") and auditing commissions, and the committees elected secretaries and other bureau (lower "politburo") members. It is clear that **the modern equivalents of said conferences and committees, not to mention departments, can be formed on the basis of random selection**, while again the bureaus could be formed by random selection or by something like somewhat-random balloting.
- 3) Higher up were the Regional, Territorial, Republican, and All-Union Party organizations, but there were republican and all-union congresses instead of conferences. Random selection is so obvious for modern equivalents for these higher cases, but again organs equivalent to the Presidium or Political Bureau, if not large enough, might have to be formed on the basis of somewhat-random balloting.

What is interesting about appointments within the CPSU, especially its leading bodies, is that they were determined by lists of names of candidates (the notorious *nomenklatura* system) concurrently holding some other position. This is referred to alternatively as a job slot system. Relatedly, recall the possibility of random selections from lists of candidates meeting certain technical criteria, which would in fact be an example of stratified sampling, one of various probability sampling methods (simple random sampling, systematic sampling, probability-proportional-to-size sampling, and cluster sampling) in contrast to quota sampling for gender and other non-probability sampling methods.

As much as possible, the party should adopt a mixture of probability and non-probability sampling methods as a replacement for elections to its councils and bureaus. Below are applications of various sampling methods to party organization:

- 1) **Quota sampling could be used for gender or for cooperation between tendencies, platforms, and currents in an editorial organ.** That organ might require some number of class-strugglist anarchists or rather pro-party anarcho-syndicalists, some number of participatory socialists, some number of market socialists, and of course some number of revolutionary-centrists. This would go a long way towards ensuring that key political positions are not censored from the party press.
- 2) Cluster sampling would be inherent in geographically lower party organizations. Nobody from the Middle East would be selected at random to lead a South American organization.
- 3) **Probability-proportional-to-size sampling could be used to measure the relative strength of the tendencies, platforms, and currents in certain organs. This would solve the political problems associated historically with the slate system on the class-strugglist left,** which according to one Pat Byrne is supposed to “recommend a list that consciously includes a good balance of talents and personalities [but] in practice [...] has allowed leaders to secure their continuous re-election along with a body of like-minded and loyal followers.”
- 4) **Once more, stratified sampling could be used for lists to filter based on specialized knowledge, past or present experience in key occupations (job slots), but it could also be used for lists to filter based on more basic criteria** like mere duration of voting membership.

- No to parliamentarism and social fascism
 - o <http://www.theonion.com/articles/american-people-hire-highpowered-lobbyist-to-push,18204/>
 - o <http://www.wsws.org/articles/2010/oct2010/corc-o25.shtml>
 - o Disenfranchised working class
 - o *Communism, Social Democracy and the Democracy Gap* by Stefan Berger [http://www.arbark.se/pdf_wrd/berger_int.pdf]
 - o Berger: “At the beginning of the 21st century the project of democracy needs rethinking. In the 1990s there was much talk about growing disillusionment of voters with political parties which found expression in lower and lower participation rates in elections. Increasing numbers of citizens withdrew even from the limited sphere in which they had previously been active: the ballot box. Their passivity seemed to threaten the legitimacy of representative democracies.”
 - o Undermine the specific combinations of “democracy” with “liberal,” “parliamentary,” “representative,” and other bourgeois adjectives
 - o “Side by side with social democracy, with whose aid the bourgeoisie suppresses the workers or lulls their class vigilance, stands Fascism [...] The combination of social democracy, corruption and active white terror, in conjunction with extreme imperialist aggression in the sphere of foreign politics [...] Social democracy itself often plays a Fascist role in periods when the situation is critical for capitalism. In the process of development social democracy reveals Fascist tendencies [...]” (<http://marxistsfr.org/history/international/comintern/6th-congress/ch02.htm>)
 - o Social corporatism

[Republic and Social Democracy in France]

But, the more the American proletariat grows and class contradictions increase, the more the bourgeoisie is anxious to use all means the republic offers it to suppress the proletariat. It engages in the much-vaunted “luring the workers” on the most tremendous scale – not through social reforms (those which have been passed recently are not worth talking about), but through systematic corruption of the masses, by flooding the country with a commercially bribable press, through buying votes in elections, through the extraction of influential labour leaders.

Today, in every country, they are trying these methods to confuse and corrupt the workers. Even absolutist Russia saw the attempts of the police officer, Zubatov, to create a workers’ movement kept on a lead by the police. But nowhere are these experiments carried out on such a scale and with such tenacity as in the republic, precisely because of the power of the ballot paper, the press and the trade unions. But these efforts are nowhere more successful than in the republic.

Republic and Social Democracy in France, Part I by Karl Kautsky [http://www.cpgb.org.uk/article.php?article_id=1004372]

If for Blanqui the sovereign means of liberating the proletariat was its political organisation, if for Proudhon it was its economic organisation, then for Louis Blanc it was the power of the orators and literati of socialism in stirring people's hearts.

[...]

The less organised, the less politically educated the proletariat is, the more it will be controlled by the press.

Second Republic and the Socialists by Karl Kautsky [http://www.cpgb.org.uk/article.php?article_id=1004398]

As bad as the theoretical fragmentation and ignorance of the Parisian proletariat was, it was not so much damaged by this as it was by its lack of a uniform organisation. This was indeed partly caused by theoretical disjointedness and partly by the absence of the right to association and assembly, which had rendered the creation of any proletarian mass organisation impossible since 1794. We shall return to the latter point further on.

The Second Empire and the Paris Commune by Karl Kautsky [http://www.cpgb.org.uk/article.php?article_id=1004409]

CHAPTER 6: "TO BEGIN WITH..."

"Proceeding from these principles, the Social Democratic Party of Germany demands, to begin with [...]"
(Eduard Bernstein)

Yes, those words were written by Eduard Bernstein, the official spokesperson and theoretician of the pacifists among the "yellow" (non-class-strugglist) *tred-iunionisty* and equally "yellow" bureaucratic careerists in the international proletariat's first vanguard party, the then-Marxist Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (SPD). Although many Trotskyists and other so-called "anti-capitalists" prefer "transitional" sloganeering and "directional" methods, respectively (as addressed in Chapter 2), the modern conditions for open class struggle (or the relative lack thereof) are such that Social-Labourists should indeed consider Lenin's own evaluation, in 1899, of the overly maligned Erfurt Program of the SPD:

We are not in the least afraid to say that we want to imitate the Erfurt Programme: there is nothing bad in imitating what is good, and precisely today, when we so often hear opportunist and equivocal criticism of that programme, we consider it our duty to speak openly in its favour. Imitating, however, must under no circumstances be simply copying.

What was said above was in fact a defense of the minimum-maximum programmatic approach against minimalists like Bernstein (who indeed authored the oppositionist "minimum" section of the Erfurt Program) who in fact rejected this approach (hence minimalism). In my earlier work, however, I deemed this original programmatic approach by Marx, Engels, and Kautsky to be problematic. Minimum programs were historically interpreted as being only on the threshold (that is, the maximum that could possibly be achieved under bourgeois-fied commodity production, or, using the language of game theory, the most rudimentary interpretation of the concept of maximin in regards to programmatic questions), and sometimes included the hard-to-categorize demands for the conquest of specifically political power by the working class (i.e., "the democratic republic," "soviet power," and now class-strugglist democracy and the demarchic commonwealth). With the historical development of bourgeois-fied commodity production, the second theoretical founder of "participatory economics," Robin Hahnel, countered this static programmatic interpretation best:

In sum, any reform can be fought for in ways that diminish the chances of further gains and limit progressive change in other areas, or fought for in ways that make further progress more likely and facilitate other progressive changes as well.

On the other hand, those Trotskyists who adhere to “transitional” sloganeering have abandoned the aforementioned static interpretation and complemented their static “transitional” sloganeering with a vulgar, defensive, and ultimately economic interpretation of oppositionist “minimum” demands (minimum) taken straight from the Second International minimalists, of whom Kautsky said in *The Road to Power*:

The reformers dream of the establishment of social peace between the classes, between exploited and exploiters, without abolishing exploitation. They would bring this about by having each class exercise a certain self-restraint toward the other, and by the giving up of all “excesses” and “extreme demands.”

In between the two extremes stands a method that is dynamic (or broadly directional) yet structural and oppositionist. Part of this method coincides with some of the minimax “ideals” of even the most structurally interventionist of “social-democrats,” while a larger part already goes beyond them, but which in its entirety facilitates the issuance of either intermediate or threshold demands later (the “Hahnel criterion,” per the note below) on while simultaneously enabling the basic principles to be “kept consciously in view” (to quote Kautsky, hence the reference to this criterion as the “Kautsky criterion” for the sake of this work) – **through the emphasis on transnational class struggle in this method, specifically the forms of transnational pressure, paradigm shifts, and related grassroots discourse, for both legislative implementation (and not regulation by hardly accountable regulators) and politico-ideological independence for the working class.**

[Note: For the sake of this work I will refer to the facilitating of the issuance of intermediate and threshold demands as the “Hahnel criterion.” This is due to Hahnel’s criticism of the “non-reformist reforms” precedent established by one Andre Gorz, notwithstanding the pareconist’s own misjudgment on the “full Keynesian program” (in fact “bastard Keynesianism” in the eyes of more radical Neo-Ricardians or Post-Keynesians such as Joan Robinson, Paul Davidson, Hyman Minsky, and Steve Keen) as being reform-enabling.]

Some of these demands are so dynamic that they transcend the political-economic divide of traditional “minimum” demands. The rest of this lengthy chapter will examine, on the basis of the Hahnel and Kautsky criteria provided above, various dynamic oppositionist demands.

32-Hour Workweek Without Loss of Pay or Benefits

“Bourgeois philanthropy becomes more and more timid. It leaves the struggle for sufficient workers’ protection more and more to the workers themselves. The current struggle for the eight-hour day in England is a very different aspect than the one which was carried out there half a century ago for the ten-hour day. As far as bourgeois politicians are advocating this measure today, they are moved not by philanthropy but by being put under pressure by their working class constituents. The struggle for workers’ protection is becoming more and more a sheer class struggle between proletarians and the bourgeoisie. On the European continent, where the struggle for workers’ protection laws commenced much later than in England, it bore this character from the start. The proletariat has no more hope for support from the property-holding classes in its endeavour to elevate itself. It now depends wholly upon its own strength, that is to say that in the first place it depends on the strength of those of its many strata which have conserved or newly achieved fortitude and enthusiasm for their struggle.” (Karl Kautsky)

The above quote is a brief history lesson on the rather spontaneous but historic struggles for shortened workdays. In 1810, the Utopian-Socialist Robert Owen raised the demand for the ten-hour day. In 1848 France, just when the Communist Manifesto was published, the twelve-hour day was won. In Chapter 10 of Volume I of *Das Kapital*, Marx recalled the events that transpired during the previous year (1866):

The Congress of the International Working Men’s Association at Geneva, on the proposition of the London General Council, resolved that “the limitation of the working-day is a preliminary condition without which all further attempts at improvement and emancipation must prove abortive... the Congress proposes eight hours as the legal limit of the working-day.”

Thus the movement of the working-class on both sides of the Atlantic, that had grown instinctively out of the conditions of production themselves, endorsed the words of the English Factory Inspector, R. J. Saunders: “Further steps towards a reformation of society can never be carried out with any hope of success, unless the hours of labour be limited, and the prescribed limit strictly enforced.”

In modern times, the 8-hour workday and 40-hour workweek are taken for granted. However, consider a notable exception, South Korea, as reported by Arirang News in 2006:

People in Seoul work the longest hours per year in the world, says a study by the Swiss financial group Union des Banques Suisses (UBS). In a recent report, UBS says that Seoul residents spend more than 2,300 hours at work each year. That's the longest among 71 world cities surveyed.

Based on a 42-hour workweek, the average South Korean worker puts in about 60 days a year more than their peers in Paris who spend just 1,480 hours on the job, the world's lowest. Only official contracts and work schedules were considered,

"My official work hours are from 9 in the morning until 7 in the evening. But due to a heavy workload, I go home at around 8 or 9 about three times a week," one Seoul office worker said.

"On average," he added, "I take off at 10 or 11 p.m. about three times a week. I do this for my company's success and for my own sense of accomplishment. Fortunately, I have my family's full support and understanding."

But longer hours do not mean necessarily better salaries. In fact, in South Korea, dedication and sacrifice come before monetary pursuit, though money is often seen as a measure of success.

The survey ranked Seoul residents only 32nd in wages per working hours. Using New York's salary level of 100 as the benchmark, Seoul had a score of a mere 44. Tokyo led Asia in salary at 18th with 78 points. Topping the list, meanwhile, were the northern European cities of Copenhagen and Oslo.

In examining the validity of this new and radical demand, the dynamic oppositionist test alluded to at the beginning of this chapter must be applied.

Does this reform facilitate the issuance of either intermediate or threshold demands? Recall what I said in my earlier work and in the first chapter:

*Already this demand surpasses the "maximum demands" of most modern "social-democratic" economists! According to the primarily single-issue Work Less Party in Canada (better marketed as "Work Less, Do More"), this modern version of the historic struggle for the eight-hour workday: reduces society's environmental footprint, reduces unemployment, promotes an increase in cultural activities and social life in general, and especially **promotes an increase in real political activity (both civic participation and heightened political activism as the bases of basic participatory democracy)** at the expense of "politics" as, in the words of the Weekly Worker's Mike Macnair, "a consumer good supplied by professional and semi-professional politicians who offer various competing 'brands' [...]"*

Based on all the history above, which undoubtedly inspired the aforementioned single-issue political party to say what it said regarding political activity, this demand meets and exceeds the Hahnel criterion. Before moving on to the Kautsky criterion, consider the position of the rather unusual "social-democratic" United States Labor Party (unusual amongst "social-democratic" parties in terms of raising this demand, thereby being less accommodationist than usual), in spite of the orientation towards factory labour:

Each year we become more and more productive at work. In a fair and just economy, increased productivity should allow us to work fewer hours, not more. Yet compared to the late 1960s, we are now working an average of more than one extra month annually. We work longer hours and have less vacation time than almost all workers in the industrialized world. While many of us cannot find work, factory overtime is now at record levels because it is more profitable to pay overtime than it is to hire new workers. Enough is enough. We call for amending the federal labor laws to: Define the normal work week to 32 hours without loss of pay or benefits; Provide a minimum of double-time pay for all hours worked over 32 hours a week and 8 hours a day; Forbid compulsory overtime; Mandate one hour off with pay for every two hours of overtime; Require twenty days paid vacation for all workers in addition to the federal holidays; Provide one year of paid educational leave for every seven years worked. Taken together these proposals will create millions of new jobs and allow us free time we need to care for our families and to participate in our communities. More family time and more community participation should be the fruit of increased labor productivity.

Does this reform enable the basic principles to be “kept consciously in view”? Well, how can a highly class-conscious working class find the time to organize, let alone capture full political power and emancipate itself thereafter, without limitations on both the workday and the workweek?

Class-Strugglist Assembly and Association: Self-Directional Demands

“Just like the original organisations for the resistance of the proletariat were modeled after those of the medieval journeymen, the original weapons of the modern labour movement – wherever they are used by solidly united masses – are the same as those used by the journeymen: the boycott, but especially the strike. But the proletariat cannot stop at using these weapons. The more completely the various strata of which it is made up unite into a single working-class movement, the more must its struggles take on a political character; for, as already the Communist Manifesto states, every class struggle is a political struggle. Even the bare requirements of the trade unions’ struggle force the workers to make political demands. We have seen that the modern state regards it as its principal function towards the wage labourers to render their organisation impossible. However, the secret organisation can only be an insufficient substitute for the public one; this is all the more the case the larger the masses are which are to be united in one single body. The more the proletariat develops, the more it needs the freedom to unite and to form an association.” (Karl Kautsky)

In the first chapter, a modern approach to programming class struggle and social revolution was outlined, based broadly on the game theory concepts of maximax and maximin, with the latter entailing immediate, intermediate, and threshold demands. Explained earlier in this chapter was the historical and long-term necessity of ensuring that the immediate and intermediate demands being raised “make further progress more likely and facilitate other progressive changes” (Robin Hahnel) as well as enable the basic principles to be – through the emphasis on transnational pressure, paradigm shifts, and related grassroots discourse for legislative implementation as the specific forms of class struggle – “kept consciously in view” (Karl Kautsky), thus being consistent with the maximin concept. Nevertheless, in between the maximax and the maximin are demands of a transformative (as opposed to pseudo-“transitional”) nature which, either combined or even individually, would necessitate a revolutionary departure from bourgeois social relations specifically (as opposed to coordinator, petty-capitalist, and even perceived “socialist” social relations) or from all forms of capitalist social relations altogether. In the case of the latter, at least one demand that is seemingly peripheral but is crucial for the departure was examined in Chapter 2.

One more detail completes this modern approach to programming class struggle and social revolution: some demands are, in the broad sense, “self-directional.” With this particular type of demand, some aspects of it pose immediate concerns, other aspects intermediate ones, still other aspects threshold ones, leaving the remainder to pose concerns of a purely transformative or genuinely transitional nature. **The freedom of specifically class-strugglist assembly and association for people of the dispossessed classes, free from anti-employment reprisals, police interference such as from agents provocateurs, and formal political disenfranchisement – as opposed to the liberal hollowness of “freedom of assembly and association” – is one such “self-directional” demand.**

[Note: The populist term “dispossessed classes” is used above explicitly to include other dispossessed classes, such as the coordinators and the proper lumpenproletariat. It is also used instead of Hardt and Negri’s “multitude” jargon and also instead of Mao’s rather vague definition of “people” – the latter including nationalistic bourgeois elements. This is discussed further at the end of Chapter 8.]

As pointed out by an enraged Lenin in his primary counter-polemic with the senile renegade who was his most influential theoretical mentor:

Under bourgeois democracy the capitalists, by thousands of tricks – which are the more artful and effective the more “pure” democracy is developed – drive the people away from administrative work, from freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, etc.

[...]

You, exploiters and hypocrites, talk about democracy, while at every step you erect thousands of barriers to prevent the oppressed people from taking part in politics. We take you at your word and, in the interests of these people, demand the extension of your bourgeois democracy in order to prepare the people for revolution for the purpose of overthrowing you, the exploiters.

Indeed, consider even the most narrowly economic take on class-strugglist assembly and association, otherwise known as unionization rights. Right after featuring Lars Lih's critique of broad economism, the very next issue of the *Weekly Worker* published these insightful remarks by Mike Macnair (if only limited by a binary, offensive-defensive approach to minimum demands) on the peculiarly British take on anti-union laws:

The use of democratic demands in connection with defensive struggles against the effects of crisis is the use of selected elements of the minimum programme which are particularly relevant to the crisis.

The first and most fundamental of these is (partially) shared by all the left 'action programmes': abolition of the anti-union laws. *The slogan should be expressed as "abolition", not "repeal": trade unions are illegal at common law (the first anti-union Act of Parliament was the Confederacies of Masons Act 1424; picketing has been unlawful since around the 1240s) and even repeal of everything passed since 1970 would still allow judges to invent new means of penalising unions or reinvent ancient ones.*

"Partially shared" because there is a more general democratic principle involved: freedom of association.

[...]

The struggle for freedom of association is a struggle for a general democratic demand. But it is also the struggle for the most elementary need of the working class as a class: to organise itself freely and independently of the capitalist state. Conditions of economic crisis and recession make this need more, not less, urgent.

However, mere abolition is insufficient. In the United States, the current push by unionized labour to have the card-check Employee Free Choice Act passed is driven by frustration over anti-employment reprisals sanctioned under current labour law, the National Labour Relations Act of 1935. These reprisals occur in between the required two elections to have union representation (the latter occurring via secret ballot, hence the right-wing hysteria to preserve secret-ballot "rights" in this area), **ranging from threats to disciplinary action to unlawful terminations that see their lawsuit resolutions too late** (not that the issue of pro-unionization intimidation during the card check process should be ignored, but that has always been playing second fiddle by far). **Leaping all the way to genuinely transitional concerns, all workplaces could be legally considered as being unionized in explicit terms of political strikes and even syndicalist strikes, regardless of the presence or absence of formal unionization in each workplace, thereby going beyond crude calls for universal unionization.**

Next, consider the historical role of "the pigs" – police officers (not even the bourgeoisie are called "the pigs" by the class-strugglist left) – as obstacles to class-based assembly and association, **including but not limited to the usage of agents provocateurs to incite violence**, the suppression of mass strikes and wildcat strikes in general, the forced enforcement of lockouts or outright unemployment in response to sit-down strikes or even "recovered" factories, and so on **despite their one-time role of cooperating with civil disobedience that was carefully planned for appropriate vs. inappropriate tactics for the nevertheless illegal action.** For the purposes of this lengthy chapter, this more direct consideration of the bourgeois-capitalist state's "principal function [of making] the effective organization of labor impossible" will indeed be limited to the usage of agents provocateurs, especially in recent years. That even paleoconservative reactionaries like Alex Jones and liberals like Steve Watson can mutually identify this expression of bourgeois-capitalist authoritarianism and (at least inadvertently) link it to class struggle is something to note:

[In 2007] peaceful protestors at the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP) summit in Montebello captured sensational video of hired agent provocateurs attempting to incite rioting and turn the protest violent, only to encounter brave resistance from real protest leaders.

Quebec provincial police later admitted that their officers disguised themselves as demonstrators during the protest at the North American leaders summit in Montebello, Que.

*In Seattle in 1999 at the World Trade Organisation meeting, the authorities declared a state of emergency, imposed curfews and resorted to nothing short of police state tactics in response to a small minority of hostile black bloc hooligans. In his film *Police State 2*, Alex Jones covered the fact that the police allowed the black bloc to run riot in downtown Seattle while they concentrated on preventing the movement of*

peaceful protesters. The film presents evidence that the left-wing anarchist groups are actually controlled by the state and used to demonize peaceful protesters.

At WTO protests in Genoa 2001 a protestor was killed after being shot in the head and run over twice by a police vehicle. The Italian Carabinieri also later beat on peaceful protesters as they slept, and even tortured some, at the Diaz School. It later emerged that the police fabricated evidence against the protesters, claiming they were anarchist rioters, to justify their actions. Some Carabinieri officials have since come forward to say they knew of infiltration of the black bloc anarchists, that fellow officers acted as agent provocateurs.

At the Free Trade Area of Americas protests in Miami in late November 2003, more provocateuring was evident. The United Steelworkers of America, calling for a congressional investigation, stated that the police intentionally caused violence and arrested and charged hundreds of peaceful protesters. The USWA suggested that billions of dollars supposedly slated for Iraq reconstruction funds are actually being used to subsidize 'homeland repression' in America.

Now, consider the formal political disenfranchisement (including, among other things, the right to vote) of criminals, many of whom upon release become law-abiding taxpayers, yet are not formally enfranchised. **"How would it feel to work and pay taxes, and be excluded from the democratic process?"** asks the American Civil Liberties Union on this status applying to 5.3 million Americans (evoking the bourgeois and petit-bourgeois slogan "No taxation without representation!"):

The recently reauthorized Voting Rights Act went a long way towards redressing imbalances. But it left one group of citizens behind. Says US Congressman John Lewis: "I just think the American people got to rise up. And not be quiet. Find a way to get in the way. And I think here today, we must see this as an extension of the civil rights movement. It is time for the American citizens to get in trouble. Good trouble, necessary trouble."

[...]

Today, we face increasing disengagement and disenchantment with the political process. High incarceration rates and felony disfranchisement exacerbate that, creating a culture of indifference [...]

Not that the ACLU has nothing to say internationally. On the contrary:

*Prisoners vote in a large number of countries, and some countries have more tailored bans on prisoner voting. For example, disfranchisement is rare in Norway, where courts are only allowed to disfranchise those convicted of treason, electoral fraud and national security breaches, and **Poland permits courts to disfranchise those convicted of extremely serious offenses and sentenced to over three years in prison.***

Some lawyers argue that American disfranchisement policies are likely to be in contravention of international human rights instruments that guarantee the right to vote, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which has been ratified by the United States. The racially disproportionate impact of the law may also contravene the non-discrimination policies in the Covenant and in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, which the US has also ratified.

Particularly worrisome is the potential application of this formal political disenfranchisement to class-conscious workers convicted of some extra-legal class-strugglist activity that falls far short of "treason" (hence the emphasis above on the Polish situation)!

Special emphasis must be given to the immediate (not "intermediate") application of this demand within the armed forces. For example, until a few years ago, trade-union rights (at least the "right" to collective bargaining, if not the right to strike) existed in the German armed forces. With all the jingoistic appeals to "patriotism" in the United States, what has been relatively ignored is the sad treatment of many military veterans by the bourgeois-capitalist government itself! Consider this Associated Press article from late 2007:

Military veterans make up one in four homeless people in the United States, though they are only 11 percent of the general adult population, according to a report to be released Thursday.

And homelessness is not just a problem among middle-age and elderly veterans. Younger veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan are trickling into shelters and soup kitchens seeking services, treatment or help with finding a job.

[...]

Some advocates say the early presence of veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan at shelters does not bode well for the future. It took roughly a decade for the lives of Vietnam veterans to unravel to the point that they started showing up among the homeless. Advocates worry that intense and repeated deployments leave newer veterans particularly vulnerable.

"We're going to be having a tsunami of them eventually because the mental health toll from this war is enormous," said Daniel Tooth, director of veterans affairs for Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.

[...]

The Iraq vets seeking help with homelessness are more likely to be women, less likely to have substance abuse problems, but more likely to have mental illness – mostly related to post-traumatic stress, said Pete Dougherty, director of homeless veterans programs at the VA.

Overall, 45 percent of participants in the VA's homeless programs have a diagnosable mental illness and more than three out of four have a substance abuse problem, while 35 percent have both, Dougherty said.

In his pathbreaking *The Road to Power*, Kautsky outlined the framework of the very revolutionary defeatism that has subsequently been misattributed to Lenin, emphasizing the need to actively break the loyalty of rank-and-file military personnel to their respective bourgeois-capitalist governments:

*To in the age of railroads and telegraphs, of newspapers and public assemblages, of countless industrial centers, of magazine rifles and machine guns it is absolutely impossible for a minority to cripple the military forces of the capital [city], unless they are already completely disorganized. It is also impossible to confine a political struggle to the capital [city]. Political life has become national. **Where these conditions exist a great transfer of political power that shall destroy a tyrannical regime is only to be expected where all of the following conditions exist [...]** Confidence in the ruling regime, both in its power and in its stability, must have been destroyed by its own tools, by the bureaucracy and the army.*

If the reader here thinks that this emphasis is too "Caesarian," it is only due to a relative lack of knowledge on the socioeconomic causes of this original "March on Rome" (faricically repeated by the Italian Fascist Benito Mussolini in 1922) and on one of the politically incorrect causes of Julius Caesar's assassination, as asserted by Michael Parenti in his *The Assassination of Julius Caesar: A People's History of Ancient Rome*: his "tyrannical" land reform proposal to redistribute common land seized by patricians either in the Senate or with Senate connections, naturally to demobilized soldiers and proletarianized peasants. History eventually repeated itself with Oliver Cromwell's short-lived assault on the British aristocracy, but moreover with the Soviet legacy posed by the ascendancy of the "Caesarist" *praktiki* (practical full-timers) around Joseph Stalin at the expense of the uniformed "Bonapartists" around Leon Trotsky and of the intellectually "aristocratic" Bolshevik Old Guard.

Once more, this real yet class-based freedom of assembly and association for people of the dispossessed classes – free especially from anti-employment reprisals, police interference such as from agents provocateurs, and formal political disenfranchisement – is the basis of politico-ideological independence for the working class, of winning "the battle of democracy" mentioned in the Communist Manifesto, and of class-strugglist democracy itself, with the working class ultimately expropriating the full political power of a ruling class for itself in accordance with the slogan "WORKERS OF THE WORLD, UNITE!"

People's Militias: The Full Extension of the Ability to Bear Arms

"Education of all to bear arms. Militia in the place of the standing army." (Eduard Bernstein)

Intimately linked with the self-directional demand for freedom of class-strugglist assembly and association is the demand for the formation of people's militias. Even after the turn to minimalism, Bernstein never advocated the elimination of this crucial minimum demand in the Erfurt Program, a demand which he himself

wrote. Just two years before the outbreak of continental war in 1914, and not long after the turn to vulgar "centrism," Kautsky made this remark in *The First of May and the Struggle against Militarism*:

The demand for a citizen force is, above all, not an economic, but a political demand. We put forward this demand in the interest of democracy; to weaken the power which the Government possesses by its control of a professional army.

Until the Cold War, even the various European social-democratic parties continued to advocate for the ability to bear arms and especially form people's militias like those in Switzerland. The SPD itself had its own shooting clubs and militias to counter the growing Nazi party-movement and its anti-worker militias in the 1920s.

That all changed with rising urban crime rates in the 1960s, when social-democrats everywhere became "social-democrats" and, instead of perhaps extending the concept of welfare towards gun ownership ("**gun welfare**" for workers as a slogan for action, leaving aside the question of gun models), supported liberal gun control measures and do so to this day. This left the advocacy of so-called "gun rights" to right-populist gun lobby groups like the National Rifle Association. Only recently did the Supreme Court of the United States, in *District of Columbia vs. Heller*, explicitly confirm the Second Amendment right to bear arms for non-militia reasons such as self-defense at home. For obvious reasons it did not address the militia question, which is commonly interpreted to refer to the National Guard.

As mentioned in Chapter 5, the advocacy of this demand easily separates class-strugglists from the most obvious of cross-class coalitionists, since Bernstein himself pushed for this demand in less formal workers' action programs. The latter group in today's environment is so spineless that even the questions of publicized civil disobedience and resistance towards police brutality are rarely, if ever, discussed. To them, strikebreaking by hostile governments and private contractors should not be resisted. To them, occupations by foreign powers should not be resisted either, contrary to what happened in countries like Lebanon – due in large part to the application of both the pre-war SPD's "alternative culture" model and the inter-war SPD's militia model by that "party of God" known as Hezbollah!

Of course, and pertaining more to the self-directional demand for freedom of class-strugglist assembly and association than to militias, much of the established Marxist tradition is hardly spotless when advocating the crude heuristic of something like "peaceful means where possible, and violent revolution when necessary." **When considering questions of civil disobedience and resistance towards police brutality, a more useful heuristic would be something along the lines of "legal means where possible, extra-legal and illegal ones when necessary, and with the non-worker authorities themselves determining the level of peace or violence."**

Local Autonomy and Alternative Local Currencies

"However, what can be included in the programme and can, at least indirectly, serve as a hint of what may not be said directly is the following demand: 'Complete self-government in the provinces, districts and communes through officials elected by universal suffrage. The abolition of all local and provincial authorities appointed by the state.'" (Frederick Engels)

In spite of my criticism of decentralization fetishes and Not-In-My-Back-Yard (NIMBY) amateurism in Chapter 4, there is a crucial difference between such fetishes and the modern, toned-down definition of *autonomia*, which the current Dalai Lama used as his stated objective for Tibet within modern China. The aforementioned demand for people's militias is to a certain extent one for local autonomy from overbearing police and domestic military reserve operations (not to mention one for resisting police or paramilitary brutality). In regards to the above remarks by Engels on the Erfurt Program, a clear-cut example of this demand can be seen in Venezuela, as explained in 2007 by Josh Lerner of *Z Magazine*:

By 2005 most of the Local Public Planning Councils had become mired in bureaucracy and dominated by politicians, paving the way for communal councils. These new councils are organized at a much more local level, usually a few blocks. They are responsible for bringing together grassroots groups, creating community development plans, implementing projects to address local needs, and monitoring government and community activities.

[...]

The law recommends that each urban council contain 200-400 families, each rural council at least 20 families, and each indigenous council at least 10 families. All decisions are to be made in citizen assemblies with a minimum of 10 percent of residents over age 15. These assemblies are to elect executive, financial management, and monitoring committees, as well as thematic committees based on local priorities (health, education, recreation, land, safety, etc.).

Perhaps most importantly, money can flow into and out of the councils. By law, they can receive funds directly from the national, state, or city governments, from their own fundraising, or from donations. In turn, the councils can award grants for community projects. If they set up a communal bank with neighboring councils, they can also make loans to cooperatives or other activities.

This genuine extension of local autonomy through the initiative of local development has gone as far as to lead to the development of local currency alternatives to the Venezuelan currency. As reported later that year by Gregory Wilpert of *Venezuelanalysis.com*:

Such a system would allow “the poor to possibility of acquiring products via exchange with an intermediary currency that could circulate, for example, in a determinate territory or would have validity for a determinate time,” explained Chavez.

[...]

*Local currencies have been used in many parts of the world, **often in times of economic crisis or in areas with depressed economic activity**. In addition to Mexico and Brazil, they have also been used during Argentina’s economic crisis, in the U.S., and in Europe.*

The best-known example in the U.S. is the “Ithaca Hour,” in Ithaca, New York, which establishes that one hour of work is equal to one Ithaca Hour. The currency is issued locally every time someone provides a service for someone else. As such, it does not require an influx of money from outside the community for transactions within the community to take place and ensures an equal hourly wage, no matter the type of work. Also, such a system can make inflation and inequality based on capital ownership practically impossible.

In Britain, Australia, and in many other countries around the world similar systems, which are not necessarily based on one hour of labor, are known as “Local Exchange and Trading Systems” (LETS).

Because of the recent economic crisis, indeed even mainstream news sources have acknowledged the value of local currency alternatives to government money. As reported by Tony Dokoupil of *Newsweek* in early 2009:

*It's all perfectly legal (except for coins) as long as it's not for profit and the bizarre dinero doesn't resemble the real thing. Dozens of such systems flourished during the Great Depression. **In the 1990s, they re-emerged as a way to fight globalization by keeping wealth in local hands.** Now the dream of homespun cash is back because it keeps people liquid even if they're unemployed or short on traditional dollars. (The U.S. Treasury declined to comment on the burgeoning interest in local currency systems.)*

In the past month, Steve Burke, who runs Ithaca Hours, a currency system in upstate New York founded in 1991, has fielded calls from a half-dozen organizers hoping to mint their own money in Vermont, Hawaii and Michigan, among other places. Meanwhile, Susan Witt, who directs the nonprofit behind the BerkShares currency in Berkshire County, Mass., has heard from groups in New York, California and New Jersey, where last year Newark’s city hall asked for advice on potential Newark Bucks.

Local currency alternatives to government money are not without their shortcomings, however. According to Paul Cockshott, there are indeed inflationary effects, contrary to proponents of such currencies. On the one hand, local groups with seigniorage power may issue these currencies without sufficient coordination, thereby devaluing them relative to the main currency, itself fiat money. On the other hand, state backing could lead to a devaluation of the main currency itself, while opportunities for financial fraud would arise during the appropriation of resources for major issuances of these currencies.

In short, local currency alternatives to government money would have to be an additional, subordinate form of the latter, also contrary to the highly reactionary fantasies of backing such currencies with precious metals, like as if they were hard money. The proliferation of one such hard money – the “liberty dollar” – warranted an FBI and Secret Service response in 2007 for overstepping local limits and competing directly

with the US dollar, not to mention the possibility of dubious financial transactions surrounding the distribution of this rather private currency.

Meanwhile, Cockshott stressed a specific shortcoming in regards to tying these alternatives to labour time under capitalism like the "labour money" scheme of the anarchist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (known most notably for his assertion that "Property is Theft"):

The basic object of Marx and Engels's critique might be described as a naive "socialist" appropriation of the Ricardian theory of value. If only, the reformers argue, we could impose the condition that all commodities really exchange according to the labour embodied in them, then surely exploitation would be ruled out [...] From the standpoint of Marx and Engels, such schemes, however, honourable the intentions of their propagators, represent a Utopian and indeed reactionary attempt to turn back the clock to a world of "simple commodity production" and exchange between independent producers owning their own means of production [...] Although labour content governs the long-run equilibrium exchange ratios of commodities under capitalism, the mechanism whereby production is continually adjusted in line with changing demand, and in the light of changing technologies, under the market system, relies on the divergence of market prices from their long-run equilibrium values [...] If such divergence is ruled out by fiat, and the signalling mechanism of market prices is hence disabled, there will be chaos, with shortages and surpluses of specific commodities arising everywhere.

[...]

The proponents of labour money want to short-circuit this process, to act as if all labour were immediately social. The effects within commodity-producing society cannot but be disastrous.

[Note: Given the above critique of Proudhon and the content of Appendix B, there is justification for using the lengthy phrase "local currency alternatives to government money," with emphasis on the words "government" and especially "money."]

With all the considerations above, does this reform facilitate the issuance of either intermediate or threshold demands? First, as mentioned earlier, the demand for people's militias may be met by means of pursuing this struggle for local autonomy. Second, considering that this extended autonomy is already of a "working" form and not a traditionally municipal form (let alone a parliamentary one), there would be potential for horizontal expansion based on localities, thus further facilitating grassroots initiatives for local development – thus certainly meeting the Hahnel criterion. Third, the realization of such "working" form would open the possibility of vertical expansion based on higher levels of legislation and administration, part of one of the central demands for the working class to become the ruling class.

Does this reform enable the basic principles to be "kept consciously in view"? In 2008, Martin Bright of the *New Statesman* unwittingly stressed the imperative of class struggle as a political struggle (with the proliferation of local currency alternatives to government money raising the possibility of mass currency strikes) and the political self-emancipation of the working class in his review of Paul Ginsborg's *Democracy: Crisis and Renewal*:

Could such a model be adopted in Britain as a way of breathing life into local politics? Well, it has been tried, in the leafy outer London borough of Harrow, of all places. In spring 2005, in collaboration with Helena Kennedy's Power inquiry into political participation, the Harrow Open Budget Process brought together 300 residents to discuss priorities for the 2006/2007 budget and elect a panel to monitor how local politicians responded.

*Ginsborg's book ends with an imagined conversation today between Marx and Mill about the merits of the Harrow experiment. Curious to know what had become of it, I called Harrow Council's press office. It has yet to get back to me. **A report I found online showed that 94 per cent of those who took part thought it was a "good" or "very good" experience, and 74 per cent suggested it should be repeated. So what did happen? The Conservatives seized control of Harrow and the idea was scrapped. One thing you can rely on in Britain is that the dead hand of local politics will always throttle anything approaching genuine participation.***

Party-Recallable, Closed-List, and Pure Proportional Representation

"A complete democracy is to be found nowhere, and everywhere we have to strive after modifications and improvements. Even in Switzerland there is an agitation for the extension of the legislative powers of the

people, for proportional representation and for woman suffrage. In America the power and mode of selection of the highest judges need to be very severely restricted. Far greater are the demands that should be put forward by us in the great bureaucratic and militarist States in the interests of democracy." (K.J. Kautsky)

Before continuing, it is fortunate that my quotations of the senile renegade *Mister K.J. Kautsky*, along with his obsession with "refuting" the Russian Revolution, are limited to this section. The quotation above comes from his controversial work *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, whose "refutations" of the Russian Revolution directly prompted the justified and timely response by Lenin now known as *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*.

Much has been said time and again about the benefits of proportional representation (PR) over single-winner district "representation" (plurality/first-past-the-post, instant-runoff, and so on), in spite of the "pure PR" caricature presented by the Israelis. These benefits include: the irrelevancy of ideally electing the candidate who would beat every other candidate in a pairwise contest (the so-called "Condorcet method" in political science), the elimination of tactical voting for the "lesser of two evils," and the elimination of wasted votes for losing candidates and for winning candidates (excess votes in safe seats, usually due to the geographically seat-manipulative gerrymandering) – thereby increasing voter turnout. There are also benefits of PR over any form of preferential voting, as contrasted by Australia's own two-party House elected by single transferable vote (STV) and by the multi-party Senate reflecting the first electoral preferences through proportional representation.

Does this reform facilitate the issuance of either intermediate or threshold demands?

First, under any form of district "representation" (including STV), the constituents can call their misrepresentative legislators and tell them to vote a certain way, but usually this does not happen, even if the constituents dislike the voting record of their respective legislators. In fact, the senile renegade had these choice words in the ultra-monetarist *The Labour Revolution*, written shortly after Lenin's death:

*Since then the responsibility of the deputy towards his constituents has tended to be overshadowed by his responsibility towards his party. It becomes ever rarer for candidates to come forward on their own account. **The candidate comes before the electors as the representative of a party. In this capacity and not because of his personal popularity he is elected. This is most strikingly manifested in the system of proportional representation, where the electors are confronted, not with individuals, but with whole parties with a long list of candidates. As a rule neither the parties nor their candidates are new-comers, but are tried and known by long years of public service.***

The individual member may no longer do what he likes in Parliament. He is subject to the discipline of his party group, and is constantly controlled by his party – unless the party itself should go out of existence. But even then the elements that have been released gravitate towards new groups, which are controlled by new party organizations outside Parliament.

Before contrasting the above with what happens under a party-recallable, closed-list, and pure-proportional-representative electoral system, it must be pointed out that this senile renegade had illusions in the aforementioned "party control" over both its legislators and its legislative seats. In 1907, long before the outbreak of the mislabelled "First World War," it was thought that a "revolutionary victory" had been achieved in the Second International against the pacifist Bernstein's class-conciliationist revisionism. In fact, however, there were no tendency struggles afterwards to purge far worse opportunists from the SPD and its Executive Committee, especially those who were also legislators (and were hence practically free from subordination to party decisions outside the legislature). This absence of purges ultimately led to betrayal of the working class by the Executive Committee and the party's legislative group, in the form of voting for war credits. In terms of "party control" over legislative seats themselves, who can prevent opportunist "representatives" from switching party affiliations (usually from some opposition party to the governing party), or conscious legislators (district representatives or otherwise) from becoming independents, thereby depriving parties of the relevant seats in either case?

On the other hand, under electoral systems based purely on party-recallable, closed-list proportional representation, there are no direct links between the "constituents" and the "representatives" (which already exists in cases of electoral parachuting). **Such formalization of the distance between the "constituents" and their so-called "representatives" except through political parties can actually result in participatory democracy of some sort**, with the "constituents" having to exert party-based pressure for

certain laws to be passed, especially through increased party memberships and increased participatory democracy at the expense of bureaucratic fetishes within the various political parties.

Second, since the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle remarked that “it is thought to be democratic for the offices to be assigned by lot [and] for them to be elected oligarchic,” the pure implementation of party-recallable, closed-list proportional representation – **with the potential for mandatory random selection or at least (somewhat) random balloting of officeholders by political parties themselves** – would go a long way towards combating the very degenerative yet professional personality politics (or rather, non-politics, being bereft of substantive policy discussions and formulations), ranging from individual corruption scandals that can be addressed through party-based replacements to person-based attack ads not being as widely circulated. These days, many if not most electoral campaigns have truly revealed the oligarchic nature of electoralism, dispensing with sufficient discussions on electoral platforms and strategic policies bound to be unfulfilled by those “best qualified” to be in the halls of legislative power.

Third, the pure implementation of party-recallable, closed-list proportional representation can and should be extended – on an immediate basis, in fact – to those in the higher halls of executive power, starting with the singular chief executives and the cabinet officials! This extension may have the potential to go a long way towards the full integration of legislative and executive powers “after the type of the [Paris] Commune,” as Lenin once remarked.

Does this reform enable the basic principles to be “kept consciously in view” – the criterion set out by the same individual responsible for writing the horribly illusory words above? If electoralist universal suffrage is nothing but, as Engels said, “the gauge of the maturity of the working class” that will one day show “boiling-point among the workers,” then steps need to be taken in order to replace this with a better gauge, if not with real political enfranchisement.

Against Personal Inheritance: Ceremonial Nobility, Productive Property, and Child Poverty

“The right of inheritance is only of social import insofar as it leaves to the heir the power which the deceased wielded during his lifetime -- viz., the power of transferring to himself, by means of his property, the produce of other people's labor. For instance, land gives the living proprietor the power to transfer to himself, under the name of rent, without any equivalent, the produce of other people's labor. Capital gives him the power to do the same under the name of profit and interest. The property in public funds gives him the power to live without labor upon other people's labor, etc.” (Karl Marx)

In 1869, Marx wrote a very short report, in his administrative capacity within the International Workingmen's Association, dealing with personal inheritance. Contrary to modern right-“libertarian” agitational propaganda, many bourgeois intellectuals back in the day, from Adam Smith and David Ricardo to the business magnate Andrew Carnegie to John Maynard Keynes, correctly viewed the personal inheritance of wealth as a very feudal leftover. The utilitarians Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill went much further, stating that this unproductive concentration of wealth did not maximize the sum of the utility of everyone as a collective whole, and that this legal right should be abolished (or at least limited to immediate family lines and then through heavily progressive inheritance taxation, not just flat inheritance taxation or even progressive inheritance taxation), such that as many people as possible would start off on an equal footing.

However, as Marx noted, many socialist radicals back in the day were excessively enthusiastic about the meritocratic potential of opposing personal inheritance within a larger framework:

To proclaim the abolition of the right of inheritance as the starting point of the social revolution would only tend to lead the working class away from the true point of attack against present society. It would be as absurd a thing as to abolish the laws of contract between buyer and seller, while continuing the present state of exchange of commodities.

It would be a thing false in theory, and reactionary in practice.

In treating of the laws of inheritance, we necessarily suppose that private property in the means of production continues to exist. If it did no longer exist among the living, it could not be transferred from them, and by them, after their death.

In concluding his short report, Marx recommended two immediate demands curtailing personal inheritance:

Considered from this standpoint, changes of the laws of inheritance form only part of a great many other transitory measures tending to the same end.

These transitory measures, as to inheritance, can only be:

a. Extension of the inheritance duties already existing in many states, and the application of the funds hence derived to purposes of social emancipation.

b. Limitation of the testamentary right of inheritance, which -- as distinguished from the intestate or family right of inheritance -- appears as arbitrary and superstitious exaggeration even of the principles of private property themselves.

These days, however, such demands are woefully modest, even with the International's supposition above. At least three considerations make necessary more radical takes on curtailing personal inheritance through even the immediate family line.

The first consideration is the continued existence of obscenely wealthy nobilities, especially ceremonial monarchs. In five of the *Weekly Worker's* issues in 1996, there was a polemical exchange on the value of abolishing ceremonial nobilities. Both sides acknowledged the problem of broad economism throughout the class-strugglist left and stressed the need for a radically democratic political program against liberal constitutionalism, but based on the premise that **the "struggle for socialism" is an economic struggle and not a political one**. However, while the radical republican side's "anti-monarchical" stance is based on the full applicability of electoral politics towards even judicial monarchs in the radically republican spirit of the Paris Commune and of soviet power, the demarchic side's stance is based on the complete sovereignty of randomly selected jurors in the legal sphere, thereby undercutting ceremonial monarchs as formal yet wealthy and hereditary sovereigns over their respective legal systems, themselves lorded *de facto* by well-off judicial monarchs. **"Anti-monarchical" and more general "anti-nobility" sloganeering, therefore, is valuable only to the extent that it is tied directly to broader opposition towards the personal inheritance of non-possessive property like land and gold bullion, thereby delegitimizing the very property rights which liberal republicanism seeks to legitimize.**

The second consideration is the very specific personal inheritance of productive property, itself being non-possessive. For example, in the sphere of productive property, the billionaire heirs of Sam Walton's wealth from the discount retail chain Wal-Mart, the bin Laden family and their construction conglomerate Saudi Binladin Group, and the hereditary ruling families of both the tourism-heavy United Arab Emirates and the oil-rich Saudi Arabia come to mind, but inheritances of sole proprietorships and partnership stakes are also relevant. **The public appropriation of not some but all productive property that would otherwise be immediately inherited through legal will or through "gifting" (the legal loophole associated with this specific inheritance) should, if the related business has "contract" or formally hired labour, at least be for the non-auctioning purpose of transforming such private property into cooperative property,** as elaborated upon later in this chapter. For small businesses whose owners do all the work, re-privatization through auctioning may be acceptable.

In seeming contradiction to the first two considerations, the third consideration is in fact the personal yet social inheritance of poverty – better known amongst the class-conciliationist lot of "social-democrats," progressives, and liberals as child poverty – wherein children are born poor through no responsibility of their own. Malnutrition, the lack of education, social isolationism (the lack of social integration), cultural conservatism, inadequate income, and even the absence of appropriate infrastructure – the hallmarks of "the idiocy of rural life" noted in the Communist Manifesto – all contribute to the continued inheritance of poverty by much of the world's population. **It is no wonder that the Erfurt Program, well in advance of today's relationship between employment incomes and levels of education, called for "free education, free educational materials, and free meals" even in "higher educational institutions for those boys and girls considered qualified for further education by virtue of their abilities."**

Overall, what is needed are ever-progressive measures against the anti-meritocratic personal inheritance of poverty by children and also of ruling-class wealth – especially of productive and other non-possessive property – measures which include the abolition of all remaining nobilities. Now, does this reform facilitate the issuance of either intermediate or threshold demands? Does this reform also enable the basic principles to be "kept consciously in view"? The answer to both of these questions, according to the short report written by Marx, depends significantly on the second consideration above:

*Suppose the means of production transformed from private into social prosperity, then the right of inheritance (so far as it is of any social importance) would die of itself, because a man only leaves after his death what he possessed during his lifetime. **Our great aim must, therefore, be to supersede those institutions which give to some people, during their lifetime, the economical power of transferring to themselves the fruits of labor of the many.** Where the state of society is far enough advanced, and the working class possesses sufficient power to abrogate such institutions, they must do so in a direct way.*

[...]

All measures, in regard to the right of inheritance, can therefore only relate to a state of social transition, where, on the one hand, the present economical base of society is not yet transformed, but where, on the other hand, the working masses have gathered strength enough to enforce transitory measures calculated to bring about an ultimate radical change of society.

Against Corporate Personhood and More: Corporations as Psychopaths

“Callous unconcern for the feelings of others; incapacity to maintain enduring relationships; reckless disregard for the safety of others; deceitfulness – repeated lying and conning others for profit; incapacity to experience guilt; failure to conform to social norms with respect to lawful behavior... Subject: The Corporation; Diagnosis of Personality Disorder: Psychopath.” (Joel Bakan)

In late 2003, Canadian legal scholar and law professor Joel Bakan wrote the critically acclaimed documentary *The Corporation*, in which he gave the above diagnosis to his patient based on its activities and its legal personhood.

Corporations started out when associations of people obtained a defined charter from the state to build a bridge over a river or perform some other approved function per that charter. Those few corporations that existed back then had limited lives based on their capitalization. Because of all these constraints, corporate lawyers eventually convinced the courts to grant the limited liability protection needed to raise additional capital, as well as other things; they eventually won legal personhood for their clients. This legal personhood mandated their social responsibility exclusively towards the financial interest of their immediate stockholders and not towards all stakeholders as the previous legal culture viewed corporations.

Notwithstanding the heavy psychological dosages of moralism in that documentary, it was only a matter of time before the Supreme Court of the United States, in *Citizens United vs. Federal Election Commission*, lifted all restrictions on corporations (and also other associations like business unions) funding candidates for the US presidency and Congress – as legal persons, of course. President Barack Obama, richly having opted out of public financing himself during the 2008 elections, said that the ruling was “a major victory for big oil, Wall Street banks, health insurance companies and the other powerful interests that marshal their power every day in Washington to drown out the voices of everyday Americans.”

The obvious solution to this corporate madness would be to abolish legal personhood altogether and restrict corporate privileges to limited liability. However, some political scientists have taken another progressive step on another front by suggesting that, besides governments, only eligible voters should be allowed to make “political contributions” as defined by the law. Canada, for example, has a somewhat broader law, allowing all citizens and permanent residents (i.e., including children and immigrants) to make political contributions. Implemented together, the abolition of legal personhood and the prohibition of legally defined political contributions made by non-government entities other than eligible voters would go a long way towards facilitating the issuance of intermediate or threshold demands aimed explicitly at minimizing the “influence of money” on politics, while ignoring the right-“libertarian” defense of so-called “free speech.”

In terms of this reform enabling the basic principles to be “kept consciously in view,” there are a few things to consider. First, the typical populist division between corporations (and other big commercial and non-commercial entities) on one side and ordinary people on the other side already implies a bit of class politics. Second, that same populist division, whether expressed by right-populists or sensationalist left-populists like the producers of *The Corporation*, draws attention somewhat to transnational class politics by putting emphasis on “multinational corporations” and “transnational corporations,” all of which have legal personhood all over the world, thereby dispelling any illusions about abolishing legal personhood in a single country. Third, the narrower emphasis on eligible voters and not citizens or “permanent residents” should actually be a reminder not to abandon the struggle for a transnationally entrenched bill of workers' political and economic rights, in this climate of increasingly nationalistic populism over immigration and citizenship.

Fourth, that same narrower emphasis helps make possible the Soviet-style disenfranchisement of the bourgeoisie and petit-bourgeoisie as one of the likely but not set-in-stone political measures of worker-class rule.

Socio-Income Democracy: Direct Democracy in Income Taxation

“Direct legislation by the people through the rights of proposal and rejection. Self-determination and self-government of the people in Reich, state, province, and municipality. Election by the people of magistrates, who are answerable and liable to them. Annual voting of taxes.” (Eduard Bernstein)

Continuing with the grossly underrated minimum section of the equally underrated Erfurt Program, that last particularly historic demand for what I call “socio-income democracy” goes a long way to highlight the broad economism infecting many (if not most) traditional Marxists, class-strugglist anarchists, left-communists, class-strugglist pareconists, and others on the “anti-capitalist” left, even those in favour of the “directional demand” approach. Now, the conventional Trotskyist who adheres to “transitional” sloganeering (thus upholding the first major critique of the original minimum-maximum programmatic approach) may protest at this charge of broad economism and point to *The Transitional Program*, but why was this demand missing from that 1938 document? Well, consider one more aspect of the question raised in Chapter 2 concerning the best approach to bridge the gulf between the vulgar-minimum and maximum demands, as posed by the *Weekly Worker’s* Jack Conrad in 2006:

Trotsky insisted that if the defensive movement of the working class was energetically promoted, freed from bureaucratic constraints, and after that nudged in the direction of forming picket line defence guards, then pushed towards demanding nationalisation of key industries, it would, little leap following little leap, take at least a minority of the class towards forming soviets and then, to cap it all, the conquest of state power.

[...]

Winning over the majority intellectually and organising the workers into a political party was dismissed as the gradualism that belonged to a previous, long dead, era [...] Winning state power and ending capitalism internationally will, though, be revealed to [workers] as the real aim only during the course of the rising spiral of struggle. Not quite, but almost, socialism as conspiracy. In essence, Trotsky, from a position of extreme organisational weakness, had re-invented the Blanquist putsch or the anarchist general strike ‘road to socialism’. This time [the Trotskyists] would be the educative elite, the tightly knit, highly disciplined, minority, operating as the command centre. They would drive the entire juggernaut of world revolution through their cogs and wheels of transitional demands, using trade union and other such levers.

[...]

No place, then, for high politics, demands for a democratic republic and extreme democracy, in the Transitional programme.

In one word: economism! That being said, the dynamic oppositionist test alluded to at the beginning of this chapter must be applied.

Does this reform facilitate the issuance of either intermediate or threshold demands? Because socio-income democracy is intimately linked to class-strugglist democracy itself (not least of which by going against the aforementioned broad economism), it meets and exceeds the Hahnel criterion. **Not coincidentally, this application of multiple voting options and modern communication technology also illustrates the sheer vulgarity of passive consumer “voting with one’s dollars” and also the antiquated nature of the bourgeois and petit-bourgeois slogan “No taxation without representation!”**

In satisfying economically populist desires to overcome the politicians’ lobby-based reluctance to effectively tax the super-rich, let alone tax them at levels not seen since the mislabelled “Second World War” and the accompanying post-war economic boom, socio-income democracy meets and exceeds the Hahnel criterion in one other way: **by planting additional seeds of participatory democracy to grow in other macroeconomic affairs.** This was alluded to in my earlier work and in the first chapter:

*One particular “transitional demand” that has emerged with the development of information-communication technology is the demand for “socioeconomic democracy” as advocated by Robley George in *Socioeconomic Democracy: An Advanced Socioeconomic System*. In its narrowest form, there is some form of [...] “maximum allowable personal wealth” that is democratically established and adjusted by society*

as a whole. Within the context of this thesis, this establishment, through class-conscious participation (as opposed to representation), would go beyond the minimum demand in the Communist Manifesto for "a heavy progressive or graduated income tax."

Does this reform enable the basic principles to be "kept consciously in view"? Well, given the complications of modern income tax laws, this demand needs to be phrased in a very specific manner, taking into consideration both transnational factors and the various, class-based types of income, such as:

- 1) Ordinary employment income, real self-employment income, and managerial income;
- 2) Individual property income such as interest;
- 3) The respective business incomes of sole proprietorships, ordinary and limited-liability partnerships, and corporations;
- 4) Both individual and corporate dividend income; and
- 5) Both individual and corporate capital gains (including those arising from deemed dispositions upon death, thereby leading to inheritance taxation by any other name).

In addition to taking into consideration the various, class-based sources of income, there are other, class-based effective tax mechanisms to consider, including alternative minimum taxation (aimed at high-income taxpayers using various tax deduction mechanisms to significantly reduce or eliminate their effective tax rates, and thus their tax liabilities), transfer pricing taxation (aimed at tax haven operations), and gross-ups or multipliers for income outside of ordinary employment, such as capital-friendly discount percentages applied to "taxable" capital gains and "taxable" dividends.

With the aforementioned emphases on class, does socio-income democracy meet that all-important Kautsky criterion in relation to other basic principles? Since full worker management over the economy entails more than just enterprise management, and since socio-income democracy is fully consistent with the transnational emancipation of human labour power being brought about only by a highly class-conscious and organized working class itself (especially while confronting the bourgeois-constitutionalist limits on referenda), socio-income democracy does indeed meet that all-important Kautsky criterion of enabling the basic principles to be "kept consciously in view."

Progress, Poverty, and Economic Rent in Land

"Abolition of property in land and application of all [economic] rents of land to public purposes." (Karl Marx and Frederick Engels)

Long before the classical economist Henry George popularized the Ricardian idea of "single" land value taxation, the ten-point program of the Communist Manifesto first called for the application (not elimination) of all economic rent of land (not just some) to exclusively public purposes. Before the critique of the emphasis on the word "single" with regards to land value taxation, it should be noted that the continued private ownership over and partial taxation of economic rent of land is connected to this period of decreasing rates of industrial and non-industrial profit:

Take some hardheaded business owners who have no theories, but know how to make money. Say to them: "Here is a little village. In ten years, it will be a great city. The railroad and the electric light are coming; it will soon abound with all the machinery and improvements that enormously multiply the effective power of labor."

Now ask: "Will interest be any higher?"

"No!"

"Will the wages of common labor be any higher?"

"No," they will tell you. "On the contrary, chances are they will be lower. It will not be easier for a mere laborer to make an independent living; chances are it will be harder."

"What, then, will be higher?" you ask.

"Rent, and the value of land!"

"Then what should I do?" you beg.

"Get yourself a piece of ground, and hold on to it."

If you take their advice under these circumstances, you need do nothing more. You may sit down and smoke your pipe; you may lie around like an idler; you may go up in a balloon, or down a hole in the ground. Yet without doing one stroke of work, without adding one iota to the wealth of the community – in ten years you will be rich!

In the new city you may have a luxurious mansion. But among its public buildings, will be an almshouse.

These words, written by Henry George in his 1879 treatise *Progress and Poverty*, is at the core of the booms and busts in real estate markets worldwide, whose principal function is to transfer wealth from future land buyers to present landowners in residential, industrial, and commercial real estate (and even empty lots of suburban and rural land for the true but otherwise immaterial speculators). Especially thanks to that financial instrument otherwise known as the mortgage, rising real estate prices result in increased debt and interest payments, but also in decreased consumer savings and general investments in the so-called "real economy," thereby crowding out potential homebuyers and even businesses. Whenever this bubble bursts, overproduction problems in the "real economy" do not merely arise, but are compounded to the point where circulation of credit itself is affected, such as during this current period. To end these booms and busts, along with their respective crowding out effects and compounding, George suggested a singular tax on land value to replace all other taxes, from income taxes to even inheritance taxes. Of course, an aging Marx had some acerbic words to say about this Ricardian popularization, which should have been implemented in every bourgeois-capitalist state long before the implementation of progressive income taxation:

*Theoretically the man is utterly backward! He understands nothing about the nature of surplus value and so wanders about in speculations which follow the English model but have now been superseded even among the English, about the different portions of surplus value to which independent existence is attributed--about the relations of profit, rent, interest, etc. His fundamental dogma is that everything would be all right if ground rent were paid to the state [...] This idea originally belonged to the bourgeois economists; it was first put forward (apart from a similar demand at the end of the eighteenth century) by the earliest radical followers of Ricardo, soon after his death. I said of it in 1847, in my work against Proudhon: "We can understand that economists like Mill" (the elder, not his son John Stuart, who also repeats this in a somewhat modified form) "**Cherbuliez, Hilditch and others have demanded that rent should be paid to the state in order that it may serve as a substitute for taxes. This is a frank expression of the hatred which the industrial capitalist dedicates to the landed proprietor, who seems to him a useless and superfluous element in the general total of bourgeois production.**"*

[...]

All these "socialists" [...] have this much in common that they leave wage labour and therefore capitalist production in existence and try to bamboozle themselves or the world into believing that if ground rent were transformed into a state tax all the evils of capitalist production would disappear of themselves. The whole thing is therefore simply an attempt, decked out with socialism, to save capitalist domination and indeed to establish it afresh on an even wider basis than its present one.

*This cloven hoof (at the same time ass's hoof) is also unmistakably revealed in the declamations of Henry George. And it is the more unpardonable in him because he ought to have put the question to himself in just the opposite way: **How did it happen that in the United States, where, relatively, that is in comparison with civilised Europe, the land was accessible to the great mass of the people and to a certain degree (again relatively) still is, capitalist economy and the corresponding enslavement of the working class have developed more rapidly and shamelessly than in any other country?***

Nevertheless, does this reform facilitate the issuance of either intermediate or threshold demands? At the most basic level, and in accordance with the most radical yet bourgeois Ricardians, public ownership and rental tenure over all land would be a key demand at some point, so the Hahnel criterion is certainly not an issue here. After all, the "free market" of Hong Kong has no private ownership of land at all!

Meanwhile, there are more immediate benefits to be realized in the application of all economic rent of land to exclusively public purposes (as opposed to the capture of some of the private economic rent of land), at least some of which also facilitate the fulfillment of other immediate demands. Besides the fact that landowners would be under economic pressure to develop vacant and underutilized land, tax avoidance and evasion by means of sales tax concealment, income tax deductions, and tax havens would be impossible. The funds associated with the public capture of all economic rent of land would more than make up for the shortfalls resulting in the populist abolition of indirect and other regressive taxation based on labour and on consumer goods and services (to be examined in the next section) and in the equally populist elimination by referendum of income taxation for at least low-income workers (as implied in the previous section).

Does this reform enable the basic principles to be "kept consciously in view"? Like with socio-income democracy, there are complications in meeting that all-important Kautsky criterion. Without the existence of

class-based income taxation (approximated somewhat by progressive income taxation) – the purposefully second demand in the Communist Manifesto's ten-point program – the stand-alone implementation of this reform would be, in Marx's words above, "simply an attempt [...] to save capitalist domination and indeed to establish it afresh on an even wider basis than its present one." On social labour and the transition to such, collective worker responsibility is key, hence the public application but not outright elimination of capturing economic rent of land. According to Jerry Jones of the Labour Land Campaign:

State ownership by itself is no guarantee. Without measures taken to value land in relation to its location and quality, and collecting the rent accordingly, those occupying the land will benefit at the expense of the public at large. Moreover, land will tend to be used indiscriminately, irrespective of its value. This happened, for example, in the former Soviet Union, where all land was state owned, and, moreover, treated as a free good (as was capital). Consequently, there were many instances of land being used inappropriately or inefficiently. In particular, it was common practice for enterprises (almost entirely state-owned in the Soviet Union) to hold land vacant indefinitely in case they might need it later. This meant that the rest of society lost out from making the best use of what was often valuable land in a prime location for more beneficial purposes. This also distorted investment decisions, which meant that capital was not necessarily invested in productive activities that made the best use of the land that was available. Nevertheless, since land use was under state control – as indeed it is in most countries, including Britain – it cannot be said that land use was entirely indiscriminate. The problem was that decisions were based not so much upon the economic value of particular sites, but more according to administrative convenience, and the relative effectiveness of lobbying by enterprise managers, local politicians and other vested interests, and the connections they had with planning authorities.

On a general programmatic note, this one demand best illustrates the danger of having an oppositionist program based on a series of disconnected reforms.

The Abolition of Indirect and Other Class-Regressive Taxation

"Undoubtedly the victorious proletariat would also make fundamental reforms in taxation. It would endeavor to abolish all the taxes that today rest upon the laboring population – first of all the indirect ones that increase the cost of living." (Karl Kautsky)

At the turn of the 20th century, Kautsky made the above remarks in one of his most important theoretical works, *The Social Revolution*. Although there is a suggestion of cynicism regarding the abolition of indirect and other regressive taxation under bourgeois-ruled commodity production, it was nevertheless a universal reform demand of the worker-class movement since 1848, when the programmatic *Demands of the Communist Party in Germany* called for "abolition of taxes on articles of consumption."

Contrast that to the existence of such taxation regimes in the welfare states par excellence known as Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. Each of those states, which are derided as "socialist" by right-wing groups, has a value added sales tax rate of 25 percent on most goods and services, a rate that is comparable to what has been and is being proposed by American right-wing groups through their "Fair Tax" lobbying (replacing income taxation with a sales tax of about 30 percent, after token rebates for the poor). Proponents of indirect taxation based on consumer goods and services point towards tax collection efficiency in the form of less tax avoidances and evasions by non-workers, but who between the average worker and the more well-off non-worker spends more on consumption relative to income?

Regressive taxation does not stop at indirect taxation based on consumer goods and services. Every state that provides unemployment insurance appropriates funds for such (or for more dubious budgetary purposes, as affirmed for example by the Supreme Court of Canada) from direct taxes on workers known as payroll taxation. The notorious Social Security and Medicare payroll taxes paid by workers in the United States are merely a more extended form of payroll taxation. In European countries, Japan, and elsewhere, television licenses are levied like poll taxation upon the populace in order to fund public broadcasting. Last, but not least, state-run lotteries are a very direct and regressive form of taxation based on workers consuming bourgeois-capitalist overestimations of class mobility, as acknowledged even by right-wing "Tax Freedom Day" think tanks such as the Tax Foundation based in Washington, DC.

So, in regards to the much-needed abolition of all indirect taxation and other class-regressive taxation based on labour and on consumer goods and services, does this reform facilitate the issuance of either intermediate or threshold demands? In 1866, while preparing for the first congress of the International Workingmen's Association, Marx wrote that "no modification of the form of taxation can produce any important change in the relations of labour and capital." Notwithstanding the aforementioned proposal for

economic rent of land being already an exception in his own time, economic developments over the past forty to fifty years have brought forth hints of another exception, and have demonstrated that not all indirect taxation is regressive. In August 1971, the United States abandoned the international gold standard known as the Bretton Woods system. In response, US economist James Tobin dealt with international currency stability by reviving a particular taxation measure suggested by the classical economist John Maynard Keynes in his *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* (despite this tax measure eventually being dubbed the “Tobin tax”):

It is usually agreed that casinos should, in the public interest, be inaccessible and expensive. And perhaps the same is true of Stock Exchanges. That the sins of the London Stock Exchange are less than those of Wall Street may be due, not so much to differences in national character, as to the fact that to the average Englishman Throgmorton Street is, compared with Wall Street to the average American, inaccessible and very expensive [...] The introduction of a substantial Government transfer tax on all transactions might prove the most serviceable reform available, with a view to mitigating the predominance of speculation over enterprise in the United States.

The adoption of this taxation proposal by the various decentralized social movements is but a mere echo of the more radical sentiments of pre-war European Social Democracy with regards to taxation, the basis of the socio-income democracy elaborated upon earlier in this chapter: **that improvements in the condition of the working class could and should be attained by shifting not some but all tax burdens currently on labour (directly or through consumption) towards all other factors of production, such as capital.**

Does this reform enable the basic principles to be “kept consciously in view”? Combined with socio-income democracy and with the aforementioned proposal for economic rent of land, this reform again poses the questions of transnational class struggle (namely, the concern that other bourgeois states will not implement this without a struggle) and full worker management over the economy. To quote Marx, it “prompts therefore every individual to control the governing powers, while indirect taxation destroys all tendency to self-government.”

“The Right to the City”

“One step towards unification of these struggles is to focus on the right to the city as both a working slogan and a political ideal, precisely because it focuses on who it is that commands the inner connection that has prevailed from time immemorial between urbanization and surplus production and use. The democratization of the right to the city and the construction of a broad social movement to enforce its will is imperative, if the dispossessed are to take back control of the city from which they have for so long been excluded and if new modes of controlling capital surpluses as they work through urbanization processes are to be instituted.” (David Harvey)

In response to gentrification and displacement of low-income people from their traditional urban neighbourhoods, Right to the City was formed in 2007 and has sought to make an impact in questions of housing, urban land, community development, civic engagement, and criminal justice, among others. The Marxist geographer and critical urban theorist David Harvey devotes his political activity to this organization.

In March 2010, a report was released by the United Nations expressing concerns over forced evictions leading up to major sporting events, which are more publicized than gentrification and displacement in places like New York City:

“I am particularly concerned about the practice of forced evictions, criminalization of homeless persons and informal activities, and the dismantling of informal settlements in the context of mega-events,” said Raquel Rolnik, the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing.

[...]

Displacement can also arise from steps taken by local authorities to swiftly remove unsightly slums from areas visible to visitors, it noted, citing how 15 per cent of the population of Seoul, Republic of Korea, was evicted and 48,000 buildings torn down to prepare for the 1988 Olympic Games.

Redevelopment can also sharply reduce the availability of social and low-cost housing, including State-subsidized residences, the publication pointed out. In Atlanta, United States, 1,200 social housing units for the poor were destroyed in the run-up to the 1996 Olympics, while it is possible that plans to build hundreds

of thousands of new low-cost homes could be affected by shifting budget demands ahead of this summer's FIFA World Cup soccer tournament.

[...]

The report called on both bodies to consider the consequences of mega-events on the enjoyment of human rights. The selection of host cities should be open to scrutiny by civil society, and housing provisions should be incorporated into any hosting agreements – which must be in line with international and national standards – entered into.

Authorities must protect people from forced evictions, discrimination and harassment, as well as provide redress for victims, it added.

Since bourgeois authorities have problems with the aforementioned obligations, it is up to potential victims themselves to organize. However, at the present time typical resident associations happen to be Not-In-My-Backyard (NIMBY) homeowner associations, usually far removed from the urban gentrification and displacement problem. **The expansion of resident association guarantees (as opposed to the ethical concept of right) beyond such homeowner privilege and towards the formation of separate tenant associations would go a long way towards combating gentrification and displacement, and in the intermediate run the very rationale for absentee landlordism.** In politically revolutionary periods, periods that combine mass support to highly organized revolutionary movements hostile towards their own rulers with instability in the rulers' own institutions – **tenant associations have been capable of extending the participatory-democratic premise of parallelism.** To quote Mike Macnair:

Now, actually, [revolutionary Russia] also had factory committees, elected factory committees, and God knows what else, elected block – tenants had the elected block committee for their housing block or street committee, or something like that. Masses of these organizational forms running in parallel...

This alone, however, is not enough to deal with residential gentrification. Moreover, even if residential landlords were under economic pressure to develop vacant and underutilized land (by means of land value taxation as discussed earlier in this chapter, and by other means), as opposed to legal pressure from grassroots occupations of vacant land and their subsequent development by non-profit community development organizations, there is still the problem of speculation on fully developed residential real estate. Sit-in protests from the 1960s to the present have occurred because of such speculation. Consider the case of financially stable renters being evicted simply because of landlord defaults, as reported by Bridget Huber of the *Christian Science Monitor*:

Nationwide, as many as 40 percent of families facing foreclosure-related evictions are renters [...] Congress and 13 states are considering laws to protect responsible renters and prevent communities from the blight of abandoned buildings that are stripped even of their copper fittings by scavengers, driving down property values.

[...]

The problem is particularly acute in the Northeast, according to the National Low Income Housing Coalition. By their estimates more than 50 percent of foreclosure-related evictions in some Northeastern cities involve renters.

[...]

*In New Haven, Conn., property values have declined by 50 to 90 percent in the neighborhoods hardest hit by foreclosure, says Amy Marx, a staff attorney with New Haven Legal Assistance, which works with many tenants of bank-owned buildings. **She suggests that the best way to stop the downward spiral of property values is to let renters stay in their homes.***

*But lenders see vacating the buildings as a necessary step in getting the properties fixed up and resold, says Rick Simon, a spokesman for Bank of America. "We believe it's better for the community to have the property prepared for resale as soon as possible," he says. **"It's generally more effective to market a property that is vacant than one occupied by a tenant."***

There have been rare cases whereby, as long as the tenant pays rent and does not neglect the property, the law provides for perpetual possession. **The limitation of all residential writs of possession and eviction**

for the benefit of private parties to cases of tenant neglect would go a long way towards curbing residential gentrification and speculation, and when combined with the existence of tenant associations and the rent strike tactic would facilitate (perhaps greater) property management by the tenants themselves in the intermediate run. In cases of non-renewals for purposes other than gentrification or speculation, most notably the replacement of a decaying apartment with a newer one of similar quality, there would still be no need for residential writs of possession and eviction for the benefit of private parties, so long as there exist tenant associations for landlords to engage in direct negotiations with.

It may be the case that the two demands above can be enacted exclusively by local governments. If so, the slogan "Right to the City" may even be suspected of promoting local politics over higher-level politics, the latter of which open class struggle is based upon. What role, then, can governments at higher levels play? Part of what caused the subprime crisis in the US is the income tax deductibility of certain items pertaining to mortgages, such as mortgage interest and mortgage insurance premiums. This was aggravated further by former President George W. Bush when he promoted policies aimed at achieving an "ownership society" (private health care, education, and pensions, plus the proliferation of home ownership). In other countries, an "ownership society" has not been promoted as aggressively, if at all. As noted by Anushka Asthana of The Observer, the Institute of Public Policy Research in the UK has conducted research leading to a conclusion directly opposite an "ownership society":

The study, by the Institute for Public Policy Research, exposes the day-to-day reality for low-income families across the UK.

By following 58 of them from boom to bust, through regular, in-depth interviews, and detailed diaries of what they spent and when, it reveals how small events could have a profound impact. Saddled with credit cards, mortgages (many self-certified) and high-interest loans, many of the families struggled to cope with things such as a washing machine breaking down, a leaking water pipe, a car needing its MOT, or children wanting warmer clothes in winter.

As a result of its research, the IPPR is calling for low-income families to be given life-long savings accounts, more affordable credit initiatives, a website on which to compare lenders and free and impartial financial advice. It also argues that policies to broaden the appeal of renting should be investigated. "Our reliance on debt – far from creating opportunity – has created vulnerability during this recession," the study concludes.

While income tax deductibility for mortgage interest and mortgage insurance premiums do not exist in other countries' income tax laws, neither does income tax deductibility for residential rent payments, to complement traditional rental subsidies. The establishment of such tax deductibility (while scrapping the aforementioned US tax deductions), and **the general establishment of comprehensive tax and other financial preferences for renting over home ownership, enables the basic principles regarding class struggle to be "kept consciously in view" through emphasizing higher-level politics.**

As demonstrated by the UN report, "the right to the city," perhaps envisaged originally as being the basis for a series of only local struggles, has transcended even national boundaries.

"Sliding Scale of Wages": Cost-of-Living Adjustments and Living Wages

"The state guarantees a livelihood to all workers and provides for those who are incapacitated for work."
(Karl Marx and Frederick Engels)

Shortly after writing the Communist Manifesto, Marx and Engels were tasked by the Communist League in Germany to draft a list of seventeen demands that would be released as the underrated *Demands of the Communist Party in Germany*. Notwithstanding issues arising from potential interpretations of this demand – originally for minimum wages to be at "living wage" levels – to mean the unconditional basic income demand critiqued in Chapter 2, consider this American analysis of the "iron law" (to borrow again from Lassalle) of the disproportionate immiseration of labour at work, courtesy of William Tabb of the *Monthly Review*:

Today, people worry that their children will not enjoy the same standard of living that they have. They know that the benefits of growth are going overwhelmingly to the wealthy and not to working people. The statistics support such an understanding. For a quarter of a century, from 1980 to 2004, while U.S. gross domestic product per person rose by almost two-thirds, the wages of the average worker fell after adjusting for inflation.

[...]

Despite globalization, **manufacturing output is not declining in the United States**. It has been expanding, growing faster than the rest of the economy in recent years. It is manufacturing employment that is shrinking.

[...]

Credit card debt ensnares a large part of the working class. In 2004, 1.6 million people filed for personal bankruptcy, twice the number of a decade earlier, and half of those filed after a major medical expenditure. Other prominent causes of debt were divorce and job loss.

On the whole, life grows ever more insecure for working people. Capital's share of all corporate income is the highest and the compensation of employees is the lowest that they have been in twenty-five years.

All of the above is under the assumption that inflation figures reported by the privately owned United States Federal Reserve are accurate. That "accuracy" should be questioned after the 2000 change in inflation "measurement" from a higher one based on the consumer price index to a lower one based on chain weighting.

In neighbouring Canada, recent studies by the "social-democratic" Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives concluded the obvious from a sample of the Greater Toronto Area, Metro Vancouver, and Greater Victoria: that existing minimum wage levels are insufficient for a decent standard of living (that standard, in 2008 Canadian dollars, being \$16.60 per hour in the Greater Toronto Area, \$16.74 per hour in Metro Vancouver, and \$16.38 in Greater Victoria, all on the assumption of year-round work on a full-time basis).

[Note: As for the relevance of this outside North America: present-day Germany, in spite of the "generous" social welfare system for its legal citizens, does not have a unified minimum wage law!]

Before moving on, a similar yet fundamentally different demand was raised by Trotsky in *The Transitional Program*, one calling for a "sliding scale of wages":

*Neither monetary inflation nor stabilization can serve as slogans for the proletariat because these are but two ends of the same stick. Against a bounding rise in prices, which with the approach of war will assume an ever more unbridled character, one can fight only under the slogan of a sliding scale of wages. **This means that collective agreements should assure an automatic rise in wages in relation to the increase in price of consumer goods.***

This is a fundamentally different demand from the original formulation by Marx and Engels, in that the demand is not leveled at the bourgeois-capitalist state at all, but rather at the lower level of union dealings. **Yet more economism, and this at the very foundations of that 1938 document!** On top of this not-so-transitional anachronism, many companies give their non-minimum-wage employees cost-of-living adjustments to their respective remunerations on an annual basis – though not necessarily consistent ones, especially during this period of decreasing rates of industrial and non-industrial profit. For example, according to CBC News in Canada:

The [Conference Board of Canada] is forecasting wage gains in the 3.9 per cent range for 2009, down slightly from 2008's actual salary rise of 4.2 per cent.

*The conference board, however, said that **with the growing global financial crisis, companies are more likely to squeeze wages even further in the coming year.***

Indeed, the board might now be looking at pay rises that could be around three per cent.

"Turmoil in the financial markets and the possibility of a global economic downturn will put downward pressure on wage increases in 2009," said the board in its annual survey of pay trends.

In June, the Conference Board contacted 2,379 companies about their compensation plans and received 395 responses.

[...]

High-tech companies said they will boost pay by four per cent while communications firms will only be seeking to hike compensation to their employees by 3.1 per cent.

Unionized employees, who tend to work in lower paid professions, should see their pay envelopes rise by 3.2 per cent, less than the overall average, the survey said.

In order for a comprehensive demand for an equally comprehensive labour reform in this area to be formulated properly, that demand must take into consideration, on top of “living wage” levels and accurate inflation measurements for proper cost-of-living adjustments on an annual basis (**thereby being historically consistent with capitalist production’s ability to increase real gross domestic product per capita**), at least three more concerns – those being benefits, executive and celebrity compensation vs. non-executive and non-celebrity compensation (including pensions), and deflation. Practically no company gives similar cost-of-living adjustments to its employees’ benefits, unless they happen to be executives, with their bloated compensation schemes (including severance pay). While protection against deflation would go against the idea of a fully sliding scale, certain inflation-indexed government bonds in the United States are protected against deflation for the sole benefit of the money-capitalists.

What about unemployment, then? Fear-mongering “free market” opponents of the minimum wage always raise the bogeyman of unemployment, and with the aforementioned demand will raise it even higher. Before rebutting that fear-mongering, however, it must be said that Trotsky had his own economic solution to accompany his “sliding scale of wages”:

*The right to employment is the only serious right left to the worker in a society based upon exploitation. This right today is left to the worker in a society based upon exploitation. This right today is being shorn from him at every step. **Against unemployment, “structural” as well as “conjunctural,” the time is ripe to advance along with the slogan of public works, the slogan of a sliding scale of working hours.** Trade unions and other mass organizations should bind the workers and the unemployed together in the solidarity of mutual responsibility. **On this basis all the work on hand would then be divided among all existing workers in accordance with how the extent of the working week is defined.** The average wage of every worker remains the same as it was under the old working week. Wages, under a strictly guaranteed minimum, would follow the movement of prices [...] **Property owners and their lawyers will prove the “unrealizability” of these demands.***

However, as remarked by Mike Macnair in 2007:

The core ‘transitional demands’ of Trotsky’s 1938 Transitional programme – sliding scale of wages and sliding scale of hours – if fully implemented, amount to the immediate abolition of money. Replacing the minimum programme with one ‘transitional’ to the maximum programme then turns out to mean... transitional to the ‘war communism’ regime of the Russian civil war, or to a Maoist ‘cultural revolution’ or Cambodian ‘year zero.’

The proper solution for this comprehensive demand for an equally comprehensive labour reform, then, is for the bourgeois-capitalist state to be pressured into setting unemployment insurance and voluntary workfare benefits themselves at “living wage” levels and then applying both inflation indexation and deflation protection! Because of the temporary nature of these benefits, this comprehensive demand avoids the problem posed by the unconditional basic income demand.

Does this reform facilitate the issuance of either intermediate or threshold demands? Considering the sorry state of unionized labour, not least of which due to the outright cross-class coalitionism of the “yellow” *tred-iunionist* in full control over most union bureaucracies (which in turn happen to be oversized just for collective bargaining), this comprehensive demand strikes at the very heart of “yellow” *tred-iunionism* by rendering collective bargaining for those wage increases for mere cost-of-living adjustments practically obsolete. The union bureaucracies would be forced to cut back on their personnel devotion towards collective bargaining and adapt to functioning in the role of what Marx and one Jules Guesde called a “workers’ statistical commission” on the “legal minimum wage” in their joint 1880 work known otherwise as the *Programme of the French Workers Party* (as a reform demand and not a pseudo-“transitional” one), and any internal struggle for the democratization of unionized labour would reach new heights, all in accordance with the aforementioned Hahnel criterion.

Does this reform enable the basic principles to be “kept consciously in view”? In addition to internal struggles for the democratization of unionized labour, the trimmed-down unions themselves would have to assume a more political character. Meanwhile, more doors would be open for non-unionized workers to form a more open class struggle for the emancipation of human labour power, all in accordance with the aforementioned Kautsky criterion.

Private-Sector Collective Bargaining Representation as a Free and Universal Legal Service

“Free administration of justice and free legal assistance. Administration of the law by judges elected by the people. Appeal in criminal cases. Compensation for individuals unjustly accused, imprisoned, or sentenced. Abolition of capital punishment.” (Eduard Bernstein)

In the late 19th-century and early 20th-century, trade unions were in fact alliances of employed workers and otherwise (unemployed workers, retired workers, and so on), provided social services, showed a lot less hesitance towards calling strikes, and sometimes posed political questions. Out of these came the One Big Union and Socialist Industrial Union concepts, neither of which united workers on merely a sectional basis.

Contrast the above to a modern, “yellow” *tred-iunion*, which: caters only to its particular section of the working class (such as public-sector workers), doesn't provide social services (except perhaps entertainment for the *tred-iunionist* who control the union bureaucracy), doesn't provide alternative mass media when considering the obstacles presented by modern mass media, pays lip service to the very concept of strikes to the point of signing no-strike deals, never poses political questions (as demonstrated clearly by United Steelworkers of America's approach to workers' cooperatives), and even organizes sometimes on the basis of craft and not trade (as is the case in the airline industry). This change, according to Dan Gallin of the Global Labour Institute in a 2009 interview, was a result of the mislabelled “Second World War”:

*Far more pervasive and general were the consequences of the war. Today it is hard to imagine the extent to which the historical labour movement had been destroyed, first by the rise of fascism in the 1920s and 1930s, then by the war itself, with the occupation of most of Europe by the Nazi armies and police. **In most of Europe the structures of the labour movement were wiped out, parties and unions of course, but also the entire institutional network that rooted the movement in society: welfare institutions, credit unions, co-ops, cultural and leisure time activities – everything.***

[...]

*Superficially, the unions emerged in a strong position – after all we were on the side of the victors, whereas big business had collaborated with fascism throughout Europe and had much to be forgiven for. **In fact, labour was far weaker than it appeared, and far more dependent on the State than before the war.** That too did not seem to be a problem at first, since most post-war governments were pro-labour in one way or another, but it did eventually lead to the loss of the political and material independence of the movement and, yes, it did promote bureaucratization.*

Whereas the pre-war movement conceived of itself as a counter-culture and an alternative society, at least in principle, the post-war movement made its peace with the “social market economy” and demanded no more than a better life within the system (full employment, welfare, social protection, good wages and working conditions).

In that situation, the leadership of the movement became increasingly unwilling to maintain a whole network of flanking institutions. If you don't want to change society then you don't need to build an alternative counter-culture or an alternative economy. Think of all the money you can save. So the unions concentrated on their presumed “core business” – collective bargaining with “social partners” – the parties concentrated on elections, and the movement lost its roots in society, lost many of its think tanks and educational institutions, and lost its periphery, a sphere of influence and protection.

As mentioned earlier, the modern *tred-iunion* also does not perform the functions of “workers' statistical commissions” to audit the business figures and processes of employers.

All in all, what is to be learned from these trends is that **the collective bargaining function itself, except perhaps where there are no union representatives, goes against politico-ideological independence for the working class.** Amongst the various forms of dispute resolution in civil law – negotiation, mediation, arbitration, and litigation – *tred-iunion* careerists perform not just negotiation on the formal behalf of

employees, but also (and in practice) mediation between employers and employees. The old Western European corporatist model best exemplifies this, whereby representatives of government, businesses, and unions met together on a regular basis and jointly determined economic policy.

Looming over this lesson and the trends is the difficulty of mobilizing clerical workers (who are mistaken for the entire “service worker” population, which includes professional workers) – as well as the newest, cross-sectoral, cross-age (from youth to midlife and beyond), and growing part of the working class that is by and large the precariat. While the comprehensive reform outlined in the previous section – for living wages, non-deflationary cost-of-living adjustments based on reliable inflation figures, and similar application towards unemployment insurance and voluntary workplace benefits – would indeed render collective bargaining for those wage increases for mere cost-of-living adjustments practically obsolete, the overall problem of collective bargaining representation would still remain, such as in the obvious topics of working conditions and wage increases well above mere cost-of-living adjustments.

The immediate solution once more lies in the Erfurt Program, this time in its demand for free legal assistance. However, what should be pursued here is **the wholesale absorption of all private-sector collective bargaining representation into free and universal legal services by independent government agencies acting in good faith** (and subjecting their employees to full-time compensation being at or slightly lower than the median equivalent for professional and other skilled workers). Significant parts of the administrative apparatus required for the complete provision of labour dispute resolution by such agencies and their plethora of lawyers are already in place in the more developed countries, and happen to be called “labour courts” or “labour relations boards.” Public-sector collective bargaining is not addressed, given the sensitivity of public-sector workers towards their government employers.

Beyond crude calls for universal unionization, it should be noted that **the collective bargaining function as a whole is different from the strike function, the latter of which should naturally remain the function of whatever unions remain**, including “red” unions and the sociopolitical syndicate. In terms of facilitating the issuance of intermediate or threshold demands, there would be emancipatory demands later on pertaining to unfavourable restrictions on the activities of these unions, which should be able to perform all the class solidarity and statistical functions mentioned earlier.

In terms of this reform enabling the basic principles to be “kept consciously in view,” politico-ideological independence for the working class, as well as exposition of the bourgeois nature of the modern state (hence the cynicism behind “acting in good faith”) and other aspects of class struggle, is upheld by this radical departure from traditional views on collective bargaining. In fact, a very early example of the exposition of the anti-worker nature of the modern state’s core functions with regards to collective bargaining was demonstrated in imperial Russia, as noted in June 2010 by Lars Lih:

*Zubatov was a tsarist police official who, around 1900, had the brilliant idea of beating the Social Democrats at their own game. Remember that not only political parties but even trade unions were illegal before the 1905 revolution. Zubatov’s idea was that **the police themselves would set up semi-legal trade unions so that workers could pursue their economic struggle in a peaceful way, while still remaining loyal, even grateful, to the tsar [...]** Now, if Lenin thought that workers were naturally reformist, one would think that he’d be pretty worried about these police unions, since **the tsarist government was trying to show it could genuinely carry out needed reforms.***

*In fact, Lenin’s attitude was very brash – indeed, it could be summed up as “Bring it on!” According to Lenin, these police unions were good for the revolutionary underground in every way. For one thing, **the police took over the job of providing legal workers’ literature**, so that the underground could concentrate on smuggling in the stronger stuff. For another thing, there was no chance that the workers would be taken in for any length of time by the anti-democratic, anti-revolutionary message of Zubatov and his minions – of course, assuming that the Social Democrats did their job of vigorously refuting Zubatov’s message [...]. In January 1905, a follower of Zubatov, Father Gapon, **led the workers to present a loyal, peaceful petition to the tsar, and they were shot down by the government on Bloody Sunday, January 1905, leading to a radicalisation of large sectors of the working class.***

On the subject of party-movements like the sociopolitical syndicate, this demand illustrates the false nature of the alleged dichotomy between building union-based labour parties on the one hand – a notoriously strong phenomenon on the British left-of-Labour scene, such as the left-nationalist No2EU project – and building cross-class, left-populist parties such as Respect on the other; neither option has the potential to mobilize private-sector clerical workers politically like this demand and considerations on the sociopolitical syndicate do.

Furthermore, this absorption, if not enacted by the bourgeoisie due to class-strugglist pressure from the workers, would have to be enacted by the latter during the early transitional period – before dissolving the businesses of the former. Meanwhile, any “workers’ statistical commission” functions arising from this reform could in fact play an important control function (that is, pertaining to control as one of the four functions of management) for social labour in this period.

Class-Based Affirmative Action

“Many college students have bills that mom and dad don’t pay. They have groceries to buy, kids to take care of, and cars to keep running. And they drop out because they have to work – more than any other reason [...] part-time students – who account for close to 40 percent of undergraduates in the [United States] – and those who have to work generally fare worse than do their full-time counterparts.” (Elyse Ashburn)

In December 2009, the Chronicle for Higher Education asked various education experts whether it was time to implement affirmative action policies based on some sort of socioeconomic status. Richard Kahlenberg of the Century Foundation responded by saying that “the enormous under-representation of low-socioeconomic students at selective institutions, always an embarrassment to higher education, is getting worse” and that affirmative action based on socioeconomic status should increase graduation rates. Professor Walter Benn Michaels of the University of Illinois remarked that “it makes complete sense to support economic affirmative action (every little bit helps) while, on the other, it makes no sense whatsoever to think it could be put into effect in a way that would make a real difference.” Jamie Merisotis of the Lumina Foundation for Education cited two statistical findings while mentioning rising college costs: that only 20 percent of those who begin college at two-year institutions graduate within three years, and that only a little more than half of first-time students graduate at four-year institutions within six years.

Of course, the majority of the liberal-progressive discourse surrounding such affirmative action policies ends up mislabelling them “class-based affirmative action,” defining “class” based on an empirical mix of income levels, education, wealth levels, and culture rather than on analysis proper. How does this reform facilitate the issuance of either intermediate or threshold demands? The same Chronicle for Higher Education asked this question:

Are the selective institutions that could provide enough financial aid to needy students, so they could work less, doing enough to recruit them?

That this has been asked illustrates that the subject of financial aid is both immediate and intermediate, to say the least.

Now, what about such policies in the sphere of employment? The subject of financial aid is irrelevant, but the problems of cronyism and nepotism – in the milder form of “networking” – are quite relevant. Also, it could be argued here that a mix of income levels, education, wealth levels, and culture is a better basis for such policies than class proper, but such an argument would be applicable only to lower-level jobs. For higher-level jobs such as in public-sector management, class proper would be a better basis, since among the candidates are outright bourgeois elements like corporate executives.

Does this reform enable the basic principles to be “kept consciously in view”? While the institution of affirmative action policies based on a mix of income levels, education, wealth levels, and culture would be a major step forward, a similar institution based exclusively on class – undoubtedly evoking the Soviet-style disenfranchisement of the bourgeoisie and petit-bourgeoisie as one of the likely but not set-in-stone political measures of worker-class rule – would go further towards shattering myths about class mobility and abolishing class hierarchy, as noted by Joanne Passaro:

Ironically, given that class-based affirmative action is on the platform of the extreme right in this country, this approach would certainly be, in traditional Marxist terms, the most radical approach, since it would heighten the contradictions and inequalities of capitalism in the United States, the nation which is now the most economically stratified in the industrialized world.

Education and Experience Recognition Against Immigrant Underemployment

“To start with, it is important to realize that the [International Workingmen’s Association] was not initiated by Karl Marx. As it turns out the British trade union movement played a key role in getting it off the ground and,

as might be expected, had very little interest in revolutionary socialism. Indeed, one of their primary motivations was to find a way of preventing foreign workers being used as scabs in British strikes [...] Accepting at face value that British trade unionists were only opposed to scabs and not foreign workers 'stealing jobs', it is necessary to note that the American trade union movement did exhibit naked racism in this period, all within the framework of the IWA." (Louis Proyect)

Since the 1990s, what economist Stephen Roach calls "global labour arbitrage" has become more common. With significantly less barriers to international trade and capital mobility comes offshore outsourcing of jobs to places where the costs of identical labour and other business costs are significantly lower (not that similar labour arbitrage doesn't already exist within countries themselves), thus yielding an increased business need to measure the import content of exports. However, the benevolent masks of free trade in the markets of consumer goods and services, when lifted, reveals much less benevolent phenomena in the markets of labour and capital. Decreases in consumer prices are more than matched by underemployment and sometimes even long-term unemployment, hence the disproportionate immiseration of labour under even under the "trickle-down" best of times.

Conversely, there is an increased mobility of labour globally, most notably from the more labour-immiserated, less developed countries to the more developed ones. This can take the form of traditional immigration, but more and more can take the form of guest work programs like those in the United States or Western Europe. In the case of the latter, money transfers derived from guest workers' wages go towards their respective countries of origin, such as in Latin America or Eastern Europe, thus depriving the more developed countries of what could have domestic consumption.

At least some of the opposition to this two-fold global labour arbitrage has been channelled into the wrong areas, most notably immigrant scapegoating. **Upon closer examination, however, many skilled and unskilled immigrants are merely taking up whatever underemployment is available to them, even during better times.** Consider immigrant health care professionals (physicians, dentists, nurse practitioners, therapists, paramedics, and others) and guest workers working "under the table." Because of the continued existence of monopolistic or oligopolistic guilds-in-all-but-name (legally controlling the labour supply at the national and regional levels with their pre-entry closed shop modus operandi and petit-bourgeois apprenticeship requirements) – be they in medicine, securities trading, real estate brokerage, public accounting, law, or engineering – the former group of immigrants have to settle for underemployment or at least a "career change" upon rejection of their education and experience credentials by these privately controlled and mostly private-sector guilds, even when facing labour shortages. For their part, governments can easily reject mere degree education due to the lack of standardization. Meanwhile, guest workers doing under-the-table work are already underemployed by not being employed in some other unskilled but formal work that pays more. The more desperate ones may once have had skilled but not guild-certified work. All in all, underemployed immigrant labour is an integral component of the newest, cross-sectoral, and growing part of the working class that is by and large the precariat.

[Note: In my earlier work, the precariat is by and large the proletarian section of the so-called "class of flux," a stratum outside the wage-labour system that enables class mobility.]

Part of a pro-worker policy alternative to the two-fold global labour arbitrage (a bigger component being discussed in the next chapter) is in **calls for mandatory private- and public-sector recognition in professional education, other higher education, and related work experience "from abroad," along with the wholesale transnational standardization of such education and the implementation of other measures to counter the underemployment of guest workers and all other immigrants.**

Does this reform facilitate the issuance of either intermediate or threshold demands? Again, the mention of full, mandatory recognition by these mostly private-sector guilds is meant to pose intermediate questions about their continued existence, starting with their petit-bourgeois apprenticeship requirements.

Does this reform enable the basic principles to be "kept consciously in view"? The most obvious principle addressed here is transnational politics, and the next obvious is elevating class struggle over parochial "stolen jobs" sentiments. The principle of social labour is the least obvious, but can be addressed by the directional method discussed in Chapter 2. Reconsider first the post-modernists' fetish of the ethical concept of right and its application towards freedom of movement. They call for things like "the right to remain," "the right to legalisation," and "the right to (equal) rights." Again, the missing links between these and the principle of social labour are calls for a transnationally entrenched bill of workers' rights (both political and economic) and especially the related globalized and upward equal standard of living for equal or

equivalent work to be realized on the basis of real purchasing power parity, thereby eliminating all forms of labour arbitrage.

Against Modern Enclosures of the Commons: Intellectual Property

“Attempts of capitalists to make money from ‘their’ intellectual property are like the highway robbery of medieval aristocrats who levied tolls on traders and restricted the growth of commerce and prosperity.” (Mick Brooks)

Once upon a time, the entrepreneurial elements of the bourgeoisie dealt with intellectual creation from a political perspective. In order for the emerging capitalism to develop the productive forces as fast and as expansive as possible, there had to be intellectual creation as much as there had to be competition. Inspired by the Renaissance, the legendary Benjamin Franklin was an inventor of many things, among them the lightning rod and bifocal eyewear, and once said, “As we enjoy great advantages from the inventions of others, we should be glad of an opportunity to serve others by any invention of ours; and this we should do freely and generously.”

Unless one were to emulate Franklin’s altruism, intellectual creation could not occur if competitors could simply copy the creations of others and sell similar goods and services for a profit (known in economics as free riding), especially if those competitors had economies of scale over the intellectual creators. Thus arose from bourgeois idealism the concept of intellectual property rights, awarding those creators exclusive ownership and revenue rights over their creations for a fixed period of time.

In the European Union Parliament elections of June 2009, Sweden’s single-issue Pirate Party won a seat with the support of 7% of Swedish voters. The party’s program is summarized by this extract from their website:

All non-commercial copying and use should be completely free. File sharing and p2p networking should be encouraged rather than criminalized. Culture and knowledge are good things, that increase in value the more they are shared. The Internet could become the greatest public library ever created. The monopoly for the copyright holder to exploit an aesthetic work commercially should be limited to five years after publication.

“Many people just don’t see illegal file-sharing as a crime, however hard the media industries try to persuade the public that it’s just as bad as shoplifting,” said BBC correspondent Rory Cellan-Jones. What happened to bourgeois idealism?

It is common knowledge that, in the sphere of modern copyright, ownership and revenue rights over intellectual creation usually do not belong to the creators themselves, but rather to publishing companies, recording companies, and other distributors. This effectively separates concerns of creative compensation on the one hand from modern copyrights on the other. Moreover, duration of copyrights can be obscenely long by means of copyright extensions, lasting well past the deaths of their respective authors. This is the modern “enclosure of the commons” that Mick Brooks wrote of in 2005, making a direct link with Marx’s commentary on land enclosures as part of the first capital accumulations by dispossession that marked the emergence of bourgeois-fied commodity production. **What is less known is that similar enclosures are occurring in the sphere of patents, most notably patents dealing with biology.** In 2005, Brooks wrote of patent attempts made immediately after sufficient studies were made on the basis of biological life: deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA). The more economic questions of health care and related insurance are themselves plagued by these enclosures, as noted by Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez in June 2009 (yes, the same month the Pirate Party above won their seat):

*An invention or a scientific discovery should be knowledge for the world, especially medicine... **That a laboratory does not allow us to make a medicine because they have the patent, no, no, no.***

This was in fact part of his announcement for genuine health care reform by means of changing existing laws on patents, which now function in the exact opposite manner (stifling innovation) as they were intended to do. The minister who was ordered to carry out the decision, Eduardo Saman, said that “patents have become a barrier to production, and we cannot allow them to be barriers to medicine, to life, to agriculture.”

Where does that leave us besides the obvious need to abolish all copyright (with perhaps the exception of Creative Commons), patent, and other intellectual property laws, as well as all restrictions on the non-commodity economy of peer-to-peer sharing, open-source programming, and the like?

But how is this need a reform that facilitates the issuance of either intermediate or threshold demands, as opposed to being some sort of “transitional” demand? There are many millions of ordinary workers holding economically liberal, social-democratic, or even conservative outlooks while at the same time deploring the concept of intellectual property for what it has (rather naturally) become. In non-revolutionary situations, support of such significance implies reform at best. As mentioned above, health care reform beyond mere public health insurance must address production in the health industry even before considering truly socialized health care.

One particular aspect that makes this need a genuine reform, and not a “transitional” demand in a highly stage-ist and economic scheme for workers to eventually engage in political struggle, is the very close relationship between the abolition of intellectual property laws and the establishment of full, comprehensible, and participatory transparency in all governmental, commercial, and other related affairs. In the very same 2009 article where he linked anti-union laws to a lack of freedom of association, Mike Macnair wrote about the dirty link between state secrets and the intellectual property form known as the trade secret, used by businesses to gain or maintain a competitive advantage:

*In the Transitional programme the question is posed as one of workers’ control. And it is indeed true that working class action, in which the administrative and financial staff of a firm act in solidarity with its direct producers, can expose secrets which the employers would prefer to keep hidden. But the question of transparency is much larger than this. **Capitalists and bureaucrats alike rely on legal rights to the control of information: official secrecy, commercial confidentiality, ‘privacy’, and ‘intellectual property rights’ (copyright, patents, etc).** An outrider is the principle of ‘candour’ applied to justify secret discussions in the civil service and the SWP alike. Private law is used to protect official secrets, as in the Spycatcher case; ‘state security’ is used to protect murky corporate dealings, as in the Al-Yamamah arms scandal. **Transparency - the abolition of state and private rights to control the publication of information, and the insistence that the inner workings of state and business alike should be exposed to public view - is thus a democratic demand.***

Now, what about the criterion established by the orthodox Marxist whose prolonged copyright ended only in 2008 – that this reform enable the basic principles to be “kept consciously in view”? Besides the obvious attack on private property, the question of transnational class struggle comes to the fore: ordinary workers can complain all they want about digital copyright laws, and can even engage in anarcho-lifestylist direct action by violating said laws and distributing digital material globally through ever-changing peer-to-peer technology, but such complaining is fruitless unless they themselves take political action. The political action that has been taken so far – by the bourgeoisie – has resulted in more punitive monetary and criminal penalties being put into law (not to mention the global coordination of the related law enforcement), specifically to make examples out of certain copyright lawbreakers.

On a copyright-related note, to readers reading this section on their respective birthdays: Happy Birthday!

Eminent Domain for Pre-Cooperative Worker Buyouts

“Our ideal suggests a reform agenda, aimed at moving us in the direction of Economic Democracy. Among these reforms would be demands for [...] Technical and financial support for worker buyouts of existing enterprises.” (David Schweickart)

The term “reform agenda” sounds shocking at first, especially coming from an advocate of “market socialism” (the retention of a “free” consumer goods and services market while eliminating the capitalism-specific markets of labour and capital) like David Schweickart. However, the same dynamic oppositionist test that was applied to the aforementioned, proven-to-be-dynamic oppositionist demands is to be applied to this demand.

Does this reform facilitate the issuance of either intermediate or threshold demands? It does indeed meet the Hahnel criterion, since more general demands may eventually have to be made regarding unconditional economic assistance – from the more technical aspects of drafting startup plans and operations management issues to the **legal mechanism of eminent domain or compulsory purchase** (due monetary compensation but without prior owner consent) to the more financial aspects such as monetary and physical assets provided for cooperative startups of sufficient mass (as opposed to business partnerships without employees), and since demands will eventually have to be made regarding necessary restrictions on subcontracting (especially amongst workers’ cooperatives) and regarding the necessary restriction of competition amongst workers’ cooperatives. Even in a more limited application – such as countering a

workplace closure, mass sacking, or mass layoff – this revival of one of the truly and radically social-democratic measures enacted by the Paris Commune suggests the need for more creative and pro-active approaches towards countering unemployment. More important, however, is the fate of “free markets” in general – their genuine elimination, and not mere regulation, arising from means other than dirigisme, or selective mercantilism. Even the anarchist Mikhail Bakunin had this to say about the historic Eisenach Program’s call for “state support of the cooperative system and state loans for free producers’ cooperatives subject to democratic guarantees”:

*There are [...] planks in this program which free-enterprise capitalists will dislike [...] Clause 10, Article 3 – is even more important and socialistic. It demands state help, protection, and credit for workers’ cooperatives, particularly producers’ cooperatives, with all necessary guarantees, i.e., freedom to expand. Free enterprise is not afraid of successful competition from workers’ cooperatives because the capitalists know that workers, with their meager incomes, will never by themselves be able to accumulate enough capital to match the immense resources of the employing class... **but the tables will be turned when the workers’ cooperatives, backed by the power and well-nigh unlimited credit of the State, begin to fight and gradually absorb both private and corporate capital (industrial and commercial).** For the capitalist will in fact be competing with the State, and the State is, of course, the most powerful of all capitalists.*

Does this reform enable the basic principles to be “kept consciously in view”? Well, this demand is historically loaded and can be extremely tricky. Consider a very similar demand raised in the Gotha Program, which was criticized heavily by Marx:

“The German Workers’ party, in order to pave the way to the solution of the social question, demands the establishment of producers’ co-operative societies with state aid under the democratic control of the toiling people. The producers’ co-operative societies are to be called into being for industry and agriculture in such dimensions that the socialist organization of the total labor will arise from them.”

*Instead of arising from the revolutionary process of transformation of society, the “**socialist organization of the total labor**” “**arises**” from the “**state aid**” that the state gives to the producers’ co-operative societies and which the state, not the workers, “**calls into being**”. It is worthy of Lassalle’s imagination that with state loans one can build a new society just as well as a new railway!*

[...]

*That the workers desire to establish the conditions for co-operative production on a social scale, and first of all on a national scale, in their own country, only means that they are working to revolutionize the present conditions of production, and it has nothing in common with the foundation of co-operative societies with state aid. But as far as the present co-operative societies are concerned, **they are of value only insofar as they are the independent creations of the workers and not protégés either of the governments or of the bourgeois.***

Notwithstanding this scathing criticism, even Engels acknowledged, in the very same letter that suggested replacing the state with the commonwealth, that this call for the formation of producer cooperatives with state aid, as “a secondary provisional measure alongside and amongst many others recognised as possible,” had a class-strugglist advantage: while forcing the hand of the state, **this call forced the feeble, sectional struggles for such cooperatives to become part of the political struggle of the worker-class movement (in short, open class struggle).**

The demand for the encouragement of, and unconditional economic assistance (both technical and financial) for, pre-cooperative worker buyouts of existing enterprises and enterprise operations – particularly in light of the recent “occupied factory” movements – improves upon this history with regards to class independence. The very premise of pre-cooperative worker buyouts is that the workers themselves “call into being” these cooperatives like they did in the Paris Commune, especially if they are about to lose their jobs in the ensuing mass sacking, mass layoff, or some other similar scenario. **In the case of closures of workplace establishments not threatened by insolvency, bold workers may “call into being” their own cooperatives if they feel that even legally binding closure vetoes are insufficient.** Yes, there is encouragement but not actual establishment by the bourgeois-capitalist state, and there is also “state aid” to both the workers and the capitalist deserters, but given the necessity to get past the Erfurt Program’s precedent for both the excessive “orthodox Marxist” phobia of cooperativism and over-reliance on the state structure (i.e., continued over-emphasis on state-based social welfare schemes, topped with “Marxist”-based “socializations” all over the place, which in fact perpetuate wage labour and capitalism itself as a money-commodities-money process, or the famed M-C-M abbreviation), these are limited specifically to the pre-

cooperative worker buyouts – thereby preserving the politico-ideological independence of the working class – and these are qualitatively superior to the “privatize the gains, socialize the losses” effects of perpetual corporate welfare (further examples of which have arisen recently in the financial services industry).

The aforementioned limitation needs to be contrasted with an example of perpetual “state aid,” the Inveval cooperative story, as reported by Kiraz Janicke of *Venezuelanalysis.com* and quoted in my earlier work:

*Francisco Pinero, Inveval's treasurer, explained that although **Inveval is legally constituted as a cooperative with 51% owned by the state and 49% owned by the workers**, “real power lies with the workers assembly.” Rather than supervisors, the workers at Inveval elect, through a workers assembly, recallable ‘coordinators of production,’ for a period of one year.*

“Everyone here gets paid exactly the same, whether they work in administration, political formation, security or keeping the grounds clean,” another worker, Marino Mora added.

“We want the state to own 100%, but for the factory to be under workers control, for workers to control all production and administration. This is how we see the new productive model; we don't want to create new capitalists here,” Pinero made clear.

All in all, this reform does indeed meet that all-important Kautsky criterion, by providing workers the opportunity to exercise cooperative ownership and management as a preliminary to social ownership and management, as noted by Marx himself on the Paris Commune:

If united co-operative societies are to regulate national production upon common plan, thus taking it under their own control, and putting an end to the constant anarchy and periodical convulsions which are the fatality of capitalist production – what else, gentlemen, would it be but communism, “possible” communism?

Die Medienfrage: The Mass Media Question

“The undemocratic part of Lenin's legacy comes in large part from European Social Democracy, while the Russian context contributed to the democratic part.” (Lars Lih)

What is normally emphasized in history classes on the Soviet era is the tradition of Russian authoritarianism since the first czar, Ivan the Terrible. What does the quoted refutation of the norm, then, have to do with the mass media? Towards the end of the introduction to broad economism, I quoted a brief criticism by Lars Lih on the socialist attitude (or a certain deficit of such) towards political freedom. Unfortunately, this deficit has a rather deep history:

*This complex of assumptions--the revolution will come only if the proletariat is convinced of its mission, “the socialist party must educate the proletariat, not the opposite,” the workers' acceptance of their mission is nevertheless only an affaire du temps--gave rise to an innovative political strategy that can be labeled campaignism. Campaignism was a central feature of the German SPD and its attempts to create an “alternative culture” (the evocative title of Vernon Lidtke's classic study on the subject). **Like the SPD, the Parti Ouvrier carried on a permanent campaign, including the written word, the spoken word of rallies and study circles, and active protest demonstrations.***

*The reader will guess where I am heading. **The Soviet system was what Peter Kenez termed a “propaganda state.” Campaignism--now conducted by a monopolistic state--was its life-blood. This central institution of the Soviet system was lifted straight from the practices of the European Social Democratic parties and from the cluster of assumptions that surrounded these practices--all well in existence by the time the young Ulyanov became a Social Democrat in the early 1890s.***

[...]

*We academic specialists on Russia like to stress the Russian roots of Soviet communism, a claim that increases the value of our own intellectual capital. We also automatically assume that Russian particularity will help explain the undemocratic distortions of what has been borrowed from Europe. When I compared the picture of international Social Democracy that emerged from my research on the Iskra period with the French perspective of Angenot and Stuart, however, I found something quite different. **The Russian context caused the local Social Democrats to lay heavy stress on an aspect of Social Democracy that had a much lower profile in the French context. I refer to “political freedom,” a term that referred specifically to rights of speech, of assembly, of association, and the like.** The crucial role of*

political freedom can be appreciated only if we keep it analytically distinct from republicanism, parliamentarism, and even democracy.

These freedoms were absolutely necessary for the entire Social Democratic strategy of a nationally organized party carrying out intensive propaganda and agitational campaigns and playing a visible role in national politics.

[...]

*I can illustrate my point by comparing *What Is to Be Done?* to *State and Revolution*. These two Lenin productions are sometimes taken as emblematic of the bad, hard-line Lenin of 1902 versus the good, "libertarian" Lenin of 1917. From the point of view of political freedom, this standard contrast looks quite different. Precisely because of the Russian context, *What Is to Be Done?* stresses the centrality of political freedom. Precisely because *State and Revolution* marks a return to the European context, it downplays political freedom and breathes an atmosphere hostile to it.*

[...]

*Thus anyone for whom political freedoms have high or intrinsic value should be sympathetic toward the Russian Lenin of *What Is to Be Done?*, who operates in a context that highlighted the role assigned by Social Democracy to political freedom in the fight for socialism. **By the same token, they should be wary of the European Lenin of *State and Revolution*, who fully embraces Social Democracy's blind spot about the role of political freedom in the good society.***

In modern times, there is popular discontent over the concentration of private ownership of what is known today as the "mass media" (for the purposes of this section, the less contentious questions of communication infrastructure, telephone companies, and so on are left for discussion in another section). This inequality in access to and distribution of free speech (even before one considers the vulgar notion of "free speech" being inclusive of typical campaign financing, its disparities, and disparities in access to lobby groups) has irrefutably led to less representation of views held by society as a whole, and to the expression only of views held by the media moguls (which in the recent economic crisis includes the bailing out of this group by means of corporate welfare), thus enhancing what the Marxist Antonio Gramsci called "bourgeois cultural hegemony." On the other hand, there is widespread hostility towards any sort of "public ownership" over the mass media, and this hostility is not based on the typical musings of administrative incompetence by bourgeois governments, but rather on the ever-atomizing individualism that goes against perceived notions of the state telling people what to think. One cannot be but reminded of a Soviet joke about only two channels in the country – Channel One being the agitation and propaganda channel, and Channel Two broadcasting a state security official warning the viewer to turn back to the first channel.

So, in accordance with a more accurate title translation of Lenin's 1901 work, "What To Do?"

In 1899, Kautsky tackled *die Agrarfrage* ("the agrarian question") using certain immediate demands in the Erfurt Program and the most revolutionary political economy in order to answer the question "Does Social Democracy Need An Agrarian Programme?" In similar fashion, it is most appropriate that this chapter is concluded not by commentary on workplace democracy, local autonomy, inheritances of productive and other non-possessive property, economic rent, or even cooperative startups, but rather by commentary on the mass media, since a programmatic solution entails aspects of all these and more. The alignment of this programmatic conclusion with the relevant reform demands that already "make further progress more likely and facilitate other progressive changes" (Hahnel) as well as enable the basic principles to be "kept consciously in view" (Kautsky) is the immediate solution to *die Medienfrage*:

- 1) Firstly, there should be **workplace democracy over mandated balance of content in news and media production**. The originally liberal-bourgeois concept of an independent press covers the obvious need and mandate for factual coverage of events. However, balance of content in news also means minimizing, if not totally eliminating, bias in providing analysis (to prevent the degeneration of such into so-called "spin"). Four or more decades ago, the news media in the more developed bourgeois regimes had, albeit relative to the politically correct mainstream, this journalistic balance. Balance of content in other media production primarily refers to the quality of, and airtime allocated for, documentaries and other educational programs (probably at its qualitative peak in the immediate post-Cold War period), cultural programming, of course sports and entertainment. As for workplace democracy, the least it can do is minimize the arbitrary power of news editors and programming coordinators.

- 2) Secondly, there should be **heavy appropriation of economic rent in the broadcast spectrum** (that part of the electromagnetic spectrum most suitable for telecommunication, from radio broadcasting to high-definition television). There are obvious parallels here between railroad land grants for privatized economic rent in land since the 19th century and the corporate commodification of the broadcast spectrum. Although frequencies are still generally not yet privatized officially (as opposed to huge swaths of communication grids in some countries), they are leased for token change in various murky arrangements. Most “profits earned” by mass media companies are in fact economic rent in the classical sense (as discussed in a later section).
- 3) Thirdly, **pre-cooperative worker buyouts of existing mass media enterprises and mass media operations should be extended to all independent mass media cooperative startups, again with unconditional “state support” (or, more notoriously phrased, “state aid”)** in technical, financial, and legal aspects. Again, even the anarchist Mikhail Bakunin thought such a measure could turn the tables on the media moguls. Meanwhile, such economic assistance would undoubtedly be funded by appropriated economic rent in the broadcast spectrum.
- 4) Fourthly, **local autonomy would be enhanced beyond obviously political and economic concerns if media decentralization were one of the aims** of the aforementioned economic assistance. Concentrated private ownership and management in the mass media is mainly ignorant of local issues and local culture, unless the relevant localities are at least somewhat metropolized.
- 5) Lastly, **anti-inheritance measures regarding the mass media should be aimed explicitly at transforming the relevant private property into cooperative property**. Notwithstanding the continued proliferation of heirs to various media empires, the appropriation of the relevant private property for, on the one hand, the sake of mere auctioning would be a step sideways and, on the other hand, for the sake of complete “public ownership” under the management of bourgeois-capitalist states would only strengthen the bourgeois cultural hegemony, or dominance.

CHAPTER 7: ON THE THRESHOLD

“To protect the working class and to raise its fighting capacity, the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party demands [...]” (Vladimir Lenin)

As illustrated in Chapter 1 and discussed at the beginning of Chapter 6, there are certain types of demands that meet the Kautsky criterion but do not “make further progress more likely” or “facilitate other progressive changes” by means of reforms under bourgeois-fied commodity production, simply because they are indeed the maximum that could possibly be achieved under any form of bourgeois-fied commodity production. In the case of reforms of this type (as opposed to the more obvious directional demands and maximalist achievements), they are on the threshold before the point whereby the working class must expropriate ruling-class political power. As elaborated upon in Chapter 5, even demands that are necessary for such political capture can be on the threshold, since on an individual basis they can be fulfilled without eliminating the bourgeois state order. **Regardless, any identifiable threshold demand is still an integral component of a formal program even when the bulk of immediate demands are not yet on the threshold!**

One such demand pertains to further reductions in the normal workweek corresponding to increased labour productivity, part of the 32-hour workweek demand in Chapter 5. The historic reductions in the workday to ten hours and then eight hours did correspond to increased labour productivity beforehand as a result of the Industrial Revolution, but unfortunately were not part of some economic development policy or plan that dealt directly with such reductions and with more typical productivity expectations. **Such normalized policy or planning, but with the acknowledgement of participatory-democratic aspects on the normal workweek, would be on the threshold simply because it does not enable policy or planning in other areas of societal concern.** It would not be self-directional, because the only aspect covered is labour time. However, this being on the threshold is nevertheless important, because it would be a major blow against further attempts by the bourgeoisie and even petit-bourgeoisie to extract surplus value by increasing labour time (what Marx called “absolute surplus value”).

A second threshold demand was identified in Chapter 6. Pre-war European Social Democracy existed in an environment where the bulk of taxation was levied on consumption and where welfare states were, where

existent, barely developed. In response, the movement went beyond questions of mere progressive taxation, and was politically aggressive about **shifting away all tax burdens on labour, whether such burdens were direct or indirect (via consumption), towards the polar opposite factor of production – capital** (through the development of the real estate industry, “capital” is nowadays inclusive of those profiting purely from economic rent in the classical sense). Today’s means of achieving this shift comes in the form of socio-income democracy, or direct democracy in income taxation.

A third threshold demand, also identified in Chapter 6, deals with workers’ cooperatives. Even after unconditional economic assistance for pre-cooperative worker buyouts of existing enterprises and enterprise operations, there is still the problem of cooperatives subcontracting out work. The same Kiraz Janicke of Venezuelaanalysis.com contrasted the Inveval cooperative with the paper company Invepal, whose cooperative owners effectively became business partners by contracting out work to casual labourers, thereby perpetuating precarious conditions. There would have to be a **prohibition of all private-sector subcontracting of labour, including whereby at least one contractual party is a workers’ cooperative**. This is necessary for the directional measure of enabling society’s cooperative production of goods and services to be regulated indicatively and directly by cooperatives under their common plan, as noted earlier by Marx on cooperatives in the Paris Commune.

Another threshold subject for consideration would be the “totality” of the discussion two chapters onward. **The fulfillment of economic “national-democratization” as specified in that chapter would be on the threshold for any particular nation-state**, in spite of deficiencies on the question of transnational class struggle. Related to “national-democratization” of the energy industry, agriculture industry, transport industry, and communication infrastructure is the threshold demand for **public ownership and rental tenure over all land, which stems from dealing properly with economic rent in land**, as advocated by the most radical yet bourgeois Ricardians.

There are others to be considered, others which are indeed threshold subjects and not purely transformative, genuinely transitional, or directional. These will be considered in the same order as that of the demands presented in the previous chapter.

Full Communal Power: Against Municipal Power and More

“The Commune to be master of its administration and its police.” (Karl Marx and Jules Guesde)

Despite bourgeois pejoratives, there are more to communes than just isolated Utopian-Socialist outlets or “Year Zero” lifestyle policies pursued by the most insane examples of peasant revolutions. In medieval times, there was no centralized authority to provide physical protection against agents of violent and lawless nobles in the countryside or local unrest within, and so each town formed legal communes for mutual defense and retribution against attackers, as well as for public order. To ensure security along trade routes and other roads in their territory, rural communes were formed, and they developed in northern France, northern Germany, Sweden, Norway, and most importantly in the territories that eventually formed the Swiss Confederation (that is, modern Switzerland). Contemporarily, the commune as a European political form takes the form of communal assemblies encompassing all who live in a Swiss municipality, communal parliaments for larger Swiss municipalities, lower levels of government in France since the French Revolution (most notably the 92 skilled workers and petit-bourgeois professionals comprising the Communal Council of the Paris Commune in 1871), and intercommunality leading up to Communities comprised of the many French communes.

In the earlier commentary on local autonomy, the word “commune” was deliberately avoided except when referring to Venezuela’s communal councils and the participatory budgeting and local currency alternatives derived from them. Emotional detachment from infantile yet glorified strike committees (better known as workers’ councils, or soviets) as the allegedly definitive but sporadically meeting organs of ruling-class power for the working class – compared to the full minimum program of eliminating judges in favour of universal and full adjudication by commoner jury, random selections for public office instead of elections, sovereign socioeconomic governments directly representative of ordinary people, recallability from multiple avenues, full freedom of class-strugglist assembly and association for the working class, etc. – need not lead to newfound emotional reattachment to political communes, communal power, agitational slogans for such, and thus decentralization fetishes as the new and historically petit-bourgeois dead-end-for-a-road towards ruling-class power for the working class. **The full minimum program for the demarchic commonwealth, the form of the so-called “dictatorship of the proletariat,” can be implemented with or without full communal power, one of whose features can indeed be the decentralization of hypothetical police functions which have already been substantially democratized.** Still, the

establishment of worker-class hegemony at the expense of bourgeois hegemony involves eliminating bourgeois pejoratives – including those about communes from their heyday as political organs of a petit-bourgeoisie that encompassed many more occupations than it does today and of a working class not yet socially differentiated in full from that same petit-bourgeoisie.

Returning to the Venezuelan example, much has unfolded since the formation of the neighbourhood-based communal councils in April 2006 and the earlier formation (and stagnation) of the Local Public Planning Councils in June 2002. As reported in July 2010 by Pascal Fletcher of Reuters:

"We're talking about government by the people," said Ulises Daal, a pro-Chavez parliament deputy and one of the main promoters of the project. He says the legislative plan to set up self-sustaining, self-governing "socialist communes" builds on the existence of some 36,000 Chavez-inspired "communal councils" that already dot the country.

Daal said 214 communes were already "under construction". Some have introduced barter markets and their own currencies.

[...]

But the Cacique Tiuna commune seemed some way off its intended goal as a self-sustaining, self-governing community.

"People don't seem enthusiastic, they don't want to participate, I don't know why, since it's for them," said the head of the carpentry shop, Alexis Valdiviezo.

He himself did not have an apartment in the commune but was brought in six months ago by the Basic Industry Ministry to oversee the creation of a "socialist" carpentry network.

"I'm living in a hotel," said Valdiviezo, who said he had been promised an apartment in the commune by Chavez.

But for many of the commune inhabitants, the apartments, built with a primary school, a state MERCAL grocery and a soon-to-be opened high school, represent a huge improvement on their previous slum accommodation in hilltop shanties.

[...]

A clause of the Communes Law stipulates that existing state governorships and municipal mayorships should make funds available to finance projects for the communes. This has led to worries by opposition mayors that the new structures will monopolize funds, accompanied by political discrimination.

The Commune Ministry's own information sheet on the Cacique Tiuna community notes among its weaknesses: "There were commune members who hold an ideology opposed to the government".

The legislation foresees each commune having its own parliament, elected in open assemblies, and a five-member council to ensure the execution of decisions taken. A Communal Bank, and communal justice system will also be created.

Moreover, there has been discussion on transforming the National Assembly itself into a Communal Parliament – not unlike the Swiss reconciliation of communal power with parliamentarism. As reported in that same month by Patrick O'Donoghue of *VHeadline.com*:

National Assembly deputy (AN), Alfredo Murga has defended the Commune bill, stating that it aims to "establish norms regulating the constitution and organization of communes as a local socialist entity when popular power sovereignty develops principles of self-government in building a communal state."

Murga, who heads the house citizen participation committee, said a communal parliament will be the maximum expression of popular power and will transform the legislative body. It is obvious, he continued, that the National Assembly should end up being part of the popular power.

The deputy did admit that the transformation of the National Assembly into the Commune is not part of constitutional content because there had been a reform attempt and "we all know where it ended" referring to the constitutional referendum which the government lost in 2007.

For socio-productive projects, organization and financing, the deputy declared, the communes are of vital importance and they will be regulated and monitored by the Ministry of Communes.

Like all government spokespersons to date, the deputy insisted that the bill does not aim at substituting the functions of state governorships and municipalities.

The Commune, at the moment, he stated, is limited to providing legality to socio-productive projects presented by nascent communes responding to the needs of local communities.

Contrary to Murga's defensive statements, full communal power beyond neighbourhood applications would go against at least municipal power in its present form, which already lacks even participatory budgeting and concentrates much executive power in the hands of strong-mayor officeholders or professional city managers. In challenging the power of certain provinces, prefectures, or so-called "federated states" (like those of Australia, Brazil, Germany, India, Mexico, Venezuela, and the United States), full communal power would go beyond federal districts for administering capital cities, since other key urban centers that subsidize rural areas are affected. **Taken to more advanced levels in critical urban theory, full communal power could replace whole provinces, prefectures, and federated states altogether, since it would cover entire chains of adjacent metropolitan areas known as megapoleis or megapolises.** Some of these are: BosWash (from Boston to Washington, DC), SanSan (from San Francisco to San Diego), the Great Lakes Megalopolis (ChiPitts from Chicago to Pittsburgh, plus the Golden Horseshoe centered around Toronto), the Pearl River Delta (centered around Hong Kong), the Yangtze River Delta (from Nanjing to Shanghai and all the way to Ningbo), and the Taiheiyo Belt (from Tokyo to Osaka and all the way to Fukuoka).

Does this reform facilitate the issuance of either intermediate or threshold demands? While full communal power is a vast extension upon participatory budgeting, local currency alternatives to government money, various other features of local autonomy, formation of separate tenant associations, and subsequent property management by tenants themselves, the limits of this can already be seen in Switzerland, again specifically in its reconciliation of communal power with parliamentarism (on top of the absence of communal power at the neighbourhood level). **Without the demarchic commonwealth in place, full communal power at the megapolitan level would most likely require parliamentary talking shops even for hypothetical sovereign socioeconomic governments directly representative of ordinary people in a given megapolis.**

Does this reform enable the basic principles to be "kept consciously in view"? Like with the earlier commentary on local autonomy, this stresses that every open class struggle grows out of political struggles (because every open class struggle is political). The more radical challenge posed towards the power of provinces, prefectures, and federated states is one that involves politics at levels higher than local ones, and again from these higher ones emerges open class struggle. Also, the development of megapoleis is such that full communal power at that level has become a transnational concern, as noted by the *Guardian*:

The world's mega-cities are merging to form vast "mega-regions" which may stretch hundreds of kilometres across countries and be home to more than 100 million people, according to a major new UN report.

[...]

The trend helped the world pass a tipping point in the last year, with more than half the world's people now living in cities.

*The UN said that urbanisation is now "unstoppable." Anna Tibaijuka, outgoing director of UN-Habitat, said: "Just over half the world now lives in cities but **by 2050, over 70% of the world will be urban dwellers.** By then, only 14% of people in rich countries will live outside cities, and 33% in poor countries."*

*The development of mega-regions is regarded as generally positive, said the report's co-author Eduardo Lopez Moreno: "**They [mega-regions], rather than countries, are now driving wealth.**"*

"Research shows that the world's largest 40 mega-regions cover only a tiny fraction of the habitable surface of our planet and are home to fewer than 18% of the world's population [but] account for 66% of all economic activity and about 85% of technological and scientific innovation," said Moreno.

"The top 25 cities in the world account for more than half of the world's wealth," he added. "And the five largest cities in India and China now account for 50% of those countries' wealth."

[...]

The growth of mega-regions and cities is also leading to unprecedented urban sprawl, new slums, unbalanced development and income inequalities as more and more people move to satellite or dormitory cities.

Socio-Income Democracy, Part II: Maximum Wage vs. Direct Democracy in Income Multiples

"Pay matters. How much you earn can determine your lifestyle, where you can afford to live, and your aspirations and status. But to what extent does what we get paid confer 'worth'? Beyond a narrow notion of productivity, what impact does our work have on the rest of society, and do the financial rewards we receive correspond to this? Do those that get more contribute more to society? With controversial bonuses being paid out this Christmas in bailed-out banks, we believe that it is time to ask challenging questions such as these." (Eilís Lawlor, Helen Kersley, and Susan Steed)

In December 2009, the UK-based New Economics Foundation released a well-publicized report on whether modern pay structures reflect the value of various jobs. Eilís Lawlor, Helen Kersley, and Susan Steed examined six jobs: corporate executives in banks, similar executives in advertising, tax accountants, hospital cleaners, child care workers, and waste recycling workers. The first three were found to be destroying value for British society, while the last three were found to be creating value.

Despite this research and the ignorance of the privately-owned mass media towards the subsequent policy recommendations, the report was within the conceptual framework of the maximum wage. Indeed, the draft party program of Die Linke (The Left party in Germany), released in March 2010, called for limiting manager salaries to "20 times the earnings of the lowest wage group in an enterprise," but called for nothing broader.

Earlier I introduced the concept of "socio-income democracy" when discussing direct democracy in taxation of the various, class-based types of income as an immediate but real, reform-enabling reform. What the maximum wage framework does not take into consideration are property income, normal and windfall profits, dividends, and capital gains. Moreover, its proponents – "socialists" and otherwise – dare not venture outside the limits of economism, simply by calling for a single relative limit legislated into law.

Taken to at least an intermediate step, and again based on multiple voting options and modern communication technology, "socio-income democracy" is also for direct proposals and rejections – at the national level and above – regarding the creation and adjustment of income multiples limits in all industries, for all major working-class and other professions, and across all types of income.

Thus, the three most prominent bourgeois occupations covered are the corporate executive, the celebrity and any associated formal or informal "brands" (arising from professional athleticism or general entertainment), and the multi-millionaire investor. It should be noted that the word "income" is subject to debate, since it should not cover inheritances (discussed elsewhere), and since it may or may not cover things like lottery winnings.

Does this reform facilitate the issuance of either intermediate or threshold demands? **That would depend on how one relates this reform to the measure of aligning the interests of "agent" officials in all political and related administrative offices with the interests of the "principal" population as a whole by means of aligning standards of living (towards some average standard of living for professional and other skilled workers).** Discussion on the former could be a means of facilitating discussion on the latter, or vice versa, but neither measure is really dependent upon the other. No other intermediate or threshold demand is at stake.

Does this reform enable the basic principles to be "kept consciously in view"? If the maximum wage framework alone is already seen as one of class struggle, how much more is this expanded "socio-income democracy"? Next, there is the idea within social labour that each individual should contribute according to personal ability and receive personal want "according to his work" (despite the Soviet distortion of that

slogan towards ignoring personal need). Also, the problem of elite emigration poses the need for transnational politics.

Real Austerity: Ancient Origins and Structural Approaches to Luxury Consumption

"Austerity, the 14th century noun defined as 'the quality or state of being austere' and 'enforced or extreme economy,' set off enough searches that Merriam-Webster named it as its Word of the Year for 2010, the dictionary's editors announced Monday." (Russell Contreras)

Towards late 2010, there was much public discussion about government budget cuts after all the deficit spending towards "privatizing the gains and socializing the losses" and vulgar stimulus, without the Chartalist insights that only persistent government deficit spending is what creates government money and even expands the credit system, and that governments must spend first before collecting taxes. It should be obvious that any bourgeois rhetoric of "austerity" leaves the bourgeoisie unscathed while making everyone else pay for bourgeois crises.

The word may be a 14th century noun, but its origins are ancient. Despite an overly liberal account of ancient history by Hal Draper before his more balanced assessment of "socialism from above," Kautsky was correct in listing Lycurgus, Pythagoras (of the mathematical theorem that bears his name), and especially Plato as part of an ancient, "long line of Socialists." Draper ignored pre-industrial class relations before late feudalism, under which both non-communal common ownership relations beyond state ownership of land and equal ownership relations beyond those over all other non-possessive property were not feasible, and under which the chattel slave classes and their populist democracy were simply incapable of long-term political organization (at least until the only successful but woefully belated chattel slave revolution in history, the Haitian Revolution). Within these pre-industrial class relations, the austere way of life for the Spartan ruling class and the Pythagoreans' rather monastic communal consumption formed the ideal basis for the Guardians' way of life in *The Republic*, Plato's controversial yet political work:

*Then now let us consider what will be their way of life, if they are to realize our idea of them. In the first place, none of them should have any property of his own beyond what is absolutely necessary; neither should they have a private house or store closed against anyone who has a mind to enter; their provisions should be only such as are required by trained warriors, who are men of temperance and courage; **they should agree to receive from the citizens a fixed rate of pay, enough to meet the expenses of the year and no more;** and they will go to mess and live together like soldiers in a camp. Gold and silver we will tell them that they have from God; the diviner metal is within them, and they have therefore no need of the dross which is current among men, and ought not to pollute the divine by any such earthly admixture; for that commoner metal has been the source of many unholy deeds, but their own is undefiled. And they alone of all the citizens may not touch or handle silver or gold, or be under the same roof with them, or wear them, or drink from them. And this will be their salvation, and they will be the saviours of the State. **But should they ever acquire homes or lands or moneys of their own, they will become good housekeepers and husbandmen instead of guardians, enemies and tyrants instead of allies of the other citizens; hating and being hated, plotting and being plotted against, they will pass their whole life in much greater terror of internal than of external enemies, and the hour of ruin, both to themselves and to the rest of the State, will be at hand.** For all which reasons may we not say that thus shall our State be ordered, and that these shall be the regulations appointed by us for our guardians concerning their houses and all other matters?*

Consciously or not, **the Paris Commune itself followed Plato's recommendation on subjecting its public officials to a standard of living no higher than that for a skilled worker** by means of "average workers' wage" pay levels.

On the subject of consumption, the pre-industrial ruling classes sometimes sought to restrain extravagance in spending on food, clothing, and furniture as well as jewelry and other luxury goods. **They did this, though, by means of rather ineffective sumptuary regulations.** There is a more fundamental point to be made, and it is one of productive labour vs. unproductive labour. In my earlier work, I offered two frameworks for this, Marx's and my own, the former being the basis for his class analysis in *Das Kapital*. In Chapter 16 of Volume I he wrote:

On the other hand, however, our notion of productive labour becomes narrowed. Capitalist production is not merely the production of commodities, it is essentially the production of surplus value. The labourer produces, not for themselves, but for capital. It no longer suffices, therefore, that they should simply produce. They must produce surplus-value.

Under Marx's framework, the production of luxury goods yields surplus value. However, the production of only a select few luxuries historically has eventually contributed, both quantitatively and qualitatively, to the broader development of society's labour power and its capabilities, such as the automobile. In 2006, Paul Cockshott and Dave Zachariah provided a contemporary, highly quantitative, and mathematical framework for productive labour vs. unproductive labour. As noted **at sufficient length**:

A problem with Marx's formulation is that whilst it readily categorises the self-employed, state officials or parsons as unproductive, it runs into difficulties with some other categories. For instance are bank employees or the workers in advertising agencies productive or unproductive? The advertising agency clearly produces a commodity – adverts, the sale of which pays its employees wages and returns a profit on top. At first sight they would appear to be productive. Similarly it can be argued that bank employees produce a commodity 'financial services' and that their labour earns the bank a profit.

[...]

One might argue that bank labour and advertising were non-productive because they were merely concerned with the transfer of property between owners rather than with the production of final consumer goods, but this would go beyond what either Smith or Marx formally defined.

[...]

Smith's introduction of the concept of unproductive labour has to be seen in the context of a polemic against the aristocracy and in favour of the manufacturing bourgeoisie in 18th century Scotland. *The dissipation of part of the surplus product by an idle and licentious aristocracy employing small armies of personal retainers meant that these people were not employed building canals, roads or steam engines. If the surplus product was consumed unproductively, as had been the case under pre-capitalist economic formations, then the productivity of labour improved at a snails pace from century to century. If instead, it were reinvested in capital goods, then the productivity of labour, and thus national wealth grew in geometric progression.*

[...]

This process of production of surplus value is tied up with the very improvements in productivity that require persistent capital investment – Smith's concern. Note that the production of relative surplus value is an economy-wide phenomenon. When cotton mills cheapened clothing, they enabled the same real wage to be met with less money. The beneficiaries were not just the mill owners but all employers who could now pay lower wages. Relative surplus value is distal not proximate.

In the main therefore, to say that labour is productive of surplus value is to say that it is productive of relative surplus value, which means that it must be:

- 1) **Susceptible to technical advance.**
- 2) **Produce a commodity that contributes to the real wage.**

[...]

Any sector that directly or indirectly sustains the workers' consumption bundle is productive [...] *If our economy is specified at industry level we can tell what industries are productive. If it is in greater detail we will gain information on what functions of it are productive [...]. Contrawise, a change in the form of ownership of the means of production does not itself shift sectors from productive to unproductive.*

[...]

In modern capitalist economies the more obvious unproductive sectors are public administration and the police-military apparatus, but also capitalist activities such as armaments, private guards, wholesale trade, advertisement, financial and juridical services, luxuries, etc.

Some sectors which have traditionally been treated as unproductive in Marxist discourse, such as parts of state education, may now be seen to be productive since they enter indirectly into the reproduction of the labour force and thus affect the ratio between necessary and surplus labour.

[...]

Despite the movement of more and more goods into the real wage, there always remains a differentiation by price of goods into luxuries and necessities, since without this differentiation the propertied classes would be bereft of a means of expressing their social superiority.

[...]

Our conclusion is that productive labour includes all work necessary to the support of the direct producers. This conclusion is well grounded in input/output analysis and lends the concept of productive labour a modern progressive polemical edge.

Based on this framework and even my own, consider one measure that goes beyond mere sumptuary regulations to suggest a structural approach to luxury consumption such as of luxury yachts. In the same year that there was much public discussion about government budget cuts, Simon Romero of the *Caracas Journal* reported a mixed situation in Venezuela:

The golfers still argue over handicaps. The waiters still serve flutes of Moët & Chandon. Sunlight still kisses the grounds laid out in the 1920s by Olmsted Brothers, the esteemed American landscape architects.

The idyll of the Caracas Country Club, a bastion of opulence for Venezuela's elite, still seems intact.

But perhaps not for much longer.

Beneath the veneer of tranquillity, a feeling of dread prevails. A state newspaper published a study this month saying that if the government expropriated the land of the Caracas Country Club and that of another club in the city, housing for 4,000 poor families could be built on the parcels.

The idea is hardly far-fetched. After all, the government has seized hundreds of businesses this year alone, and thousands of people are homeless because of heavy rains, accentuating a severe housing shortage. At the behest of President Hugo Chávez, flood victims have already moved into hotels, museums, the Foreign Ministry and even his own office. (Mr. Chávez says he will stay in a tent given him by Libya's leader, Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi.)

[...]

The reaction to the club's predicament reflects that of the polarized country itself. José Bejarano, 34, a motorbike courier who works in a neighborhood on the club's southern fringe, said it was hard to shed any tears for such an island of privilege.

[...]

Some members contend that Mr. Chávez's rise had already changed life within the club forever, reflecting a chasm between members who have openly clashed with the president and others who have discreetly opted to profit from contracts with his government.

[...]

"You see the government apparatchiks paying private homage to the oligarchy they publicly ridicule, and vice versa," Ms. Neumann said of the atmosphere at the club that day. "The former out of a desire to belong, the latter out of a desire to survive."

The words "expropriated" and "seized" were used to promote bourgeois and petit-bourgeois outrage despite, as noted earlier, the existence of eminent domain or compulsory purchase as a widespread legal mechanism (due monetary compensation but without prior owner consent) among even developed bourgeois-capitalist states that ironically violates the more propertarian Article 17 of the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights." **While eminent domain can be used for achieving some actually immediate demands instead of furthering things like residential gentrification, it can be used for achieving quite a bit more, from growing the public ownership and rental tenure over all land to recycling or reconfiguring the biggest luxury goods (such as luxury yachts) to restructuring unproductive enterprises and industries into productive ones.**

Because such actions collectively point to a last defense of constitutional guarantees to the right of private ownership of productive and other non-possessive property, by means of due monetary compensation, this reform does not meet the Hahnel criterion for facilitating other threshold demands exclusively, or even immediate and intermediate ones. Due monetary compensation does not take into account timeliness, and there have been many cases where the courts have failed to enforce both factors, despite their proprietarian allegiances. Also, because one of its aims is a more structural and not regulatory approach to luxury consumption, it is not so closely related to the measure of aligning the interests of "agent" officials in all political and related administrative offices with the interests of the "principal" population as a whole by means of aligning standards of living (towards some average standard of living for professional and other skilled workers).

How does this reform enable the basic principles to be "kept consciously in view"? The perspective and principle of class struggle and also the principle of transnational emancipation are obvious, going back to the beginning about contrasting this with leaving the bourgeoisie unscathed while making everyone else pay for increasingly global bourgeois crises. Meanwhile, the principle of social labour is addressed with regards to productive labour vs. unproductive labour.

Public Employer of Last Resort for Consumer Services: For the Precariat and Zero Unemployment

"But if a surplus labouring population is a necessary product of accumulation or of the development of wealth on a capitalist basis, this surplus-population becomes, conversely, the lever of capitalistic accumulation, nay, a condition of existence of the capitalist mode of production. It forms a disposable industrial reserve army, that belongs to capital quite as absolutely as if the latter had bred it at its own cost. Independently of the limits of the actual increase of population, it creates, for the changing needs of the self-expansion of capital, a mass of human material always ready for exploitation." (Karl Marx)

In Chapter 25 of Volume I of *Das Kapital*, Marx made this damning observation of a phenomenon that, until the advent of bourgeois-fied commodity production, existed only as a result of natural disasters and wars: structural unemployment. Meanwhile, and earlier in this work, the question of comprehensive labour reform in the form of both living-wage minimums and deflation-protected, accurately measured cost-of-living adjustments for various kinds of compensation took into consideration the necessity of applying these towards unemployment insurance and voluntary workfare benefits. Additionally, the question of unemployment arising from workplace closures, mass sackings, and mass layoffs was addressed by means of partially rehabilitating Lassalle's political agitation for the formation of producer cooperatives with state aid (in this case, pre-cooperative worker buyouts of existing enterprises and enterprises just like what happened in the Paris Commune). However, these two measures would still be insufficient to tackle fully the problem of unemployment or, to use more precise economics terminology, non-frictional unemployment. In the first instance, the mention of voluntary workfare benefits refers to pay levels and not to operational aspects of the government programs themselves. In the second, non-frictional unemployment can arise from other situations.

In the recent economic crisis, there has been much discussion in the United States about all the measures of unemployment used by the Bureau of Labor Statistics:

- U1: Percentage of labor force unemployed 15 weeks or longer
- U2: Percentage of labor force who lost jobs or completed temporary work
- U3: Official unemployment rate per the International Labour Organization
- U4: U3 + "discouraged workers", or those who have stopped looking for work because current economic conditions make them believe that no work is available for them
- U5: U4 + other "marginally attached workers", or "loosely attached workers", or those who "would like" and are able to work, but have not looked for work recently
- U6: U5 + Part time workers who want to work full time, but cannot due to economic reasons.

At the end of 2009, U6 was well over 15%.

Now, consider a similar downturn elsewhere and a few years back. Towards the end of 2001, the Argentine economy went into a nosedive after two decades of privatization and liberalization. Official unemployment jumped to 21.5% by the middle of 2002, and over half the population was living in poverty. However, local currency alternatives to government money flourished and, not unlike the workers of the Paris Commune, Argentine workers reclaimed many abandoned factories to form the cooperative movement in that country. Moreover, in April 2002 the government created the Heads of Household program, providing part-time work

for all household heads who met various family requirements. This part-time work consisted of participation in nonprofit-administered training programs and, more notably, provision of community services.

In the March 2008 issue of *Dollars and Sense: Real World Economics*, Ryan A. Dodd described the above before making a general point about that program:

Not surprisingly, as Argentina's economy has recovered from the depths of the crisis, the government has recently made moves to discontinue this critical experiment in direct job creation.

The Argentine experience with direct job creation represents a real-world example of what is often referred to as the employer of last resort (ELR) proposal by a number of left academics and public policy advocates. *Developed over the course of the past two decades, the ELR proposal is based on a rather simple idea. In a capitalist economy, with most people dependent on private employment for their livelihoods, the government has a unique responsibility to guarantee full employment. This responsibility has been affirmed in the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which includes a right to employment. A commitment to full employment is also official U.S. government policy as codified in the Employment Act of 1946 and the Humphrey-Hawkins Act of 1976.*

[...]

Today, the ELR idea is mostly confined to academic journals and conferences.

Because it is long overdue for the class-strugglist left to commit to programmatic clarity, quoted at extensive length is L. Randall Wray of the Levy Economics Institute of Bard College on the subject:

The mainstream interpretation of Keynes's economics seemed to offer theoretical justification for policies that could tame the business cycle, promote full employment, and eliminate poverty. The two main levers to be used would be fine-tuning of investment spending to keep it at the full-employment level, supplemented by welfare spending to keep aggregate demand high while protecting the unfortunate who might be left behind by a rising tide. While Hyman Minsky is best known for his work on financial instability, he was also intimately involved in the postwar debates about fiscal policy and what became the War on Poverty. Indeed, at Berkeley he was a vehement critic of the Kennedy/Johnson policies and played a major role in developing an alternative.

[...]

Minsky argued that we need a "bubble up" policy, not trickle down economics (Minsky 1968). Spending should be targeted directly to the unemployed, rather than to the leading sectors in the hope that tight labor markets might eventually benefit lagging sectors and poor households. For this reason, he advocated an [Employer of Last Resort] program that would take workers as they are and provide jobs that fit their skills (Minsky 1965, 1968, 1973, 1986). He argued that only the federal government can offer an infinitely elastic demand for labor, ensuring that anyone willing to work at the going wage would be able to get a job. Further, he argued that in the absence of tight full employment, the true minimum wage is zero; however, with an ELR program, the [basic] program wage becomes an effective minimum wage.

Before continuing, **one could argue that the last sentence on an effective minimum wage also applies to the normal workweek, in that a pro-worker normal workweek established by such a program becomes the effective normal workweek for society as a whole.** Continued:

ELR could include part-time work, child maintenance, and a discounted youth wage, if desired. In addition to providing jobs where they are most needed, ELR would also provide public goods and services where most needed – in urban ghettos – to help quell unrest.

To ensure taxpayer support of the program, it would need to provide readily visible public benefits. Minsky advocated a progressive income tax, and would distribute the benefits of publicly produced goods and services progressively (Minsky no date). Hence, taxpayers would get something for their taxes – parks, safety, clean streets, education, child care and elder care, etc. – but there would be a strong redistributive bias. He recognized that the program would probably need a permanent cadre to provide critical services – as the public becomes accustomed to receiving public services from the ELR program, these cannot be suddenly shut off (Minsky 1973).

*One of the goals of the program would be to make labor more homogenous through education and training, but Minsky opposed any education or skills requirement for admission to the program (Minsky 1965). He also opposed means-testing, which would turn the program into what is now called workfare [...] He recognized that the nation would still need some programs for skilled workers who lose high wage jobs and fall into the ELR program. As discussed, a dynamic economy would always be creating structural unemployment, so retraining programs would be needed to ameliorate skills mismatch. He also recognized that the nation would still need welfare for those who could not, or should not work [...] However, he showed that an ELR program by itself would solve most of the poverty problem [...] **He saw ELR as an alternative to the dole, arguing that unemployment compensation just institutionalizes unemployment. By contrast, jobs affirm the dignity of labor and allow all to participate more fully in the economy.***

This particular kind of job creation program is a major leap in approaching structural (and also cyclical) unemployment, **including that which arises from offshore outsourcing and that which gives rise to the newest, cross-sectoral, cross-age (from youth to midlife and beyond), and growing part of the working class that is by and large the precariat.** Traditionally, public works programs have been initiated to get people back to work, but in the recent crisis have been on the whole ineffective because of their treatment as being little more than short-term stimulus spending by governments. Moreover, public works themselves do not take into account the skill sets of most resident and guest workers in developed economies, which are not in manufacturing or construction trades, but rather in skilled and unskilled services. **This problem also applies to otherwise well-meaning politicians and civil servants transitioning out of public office, who may argue for bloated compensation in the absence of an employment transition program.** Consequently, grassroots agitation for public works – much less for the traditional Trotskyist call for fully implementing a sliding scale of hours – tends to not win solid support from these workers, to say the least.

Because this is the most that bourgeois-fied commodity production can accommodate with respect to non-frictional unemployment, this reform – **for the expansion of public services to fully include employment of last resort for consumer services** – does not meet the Hahnel criterion for facilitating other threshold demands or even immediate and intermediate ones. The biggest stick of bourgeois-fied commodity production is non-frictional unemployment; without this threat of employees entering unemployment, employers can only resort to carrots. Other reactions by employers would have to be pre-empted or dealt with swiftly, both overtly and covertly, and a number of overt and subtle measures should be implemented beforehand to prevent capital flight, investment strikes (not investing as required by government plans towards maintaining or expanding production), and other economic blackmail on the part of the bourgeoisie and petit-bourgeoisie.

Some will undoubtedly rush to say that this proposal is little different from the post-modernist call for unconditional basic income as discussed in Chapter 2. Recall that this scheme would, under bourgeois society, result in both the monetization of social benefits through their privatization and a universally downward shift in wages. Moreover, with jobs come certain psychological benefits not found in mere welfare receipts, not to mention the usual skills development, as demonstrated aptly by the rejection of welfare receipts by some of the very same participants in the Argentine government's job creation program (who in turn preferred work). The brief implementation of proposal in places like Argentina and even in the Depression-era US also means that this threshold demand is, as mentioned earlier, not directional or genuinely transitional.

How, then, does this reform enable the basic principles to be "kept consciously in view"? Besides the obvious "Precariat of the world, unite!" and the call to broader class struggle and pro-immigrant transnational politics against the biggest stick of bourgeois-fied commodity production, consider the approach to zero non-frictional unemployment by an economy operating on the principle(s) of social labour, as explained by Paul Cockshott in a video on socialist economies:

*One of the key differences between a socialist economy and a capitalist economy is that, in a capitalist economy, there is always unemployment. This unemployment acts as a stick to beat the worker to work harder. **Now, in a socialist economy where the allocation of resources is being planned, you tend to get full employment [...]** However, full employment could come in two forms. It could either come because, in the economy as a whole, there was sufficient demand for labour to take up all the people willing to work – or it could come because people had a right to work at one particular workplace where they started work. Now, if you have the latter form, you run the danger that the economy will become set in concrete; it becomes very difficult to reallocate resources to new industries and to run down old industries as tastes change or technologies change. **So, it has to be the case that the state guarantees people a job, but doesn't necessarily guarantee them a job at the same place indefinitely.***

Conflict with Cost-of-Living Adjustments and Reinterpreting “Sliding Scale of Wages”

It has been noted that the aforementioned reform and extended socio-income democracy could conflict with the consistent, complete, and lasting implementation of the earlier cost-of-living adjustments demand – for the universalization of annual, non-deflationary adjustments for all non-executive and non-celebrity remunerations, pensions, and insurance benefits to at least match rising costs of living. L. Randall Wray wrote on Minsky’s zero non-frictional unemployment reform:

*He argued that it should increase over time faster than high wages to reduce the spread between low-skilled and high-skilled wages. As discussed above, **policy might need to constrain high wage growth (to a rate below productivity growth) to offset any inflationary pressures.***

[...]

Minsky argued that ELR would not be inflationary once it is in place. He did allow that implementation of ELR could raise wages and employment, leading to some price increases. However, he insisted that maintaining full employment does not have the same inflationary impact as moving to full employment (Minsky 1965). Raising aggregate demand (for example, through investment incentives or defense spending) to move to full employment would be inflationary. But, he argued, it hasn’t been shown that maintaining low unemployment is inflationary – especially if full employment is maintained through a wage floor. For this reason, even if implementation of ELR raised wages at the bottom and increased consumption demand, placing pressure on prices, this is a temporary phenomenon. Maintenance of full employment with an ELR program would not cause permanent inflation.

[...]

*Further, ELR would also be supplemented with other policies to deal with unemployment and poverty – and these, too, would need to be changed through time [see Minsky (1986) and Minsky and Whalen (1996) for discussion of other policies]. In particular, Minsky consistently argued for policy to reduce bigness; he favored policy biased toward smallto- medium sized firms. **He would restrain growth of construction wages, as he saw these as substantially set by powerful labor unions, imparting an inflationary bias to the economy.** He also advocated price controls for things the government buys (most importantly, utilities, defense industry outputs, and healthcare), as well as moderated wage increases in those sectors and in the government sector (Minsky 1968, 1975a). **Together with ELR, this would allow for full employment, with greater equality and lower inflation than alternative antipoverty programs.***

Although the rate of productivity growth is not the same as the rate of inflation, when there is little or no economic growth, the former can be lower than the higher, most notably in cases of stagflation or even hyperinflation. If that is not enough, the creation and especially adjustment of income multiples limits in all industries, for all major working-class and other professions, and across all types of income would certainly conflict with the earlier demand if high-wage incomes are affected by income multiples limits.

On the other hand, the simultaneous existence (not implementation) of all three reforms with priority given to zero non-frictional unemployment and income multiples limits would put an end to precarious conditions and give a new meaning to “sliding scale of wages.” Sliding scales, more generally, are scales whereby indicated wages, prices, tariffs, taxes, and so on fluctuate due to changes in at least one other factor, standard, or condition. Instead of Trotsky’s reductionist, one-dimensional slogan aimed economically at the lower level of union dealings and not at the bourgeois-capitalist state, wages under this new, multi-factor “sliding scale” would fluctuate in accordance with rising costs of living (not notorious government underestimations due to faulty measures like chain weighting, or even underhanded selections of the lower of core inflation and general inflation), with limits on high-wage incomes based on productivity growth, and with income multiples limits in all industries, for all major working-class and other professions, and across all types of income.

Behavioural Political Economy and Economy-Wide Indicative Planning

"I have always had a visceral revulsion for the idea of 'false consciousness'. As a student radical in the early 1970s, I was continually being warned about the dangers of this social disease. Many on the left argued that the general public, specifically the working classes, did not understand what their real interests were. The self-appointed carriers of true consciousness pointed to certain areas of plebian behaviour, such as seeking solace in football or voting for the UK Conservative Party, as proof of the widespread nature of 'false consciousness'." (Frank Furedi)

Many who subscribe to the notion of "false consciousness" see their relationship with more ordinary workers as one between parents and preteens. When considering that many of them in turn do not have working-class backgrounds or occupations, one cannot help but consider their attitude to be as patronizing as the more blatant attitudes of the better-off classes. In political reality, however, the analogy of social adolescents is far more appropriate. Social adolescents are maturing, may physically live on their own upon individual graduation, but will live their own lives upon maturity. In this period, parents tend to have a generally passive relationship with social adolescents, while high school teachers expect more maturity. **Likewise, more ordinary workers tend to have high and sometimes erratic and mixed aspirations, but no advanced game.** A more slang, provocative, yet light-hearted equivalent of this would be horny teenagers.

Meanwhile, academic Andrew Vincent summarized the evolution of Marxist attitudes towards "false consciousness" in *Modern Political Ideologies*:

Engels in particular coined the now notorious term "false consciousness" for ideology, something that Marx did not do [...] The problem of ideology in Marxism is further complicated when we move into the twentieth century [...] In Antonio Gramsci we see the most sophisticated, if equivocal, treatment of ideology. For Gramsci, domination under capitalism is not achieved simply by coercion, but subtly through the hegemony of ideas [...] Gramsci thus called for a struggle at the level of ideology.

"False consciousness" gave way to plain ideology, yet Antonio Gramsci focused too much on the superstructure in Marx's base-superstructure analytical framework and also stuck with the reductionism of that framework. It simply does not describe the motion, flux, shifting balances of forces, and other changes that form the dynamic reality of human civilization, as opposed to analogies like the internal structure and atmosphere of the Earth, along with their specific dynamics and interrelationships.

Meanwhile, behavioural economics and behavioural finance have emerged in recent years with insights from psychology (such as cognitive dissonance, of which "false consciousness" is in fact a narrower but more political form), in an attempt to provide greater understanding of individuals' and organizations' economic decisions, specifically why less rational ones are made. Relatedly, however, new forms of bourgeois paternalism have emerged, as noted by Guy Standing in his work on the newest, cross-sectoral, cross-age (from youth to midlife and beyond), and growing part of the working class that is by and large the precariat:

*A new perspective on social and economic policy is behavioural economics, which has produced libertarian paternalism. Nudge, an influential book by Cass Sunstein and Thaler [in] 2008, two Chicago-based advisers and friends of Barack Obama, was premised on the idea that people have too much information and so make irrational decisions. **People must be steered, or nudged, to make the decisions that are in their best interest.***

[...]

The new buzz word is 'conditionality'. There has been a remarkable growth of conditional cash transfer schemes or CCTs. The leading examples have been in Latin America, led by the Progreso scheme (now Oportunidades) in Mexico and Brazil's Bolsa Familia, which by 2010 was reaching over 50 million people. Seventeen Latin American countries have CCTs. The essence of these schemes is that people are given small state benefits, in the form of cash, only if they behave in predetermined ways.

Conditionality has been imported into rich countries, including the United States, and CCTs have been widely used in Central and Eastern Europe. One of the most detailed was Opportunity New York – Family Rewards, an experimental scheme with incredibly intricate financial incentives and penalties for doing and not doing certain things. The premise of all CCTs is that people need to be persuaded to behave in ways that are best for them and for 'society'. Thus the World Bank (Fiszbein 2009) believes they can overcome

'persistent misguidedness'; it attributes poverty to an inter-generational reproduction of deprivation, such that CCTs will break the cycle by persuading people to behave responsibly.

The morality of this approach is dubious [...] Already there are conditionalities in many benefit schemes and these are being tightened. Thus in the United Kingdom, doctors are now required to report on their patient's degree of employability if they are receiving disability benefits, turning a confidential doctor-patient relationship into social policing.

One should worry where such trends could lead. In India, following the libertarian paternalists, a cash transfer scheme targeted at economically insecure women promises them cash when their first child reaches adulthood, on condition that they are sterilised after the birth of a second child.

That is not to say that the work of this founding member of the Basic Income Earth Network is immune from paternalism, because its advocacy of unconditional basic income – a scheme which, under bourgeois society, would result in both the monetarization of social benefits through their privatization and a universally downward shift in wages, without yielding either non-mandated skills development or psychological benefits associated with gainful employment – is still inherently paternalistic, as noted by one John Tomlinson:

Is there any difference in the paternalism of such universal payments that makes them less objectionable than the paternalism explicit and implicit in targeted categorical welfare payments or participation income schemes? I think the answer is an undeniable "Yes!" though it is true that under a Basic Income every permanent resident is, from birth to death, guaranteed an income entitlement to which they have not directly contributed. In that sense, the provision of such income support is clearly a benevolently paternalistic act of the government towards each and every permanent resident.

All pretenses to being against paternalism aside, even behavioural economics and behavioural finance are insufficient terms to describe attempts to understand why less rational decisions are made and to provide appropriate solutions. The key lies in the devolution of political economy into mere economics, as noted by the neo-conservative Stratfor founder George Friedman:

*For classical economists, it was impossible to understand politics without economics or economics without politics. The two fields are certainly different but they are also intimately linked. **The use of the term "economy" by itself did not begin until the late 19th century.** Smith understood that while an efficient market would emerge from individual choices, those choices were framed by the political system in which they were made, just as the political system was shaped by economic realities. For classical economists, the political and economic systems were intertwined, each dependent on the other for its existence.*

The current economic crisis is best understood as a crisis of political economy.

[...]

The sovereign debt question also created both a financial crisis and then a political crisis in Europe.

[...]

This, then, is the third crisis that can emerge: that the elites become delegitimized and all that there is to replace them.

Little wonder, then, that Marx began working on a comprehensive Critique of Political Economy in the late 1850s – covering capital, land ownership, wage labour, the state, international trade, and the world market – though unfortunately he never outlined this project more voluminously (ultimately focusing too much on *Das Kapital*), let alone completed it.

In modern times, attempts to understand why less rational decisions are made and to provide appropriate solutions should be called Behavioural Political Economy. In more political affairs, this gets past the notorious "false consciousness," the very non-political "cognitive dissonance," and the philosophically near-idealistic "ideology" in attempting to address certain phenomena within the working class. One such phenomenon is that of labour aristocracies in the original sense (that is, not related to real or perceived imperialistic superprofits extracted from workers in less developed countries): the parochial unionization of high-paid and high-skilled workers without any interest in unionizing lesser-paid or lesser-skilled workers, as has been the case historically with the American Federation of Labor (AFL). Another such phenomenon is that of workers voting for politically conservative parties especially after their individual

situations have been worsened by a combination of privatization, deregulation, and racist discrimination – on top of not having all the facts by drawing only upon certain, like-biased news sources, as if lies told often enough have become truths.

Behavioural Political Economy attempts to address the most important phenomenon within the working class, which goes right back to the very Party Question and *Partiinost* discussed earlier, and goes against the organizationally defeatist worship of the self's lack of control over the world. With a workers-only voting membership policy and a proper approach to the democracy question, the classical Social-Democratic relationships of programmatic, theoretical, and other educational authority, of all kinds of charismatic and other agitational authority, and of institutional and other organizational authority – all between the whole mass party-movement as coach-like authoritative leaders and all other workers as player-like followers – still apply, because ad hoc organs of agitated action upon agitated action (including the glorified strike committees better known as workers' councils or soviets) cannot provide long-term governance or accountability, and because **only the mass party-movement is the worker class for itself!**

Moreover, **Behavioural Political Economy provides the policy basis for how whole economic organizations and groups of them, not just individuals, should be "steered"** such that they will "make the decisions that are in their best interest" and in the interest of society as a whole. Part of such a comprehensive policy has been described by the non-mainstream development economist Ha-Joon Chang:

Even in a capitalist economy, there are situations – a war, for example, in which central planning is more effective. For example, during the Second World War, the economies of the major capitalist belligerents, the US, the UK and Germany, were all centrally planned in everything but name.

But, more importantly, many capitalist countries have successfully used what is known as "indicative planning." *This is planning that involves the government in a capitalist country setting some broad targets concerning key economic variables (e.g., investments in strategic industries, infrastructure development, exports) [...]*

France had great success in promoting investment and technological innovation through indicative planning in the 1950s and 60s, thereby overtaking the British economy as Europe's second industrial power. Other European countries, such as Finland, Norway and Austria, also successfully used indicative planning to upgrade their economies between the 1950s and the 1970s. The East Asian miracle economies of Japan, Korea and Taiwan used indicative planning too between the 1950s and 1980s. This is not to say that all indicative planning exercises have been successful; in India, for example, it has not. Nevertheless, the European and East Asian examples show that planning in certain forms is not incompatible with capitalism and may even promote capitalist development very well.

Undoubtedly this summarization is a bit misleading, to say the least. Together, the Japanese Economic Planning Agency, National Land Agency, and Ministry of International Trade and Industry practiced the most extensive, centralized, and successful example of indicative planning for recovery and more after the devastation of the Pacific War. Even the Soviet Union during the New Economic Policy, for all the economic historians' overemphasis on market forces, practiced indicative planning through the State General Planning Commission, in conjunction with more aggressive electrification planning through the State Commission for the Electrification of Russia. On the other hand, the *Commissariat général du Plan* (General Planning Commission) and other institutions responsible for the more regionalized indicative planning in France came closest to realizing Soviet economist Leonid Kantorovich's linear programming, along with other forms of mathematical optimization, in operation at levels above mere enterprises and isolated government agencies. The absence of linear programming in the Japanese example and elsewhere in the Asia-Pacific region can be attributed to the preference for "industrial policy" within indicative planning, and this has been known for its inherently sectoral approach and arbitrarily "picking winners," not to mention increasing the potential for the relevant sectors and "winners" to extract economic rent in the classical sense from society as a whole.

When considering the rapid development of information technology overcoming socialist calculation debates based on planning by pencils and pens, the appropriate policy is one of economy-wide indicative planning based on extensive mathematical optimization. This transcends the mathematical optimizations employed by mere enterprises and isolated government agencies, and also transcends any emphasis on particular economic sectors. **One particular problem, and quite a behavioural one at that, to be addressed by economy-wide indicative planning based on extensive mathematical optimization is that of surplus capital or idle capital**, regardless of dynamics between this and the

tendency of the rates of industrial and non-industrial profit to fall. As noted by the Marxist geographer and critical urban theorist David Harvey:

*At times of crisis, the irrationality of capitalism becomes plain for all to see. Surplus capital and surplus labour exist side by side with seemingly no way to put them back together in the midst of immense human suffering and unmet needs. In midsummer of 2009, **one third of the capital equipment in the United States stood idle**, while some 17 per cent of the workforce were either unemployed, enforced part-timers or 'discouraged' workers. What could be more irrational than that?*

*For capital accumulation to return to 3 per cent compound growth will require a new basis for profit-making and surplus absorption. **The irrational way to do this in the past has been through the destruction of the achievements of preceding eras** by way of war, the devaluation of assets, the degradation of productive capacity, abandonment and other forms of 'creative destruction'.*

Does this reform facilitate the issuance of either intermediate or threshold demands? Mentioned earlier was the threshold demand for the institution of normalized planning and policy pertaining to additional reductions in the normal workweek and to related increases in labour productivity, but the historic reductions in the workday to ten hours and then eight hours did not require even more rudimentary indicative planning. Also mentioned earlier was the threshold demand pertaining to pro-labour eminent domain and restructuring related luxury enterprises and industries into ones more susceptible to technological advance and more directly sustaining the workers' consumption bundle, but this is within the very realm of "industrial policy," its inherently sectoral approach, and its "picking [of] winners." **In general, economy-wide indicative planning based on extensive mathematical optimization is quite compatible with a "free" consumer and services market, and also with the capitalism-specific markets of labour and capital, but computerized planning of a methodologically more advanced nature questions the validity of the latter two markets if not eliminates them altogether.**

Does this reform enable the basic principles to be "kept consciously in view"? On the one hand, **indicative planning was never implemented without pressing conditions.** On the other hand, without the very specific form of political struggle known as class struggle, indicative planning has been used exclusively for bourgeois interests. That points to the necessity of class struggle. Both today's capital mobility and some imposition of capital controls require a transnational perspective, since surplus capital and other problems to be tackled by economy-wide indicative planning based on extensive mathematical optimization are transnational problems. On the general thrust of social labour, the systemic establishment of worker management (i.e., planning, organization, direction, and control) and responsibility over an all-encompassing participatory economy, most market-socialists are in fact in favour of indicative planning. Some, however, dismiss this and by extension the systemic and participatory aspects of social labour, as noted by the socialist Michal Polak:

*On the other hand, there are also market socialist models that address the issue of entrepreneurship and discovery explicitly. A prime example of this strand is Brus and Laski's [...] The model differs from the "neoclassical" ones mentioned above in that there is no attempt by the center to monitor, regulate, or less plan the economy – that is, **there is not even 'strategic' or 'indicative' planning.** Instead, major investment decisions are taken by publicly owned but independently operating firms themselves, i.e. **there is a real market for capital goods** (just as there are labour and consumer markets).*

This last model really reveals the prime source for dissatisfaction with market socialist models. Brus and Laski note that while they themselves have in the past advocated more 'socialised' version of the market socialist model, practical experience shows that [...] once that model is specified as above, the 'socialist' component of the model reduces purely to formal state ownership of the assets. **That ownership, however, amounts to practically nothing, given that firms must be free to have complete operational control over these assets.** The retention of state ownership is thus itself "artificial and redundant", as Adaman and Devine (1997) note. Brus and Laski (1989) themselves conclude that "the pure logic of the fully-fledged market mechanism seems to indicate the non-state (private) enterprise as the more natural constituent of the enterprise sector".

Similar lesson is drawn by Kornai in his (1990a). The conclusion seems inescapable. Market socialism, however modelled, is not a stable formation. There is an inner logic within it which points toward independence of the decision-making units whose goal is profit maximization. The greater that independence, the more capable they are of simulating the entrepreneurship within the capitalist economy.

Also, because economy-wide indicative planning based on extensive mathematical optimization requires at least some input by the likes of suppliers, creditor institutions, government agencies for regulation and taxation, local and higher-level communities, and activist groups – in addition to management and non-management employees – it is a far superior “school of planned economy,” to quote Trotsky in relation to both computerized planning and participation, than mere “workers control” of production processes at the workplace, which excludes the aforementioned stakeholders.

CHAPTER 8: MISCELLANEOUS QUESTIONS

Supply-Side Political Economy: More Public Management over Labour Markets

In the mid-1970s, Arthur Laffer, Herbert Stein, Robert Mundell, and Jude Wanniski started to develop the notorious supply-side economic school of thought. Recall that bourgeois-fied commodity production has three broad markets: the consumer goods and services market, the labour market, and the capital market. Naturally, that first market which predates modern production relations is related to demand-side economics, and the aforementioned bourgeois economists were concerned primarily with the last market. Wanniski even considered Marx to be a supply-side economist, but of course for the wrong reasons. Most modern labour economists, meanwhile, merely analyze the labour market from a supply-side perspective, while what insufficient normative or policy-related conclusions they have are too biased towards demand-side economics and aggregate demand management, like “full employment” stimulus spending betting on money multipliers here and there. In fact, unconditional basic income is the most extreme form of demand-side policy. Finally, only a handful of market-socialists to date have discussed the labour market like Hyman Minsky did, while most others discussed only the consumer and capital markets.

All labour-related radical reform proposals proposed in earlier chapters have in fact been proposed from a labour-oriented supply-side perspective of political economy. This means being more critical of Marx’s remark about “the childish babble of a Say” in reference to snide and personalized remarks about Jean-Baptiste Say’s nonetheless simplistic observations about the relationship between supply and demand. As demonstrated in information technology, the supply of valued consumer goods and services creates necessary prerequisites for the satisfaction of, and sometimes the very occasion for, demand. **In the relationship between the labour and capital markets, the vulgar mantra that “businesses create jobs” (an indirect capital theory of value) does not hold water, since without the labour supply or labour market the so-called “innovative entrepreneurs” who still need to hire for a profit cannot realize their innovations.** What follows are two key proposals from a labour-oriented supply-side perspective of political economy, boosting the bargaining position of labour more directly, spilling or “trickling” over into consumer demand and savings.

When considering the newest, cross-sectoral, cross-age (from youth to midlife and beyond), and growing part of the working class that is by and large the precariat, there is growing “casualization” of labour to the point where some economists have described it as a “commodity” in the sense of regular business lingua: a good or service supplied without qualitative differentiation, such as natural resources. Long-standing populist resentment towards the “middleman” can be applied to temporary or casual labour agencies, **whose charges increase labour costs without the workers benefiting directly** through increased labour compensation, let alone realizing much in the way of employer benefits. On the one hand, the proliferation of these agencies does not substantially reduce their payroll costs per unit of service provided. **On the other hand, fully extending the responsibilities of public-administered job search agencies and labour ministries overseeing them by reorganizing every single temporary labour agency into a monopoly under public ownership could result in economies of scale for payroll costs and help tackle the problem of structural and cyclical unemployment.** With legislation and regulation around gainful wages and working conditions, extra support for temporary workers, and especially rules guaranteeing their ability to refuse lousy wages, lousy working conditions (especially unsafe working conditions), or both, such monopoly may even be the modern means to Hyman Minsky’s realization of zero unemployment structurally and cyclically by means of expanding public services to fully include employment of last resort for consumer services.

Another proposal is simpler, more radical, and less discussed: that “big government” should be the sole *de jure* employer, hiring all workers directly as a monopsony (with of course individual and collective ability to refuse jobs with things like unsafe working conditions) and contracting out all labour services as a monopoly to the private sector and to state enterprises and the rest of the public sector. This promotes gender pay equity and puts a practical end to wage theft such as back pay from small-business employers, which despite labour laws still occurs on the scale of many billions of dollars, according to Mike Elk:

Advocates estimate that tens of billions dollars are stolen from workers every year through wage theft. A national survey of workers in the United States’ three largest cities – New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles – showed the startling finding that 26 percent of those surveyed in low-wage industries were paid less than the minimum wage in the last year and 75 percent were not paid overtime. The survey showed that 15 percent of the earnings of low-wage workers were stolen each year.

Part of the problem is that often workers don’t have the ability to prove that their wages were stolen. Pay stubs do not have uniform standards that clearly indicate overtime, wage per hour, exact days, and hours worked.

This proposal also opens up discussion to a whole range of labour policies. On the one hand, it could popularize crude calls for universal unionization as well as the very petit-bourgeois advocacy of wage subsidies to small businesses (on top of existing wage subsidies to non-profit organizations), with the latter repeating the vulgar “businesses create jobs” mantra (as if *lumpen*-based calls for unconditional basic income and various other non-worker schemes are not paternalistic enough). In that latter instance, instead of rebates and tax credits being the subsidy mechanisms, every worker as a public employee to be contracted out could be paid higher while the “big government” incurs negative gross margins by charging lower labour usage rates for small businesses. On the other hand, the government agency responsible for the workforce could coordinate with a separate government agency responsible for employment of last resort for consumer services.

Both proposals do not directly address the wholesale absorption of all private-sector collective bargaining representation into free and universal legal services by independent government agencies acting in good faith, or the prohibition of all private-sector subcontracting of labour such as the case whereby at least one contractual party is a workers’ cooperative. However, there is still private-sector dispute resolution on the labour usage rates charged, and private-sector logic (with the related labour dispute resolution mechanisms) still applies elsewhere except where taxpayer funds directly compensate public-sector workers. The latter proposal can open up another route with respect to “state aid” discrimination favouring workers’ cooperatives over other private businesses: as public employees, owners of workers’ cooperatives enjoy the associated benefits, while their operations can be charged lower labour usage rates by the government agency.

Naturally, these proposals enable the basic principles to be “kept consciously in view.” The class struggle by, of, and for the working class is emphasized, since their human labour, both manual and manual, and its technological, labour-saving equivalent are the only non-natural sources of value production. A fully socialized labour market goes a long way towards the systemic establishment of worker management (i.e., planning, organization, direction, and control) and responsibility over an all-encompassing participatory economy, and also towards preventing public enterprises from hoarding labour like they have historically in order to overfulfill production targets. Just as only “big government” can end structural and cyclical unemployment, only “big governments” can collectively establish something like the World Trade Organization but for enforcing a bill of workers’ political and economic rights such as a globalized and upward equal standard of living for equal or equivalent work, all based on real purchasing power parity.

However, it is more difficult to determine if these proposals are of an intermediate stage or on the threshold. By themselves they are more radical than the universalization of annual, non-deflationary adjustments for all non-executive and non-celebrity remunerations, pensions, and insurance benefits to at least match rising costs of living, and the first proposal could very well have an immediate character. On the other hand, the first proposal and especially the second one could be combined with Minsky’s program to emphasize the need for a fully socialized labour market.

- Qualified support for reforms that meet the Hahnel criterion but not the Kautsky criterion
- "Tough on crime" populism? (<http://www.revleft.com/vb/can-tough-crime-t138310/index.html>)
 - o Also: <http://www.rabble.ca/babble/labour-and-consumption/can-tough-crime-populism-be-progressive-re-labour>
 - o Also: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Left_realism
 - o Me (Theory thread):

Most of the time, "tough on crime" populism is reactionary. However, can there be instances where it is progressive, in that it separates us politically from liberal "restorative" views on crime, and that the nonetheless Utilitarian basis for the separation – the greatest good for the greatest number of working-class folks – is not Hedonistic? I'm looking at things like outright wage theft, other labour law violations, and the usual canard of corporate crime. Very rarely is wage theft punishable by jail time, let alone longer sentences (as opposed to fines and even class action lawsuits). Ditto with other labour law violations. Meanwhile, not enough corporate crime is met with practically lifelong jail time.
 - o Me (E-mail):

One Raul Duke there said that "'tough on corporate crime' populism is rare and usually labeled only as 'populism' depending on context and environment (for example of the politicians in the Appalachia called out tough actions against Massey Coal and if the politicians of Louisiana called out tough actions on BP, these people would be labeled as being populists and not 'tough on crime')," but also that he concurred with *my preference for harsh corrective labour over jail time or lengthier jail sentences for the criminals I'm talking about* by saying "that'll teach them not to fuck with my wage (exploiting me even more than usual/normal)."
 - o Dave Zachariah (E-mail):

I certainly think there is a populist appeal for egalitarian justice on these issues. It could undercut some of the Right's monopoly on crime issues.
 - o Cueball (Babble):

Besides, there aren't really enough white collar criminals and corporate executives to staff a decent GULAG, though I must admit the image of Conrad Black leading a tree planting crew up by the French River does appeal.
 - o Tommy Paine (Babble):

I don't see anything wrong, in the realm of political theater, for the NDP or labour to use the reactionary rhetoric on tough on crime to go after corporate crime, business fraud or political corruption. But as far as actually doing something about those problems, the left has to stop looking to government, and start taking action themselves. We need to learn how to investigate and learn how to bring private prosecutions, and in general, make life more difficult for corporate criminals and those in law enforcement, the judicial system and the politicians that purposely turn a blind eye to these kinds of activities.
 - o Unionist (Babble):

I would punish all such crimes with severe, just, and proportional confiscation of wealth. Not just "fines" – capital. Walmart shuts down a store to shaft the union? Relieve them of ownership of another store. They won't invest in Canada any more? Boo hoo.
 - o Raul Duke (Theory thread):

To some people at the bottom who have worked minimum wage jobs, particularly industries where tipping is involved (i.e. basing this on what I heard on here, that some members got money from the tip jar taken from them by the boss), such anti-corporate crime policies would be very popular and a very populist appeal. Right now, with the whole BP thing and the Massey mine incident, there's a segment that would love to see such "tough on corporate crime" actions. I mean c'mon, I would love to see BP's assets seized and/or being revoked of doing business in the U.S. for the crime of environmental destruction at a scale that could be considered a "crime against humanity" (and world). I would like to see Massey, Inc brought to court for criminal negligence. I bet I'm not the only one.
- What about dead-end reforms that meet neither criterion, SUCH AS PUBLIC HEALTH INSURANCE?
 - o "Steps in the right direction, so-called 'immediate demands,' are among the most precarious. They are precarious because they are subject and prone to the lure of the 'sop' or the

'palliative' that the foes of labor's redemption are ever ready to dangle before the eyes of the working class, and at which, aided by the labor lieutenants of the capitalist class, the unwary are apt to snap and be hooked. But there is a test by which the bait can be distinguished from the sound step, by which the trap can be detected and avoided, and yet the right step forward taken. That test is this: Does the contemplated step square with the ultimate aim? If it does, then the step is sound and safe; if it does not, then the step is a trap and disastrous." (Daniel DeLeon)

- <http://www.marxists.org/archive/deleon/works/1904/040421.htm>
- There are times when reforms for labour empowerment and reforms that facilitate capital accumulation and ensure the reproduction of labour power intersect. There are measures strictly for the latter, measures strictly for the former, and measures that can achieve both.
 - Implicit in Hahnel criterion: really, really stretching labour empowerment yet yielding very little (but nonetheless capital-positive) in terms of capital accumulation and ensuring the reproduction of labour power.
 - Later on, measures strictly for labour empowerment are ones that tend to lead towards crisis unless workers take power.
 - http://boffyblog.blogspot.com/2011/05/awl-up-to-their-misrepresentation-again_30.html
- Also (me): Another dead-end reform that can be deemed the worst sort of reformism is the mechanism of refundable tax credits based upon having employment income; diverting these employee credits towards employer payment of closely audited higher wages of a non-executive type would solve the problem of most people not understanding the effects of various tax credits on after-tax income, and would make the income tax system more efficient, but would reinforce the corporate bourgeois character of the modern state by means of employer lobbying for additional refundable credits that would be more difficult to phase out. Working-class pressure that is normally aimed at the modern state would become direct but economic pressure on employers themselves!
 - **For now this is here, but it is applicable in the Third World ("national petit-bourgeoisie") and may generally be paired with "tough on crime" populism**
- Identity "Politics"
 - Already cited in People's Histories commentary: *Now more than ever, we need a radical center* by Michael Lind [http://www.salon.com/news/politics/democratic_party/index.html?story=opinion/feature/2010/04/20/radical_center_revisited]
- What about the distinction between reforms in general and "daily" issues, "bread and butter" issues, "etc. like the periodic raising of the minimum wage, free public transport, cheap medicines, and smaller classroom sizes?"
 - Lack of distinction most prominent in the Maoist "Mass Line" approach
- Trade union bureaucracy
 - Union security agreements: closed shops and union shops vs. agency shops (once hired must either join union or pay equal fees called agency fees to cover bargaining costs, as non-members still get union benefits), "right to work" laws in France, etc.
 - Compare closed-shop union security agreement campaigns with anti-immigrant sentiments
 - Compare fees to "union shops" with employee-paid parking and taxable benefits for employer-paid parking
- Nation-state considerations
 - "The proletariat of each country must, of course, first of all settle matters with its own bourgeoisie [...] Since the proletariat must first of all acquire political supremacy, must rise to be the leading class of the nation, must constitute itself the nation [...]" (Karl Marx and Frederick Engels)
 - Authoritarianism and Rudolf Hilferding: <http://www.solidarity-us.org/node/1817> (again)
 - Russian fable: "Eagles may at times fly lower than hens, but hens can never rise to the height of eagles." (<http://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1922/feb/x01.htm>)
 - "By 1882, foreign criticism by exiles of party opportunism, the rancorous disputes, and the looming split finally necessitated a secret party Congress that was held in Wyden, Switzerland [...] The most spectacular decision to come out of the Wyden Congress was the decision to strike the word "legal" from the Gotha Programme so that the party could realize its goals "by all means" including, therefore, illegal ones." (<http://ir.lib.sfu.ca/bitstream/1892/4496/1/b10103521.pdf>)
 - Abolition of prison labour for the benefit of private parties

- Gotha Program: “The Socialist Workers' Party of Germany demands, within existing society... Regulation of prison labour.”
- Marx: “A petty demand in a general workers' program. In any case, it should have been clearly stated that there is no intention from fear of competition to allow ordinary criminals to be treated like beasts, and especially that there is no desire to deprive them of their sole means of betterment, productive labour. This was surely the least one might have expected from socialists.”
- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-11463182>
- Prisoner strikes: http://www.nytimes.com/2010/12/12/us/12prison.html?_r=1 and also <http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/world/2010/12/14/1224285486855.html>

One final nation-state consideration needs to be addressed: that of operating under authoritarian regimes. In 1922, Lenin quoted a Russian fable about eagles and hens, how the former could fly lower at times than the latter, but also how the latter could never rise to the height of the former. Had he lived a further decade, he might have reconsidered his opinion of a secondary renegade who became an eagle on the question of authoritarianism, as noted by one William Smaldone in 1998:

Rudolf Hilferding rose to prominence within the Austrian and German socialist movements prior to the First World War. He began his career as a student of Karl Kautsky, the most important socialist theoretician at that time, and in 1903 he became a regular contributor to Kautsky's journal, the Neue Zeit.

In 1910 Hilferding published his great work of political economy, Finance Capital, which catapulted him into the front rank of social democracy's leading theoreticians. Regarded by many as the fourth volume of Marx's Capital, Hilferding's book examined the ongoing and, at that time, little-studied fusion of bank and industrial capital, its relationship to intensifying imperialist rivalries among the great powers, and its role in increasing the likelihood of a major war.

[...]

In October 1933 Hilferding argued that the SPD had two main tasks: first, to organize illegal operations in Germany and build cadre that would take over the movement's leadership; second, to prepare itself intellectually in order to lead the fight and to exercise power after the revolution.

Hilferding argued that the current situation necessitated reorganizing the SPD along decentralized, conspiratorial lines that would make underground operations in Germany possible. Such activities would allow the movement to lead the popular forces that he believed would eventually smash Nazism in a civil war.

It would then fall to social democracy to establish a revolutionary government that would, at a minimum, destroy the fascist regime, condemn Nazi criminals, purge the bureaucracy, the courts, and the military, staff these organizations with revolutionaries, and expropriate heavy industry, the banks and semi-feudal landed estates.

Such actions, he thought, would avoid the mistakes made during the German Revolution of 1918, from which many of the old imperial institutions had emerged unscathed only to topple the republic later on.

[...]

Hilferding had called on social democracy to prepare itself to lead a clandestine struggle against fascism and, ultimately, a civil war. He resisted using the term “dictatorship” to describe the regime that would replace Nazism, but envisioned a revolutionary government able to wield extensive power and open the road to socialism. Now his sense of principle prevented him from taking this step, and he attempted to distance himself from the SPD's warring factions. Ultimately, their conflicts remained unresolved and the movement ineffectual until the Second World War destroyed the Nazi state.

People's Histories, Third-World Blocs, and "Managed Democracy" Reconsidered

"Without too much overreaching, we might say [Julius Caesar's] reign can be called a dictatorship of the *proletarii* [the poor propertyless citizens of Rome], an instance of ruling autocratically against plutocracy on behalf of the citizenry's substantive interests." (Michael Parenti)

In 2003, Michael Parenti illuminated much of the truth behind the traditional depiction of Julius Caesar as a tyrant and a demagogue, also beyond the "progressive Caesarism" suggested by the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci while in prison. In *The Assassination Of Julius Caesar: A People's History of Ancient Rome*, Parenti breaks through the traditional depiction set by the rich nobility of the Roman Republic and beyond, which like today's bourgeoisie deemed the commoners contemptuous and worthy of little more than breads and circuses. Only a few were social reformers, starting with Tiberius Gracchus. The line of social reformers was a tragic one, a line in which almost all were assassinated.

Enter a young Julius Caesar, an army officer with a program of social reform, if not social revolution: land reform, outright grants to the poor, public works and other employment programs for putting plebeians toward productive work, luxury taxes, partial debt relief, recognition of minority religions like Judaism as legitimate, and even a Maximum on Allowable Personal Wealth of 60,000 sesterces or 15,000 drachmas (but not one that was subject to populist adjustment by mass democratic means). Even in spite of his military successes, his plan to transfer power from the patrician Senate to the plebeian Tribunal Assembly led him to fall victim to a Senate conspiracy: assassination.

Despite the limited participants in the class struggle of ancient Rome – the free rich and the free poor (and neither slaves nor provincial farmers) – **it is unfortunate that the traditional depiction set by the rich nobility seeped into the revolutionary accounts** of the likes of Wilhelm Liebknecht and Karl Marx himself, and from there into more contemporary revolutionary accounts like those of Jack Conrad:

Julius Caesar in particular, because of his youthful identification with the popular cause, programme of land reform and stunning military successes in, and plunder of, Gaul and Egypt, was able to offer substantial gifts to a supportive, but not uncritical, citizen mass. Through their votes – and semi-autonomous street manifestation – Julius Caesar was able to skilfully outmanoeuvre and eventually bludgeon his aristocratic rivals into submission. The lowering presence of his legions helped too.

He got himself appointed dictator perpetuus, or life-long holder of emergency powers. A Bonapartist domination which by no stretch of the imagination equates to what Michael Parenti – an apologist for "official communism" – calls "a dictatorship of the proletarii, an instance of ruling autocratically against plutocracy on behalf of the citizenry's substantive interests." Such a description is akin to projecting back in time contemporary Stalin, Mao, Castro, and Chavez myths.

On the subject of former army officers, people's history found another in Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez. At least part of his program is in fact a combination of the programs of three 19th-century political figures with very different politics: anarchist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon for his emphasis on workers' cooperatives and communal power, democratic-socialist-yet-centralist Ferdinand Lassalle for his emphasis on "state aid" in social transformation as a means of agitating towards political action, and the statist Iron Chancellor Otto von Bismarck for his "social justice" welfare missions and a touch or two of social conservatism (like on enacting measures against those video games and toys which promote violence).

At least rhetorically, Chavez has on questions of class struggle elevated himself above the likes of Mao and even Ho Chi Minh, **discarding the so-called Great Helmsman's class-conciliationist and illusory Bloc of Four Classes** (workers, peasants, small-business petit-bourgeoisie, and so-called "national bourgeoisie" or "patriotic bourgeoisie"):

The bourgeoisie keeps plotting to kill me. If they kill me, listen to me, do not lose your head! We have leaders, the party, my generals, my militias, my people. You know what to do. Just take over power throughout Venezuela, absolutely all, sweep away the bourgeoisie from all political and economic spaces and deepen the revolution!

In so doing, he unwittingly stumbled upon the positions of the Second International on political and social change (not the kind of social revolution described in this work) in less developed countries where workers do not exclusively form the demographic majority, inspired by the radical *sans-culottisme* among the French

Revolutionary lower classes in the dual avoidance of collaboration with bourgeois liberals and misplaced “permanent revolution” contempt towards the likes of small tenant farmers and sharecroppers (i.e., Engels and Trotsky), who can indeed be politically revolutionary even if not socially revolutionary. As noted in more reluctant and less generous terms by Mike Macnair in August 2010:

It's true that the peasantry is forced to decide between the fundamental classes. But it's not true that, because the peasantry is forced to decide between the fundamental classes, it cannot find political representation or act in support of autonomous peasant goals, that is to say, patriarchy, the setting up of an absolute ruler, a cult of personality whether it's of Lenin or Saddam Hussein or Robert Mugabe.

For the purposes of this work, these revolutionary positions on political and social change in less developed countries will be called the Bloc of Dispossessed Classes and National Petit-Bourgeoisie and the Caesarean Socialism, respectively.

What are the key ideas behind the Bloc of Dispossessed Classes and National Petit-Bourgeoisie, a strategy that, unlike the worker-centric Permanent Revolution, carries profound relevancy in less developed countries even today? Consider the following class coalition, which is bigger than the proletariat-led class coalition in an imperialist power:

- 1) Proletarian demographic minorities, whose class organizations must achieve and maintain politico-ideological independence regardless of whether they lead this coalition or not, and the violation of whose independence by other Bloc elements would characterize typical Bonapartism;
- 2) Dispossessed elements which nevertheless perform unproductive labour and can perhaps be called the modern *proletarii* (like butlers, housemaids, paralegals, all who work exclusively in luxury goods production and sale, and perhaps all who work exclusively in non-civilian arms production and trade);
- 3) Proper lumpenproletariat, preferring legal work to illegal work (like prostitutes where illegal and rank-and-file gangsters);
- 4) Coordinators, a dispossessed class apart from the so-called “prole” classes (like mid-level managers, tenured professors with subordinate research staff, doctors without general practice businesses, and bureaucratic specialists); and
- 5) Demographic majorities of nationalistic or more optimally pan-nationalistic petit-bourgeoisie of urban areas (like small-business shop owners) and rural ones (like the more numerous small tenant farmers and sharecroppers), apart from those accommodating to the whims of foreign capitalists, but also part of a propertied class which, in an imperialist power, would belong to “one reactionary mass” (to quote Lassalle) of bourgeois and petit-bourgeois class coalitions.

Since the “national” or even “pan-national” loyalty is held by part of the petit-bourgeois demographic majority and not the bourgeoisie as per Mao’s illusion, all bourgeois elements are excluded before, during, and after the Bloc wages its oppositionist class struggle, which in turn could include a mix of People’s War, Focoist guerrilla warfare and the kind of political strikes or mass strikes in the cities that helped then-guerrillas Fidel Castro and Che Guevara topple US-backed tinpot tyrant Fulencia Batista, and populist breakthrough (military) coups like those employed by many Soviet-supported anti-colonial movements or the one in 1970s Afghanistan. **How, then, could the Bloc achieve the exclusion of the bourgeoisie during and after such class struggle come about while taking into account the leadership role of one following the footsteps of the Julius Caesar of people’s history? The answer, ironically, comes from the modern Kremlin, an example of bourgeois authoritarianism that was programmatically opposed earlier.**

According to Ivan Krastev of the Centre for Liberal Strategies in Bulgaria:

It cannot explain what distinguish [Vladimir] Putin's concept of sovereign democracy and Hugo Chávez's concept of sovereign democracy.

What is missing in western attempts to make sense of Putin's Russia is an insight in the political imagination of the current political elite in Moscow. What is missing is an interest in the arguments with which the regime claims legitimacy. Carl Schmitt could be right when some fifty years ago he noted that "the victor feels no curiosity".

Sovereignty, a recently published volume of ideological writings edited by Nikita Garadya presents a promising opportunity to glimpse into the political imagination of Putin's elite.

The volume is a compendium of excerpts from the president's state of the union speeches, newspaper interviews with one of his possible "successors" (deputy prime minister Dmitry Medvedev), the legendary February theses of Kremlin's ideologue-in-chief Vladislav Surkov delivered in front of the activists of United Russia, and a dozen essays and interviews in the tradition of enlightened loyalism.

The book's ambition is to define and develop the master-concept of Kremlin's newfound ideology: the concept of sovereign democracy. The contributors – philosophers, journalists and military strategists – are regarded as key members of Putin's ideological special forces.

[...]

*The nationalisation of the elite took the form of de facto nationalisation of the energy sector, total control of the media, **de facto criminalisation of the western-funded NGOs, Kremlin-sponsored party-building, criminal persecution of Kremlin's opponents (the case of Mikhail Khodorkovsky) and the creation of structures that can secure active support for the regime in the time of crisis (such as the Nashi [Ours] movement).***

As implied above, it must be stated more explicitly that **a de-liberalized, radicalized, substantively populist, and very left-oriented implementation of "managed democracy" that appeals to "sovereignty" is far from being the full minimum program for the demarchic commonwealth**, the form of the so-called "dictatorship of the proletariat" (as opposed to the Bloc of Dispossessed Classes and National Petit-Bourgeoisie), and that, by extension, Parenti's "dictatorship of the *proletarii*" conclusion was indeed "overreaching." For example, where is the management component in eliminating judges in favour of universal and full adjudication by commoner jury? In random selections for public office instead of elections, thus blunting the charismatic appeal of any would-be National/Pan-National/Paramount/Supreme Leader? In sovereign socioeconomic governments directly representative of ordinary people, thus putting such would-be Leader in a position of having to choose between socioeconomic matters and matters like high politics? In ensuing that such would-be Leader's standard of living is at or slightly lower than the median equivalent for professional and other skilled workers, thus greatly humbling personal prestige? In recallability from popular recall, universal and full adjudication by commoner jury sanctioning representatives who violate popular legislation, lower representative bodies, political parties themselves, and other avenues – thus putting such would-be Leader in a very precarious position? In full freedom of class-strugglist assembly and association for the working class, such as in the formation of working-class militias, thus again putting such would-be Leader in a very precarious position?

However, the aforementioned "managed democracy" may be compatible with the political section of a more orthodox minimum program, ranging from dynamic opposition to the threshold before the point whereby the working class must go past the urban petit-bourgeois democratism of the likes of most non-liberal "democratic theory" academics – and expropriate ruling-class political power. Consider these points, in addition to more basic ones like equal suffrage, for example:

- 1) The reduction of the normal workweek (even for working multiple jobs) – including time for workplace democracy, workers' self-management, broader industrial democracy, etc. through workplace committees and assemblies – to a participatory-democratic maximum of 32 hours or less without loss of pay or benefits has an ecological component, which implies some form of management. Further reductions corresponding to increased labour productivity, plus normalized planning and policy pertaining to reductions in the normal workweek below the participatory-democratic threshold and to related increases in labour productivity, also imply some form of management.
- 2) The expansion of local autonomy for equally local development through participatory budgeting and oversight by local assemblies, as well as through unconditional economic assistance (both technical and financial) for localities seeking to establish local currency alternatives to government money, may enhance the prestige of the aforementioned "managed democracy," and full communal power replacing the full scope of municipal power – from the neighbourhood level to the metropolitan level to even the megapolitan level, and thus actually replacing whole provinces, prefectures, and federated states altogether – alters the federal structure towards resembling a hourglass, **increasing both the role of the lowest levels of power and the central government power, all at the expense of levels of power in between.**
- 3) Workplace democracy over mandated balance of content in news and media production, heavy appropriation of economic rent in the broadcast spectrum, and unconditional economic assistance (both technical and financial) for independent mass media cooperative startups would go **a long way towards eliminating the inequality in access to and distribution of free speech** that results from the mass media like RCTV and Globovisión not being fully independent from concentrated private

ownership and management (not just from private ownership and management by those colloquially called media moguls or media tycoons, such as Rupert Murdoch).

4) Most importantly, a closed-list proportional representation that both achieves full or near-full proportionality and allows even smaller parties to arbitrarily appoint to and remove from the halls of power those with party affiliations (even by means of random selection that is institutionalized internally) **does not take into consideration which parties are allowed representation in the first place, unless one were to consider working-class freedom from formal political disenfranchisement due to class-strugglist assembly and association.** Before being sidelined from politics, Lenin once told a foreign journalist, “However, eventually we will have a two-party system such as the British have – a left party and a right party – but two Bolshevik parties, of course.” Stalin insisted on official Popular Front governments in all Eastern European governments, comprised of official Communist parties in predetermined leading roles and agrarian, Catholic, left-nationalist, and minor parties in predetermined supporting roles. **In short, a managed multi-party system committed in substance to a de-liberalized, radicalized, substantively populist, and very left-wing orientation (in short, Caesarean Socialism) can be compatible with an orthodox minimum program and even more.**

Under the preferably charismatic leadership of one following the footsteps of the Julius Caesar of people’s history, a Bloc of Dispossessed Classes and National Petit-Bourgeoisie coming to power in a less developed country and excluding all segments of the bourgeoisie from the political process – by means of a de-liberalized, radicalized, substantively populist, and very left-oriented implementation of “managed democracy” that appeals to “sovereignty” – would be a reenactment of *Alea iacta est* (“the die has been cast”), of committing treason against the Roman Senate by not disbanding one’s army on the way to Rome, of crossing the Rubicon, and of the original and genuine March on Rome (not Mussolini’s farcical Fascist *coup d’etat*).

Within this “managed democracy,” the most obvious element is the National Leader or more optimally pan-national equivalent, even if there is no organizational emphasis here. Such role could move in and out of the presidency like Putin. Beyond extensive restrictions on “states of emergency,” the absence of strong veto power as wielded by US and Ukrainian presidencies or by a popularly elected dictator (overridden only upon a two-thirds legislative majority in all legislative chambers), and the inability to disband legislatures, the presidency itself could nevertheless be constitutionally stronger on the whole than various presidential systems, particularly Latin American ones, combined. Any existing veto power, while subject to aforementioned limits, could be stronger than a mere one-time ability to ask legislatures to reconsider certain legislation, as is the case in Hungary, Italy, and Portugal. From Peru’s model there could be an exclusively executive ability, exclusively only because of the absence of strong veto power, to deal with legislature-defeated bills and vetoed bills, like those dealing with questions on war and peace, by holding referenda. From the models of Brazil and Chile there could be exclusive legislative initiative in policy areas beyond just budget law and international trade affairs. From Ecuador’s model there could be the ability to force legislatures to explicitly vote down, within a certain number of days, bills submitted by the executive that have also been declared “urgent.” Meanwhile, from Venezuela’s model there could be the ability to legislate by decree. For the purposes of direct monetary and fiscal intervention, including the specific case of avoiding a US-style budget crisis initiated by a relatively stubborn legislature, there could be, from Colombia’s model, the ability to declare “economic emergency.”

Additionally, from other executive models comes undisputed sovereignty *perpetuo* over all military and civil administration, including chief executives at lower levels (municipalities, provinces, prefectures, and federated states), something best described as “neo-patrimonial” in light of historian Yoram Gorzki’s observation of “patrimonial authority coexisting alongside quite modern and routine forms of high-level decision making” that characterized the late Stalin era. The basis of this would be Byzantine-inspired “judiciary reorganization,” or the less euphemistic presidential “court packing” of specifically constitutional courts – apart from the regular court system and its supposed-to-be-independent judiciary – would facilitate more radical labour and social reforms at the expense of bourgeois federalism, against which the transition to full communal power could see the National Leader’s obvious influence on the developing communal bulwark. **Despite all this power, the president should be subject to legislative confidence, and a National Leader outside the presidency should also be the leading member of a party (all the more so as president).**

Again, the most important element of this “managed democracy” is not the National Leader or more optimally pan-national equivalent, but the managed multi-party system. Tillman Clark noted the importance of mass politics even within this “managed democracy”:

*A tradition of dictatorial political leadership in Latin America that is best characterized by the image of the caudillo – an authoritarian but popular military leader – may seem appropriate to populism. But what separates the populist leader from the caudillo is that **populism operates in a context of mass politics** instead of dictatorial, singular power. In this sense, populist leaders must have a democratic form of popular support for their rule – either through street demonstrations and rallies or through constant calls to the voting booth. Populist mobilization, therefore, is an inherently top-down process that often feeds off a direct relationship between a leader and an originally unorganized mass of followers. But this is not nearly enough, as almost any original movement can be seen this way.*

[...]

Chávez applied the elementary populist discourse of “alien elements” – corrupt politicians, oligarchic elites, agents of imperialism, etc. – to justify the circumvention of traditional democratic procedures and institutions through the guise of manifesting the “popular will” as determined through the mandates of the voting booth.

*This tendency is best exemplified by the method through which the 1999 Constitution came into being; Chávez’ campaign pledge to elect a constituent assembly and overhaul the nation’s democratic institutions. Controlled by a 92% Chavista majority, thanks largely to a boycott of the elections by oppositional members, the constituent assembly moved quickly to claim extra-legal authority to re-found Venezuelan democracy. It proceeded to increase the size of the judiciary to include more judges (sympathetic to Chávez) and shut down the congress in order to convoke new elections to “re-legitimize” public officials at every level of the political system. As such, having more than a two-thirds majority in Congress, the Chávistas had the ability to undertake a vast restructuring of the political system. **With a two-thirds majority congress, a sympathetic and reformed judiciary, and the lack of voiced opposition in any democratic institution, there was little blocking the radical change many Chávistas hoped to bring to Venezuela** and with this more or less domination of all aspects of governance, a wide variety of important changes were made to Venezuelan society during the first stage of the Chávez presidency, all of which cannot be noted here, that have continued and expanded in the second.*

[...]

*Populism’s positive aspect lies in how it often ushers in a new mass democracy that transcends the old, traditional, and oligarchical politics, providing a new sense of dignity and **self-respect for lower class sectors of society, who are encouraged to recognize that they possess both social and political rights**. The negative aspect of traditional populism was its effect on democratic citizenship. Populism requires the “privileged link” between the masses through electoral functions and acclamations, **but once in power, this leadership provided few institutional means by which citizens can participate in the functioning of government or hold it accountable**. Elections were thus merely delegative formalities where the masses choose who to give authority and then retreat to a paternalistic position. It is in this regard that the unique nature of Chávismo populism holds hope.*

Accordingly, one such managed multi-party system committed in substance to the de-liberalized, radicalized, substantively populist, and very left-wing orientation that is Caesarean Socialism – and thus worthy of at least critical support – could look like this:

- 1) There is a big populist party of power on the "right" that appeals economically to the fringes of left-wing social democracy but, in accordance with the March 2010 draft party program of Die Linke (The Left party in Germany), is committed to things like: “public and democratically controlled ownership of general public service, social infrastructure, the energy industry and the finance sector as well as [...] transfer large, structure-setting industrial companies to democratic social ownership and to overcome capitalist ownership”; “the prohibition of mass dismissals in companies not threatened by insolvency [and] the socially secured transfer of employees from shrinking branches into sustainable ones”; “a public future fund for helping out endangered yet economically viable enterprises, and promoting socio-ecological transformation [where] governmental aid should be allotted only in exchange for [permanently] according property shares to the public sector or to employees [...] to be employed for changing management criteria”; “effective control and regulation of international capital flows and a ban on highly speculative investment vehicles, which jeopardize the stability of the finance system and hence of the entire world economy”; “wealth tax in the form of a millionaires’ tax of an annual five per cent on property exceeding one million euros in value”; and “the abolishment of humiliating means tests, and an end to the coercion into accepting jobs paid below the pay-scale or one’s qualification level.” **However, this big party is the relatively or at least moderately conservative “Party of Order” on social issues** like tackling violent video games (like banning them in Venezuela), thereby embodying

the politics of what one Michael Lind called “the radical center.” Rightward orientation would be limited by executive influence, by the political orientation of parties further left, and by the overall need for coalition politics.

2) There is also another big populist party of power, but one that is on the “left” and that appeals more economically to the Yugoslav model of market socialism, and might adopt the positions of Hyman Minsky and Swedish economist Rudolf Meidner to tackle structural unemployment and working-class savings, respectively (more on Meidner in the next chapter). **Socially, this big party is the relatively liberal “Party of Liberty”** which would go past or at least emulate Bismarck’s anti-Catholic *Kulturkampf* for ending legal and economic ties between organized religion and political affairs, and which, in relation to the Die Linke, should definitely be supportive of “demonstrations and petitions for referendum and civil disobedience, but also with instruments such as political strikes and general strikes [as] the most effective forms of struggle.”

3) There is also a third party or limited group of third parties standing in between the two big parties. One such party is in fact a “Labour” party – obviously one not trapped in dead ends like British Labourism, given the standards set above by the March 2010 draft party program of Die Linke. This “Labour” party’s purpose is to serve mainly as a significant coalition partner to either of the two big populist “parties of power,” like Lassalle’s long-term orientation when faced with the choice of Bismarck and the bourgeois liberals, and like the more mainstream Green parties in Europe today as coalition partners to either of the two bigger parties. **The “third party” position need not necessarily be a monopoly held by some “Labour” party.** Green parties, “Pirate” parties for intellectual property reform, and other special-interest parties approved under executive influence could occupy this position, as well.

4) The fourth party or limited numbers of fourth parties are class-strugglist left parties of various backgrounds. There can be parties that are traditional in allowing non-worker intellectuals, really self-employed service providers, sharecroppers, and so on to be members. **Most importantly, there can be a national or pan-national section of Class-Strugglist Social Labour that, through a workers-only voting membership requirement, helps achieve and maintain politico-ideological independence for the proletariat and for the broader strata of so-called “prole” classes. This “fourth party” position should refuse coalitions with either party of power or with those in the “third party” position unless the full minimum program of the demarchic commonwealth, the form of the so-called “dictatorship of the proletariat,” is met.**

5) **Attempts to form political organizations to the right of the “Party of Order” would receive executive treatment not unlike the full spectrum of the Kremlin’s treatment of liberal opposition groups or similar treatment in neighbouring Belarus:** immediate criminalization for actions like receiving funds from foreign capitalists and their governments, more mundane haranguing, collective monopoly on electoral registration to be held by the four parties or groups of parties (so that, like with the difficulties of third-party registration in the US, this further-right opposition would be forced to file endless stacks of papers, go through long waiting times, and so on), coordinated media taboos, and Potemkin diversions (pseudo-parties staffed entirely by public agents with the goal of dividing the further-right opposition, all the while making organizational and political mishaps at that opposition’s expense).

CHAPTER 9: ECONOMIC “NATIONAL-DEMOCRATIZATION”

“Non-capitalistic development does not ensure an immediate transition to socialism. But it is the start of a social-economical development that creates the necessary base to form a socialist society.” (Veniamin Evgenevich Chirkin)

Except for the commentary on the directional demand regarding the monopolization of all commercial and consumer credit in the hands of a single transnational bank under absolute public ownership, not much else has been said on the so-called “nationalization” question, precisely due to its historically disproportionate programmatic standing (relative to other, more disparate economic demands raised by the class-strugglist left) and also due to its national nature or, in the case of a political entity like the European Union, its multinational nature (thereby putting material limits to the potential for transnational class struggle on this question). With all the half-hearted, debt-heavy “nationalizations” that have occurred as of late in the leading bourgeois-capitalist nations, and even with the historical record of “social-democratic” nationalizations, **it is**

no longer sufficient to advocate nationalizations (that is, permanent capitalist nationalizations) even on the level of radical reforms – much less lump the alternative with other economic reform demands that are more disparate but transnational in scope.

“National-Democratization” and “Industrial Complexes”

During the 24th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1971, party leader Leonid Brezhnev suggested “non-capitalist development” in the former colonial countries, referring specifically to the superfluous role of the bourgeoisie in the money-commodities-money process, known otherwise as capital (while Mao polished China’s relations with the most reactionary bourgeois-capitalist governments). This was elaborated upon further by academician Veniamin Evgenevich Chirkin in his *A Socialist-Oriented State: Instrument of Revolutionary Change*. Notwithstanding a scathing but ultimately poor rebuttal by the “anti-revisionist Marxist Leninist” Ludo Martens later on in his *Leonid I. Brezhnev and the National-Democratic Revolution*, and notwithstanding the irony that was lost on the Soviet government, Chirkin did indeed have in mind the rebuttal of one Eugen Duhring by Frederick Engels, better known nowadays as *Anti-Duhring*:

The period of industrial high pressure, with its unbounded inflation of credit, not less than the crash itself, by the collapse of great capitalist establishments, tends to bring about that form of the socialisation of great masses of means of production and of communication which we meet with in the different kinds of joint-stock companies. Many of these means of production and of communication are, from the outset, so colossal that, like the railways, they exclude all other forms of capitalistic exploitation. At a further stage of evolution this form also becomes insufficient: the official representative of capitalist society – the state – will ultimately have to undertake the direction of production.

[...]

*If the crises demonstrate the incapacity of the bourgeoisie for managing any longer modern productive forces, the transformation of the great establishments for production and distribution into joint-stock companies and state property shows how unnecessary the bourgeoisie are for that purpose. **All the social functions of the capitalist are now performed by salaried employees. The capitalist has no further social function than that of pocketing dividends, tearing off coupons, and gambling on the Stock Exchange, where the different capitalists despoil one another of their capital.***

[...]

But the transformation, either into joint-stock companies, or into state ownership, does not do away with the capitalistic nature of the productive forces. In the joint-stock companies this is obvious. And the modern state, again, is only the organisation that bourgeois society takes on in order to support the general external conditions of the capitalist mode of production against the encroachments of the workers as well as of individual capitalists. The modern state, no matter what its form, is essentially a capitalist machine, the state of the capitalists, the ideal personification of the total national capital. The more it proceeds to the taking over of productive forces, the more does it actually become the national capitalist, the more citizens does it exploit. The workers remain wage-workers – proletarians. The capitalist relation is not done away with. It is rather brought to a head. But, brought to a head, it topples over. State ownership of the productive forces is not the solution of the conflict, but concealed within it are the technical conditions that form the elements of that solution.

As a small tribute to Chirkin’s economic elaboration of the Soviet government’s “national-democratic revolution” concept, the term “national-democratization” – the combination of permanent capitalist nationalization with the “democratization” (hence the hyphen) of co-management participation by non-management employees, existing customers, suppliers, joint venture partners, creditors, prospective customers, activist groups, and local and higher-level communities – should be used when referring to “anti-capitalist” nationalization reforms and multinational equivalents directed democratically against private ownership and elite management of significant productive and other non-possessive property, **especially those generating merely, to use the language of classical political economy, economic rent** (not taking into account Marx’s expansion of this term towards equivalence with surplus value).

Just how significant are the “significant” productive and non-possessive properties? Consider a key remark in the farewell address of US president Dwight Eisenhower:

*This conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry is new in the American experience. **The total influence – economic, political, even spiritual – is felt in every city, every statehouse, every office of the federal government.** We recognize the imperative need for this development. Yet we must not fail to comprehend its grave implications. **Our toil, resources and livelihood are all involved; so is the very structure of our society. In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex.** The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist. We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes.*

Although Eisenhower referred to the military-industrial complex, other “industrial complexes” – not just mere “industries” – have arisen from many of these “significant” productive and non-possessive properties, each of which has “unwarranted [private] influence,” and each of which constitutes a part of the commanding heights of any given national economy. Once more, the rather incomplete “totality” of the suggested national-democratization measures is, since the measures themselves are or have proven to be quite achievable (less the “democratization”) under bourgeois-fied commodity production, on the level of radical reforms. **The radical reform measures themselves, even if carried out by sovereign socioeconomic governments directly representative of ordinary people and accompanied by other “democratization” measures, are by no means intended to appear “transitional” or even be such in the post-bourgeois sense,** contrary to the intentions of the “expropriation of separate groups of [commanding-heights] capitalists” as elaborated upon in that Trotskyist sacred cow known otherwise as *The Transitional Program*.

Towards Exclusively Public Purposes, Compensation and Capital Flight

"The difference between these demands and the muddleheaded reformist slogan of 'nationalization' lies in the following: (1) we reject indemnification; (2) we warn the masses against demagogues [...] who, giving lip service to nationalization, remain in reality agents of capital; (3) we call upon the masses to rely only upon their own revolutionary strength; (4) we link up the question of expropriation with that of seizure of power by the workers [...]" (Leon Trotsky)

As elaborated upon earlier, despite the broad economism inherent in that Trotskyist sacred cow known otherwise as *The Transitional Program*, there are a number of points in that “transitional” approach worth salvaging.

One of those points deals precisely with the question of indemnification. Given the extremely depressed period in which the Trotskyist sacred cow was committed to written form, only the most primitive dimension of the question of indemnification was considered, one not too dissimilar from either the very first accumulations by dispossession that jump-started bourgeois-fied commodity production (most notably land enclosures) or the combined agricultural *kolkhozy* proliferation, artificial depression of wages, and extensive GULAG labour that made so-called “socialist primitive accumulation” in Soviet economic development.

As noted by Karl Kautsky in *The Social Revolution*, however, there are other ways to effect non-compensatory expropriations:

*Direct confiscation would complete this quickly, often at one stroke, **while confiscation through taxation permits the disappearance of capitalist property through a long drawn out process** proceeding in the exact degree in which the new order is established and its benevolent influence made perceptible [...]. Confiscation in this way loses its harshness, it becomes more acceptable and less painful. The more peaceably the conquest of the political power by the proletariat is attained and the more firmly organized and enlightened it is, the more we can expect that the primitive forms of confiscation will be softened.*

In the 1970s, German-born Swedish economist Rudolf Meidner outlined a similarly protracted plan for the increase of real social savings and investment (in turn for, among additional and exclusively public purposes, sustaining real wage growth and the least the limited Keynesian definition of “full employment”), by first means of mandatory and significant redistributions of annual business profits – with no allowances for net loss rebates (the exact opposite of “privatize the gains, socialize the losses” bailouts) – by private enterprises with more workers than a defined threshold, as non-tradable and superior voting shares to be held by geographically organized worker funds; the respective specifics are twenty percent of business profits (again, no net loss rebates), fifty employees, and regional and not union-level organization of wage-earner funds. Naturally, the Swedish bourgeoisie mobilized well-funded opposition towards this decades-long plan to peacefully liquidate them as a class within decades.

In September 2008, the market-socialist David Schweickart illustrated a specific application of eminent domain or compulsory purchase that points to a more immediate, more direct, yet perfectly legal way to effect non-compensatory expropriations:

Let us imagine a quick transition from the deeply irrational, ultimately unsustainable economic system we presently inhabit to a democratic, socialist economy, one in which enterprises are run democratically, and economic stability no longer requires keeping our capitalists happy. Suppose we do get a financial meltdown on the scale of the Great Depression. And suppose we had a government newly elected, determined to effect this transition.

*The first thing would be to assure everyone, a la Franklin Delano Roosevelt, that there's nothing to fear but fear itself. I mean, we are not talking about a meteor crashing into the earth, or an incurable plague, or a nuclear war. **Pieces of paper have suddenly lost their value.** Our resources are still intact. Our skill base is still intact. There's no reason for ordinary people to lose their jobs or see their incomes plummet-no material reason, that is.*

*What next? Well, since the stock market has tanked, **let the government step in and buy up those now near-worthless shares of the publicly-traded non-financial corporations.** (The price tag may well be less than Paulson's \$700b. The government can print the money, if need be. In a depression it's essential to stimulate the economy by pumping money into it.) Suddenly our government has controlling interest in all the major corporations. **(Notice, these assets are not "expropriated" by the government. They are paid for at full market value.)***

The more primitive forms of non-compensatory expropriations should not be ruled out, however. The most obvious case comes in the form of overt and covert confiscatory measures against capital flight, or to quote the Communist Manifesto, "confiscation of the property of all emigrants and rebels."

Classical Economic Rent and Self-Directional Demands

"In the first place it is self-evident that [the proletariat] would recover what the bourgeoisie has lost. It would sweep all remnants of feudalism away and realize that democratic programme for which the bourgeoisie once stood. As the lowest of all classes it is also the most democratic of all classes." (Karl Kautsky)

As elaborated upon in Chapter 5, contrary to established Marxist tradition, *demokratia* – the non-electoral rule of the common people – or even radical republicanism was never the political program of the bourgeoisie, contrary to Kautsky's unfortunate concession of "the battle of democracy" above in *The Social Revolution*. Moreover, his musings on the anti-feudal revolution are overly brief. To get a clearer picture of this anti-feudal revolution, an excellent starting point would be Marx's *The Poverty of Philosophy*, a critique of the anarchist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (again, known most notably for his assertion that "Property is Theft"):

But we all know that competition was engendered by feudal monopoly. Thus competition was originally the opposite of monopoly and not monopoly the opposite of competition. So that modern monopoly is not a simple antithesis, it is on the contrary the true synthesis.

Thesis: Feudal monopoly, before competition.

Antithesis: Competition.

Synthesis: Modern monopoly, which is the negation of feudal monopoly, in so far as it implies the system of competition, and the negation of competition in so far as it is monopoly.

Thus modern monopoly, bourgeois monopoly, is synthetic monopoly, the negation of the negation, the unity of opposites. It is monopoly in the pure, normal, rational state.

In light of the recent economic crisis, Professor Michael Hudson, a former Wall Street economist, invoked classical political economy to elaborate upon the aforementioned historical development. Contrary to popular myth, even Adam Smith, best known for conceptualizing "free markets," meant for it to mean something completely different from the definition used by the modern bourgeoisie. "Free markets," according to classical political economy, were to be free primarily from economic rent derived from special privilege – the economic core of feudalism – thereby ensuring that income and wealth would be obtained only through personal labour (the role of workers) and through personal enterprise (the role of "industrial"

capitalists and petty proprietors). Taxation, therefore, would be based primarily on the collection of this economic rent – most obviously ground rent, but more importantly royalties, monopoly rent (including franchise fees), and interest – and its application towards public purposes.

The political debate at that time was between the position of reducing governments **as a means to minimize the collection of economic rent for non-public purposes** (as opposed to the vulgarized sloganeering of “small government” that is heard today) and the position of increasing the role of governments as a means to achieve the exact same purpose. In his article on Orwellian doublethink being applied to the government bailouts, Hudson wrote:

*All this history of economic thought has been as thoroughly expunged from today's academic curriculum as it has from popular discussion. Few people remember the great debate at the turn of the 20th century: **Would the world progress fairly quickly from Progressive Era reforms to outright socialism – public ownership of basic economic infrastructure, natural monopolies (including the banking system) and the land itself (and to Marxists, of industrial capital as well)?** Or, could the liberal reformers of the day – individualists, land taxers, classical economists in the tradition of Mill, and American institutionalists such as Simon Patten – retain capitalism's basic structure and private property ownership? If they could do so, they recognized that it would have to be in the context of regulating markets and introducing progressive taxation of wealth and income. This was the alternative to outright "state" ownership. Today's extreme "free market" idea is a dumbed-down caricature of this position.*

[...]

*As public relations advocates for the vested interests and special rentier privilege, today's "neoliberal" advocates of "free" markets seek to maximize economic rent – the free lunch of price in excess of cost-value, not to free markets from rentier charges. So misleading a pedigree only could be achieved by outright suppression of knowledge of what Locke, Smith and Mill really wrote. Attempts to regulate "free markets" and limit monopoly pricing and privilege are conflated with "socialism," even with Soviet-style bureaucracy. **The aim is to deter the analysis of what a "free market" really is: a market free of unnecessary costs: monopoly rents, property rents and financial charges for credit that governments can create freely.***

[...]

*Reformists and more radical socialists alike sought to free capitalism of its egregious inequities, above all its legacy from Europe's Dark Age of military conquest when invading warlords seized lands and imposed an absentee landlord class to receive the rental income, which was used to finance wars of further land acquisition. **As matters turned out, hopes that industrial capitalism could reform itself along progressive lines to purge itself of its legacy from feudalism have come crashing down. World War I hit the global economy like a comet, pushing it into a new trajectory and catalyzing its evolution into an unanticipated form of finance capitalism.***

It was unanticipated largely because most reformers spent so much effort advocating progressive policies that they neglected what Thorstein Veblen called the vested interests. Their Counter-Enlightenment is creating a world that would have been deemed a dystopia a century ago – something so pessimistic that no futurist dared depict a world run by venal and corrupt bankers, protecting as their prime customers the monopolies, real estate speculators and hedge funds whose economic rent, financial gambling and asset-price inflation is turned into a flow of interest in today's rentier economy. Instead of industrial capitalism increasing capital formation we are seeing finance capitalism strip capital, and instead of the promised world of leisure we are being drawn into one of debt peonage.

[...]

Shifting the tax burden off wages and profits onto rent and interest was the core of classical political economy in the 18th and 19th centuries, as well as the Progressive Era and Social Democratic reform movements in the United States and Europe prior to World War I. But this doctrine and its reform program has been buried by the rhetorical smokescreen organized by financial lobbyists seeking to muddy the ideological waters sufficiently to mute popular opposition to today's power grab by finance capital and monopoly capital. Their alternative to true nationalization and socialization of finance is debt peonage, oligarchy and neo-feudalism. They have called this program "free markets."

Particular attention should be paid towards his mention of “Social Democratic reform movements,” which before the war demanded the “socialism” defined by Hudson above. Shortly after that inter-imperialist war, the political spectrum of political economy, including the position of “social democracy” itself, shifted from the classical center to the price economics of the so-called “neo-classical” (marginalist) right-wing, with Austrian pseudo-economics at the far-right. This shift demonstrated irrefutably the inconsistency of the classical liberal position of socializing economic rent while retaining private ownership over properties that generate economic rent. Meanwhile, the spectre of fascism, again mistakenly called “corporatism” by the Italian Fascist tyrant Benito Mussolini (mistaken only in the sense that fascism is actually a subset of corporatism), rose to haunt Europe. While Trotsky emphasized the small-business owners, the really self-employed, and the lumpen as being the social base of fascism, he erroneously downplayed the role of the classical economic rentiers – a mistake not made by the very “Stalinized” Comintern that he criticized for its programmatic observation of “social fascism”:

The merging of industrial capital with bank capital, the absorption of big land ownership into the general system of capital organisation, and the monopolist character of this form of capitalism transferred the epoch of industrial capital into the epoch of finance capital. “Free competition” of the period of industrial capitalism, which replaced feudal monopoly and the monopoly of merchant capital, became itself transformed into finance capital monopoly. At the same time, although capitalist monopolist organisations grow out of free competition, they do not eliminate competition, hut exist side by side with it and hover over it, thus giving rise to a series of exceptionally great and acute contradictions, frictions and conflicts.

[...]

*In squeezing enormous sums of surplus profit out of the millions of colonial workers and peasants and in accumulating colossal incomes from this exploitation, **imperialism is creating a type of decaying and parasitically degenerate rentier-class, as well as whole strata of parasites who live by clipping coupons.***

[...]

Side by side with social democracy, with whose aid the bourgeoisie suppresses the workers or lulls their class vigilance, stands Fascism.

[...]

*The combination of social democracy, corruption and active white terror, in conjunction with extreme imperialist aggression in the sphere of foreign politics, are the characteristic features of Fascism. In periods of acute crisis for the bourgeoisie, **Fascism resorts to anti-capitalist phraseology, but, after it has established itself at the helm of State, it casts aside its anti-capitalist prattle and discloses itself as a terrorist dictatorship of big capital. The bourgeoisie resorts either to the method of Fascism or to the method of coalition with social democracy according to the changes in the political situation; while social democracy itself, often plays a Fascist role in periods when the situation is critical for capitalism.***

Social corporatism, indeed! Nowadays, the only material difference between rent-based “social democracy” and its other corporatist twins is its dedication to capture a small slice of the private economic rent for various “social justice” issues that tend to be diversionary from class interests or, in older socialist language, “sops.” On the other hand, in *Finance Capitalism Hits a Wall*, Hudson praised “Stalinist Russia and Maoist China” for purging rentier income in developing their respective economies, and wrote:

But the question must now be raised as to whether only socialism can complete the historical task that classical political economy set out for itself – the ideal that futurists in the 19th and 20th centuries believed that an unpurified capitalism might still be able bring about without shedding its legacy of commercial banking indebted property and carving infrastructure out of the public domain.

Because the answer to the aforementioned fulfillment of the anti-feudal revolution is undoubtedly in the affirmative, classical economic rent should be connected to, according to a modern classical economic interpretation, Marx’s expansion of economic rent towards equivalence with surplus value. On the one hand, this connection may be as brief as the mention of “venture” (read: vulture) capital for relatively new businesses that cannot raise equity capital in the stock markets, complete debt offerings, or secure bank financing. It may also be as brief as discussing once more, from the previous discussion section, Meidner’s plan to redistribute a percentage of company profits towards wage-earner funds as non-tradable shares.

On the other hand, this connection may be as protracted as connecting the various forms of economic rent with their underlying productive and other non-possessive property, as well as with self-directional demands. **The application of not some but all economic rent beyond that of the natural environment (already including land and the broadcast spectrum) towards exclusively public purposes poses immediate, intermediate, and threshold concerns, as well as poses the purely transitional concern of surplus value.**

Financial National-Democratization

“Even the *Financial Times* now warns in its editorials that it may not be possible to avoid much longer the issue of really taking the whole banking system into public ownership, given its current dysfunctionality. Indeed, there has long been a strong case for turning the banks into a public utility, given that they can’t exist in complex modern society without states guaranteeing their deposits and central banks constantly acting as lenders of last resort.” (Leo Panitch)

It is interesting to note the market-socialist David Schweickart referred to and approved of the same editorial alluded to by Leo Panitch, one by Willem Buiter, a professor of European political economy at the London School of Economics and the former head of the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development. In *The end of American capitalism as we knew it*, Buiter wrote:

Is the reality of the modern, transactions-oriented model of financial capitalism indeed that large private firms make enormous private profits when the going is good and get bailed out and taken into temporary public ownership when the going gets bad, with the taxpayer taking the risk and the losses?

*If so, then why not keep these activities in permanent public ownership? **There is a long-standing argument that there is no real case for private ownership of deposit-taking banking institutions, because these cannot exist safely without a deposit guarantee and/or lender of last resort facilities, that are ultimately underwritten by the taxpayer.***

Even where private deposit insurance exists, this is only sufficient to handle bank runs on a subset of the banks in the system. Private banks collectively cannot self-insure against a generalised run on the banks. Once the state underwrites the deposits or makes alternative funding available as lender of last resort, deposit-based banking is a license to print money.

*That suggests that either deposit-banking licenses should be periodically auctioned off competitively or that deposit-taking banks should be in public ownership to ensure that the taxpayer gets the rents as well as the risks. **The argument that financial intermediation cannot be entrusted to the private sector can now be extended to include the new, transactions-oriented, capital-markets-based forms of financial capitalism.***

It should be noted that “bank runs on a subset of the banks in the system” vs. “generalized run on the banks” refers to fractional reserve banking; even credit unions and employee-owned cooperative banks keep only a fraction of deposits in highly liquid reserves, lend out the rest, and all the while are legally obligated to redeem all deposits upon customer demand. For all the rhetoric by Milton Friedman, the rest of the Chicago School, the Austrian School further to their right, and other right-wing economists on fractional reserve banking as the main culprit behind debt bubbles, they miss the point: **under the present financial system, the amount of public management over M0, M1, M2, and the entire money supply generally is almost non-existent.** A national-democratized financial monopoly beyond even the limitations of the former *Gosbank SSSR* (USSR State Bank), along with the extension of this public monopoly on money supply management into the general provision of commercial and consumer credit (implying the elimination of even credit unions and employee-owned cooperative banks), is the only way towards achieving at least substantive public management over the money supply. This is just as applicable if not moreso at the level of entities like the European Union and its European Central Bank, recalling Marx’s more reform-oriented “The whole of Germany shall be declared a single and indivisible republic [...] A state bank, whose paper issues are legal tender, shall replace all private banks” – shortly after publishing the Communist Manifesto. Such a monopoly is also the only way to make substantive inroads against the massive behemoth of derivatives trading currently done by hedge funds, clearing houses, and the like – not to mention speculative trading in general like in stock exchanges.

In early 2009, political economist Paulo L dos Santos went further in addressing the appropriate purchase prices based on the market capitalization of these financial institutions, particularly those in trouble:

*There is a simple, rational alternative that needs urgent public discussion. Expropriate the banks – or, for those partial to more diplomatic language, **nationalise them at the market prices that would prevail had the public not poured hundreds of billions into them.** Then run the banks under the sole imperative of stabilising the financial system and paving the way for economic recovery, with no constraints imposed by the need to attract private capital or maintain future private franchise value.*

*Expropriation would lower the fiscal impact of state intervention. **It would also curb the massive hoarding currently taking place as banks try to build up capitalisation levels.** State banks could maintain lower capital reserves – after all, the only thing maintaining public confidence in the solvency of banks are state guarantees. This would allow additional room for credit creation, and render recent interest rate cuts effective.*

*State banks would also be able to provide relief on the debts currently saddling many households, helping provide a welcome boost to aggregate demand. **Lastly, state banks could curb the more egregious practices of private banks: exorbitant account, overdraft and transaction fees; interest rates on credit to households; gains made on trading and own accounts at the expense of retail savers; and, of course, bonuses.***

***These measures are unlikely to be taken by currently dominant political forces, even though such policies are neither socialist nor in themselves steps towards socialism. They are just rational attempts to stop the current economic bloodletting.** Economic recovery will require taking on the long-term systemic economic imbalances that conditioned the current meltdown. Those include falling real investment by non-financial corporations, mediocre productivity growth, growing private provision of pensions, health and education, and rising inequality. Addressing those issues will require significant socialist inroads into the functioning of the economy and dramatic political changes. They also require an integrated, long-term understanding of the current crisis and secular developments in the real economy. Stay tuned.*

Many have tried to contrast the role of financial capital with that of the older industrial capital, usually by resorting to some form of ethics. Keynes himself openly distinguished between the “entrepreneur” and the “capitalist” (financiers, short-sellers of shares and similar speculators in derivatives and currency exchange, etc.), but the market-socialist David Schweickart made the most obvious point in his book *Against Capitalism* about the system inherently joining the two:

It is true that some capitalists innovate, reorganize, and manage, but it is also true that many do not. This fact, if not its ethical implications, is acknowledged by most economists; it is reflected, for example, in the standard distinction between interest and profit. Profit is the residual accruing to the entrepreneurial after wage, rental, and interest accounts have been paid.

The basic problem for one trying to justify capitalism (noncomparatively) is precisely this category: interest, a return that requires neither risk nor entrepreneurial activity on the part of the recipient.

***Time preference need not enter into the explanation of the capitalist's behavior any more than the entrepreneur's.** If Marx and Weber are right, the motivational structure for the paradigmatic capitalist is accumulation, not consumption. Moneymaking becomes an end in itself. **The capitalist qua capitalist invests now not to have more to consume later but to have more to invest later.** As Marx puts it, “Accumulate, accumulate. That is Moses and the prophets.”*

One last aspect of financial national-democratization should be touched upon, and indeed it is about an ethical position as much as it is about the numerical difference between assets and liabilities: equity. In several pre-industrial societies, there were taboos against charging interest on loans or – to use an older word – usury. There were also equitable rules on secured loans. For example, Exodus 22:25-27, Deuteronomy 23:20-21, and rabbinical literature prohibit the charging of interest to Israelites (except when a life is in danger) as well as the using for loan security items needed by the poor among them to survive (garments needed by the poor among them to survive cold nights or flour-making millstones, but other items are implied as well) – quite a contrast to the Catholic-imposed privilege of charging usury enjoyed by medieval Jewish usurers but for the convenient purpose of anti-Semitic scapegoating later on, and certainly a contrast to the financial practices of modern Israeli society! Meanwhile, the anti-usury Islamic finance has a Sumerian precedent which could be applied today, free of pork and alcohol limitations and applied especially towards venture (read: vulture) capital activities: agreements between the *de facto* creditor and the *de facto* debtor whereby the latter would manage the new business venture and the former would invest in the business venture, assuming typical business risk to income stability but deriving income in the form of

profits. **To revisit what Santos discussed above, a national-democratized financial monopoly should be more than capable of absorbing, say, the higher risk to income stability posed by small cooperatives or small-business proprietorships as it effectively nationalizes those debtors' operations in the financing agreements – only to effectively re-privatize them as equitable profits (and not interest) due the monopoly reduce that monopoly's ownership positions.**

National-Democratization, Energy-Industrial Complexes, and Joint Ventures

"Incidentally, it is only the Anglo-Saxon countries (the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, and Canada) where the energy sectors are not the property of the state." (Vyacheslav Nikonov)

Apart from the Anglo-Saxon countries, almost all countries maintain energy companies under state ownership. This was asserted in late 2004 by the aforementioned grandson of Vyacheslav Molotov (Stalin's long-standing foreign minister) in his capacity as a pro-Kremlin political scientist. In fact, and according to the Baker Institute for Public Policy, **state-owned energy companies control at least 77% of the world's proved oil reserves, and prohibit any form of minority equity shares held by domestic or foreign private-sector energy companies.** Here are a few of these state-owned energy companies, seven of whom were dubbed by the *Financial Times* as the "new Seven Sisters" in energy: Gazprom, Iraq National Oil Company, National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC), Petrochina (now vying to become the world's biggest company by market capitalization), Petróleo Brasileiro (Petrobras), Petroleos de Venezuela (PDVSA), Petrolim Nasional Berhad (hence Malaysia's extravagant Petronas Twin Towers), Saudi Aramco, and Statoil. It should be noted that the "new Seven Sisters" alone control more than a third of the world's proved oil reserves. Nowadays, the old "Seven Sisters" – among them ExxonMobil, Chevron, Royal Dutch Shell, and the troubled British Petroleum (troubled with its recent oil spill) – control less than 10% of the world's proved oil reserves, and this number will only decrease. Joint ventures between private-sector energy companies and state-owned energy companies amount to 7%, but this number is expected to decrease as well.

In South America, a new form of joint venture has emerged: between state-owned energy companies. In 2008, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev started his first trip to Brazil by stopping at the corporate headquarters of Petrobras and made clear Gazprom's intentions to pursue further joint ventures with Petrobras apart from the existing ones. In 2009, Petrochina and PDVSA made a similar joint venture by agreeing to build a refinery in the Guangdong province. Although not an agreement between state energy companies, the state-owned China Development Bank agreed to lend Petrobras up to \$10 billion for developing further its oil reserves, most notably development under a newly created and purely state-owned Petrosal. **Although this form of cooperation between state-owned companies has yet to be seen in other industrial-complexes of the global economy, the key demand to be gleaned from this modifies the national-populist demand to abolish foreign ownership stakes in the domestic economy;** the modification is the taking into account of technical expertise provided by national-democratized commercial entities from abroad in joint ventures, as well as of rapid engineer education and equipment production programs for related input shortages.

While all of the above deals with the upstream operations in oil and gas – exploration, recovery, and production – **national-democratization should cover the entire energy-industrial complex**, which includes downstream oil and gas operations (refinement, commercial distribution, and the typical retail distribution outlets on street corners), energy utilities such as those running hydroelectric dams and fission-based nuclear plants, everything that has to do with more environmentally friendly and longer-term renewable energy sources such as wind or solar or geothermal energy, and of course all fusion-based nuclear power research and development.

National-Democratization, Industrial Complexes in Food Production, and Agrarian Populism

"The agrarian questions are too important to be passed in silence for, in spite of all technical revolutions, agriculture remains the basis of our existence. And the farmers are too powerful a class to be indifferent to their antagonism. But though different interests may divide the proletariat and the farmers, which make it impossible to unite them in the same party forever, still they have many points of agreement as against other classes that make a temporary alliance not only possible, but also desirable. And a great many antagonisms are really founded on prejudice and may be overcome by enlightenment. Not party membership, but a better understanding of our aims and a temporary alliance, that may be gained by our agitation among farmers. Indeed, situations may arise, in which it will be very valuable to have them as our allies. Agitation among farmers in this sense, wherever conditions seem favorable, is not only worth

considering but very desirable, providing it is not carried on at the expense of the industrial and rural wage workers." (Karl Kautsky)

While Kautsky's views on *die Agrarfrage* ("the agrarian question") were more fully expressed in his 1899 work of that same German phrase, he made more political remarks in his article on farmer agitation in the US. Only after a few years after defending the exclusively worker character of the then-Marxist Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (SPD) from opportunists who wanted to admit small tenant farmers and sharecroppers into the party (a lesson that the most prominent of this theoretical mentor's followers abandoned in early 1923 despite his political testament), Kautsky nevertheless committed to better understanding between worker-class political forces and the forces of agrarian populism, agrarian radicalism, agrarian socialism, etc.

In order to obtain an understanding of this micro-political dynamic in food production, consideration should be given first to industrial, macro-political, engineering, and historical dynamics in food production. Starting with the industrial, one can find that **food production (or nutrition production) is indeed as much an industrial complex as the military- and energy-industrial ones, spanning agricultural inputs, aquaculture, food processing, industrial fishing, and much more.** Moreover, food production is no exception when it comes to the concentration of capital, as noted by Timothy Wise and Sarah Trist in their August 2010 analysis of hog markets:

The U.S. Departments of Justice (DOJ) and Agriculture (USDA) have focused attention recently on rising levels of corporate concentration in agricultural markets and the challenges that may pose to U.S. anti-trust enforcement and agricultural policies. Both agencies have raised particular concerns about dominant firms' exercise of buyer power over farmers, especially in livestock markets controlled by a shrinking number of large multinational meat packers.

U.S. hog markets have undergone rapid concentration in the last twenty-five years, with the top four packers now controlling two-thirds of the market. Mergers and acquisitions have left Smithfield Foods, the industry leader with 31 percent of the market, as the only buyer in the Southeastern part of the country. While President Bush's Justice Department approved the 2007 merger that made that possible, questions remain about how independent hog farmers in the region can receive a fair-market price for their animals in such concentrated buyer markets.

*Buyer power can operate in many ways. **With one or two buyers, farmers may have little competitive bidding for their animals.** Direct packer ownership or control of hogs through production contracts may thin the spot market to the point that packers can manipulate prices to their advantage through their own sales and purchases. **Bank financing may become harder to secure without a contract from a packer, and contracts themselves present a variety of issues, as they can become take-it-or-leave-it propositions for farmers lacking other offers.***

Moving on to the macro-political dynamics, one can find that much of the problems of underdevelopment in places like sub-Saharan Africa can be attributed to subsidy largesse for food production in the more developed states, as noted most poignantly by Julio Godoy in an article during that same month:

Subsidies for agriculture in the industrialised countries of the world grew again in 2009, benefiting the largest companies and land owners, such as Prince Albert of Monaco and Queen Elizabeth of Britain.

The latest increase came despite repeated and consistent evidence that such subsidies contribute to the destruction of the livelihoods of poor farmers in developing countries, especially in Africa, and that they distort international trade.

[...]

Due mostly to over-production, the European milk prices for farmers were in early 2009 extremely low at less than 0.20 euro per litre. Instead of reducing the production to stabilise prices, the EU reintroduced subsidies for milk in 2009 to support producers.

"As consequence, the EU is again exporting milk to the whole developing world, especially towards Africa, at 'dumping' prices," Wiggerthale said. "By so doing, the EU is destroying the livelihoods of farmers in the poorest countries of the world while artificially maintaining a too high level of production."

To add insult to injury, the EU is simultaneously forcing developing countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific to further open their markets through the trade deals called economic partnership agreements.

Earlier, in January 2009, Bolivia under President Evo Morales became the fifth country in the world to stipulate the concept of "food sovereignty" into its constitution. **This concept goes further than the more technical concept of "food security" and the liberal concept of "food justice."** Despite inherent limitations, the program of food sovereignty encompasses:

- 1) Rights-based assertions on universal access to safe, nutritious and culturally appropriate food in sufficient quantity and quality to sustain healthy lives;
- 2) Land redistributions to sharecroppers and indigenous communities without discrimination on the basis of gender, race, class, and religious or political beliefs;
- 3) Sustainable care and use of natural resources without intellectual property rights as obstacles, most notably patents (as discussed in Chapter 6);
- 4) Self-sufficiency in food production;
- 5) Drastic reductions in influence over agricultural policies held by multinational corporations;
- 6) Social peace on the question of food, ranging from food not being used as geopolitical weapons to combating racism on the part of small farmers; and
- 7) Greater democracy in formulating agricultural policies from the local level to the global level.

Turning to the engineering dynamics, I wrote in my earlier work that food production should meet a demand from three sources: organic food consumption, biofuel production, and typical food consumption. The shortsighted but prevailing approach today is one of further development of agricultural technology in order to increase production for the two latter demand sources, thereby freeing up land for organic food production. However, there is only so much arable land on the planet. **It is here that radical engineering should be considered, most notably the concept of vertical food production.** According to Dr. Dickson Despommier of The Vertical Farm Project, the concept has at least the following advantages:

- 1) Because multiple floors are being used, one indoor acre is equivalent to several outdoor acres;
- 2) Droughts, floods, pests, and other weather-related crop failures are avoided due to growing the crops inside, capitalizing on ongoing research and development on light-emitting diodes (LED) as grow lights;
- 3) Organic food production and overall food production can be increased at the same time, with vertical farms having the ability to produce food organically without pests as a problem;
- 4) Some industrial equipment, such as tractors, will be rendered unnecessary; and
- 5) With all the current discussions on carbon emissions and global warming, external farm land can be freed up to allow the restoration of ecosystems, which in turn will absorb more carbon.

Despite ecological pretenses and the inadaptability of certain agricultural products to growth within such an environment, vertical food production is as an industrial a form of food production as more stereotypical factory farming. Just the mere construction of these more than offsets the non-industrial absence of tractors and pesticides. Indeed, vertical food production as a form of industrial food production was illustrated in May 2010, as noted by James Murray of *BusinessGreen.com*:

For years the concept of vertical farms has been consigned to the pages of architect's notebooks, but now a British-Canadian firm is poised to turn vertical farming into a reality – albeit on a smaller scale than the farm skyscrapers you find in science fiction novels.

Cornwall-based Valcent Products has developed a vertical horticultural system that promises to slash the amount of land, water and energy used to produce crops typically grown in greenhouse conditions.

"The idea of huge farm skyscrapers is really exciting, but even those who have produced the concepts accept that they are not currently practical or cost effective," said Tom Bentley, manger of business development at Valcent. "But smaller-scale systems using vertical growing rigs can work really well in a warehouse or greenhouse and use a lot less energy."

*According to Valcent, the automated vertical growing rigs mean one greenhouse can deliver **eight times more produce** than a conventional greenhouse of the same size, while **cutting energy use by 40 per cent**. The system also uses an automated watering system that means farmers use about **five per cent of the water they would need for field-grown crops**.*

Moreover, in February of that same year, a vertical food production model encompassing both agriculture and aquaculture was proposed by Mary Rhinehart in Dr. Despommier's own city:

A "vertical farm" may seem like pie-in-the-sky thinking to some, but Mary Rhinehart is convinced it could be an alternative to a proposed motorsports complex at the old Cooper Stadium site in Columbus.

[...]

*Looking for a quieter alternative, Rhinehart is developing a business plan with **cost estimates for a vertical farm where produce and fish would be raised inside an environmentally friendly, multi-story building on the stadium site.** Once her plan for Sky Gardens is completed, she will seek investors and business partners to advance the first-of-its-kind project.*

"This would put Columbus on the international map," Rhinehart said. "It would bring in people from all over the world to study it."

Besides becoming an ecotourism attraction, the vertical farm would be in use year-round and provide jobs, she said. It would produce vegetables, fruits, flowers and fish on climate-controlled floors of a glass-walled building that could go as high as eight stories.

Although **national-democratization of the entire industrial complex in food production, with due consideration of food sovereignty issues and at least cooperative distribution, is the most obvious concluding political point** of this discussion, historical tragedies behind past attempts should be neither forgotten nor distorted. Obviously what is being suggested here is the history of Soviet agriculture. The main thrust of "socialist primitive accumulation" in Soviet economic development was the extraction of large surpluses in food production in order to pay for necessary industrial machinery being imported from abroad (despite the Depression) and to feed a growing industrial workforce. **How this extraction was to occur was subject to debate, and not a planned as some sort of genocidal "Holo" (for "Holocaust") conspiracy against Ukrainians.**

According to historian James Heinzen, there were at least three forms of collective farming proposed: common use of land only ("Association for Joint Cultivation of Land"), agricultural artels, and the agricultural commune form that did not survive the Stolypin agrarian reforms but was nonetheless praised by "late Marx" in contrast to his much earlier statements on "the idiocy of rural life." Add to that the choice between collective farming and proper state farming, and what resulted were *kolkhozy* – artel-based collective farms legally owned by those operating them, with the underlying land owned by the state and with both parties engaged in pre-wage economic relations – and *sovkhhozy*, state-owned industrial farms wherein every labourer was working for wages and under the directorial likes of Belarusian president Alexander Lukashenko. Besides problems with the natural environment, the famine in the Ukraine is largely attributable to the wrong form of collective farming implemented. Not only did the pre-wage agricultural relations in the Ukraine require the the *kolkhoz* farmers, or *kolkhozniki*, to sell procurement quotas at state-imposed price ceilings (beyond which surpluses could be sold at market prices), but those farmers' legal ownership status exposed their income to significant profitability risks. **The *kolkhozniki*'s savage destruction of their own food production precipitated needless urban food shortages like during city sieges, and invited swift and equally horrible vengeance from the state authorities.**

Eventually the ability to earn income on the side through private-plot production was conceded to the *kolkhozniki*, although it should be noted that the higher productivity could not have been made possible with the disproportionate usage of public resources from the *kolkhozy*, and of additional land for private pasturage – the total land for private plots and pasturage amounting to about a fifth of all Soviet farmland. Elsewhere, however, the collective farming situation was more productive, precisely because larger former landlord estates were transformed into wage-based *sovkhhozy*, where profitability risks were borne by the state. With the end of "socialist primitive accumulation" – anywhere between one or two years before Stalin's death to 1955-56 with the implementation of mass housing programs and a minimum wage – came the mass consolidation of less solvent *kolkhozy* into additional *sovkhhozy* for taking advantage of economies of scale, the elimination of state control over *kolkhoz* access to tractors and other farm machinery (concentrated in machine tractor stations), and even the eventual implementation of wages and benefits for the *kolkhozniki*.

Now that the industrial, macro-political, engineering, and historical dynamics in food production have been considered, one can obtain a better understanding between worker-class political forces and the forces of agrarian populism, agrarian radicalism, agrarian socialism, etc. As Kautsky noted, there are fundamental

differences between the political interests of the former and those of the latter. Even more basic measures like the shortening of the workweek without loss of pay or benefits and the prohibition of child labour within families would drastically increase the costs of food production for small tenant farmers and sharecroppers. **Nonetheless, on the level of radical reforms, there can be an accommodation between vertical and other industrial food production that is both national-democratized and free of all pre-wage economic relations – on the one hand – and on the other some specific cases of rural and coastal egalitarianism based on equal rental tenures (including redistributions of land every now and then) perhaps and equal private ownership relations in small-scale food production equipment like tractors and small fishing boats.**

At the core of such accommodation is fully national-democratized and wage-based food production for achieving and maintaining the food sovereignty program, except for the second point on land redistributions, in metropolitan and even megapolitan areas. This goes back to the earlier discussion on full communal power and its relationship with those highly urbanized areas. Vertical food production and related development in the cities, with no private-slot production inside the buildings, is the engineering mechanism for this food sovereignty. Further outward are the industrial farms, other facilities for industrial food production, and other areas worked by proper farm workers, all of which as elements of the industrial complex in food production should undergo national-democratization, abolish all remaining pre-wage economic relations, and produce for food sovereignty (except again, without the second point on land redistributions) without need for private plots nearby. Combined with the national-democratization of the agricultural input industry as well as of all aquaculture, all food processing, all industrial fishing, and so on, commanding these economies of scale can then allow the accommodation of the inevitable inefficiencies resulting from populist redistributions of remaining landholdings and perhaps small fishing boats and other capital assets to the likes of small tenant farmers, sharecroppers, and non-industrial fishermen.

National-Democratization, International Trade, and Trade Policy

“Ivan the Terrible's remarkable enterprise was the fact that he was the first to introduce a state monopoly on foreign trade. Ivan the Terrible was the first to introduce it; Lenin was the second.” (Joseph Stalin)

Despite family intrigues and absolutism, Russia was transformed from a collection of divided fiefdoms into a multicultural but unified military power under its first czar, the more accurately named Ivan Grozny. One of the key economic features driving the rise of the Tsardom of Rus, the empire preceding the formal Russian Empire, was the public monopoly on foreign trade.

Centuries later, the Bolsheviks placed great emphasis on this public monopoly, as noted by Mark Boguslavskii and P.S. Smirnov:

*On the economic policy agenda of the proletarian state, drawn up by Lenin for the meeting of the Council of People's Commissars on 27 November (10 December) 1917, **establishment of a "state monopoly on foreign trade" occupied third place after the nationalization of banks and compulsory syndication** [...] The state monopoly on foreign trade came into being with the Decree of the Council of People's Commissars of 22 April 1918, "On the Nationalization of Foreign Trade" [...] However, it seems that the principal content of the 1918 Decree was to confirm the **authorization-type system for the conduct of foreign trade transactions and for the import and export of goods, which is characteristic today of the regulation of foreign trade in many countries.***

Historically, today's most developed states resorted to protectionism and interventionism to develop, but through aggressive pursuit of free trade in consumer goods and services – and more blatantly imperialist trade agreements as discussed earlier on the likes of food production – have hypocritically prevented other states from doing the same. Beyond combating this and other forms of imperialist trade policy, there are very pragmatic reasons for a **national-democratized foreign trade monopoly and accompanying trade policy**, whereby all procedures of foreign trade are conducted through or preferably initiated by special public enterprises operating completely under some foreign trade ministry – with initiation referring to the emphasis on domestic consumption by domestic enterprises, leaving excess production to be “dumped” on the state for export at its own full discretion.

Beginning with arguments from classical mercantilism, neo-mercantilism, and real protectionism, states that are comparatively but not absolutely disadvantaged in certain industries should be allowed to protect and develop the related domestic industries until they become competitive in international trade, and public monopoly on foreign trade facilitates better management over imports. Again, **free trade in consumer goods and services tends to maintain comparative advantages and comparative disadvantages.**

Furthermore, the economist David Ricardo developed this concept based on the assumption of capital immobility, an assumption torn asunder in recent decades with little to nonexistent capital controls. **Mobility in both capital and labour transforms comparative advantage into absolute advantage**, including that found in labour arbitrage. Next, **even some states that do employ an imperialist trade policy find it very difficult to truly diversify trade**. The commerce chatter of trade diversification is empty rhetoric without substantive measures, and present regulation of foreign trade is no such substantive measure. Finally, and directly countering both imperialist trade policy and the hollowness of typical foreign aid, is the **possibility of subsidized trade for the less developed states to import necessary products at below-market prices and export other products at above-market prices** – on top of their own state monopolies on foreign trade, general protectionism, interventionism, and other domestic development measures.

National-Democratization, Health-Industrial Complexes, and Comprehensive Workers Insurance

“Free medical care, including midwifery and medicines. Free burial [...] Takeover by the Reich government of the entire system of workers’ insurance, with decisive participation by the workers in its administration.” (Eduard Bernstein)

It was from Otto von Bismarck’s Health Insurance Bill in 1883 and from the Erfurt Program in 1891 where modern society got the concept of public health insurance. Back in the day, there were solid arguments to be made that state-administered public health insurance was no dead-end reform, and that it was even a demand on the threshold. However, in concluding his contribution to the oppositionist “minimum” section of the Erfurt Program, Eduard Bernstein unwittingly inserted a demand with a much broader scope than unemployment insurance, workplace accident insurance (public insurance systems for compensating workers who are injured in the course of employment in exchange for the mandatory inability to sue employers for the tort of negligence), and other similar public insurance systems as we know them today. For one thing, there is hardly any participatory administration by all workers, let alone decisively participatory administration.

In 1917, that broader scope was defined more fully by some Bolsheviks in discussions to amend the party program:

Full social insurance of workers: for all forms of wage-labour; for all forms of disablement, namely, sickness, injury, infirmity, old age, occupational disease, child-birth, widowhood, orphanhood, and also unemployment, etc.; all insurance institutions to be administered entirely by the insured themselves; the cost of insurance to be borne by the capitalists; free medical and medicinal aid under the control of self-governing sick benefit societies, the management bodies of which are to be elected by the workers.

Mentioned in Chapter 6 was the imperative that health care reform beyond mere public health insurance must address health-related production even before considering truly socialized health care. **However, health as a crucial area in any given national economy is also an industrial complex**, spanning health insurance providers, pharmaceutical companies, biotechnology companies, providers of related scientific services, home health care providers, nursing homes, hospitals that those that specifically supply them, medical tourism, and services provided by health care professionals.

Furthermore, health as an industrial complex is closely related to other areas in the economy, such as the insurance of individuals. Sometimes in the past, countries placed all aspects of the “welfare state,” ranging from public health insurance and workplace accident insurance to unemployment insurance and public pension programs, under unified administration. In the private sector, life insurance companies provide more than just insurance services for paying beneficiaries upon the death of the individual insured, covering things like group life insurance, critical illness, long- and short-term disability, other private health insurance services (depending on the jurisdiction), annuities, private pensions (since pensions are a form of insurance), and various investment products. **The addition of dedicated pension fund companies to the mix makes one appreciate these close relationships.**

On the subject of private pensions, there are at least three illusions that need to be dispelled. First is the illusion of higher returns on the open market. Leaving aside the Iron Law of Disproportionate Immiseration and its downward pressures on individual savings (thus the ability to save for retirement in the first place), saving for retirement tends to be accompanied by a more conservative investment profile, even in younger

age groups, than that accompanying non-retirement investing. **The rates of return even in younger age groups can be matched and exceeded by public pensions** such as the Government Pension Fund of Norway, the Dutch National Civil Pension Fund, the Quebec Deposit and Investment Fund, and the smaller Canada Pension Plan, depending on their respective investment profiles; only US Social Security is needless stuck with a low-return investment profile entirely of government treasury bills. Second is the illusion of legal security over one's own pension investments. **In the recent business restructuring case of the Big Three American automotive companies (General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler), existing pension contracts were nullified, and the legal position worldwide on employer-funded pension funds is that, despite whatever employer or non-employer trust arrangements may exist, absolutely everything in those funds not committed immediately to pension payments is the property of the employers.** More emotional description of this accumulation by dispossession could be used here, such as "pension raids" and "pension theft." Third is the illusion of ownership in individual pension investments, and this in fact extends to mutual funds. **The money itself may belong to the individual investor, but there is no share ownership in either the fund companies or even the companies in the fund companies' investment mix.**

Mentioned in Chapter 3 was the point that "pension fund socialism" is merely a tool for big businesses to obtain additional financial leverage on the collective back of the working class, all the while continuing the exploitation of labour. The lack of legal security and actual employee ownership are only two of the three problems with this phenomenon. **The remaining problem is political: it benefits mere sections of the working class, not the working class as a whole. Contrast this with increases in real and society-wide savings and investment resulting from the implementation of something like Rudolf Meidner's economic plan,** for example: mandatory and significant redistributions of annual business profits without allowances for net loss rebates, by private enterprises with more workers than a defined threshold, as non-tradable and superior voting shares to be held by geographically organized worker funds. Again, the respective specifics were twenty percent of business profits, fifty employees, and regional and not union-level organization of wage-earner funds.

However, in the specific case of the health-industrial complex and all assets of workers' insurance and private pension funds, Meidner's plan may not be enough. **What certainly is a solid start, however, is the takeover of the health-industrial complex and all assets of workers' insurance and private pension funds into permanent public ownership, with levies against enterprise assets for any fund deficits, with appropriate pro rata transfer provisions for prospective pensioners, and with decisive worker participation in their administration.** The levies prevent "pension raids" and "pension theft," while the participation would be necessary in order for the new pension system not to degenerate into the joint, state-based speculation schemes known as sovereign wealth funds. On that note, one more illusion regarding private pensions should be dispelled, and this statement by Paul Cockshott and Dave Zachariah is equally applicable to insurance claims vs. insurance premiums:

*The financial system now takes on the role of the feudal aristocracy and priesthood. They spend the nation's surplus product in conspicuous consumption. **Instead of papal indulgences promising a better hereafter, they sell modern promissory notes supposedly guaranteeing a happy retirement.** The promises are almost as egregious as those Luther protested against. Today's savings have gone on bankers' bonuses, air force jets and soldiers' wages. **The truth is that the real consumption of the retired must always be supplied by the labour of their younger contemporaries.** The enormous, expensive and unproductive financial system consumes savings today whilst being unable to conjure up new labour to support future retirees.*

[...]

*Since debts had been cancelled, firms, having no interest to pay, would remain solvent under these conditions. But they would cease to pay dividends, and shares would lose their value. **This would impact private pensions.** But the abolition of the national debt would leave the state in a position to substantially raise state pensions. Relatively wealthy pensioners would still lose out, **but the majority of pensioners would gain.***

National-Democratization in Relation to Economic Republicanism

- NATIONAL-DEMOCRATIZATION
 - o Chirkin: <http://www.getcited.org/pub/101936343>
 - o Martens: <http://www.icsbrussels.org/ICS/2000/2000en/ludo1.htm>
 - o Engels: <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1877/anti-duhring/ch24.htm>
- National-democratization: "Transport-industrial complex"
 - o "The whole of Germany shall be declared a single and indivisible republic [...] All the means of transport, railways, canals, steamships, roads, the posts etc. shall be taken over by the state. They shall become the property of the state and shall be placed free at the disposal of the impecunious classes." (<http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/03/24.htm>)
- National-democratization: "Communication-industrial complex" (communication infrastructure, NOT media enterprises)
 - o "The starting point of this great economic revolution is the expropriation of the landlords and capitalists [...] The confiscation and proletarian nationalisation of private capitalist communication services (telegraph, telephones and radio) and the transference of State and municipal communication services to the Soviets." (<http://www.marxists.org/history/international/comintern/6th-congress/ch04.htm>)
- National-democratization: "Construction-industrial complex"
 - o Obama's public works plan (http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/07/us/politics/07radio.html?_r=1&ex=1228798800&en)
 - o "The struggle against unemployment is not to be considered without the calling for a broad and bold organization of public works. But public works can have a continuous and progressive significance for society, as for the unemployed themselves, only when they are made part of a general plan worked out to cover a considerable number of years." (Transitional Programme)
 - o Text below from: <http://books.google.com/books?id=kwoAAAAMBAJ&printsec=frontcover>
 - o The immediate post-war decade had been characterized by a number of grandiose projects (such as the seven "Stalinist Gothic" towers that still dominate the Moscow skyline); but the larger needs of society, particularly in housing, were being addressed by construction methods of pre-revolutionary origins. Furthermore, economic considerations received inadequate attention, so that large sums were expended on prestige buildings, while the majority of the population lived in overcrowded communal apartments or in hastily-built barracks.

In 1955 the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the Council of Ministers responded to the housing crisis by adopting a series of measures aimed at transforming the Soviet construction industry. Its thrust involved the implementation of industrialized construction methods based on the prefabrication of standardized parts and modules for assembly on site.

[...]

New projects must make some effort to address the problem of design monotony in industrialized construction.

- o "USSR Gosstroy touches all Soviet construction: buildings, roads, industry, dams, pipelines, etc., but only approves projects; industry must obtain financing for the projects from the State Construction Banks. USSR Gosstroy develops new designs, sets standards, conducts research, approves projects and building procedures, and coordinates cooperative exchanges." (<http://books.google.com/books?id=DZQ9AAAAMAAJ&printsec=frontcover>)
- National-democratization of other natural monopolies
 - o "These private monopolies have become unbearable, not simply for the wage-workers, but for all classes of society who do not share in their ownership. It is only the weakness of the bourgeois world, as opposed to capital, which hinders it from taking effective action against these monopolies. A proletarian revolution must from its very necessity lead to the abolition of private property in these monopolies. They are to-day very extensive and dominate in a high grade the whole economic life and develop with great rapidity. Their nationalization and communalization signifies simply the domination of the whole productive process by society and its organs [...]" (<http://www.marxists.org/archive/kautsky/1902/socrev/pt2-1.htm#s2>)
 - o Classical political economy: <http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=12418>
- **INTRODUCE ECONOMIC REPUBLICANISM (minus construction, agriculture, and health)**

CHAPTER 10: PROGRAMMATIC DISCLOSURES

Demands, State Power, Political Struggle, and Economic Illusions

"At the heart of the problem was the Left's often uncritical embrace of one of the most oppressive, disempowering and alienating institutions that most working-class people ever have the misfortune to interact with in their lives: the modern state. At some point, the Left dropped its former aim of encouraging the 'self-emancipation' of working people, and replaced it with an aim that to most people seems like its opposite: technocratic 'public administration' by state agencies." (Steve D'Arcy)

In September 2011, hundreds of protesters heeded the months-old call of the Canadian-based Adbusters Foundation for a peaceful occupation of Wall Street as a form of sustained protest against growing inequality in wealth, corporate influence on the political process, and relative legal inaction in the wake of the recent financial and economic crisis. Only a short time passed until police brutality against sustained protests elsewhere in New York City unintentionally popularized this initial protest movement all across the United States, Canada, Belgium, Germany, Italy, New Zealand, and elsewhere worldwide. All over, the broader political movement used the left-populist slogan "We are the 99%" to refer succinctly to all those outside the wealthiest one percent of society.

Though unsurprisingly only token support came from the corner of mere labour disputes, the kind of popular support given to this left-populist movement came from all other walks of life. Lucy Sherriff of the *Huffington Post* noted this example of working professional support by one Aneurin Rainbird in Occupy London:

*Despite bold headlines screaming about "Defecation and drugs" at the camp, **there are clear signs of it being a "drink and drug free" zone.***

*Aneurin Rainbird, a regular participant at the camp, said **there was a strict no alcohol policy and drugs were also banned.** "I was concerned it would regress into some stupid hippy camp at first but it's actually amazingly organised. There are various groups to establish a harmonious atmosphere at the camp: waste management, noise control and so on."*

The 23-year-old described the media portrayal of the camp as "incredibly frustrating".

[...]

"Unfortunately I can't be involved as much as I would like to be because of my job. They all know I work in the City. They don't care or judge me for that.

*"I am thankful to the **people who are there all the time because it means I can keep my job and still show my support by going down there in the evenings.** I don't feel like I need to quit my job to get involved.*

"The guys running the camp full-time wouldn't expect me to either", he added.

And what do his colleagues at [Price Waterhouse Coopers] think of his involvement at the camp - whose ideals seem to contradict everything his company stands for?

"I don't try to hide my views but at the same time I don't go around work saying I'm down at St Paul's every night. I don't know if they'd judge me if everyone knew - I guess they probably would."

So you don't feel your job impedes on your credibility of being at the camp?

"No, not at all.

"Although", Rainbird adds, "I spend my days in a suit working for one of the Big Four **and my nights discussing corporate greed and how the current capitalism is damaging to society at a makeshift camp.**

"I guess that's pretty ironic, isn't it?"

A few sections have issued preliminary lists of substantive and semi-substantive demands, such as in the western Canadian city of Vancouver:

1. We demand that the wealthiest 1% pay their fair share by the closing of tax loopholes [...]
2. We demand that the banks be nationalized [...] The mandate of the Bank of Canada must now include the pursuit of low unemployment in addition to low inflation.
3. We demand that crimes committed by banks and corporations be prosecuted more rigorously – a dedicated justice fund for white-collar crimes must be created. Canadian corporations must also be held accountable for crimes (such as bribery and pollution) committed abroad.
4. We demand that all income tax for those who make less than the living wage be eliminated.
6. We demand a higher minimum wage – one that equals a living wage. Those unable to work due to disability or infirmity should have a guaranteed income which will allow a dignified existence.
12. We demand that corporate person-hood is repealed.
13. We demand the influence of lobbyists and influence peddlers be reduced by requiring all lobbyists and corporate representatives conduct all meetings with representatives out in the open, with records of what was said and what was spent easily accessible to the public.
15. We demand the installation of a proportional representation system in all municipal, provincial and federal elections [...]
18. We demand the elimination of the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2001, which criminalizes activities similar to the ones conducted by the French Resistance in WW2 and Nelson Mandela's ANC in South Africa.
26. We demand that "none of the above" be an option on all electoral ballots.
29. We demand massage [therapy], dental and eye care be covered under the health care system.
30. We demand an end to gender and racial discrimination in the workplace. We demand pay equity and employment equity. We demand equal pay for different but equivalent work.
42. We demand an end to the corporate funding and control of [colleges] and universities.
59. We demand protection of water rights and transparency in all Canadian water deals.

By and large, however, only the bigger issues which inspired the protests and scattered demands by individual protesters and groups have been discussed, as opposed to unified platforms of demands. According to Miranda Leitsinger of *msnbc.com*:

As the "Occupy Wall Street" protest enters its third month, members are wrestling with an issue as old as the Athenians who first hatched the idea of democracy around 500 B.C.: **Should we issue a set of demands and, if so, what should they be?**

The debate has taken on new meaning with this week's removal of the protest camp at Zuccotti Park. Some in the flagship occupation in the heart of America's financial sector believe the police action provided them with the perfect moment to put forward specific demands and build support among the so-called "99 percent" of Americans outside the economic elite.

But opponents argue that not making demands will strengthen the "Occupy" cause by keeping all options on the table, including the sort of systematic changes that they believe are needed to address the economic inequalities that are at the core of their anger.

[...]

"Inherently, in asking for demands, you are accepting that there is a power greater than yourself, which is something that this movement is categorically against," Patrick Bruner, a 23-year-old protester, told the group. "This movement is founded on autonomous action and collective wisdom."

Indeed, Steve D'Arcy of the Huron University College made similar statements just before Occupy Wall Street began:

In part, that means replacing the utilitarian and technocratic images of a post-capitalist social order with more appealing images of radically democratic forms of community-based egalitarian economic democracy. But, in more immediately practical terms, it means a strategic reorientation of the Left: **a turn away from**

the habit of engaging primarily with state institutions (parliaments, regulatory agencies and the welfare state) [...]

The Left, in other words, must turn its attention back toward civil society: union locals, cooperatives, social movement organizations, mutual aid projects, popular assemblies and other community associations. These expressions of grassroots democracy and popular self-organization -- operating independently of both the market economy and the state -- offer the Left the crucial benefit that they do not replicate the alienating and disempowering character of corporations and governments (although the Left is unfortunately overpopulated with bureaucratic and staff-led union and NGO apparatuses that today emulate the administrative systems of elite institutions).

Superficially, the mention of “union locals, cooperatives, social movement organizations, mutual aid projects, popular assemblies, and other community organizations” might evoke the SPD model. **However, there is an implicit “movement of movements” premise, and there is also the danger here of all this fostering a “change the world without taking power” illusion**, to quote the explicitly anti-political John Holloway’s book and book title. After all, D’Arcy himself drew rather questionable conclusions about approaches to be taken in different political periods, ironically based very much on an orthodox Marxist framework. As noted **at sufficient length**:

[Strategic] principles that comprise the most distinctive and controversial elements of Lenin’s first-order strategy are as follows: First, that the organizational form of the political party should be the central vehicle for leading the anti-capitalist movement, rather than, say, unions or cooperatives, as proposed by some syndicalists, anarchists and others.

[...]

For my purposes, five of Lenin’s meta-strategic principles stand out as especially important [...] as long as the balance of forces favours the ruling class and its allied social forces, the revolutionary struggle must be preparatory in nature, and hence protracted and asymmetrical, but as soon as the balance of forces favours the oppositional class and its allied forces, so that a rapid and fundamental strategic reversal seems possible, the struggle passes from a preparatory into a critical phase [...] the strategic orientation appropriate to protracted and asymmetrical struggle, that is, to the preparatory phase of anti-capitalist struggle, is that of an attrition strategy, whereas the strategic orientation appropriate to the critical phase of anti-capitalist struggle is that of an overthrow strategy.

[...]

The occasion for Kautsky’s introduction of the attrition/overthrow distinction was a debate between himself and Rosa Luxemburg, over how best to advance the aim of winning universal suffrage across Germany [...] In both Lenin’s reply to Martov [...] and Luxemburg’s reply to Kautsky [...] the authors introduce evidence, such as strike levels and other data, to demonstrate that the workers’ movement is stronger, and the ruling class is weaker, than Martov and Kautsky have suggested.

[...]

Because it is clear, at least in reference to today’s North America, that the balance of forces between the contending classes makes revolution an unlikely outcome in the foreseeable future [...] several of Lenin’s first-order principles – namely, the first, third, fourth, and sixth – have little or no strategically sound application under circumstances where a first-order strategy of attrition is called for. This is especially so under circumstances of legality (low levels of anti-radical repression).

*Consider the first principle, that the political party is the central vehicle for leading the anti-capitalist movement. **The whole conception of a ‘political party’ that Lenin takes for granted – whether he depicts as his paradigm case the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) in the decades immediately prior to World War I or the Russian Communist Party after 1917 – presupposes that the party will be a mass organization, with real influence among millions of members of the working class [...]** Such a party cannot exist today or in the currently foreseeable future.*

[...]

*In the short term, that means systematically encouraging the development of an oppositional rather than an integrative politics: **a channelling of popular political engagement away from the ‘official’ forms of***

political participation within the framework of the capitalist state, such as voting or joining electoralist parties, into specifically extra-parliamentary modes of civic engagement, notably protest movement activism and other forms of grassroots, community-based civic activism. In the long term, though, building an alternative politics will mean fostering the re-emergence of counter-capitalist, parallel political institutions beyond the control of capital and the state, such as popular assemblies or community councils.

The problems with such a conclusion are manifold. First, most community-based civic activism revolves around Not-In-My-Back-Yard (NIMBY) amateurism and other single-issue advocacy, including the mislabelled “identity politics.” Second, much if not most protest movement activism, being too cozy with the rule of bourgeois law, downplays the role of publicized civil disobedience and organizing mass civil disobedience campaigns. Third, that very same activism tends to have peculiar views about democratic processes, ranging from illusions in the effectiveness of formal consensus beyond small meetings and small groups to anathema towards concrete unity in concrete action, as expressed in the “diversity of tactics” accommodation of Black Bloc hooliganism and other faux-“militant” tactics. Fourth, cynical yet ineffective abstention instead of spoilage and mass spoilage campaigns is implied in trying to sidestep “official forms of political participation,” including referenda, and this only reinforces the bourgeois notion that abstainers are either stupid or content, or just plain lazy. **More broadly, while the state is by no means the only acceptable arena for worker-class political activity in general, it cannot be dismissed.** As sociologist Michael Neocosmos explained while criticizing political liberalism:

I shall be commenting here on theoretical problems inherent in thinking the neo-liberal state in an African context and also concerning the relations between this state and what has come to be referred to as ‘civil society’. The dominant theme of this paper is that, in an African historical context, the liberal conception of politics, which forms the globally hegemonic discursive framework within which much of the debate on democratisation operates, and which outlines both ‘problems’ and ‘solutions’ for Africa, is authoritarian to the core. Moreover, it will be argued that both alternatives proposed by power for Africa, namely neo-liberalism and state nationalism, are founded on liberal precepts and are fundamentally authoritarian. An alternative conception of emancipatory democracy has to reject liberal thinking on the state and politics [...]

Central to liberal discourse has been a conception revolving around the idea that politics is reducible to the state or that the state is the sole legitimate domain of politics. For liberalism, ‘political society’ simply is the state. This idea has permeated so much into African political thinking for example, that it has become **difficult to conceive of an opposition political practice that is not reduced to capturing state posts or the state itself** to the extent that it seems to be universally assumed that ‘politics is the state and the state is politics’

[...]

While the state cannot substitute itself for social activities, it should not be assumed a priori either that any social institutions can be substituted for the state itself.

[...]

*The one-sidedness of a statist conception is thus not unconnected with its apparent mirror image, **the tendency to analyse social relations abstracted from state activity.** After all, a whole academic discipline of Western Sociology has largely been content to study society and culture while assuming their ability to reproduce themselves of their own accord, without state intervention in society—a position perhaps most clearly expressed in Durkheim’s work (at least in its structural-functionalist readings). **For such a sociology, political power could easily be seen as a feature of society abstracted from institutional control, thus diluting its political character.***

Therefore, it is necessary to press forward or issue demands of an immediate, intermediate, and threshold nature that explicitly include the bourgeois-capitalist state as an elephantine component of the political audience, but that also give no legitimacy whatsoever to the rule of bourgeois law simply by the mere proper acknowledgement of civil disobedience.

There is yet another problem with D’Arcy’s conclusion: this **almost anarchistic-leaning left orientation lumps goals pertaining to two or more forms of class independence together, and conflates them.** The politico-ideological independence of the working class is embodied in its very own party-movement of class-strugglist labour, existing on the premise that real parties are real movements and vice versa, yet criticized just above was in fact a rejection of achieving this imperative “today or in the currently foreseeable future.” Even if such a rejection were not made, goals of politico-ideological independence have been, to at

least a considerable extent, **lumped together with goals of economic independence, echoing the overly broad and extremely vulgar assertion that “the economic is political”** (courtesy of ever-crude economic determinism). From the long-lived cooperative movement to the premise of collective bargaining representation to the various residential anti-gentrification campaigns to the social movements for local currency alternatives to government money, **the respective histories of all these and more have, individually and combined, demonstrated that economic independence for the working class under bourgeois-fied commodity production is wishful thinking**, since related demands pressed forward have not and cannot be established on the level of society as a whole except through the overall body politic, let alone enforced by the modern state.

One last criticism of issuing demands must be addressed: the toxic notion of managing the bourgeois-capitalist state, or of managing bourgeois capital, state capital, and so on. In more technical terms, this means that reform struggles do not really benefit the working class, but instead facilitate capital accumulation and the reproduction of labour power. What these particular critics simply do not understand is that there are times when these two outcomes intersect; **there are measures strictly for facilitating capital accumulation and the reproduction of labour power, measures strictly for labour empowerment (politically and economically), and measures that can achieve both in varying degrees.** While it should be acknowledged that even the economically-inclined demands based on the game theory concept of maximin – by enabling the basic principles to be “kept consciously in view” (Kautsky) and, in the cases of immediate and intermediate but not threshold demands, by “mak[ing] further progress more likely and facilitat[ing] other progressive changes” (Hahnel) – involve some degree of facilitating capital accumulation and the reproduction of labour power, **maximin yields little in the way of this other side and much more in the way of labour empowerment.** Meanwhile, the economically inclined demands that result strictly in labour empowerment – and necessarily require the working class to expropriate, beforehand, ruling-class political power in policymaking, legislation, execution-administration, and other areas – are simply of a directional nature.

Trotskyist Critiques

- Marx's crisis theory: overrated? [<http://www.revleft.com/vb/marxs-crisis-theory-t160755/index.html>]
- “It's transitional!”
 - o RSDLP program: “State insurance for workers covering old age and total or partial disablement out of a special fund formed *by a special tax on the capitalists.*”
 - o “The argument that there is no money to pay for reforms is a blatant falsehood. There is plenty of money for arms and to pay for the criminal wars of aggression in Iraq and Afghanistan. But there is no money for schools and hospitals. There is plenty of money to subsidize the rich, as we saw with Bush's little gift of \$700 billion to the bankers. But there is no money for pensions, hospitals or schools. The argument about “practicability” therefore falls to the ground. A given reform is “practical” or not, depending on whether it is in the interests of a given class or not. In the last analysis, whether it is practical (that is to say, whether it will be carried into practice) depends on the class struggle and the real balance of forces. When the ruling class is threatened with losing everything, it will always be prepared to make concessions that it “cannot afford.” (<http://www.marxist.com/imt-manifesto-on-crisis-part-two.htm>)
- “Re-Imagining Capitalism,” Jules Guesde, and the Anatomy of Revolution
 - o “Imagine you have the ability to reinvent American capitalism: Where would you start? What would you change to make it less destructive and domineering, more focused on what people really need for fulfilling lives? We put the question to an eclectic list of people who are known for thinking long term—public-spirited veterans of business and finance, optimistic activists, inventive policy thinkers. Their responses provide a provocative sampler of smart ideas—concrete proposals for reforming the dysfunctional economic system in fundamental ways [...] The problem, of course, is that none of these ideas have any traction in regular politics. Both parties are locked in small-minded brawls, unable to think creatively or even to tell the truth about our historic economic crisis [...] Despite the so-called recovery, the economic pathologies generated by unbounded capitalism during the past thirty years are expanding. Falling wages and surplus labor, swelling trade deficits and foreign indebtedness, deepening inequality and the steady destruction of the broad middle class—the political system does not have an answer for any of these [...] The public may not even be aware that there are

promising alternatives, since no one prominent in politics ever talks about them. What voters do know, however, is that the system no longer works [...] In other words, the new politics does not start in Washington. Trying to persuade policy elites and incumbent politicians to take these ideas seriously is a waste of time. Reform politics has to start on the other end, with the experiments and experiences of ordinary people [...] Our first great task is to change the way we talk about what's possible." (William Greider)

- <http://www.thenation.com/article/161267/reimagining-capitalism-bold-ideas-new-economy>
 - "The minimum electoral program was designed solely as a "means of organization and struggle." It consisted of a series of minimum demands that Guesde drew from labor and Radical movements: civil liberty, arming of the people, religious separation, communal autonomy, eight-hour day, weekly day of rest, abolition of child labor, minimum wage law, equal wages for equal work, free public education and child maintenance, employer responsibility for industrial accidents, an end to employer interference with workers' treasuries, worker consultation on shop regulations, the return of all alienated public property, including banks, railroads and mines, to the nation and their exploitation by their own workers, the abolition of indirect taxes, and imposition of a progressive tax on incomes of more than 3,000 francs and all estates of more than 20,000 francs.
 -
 - Discounting the possibility of obtaining these reforms from the bourgeoisie, Guesde regarded them not as a practical program of struggle, but simply as a means of agitation, as bait with which to lure the workers away from Radicalism. Since in his view these reforms were - with the exception of a minimum wage - compatible with the capitalist system, their rejection would free the proletariat "of its last reformist illusions and convince it of the impossibility of avoiding a workers' [1789]." (Bernard H. Moss)
 - <http://books.google.com/books?id=quW3ZVn8WGgC&printsec=frontcover>
 - Anatomy of Revolution reproduced quote (James Chowning Davies):
 <http://books.google.com/books?id=bm3VNPIOTQoC&printsec=frontcover>
 - "First, these were all societies on the whole on the upgrade economically before the revolution came, and the revolutionary movements seem to originate in the discontents of not unprosperous people who feel restraint, cramp, annoyance, rather than downright crushing oppression. Certainly these revolutions are not started by down-and-outers, by starving, miserable people. These revolutionists are not worms turning, not children of despair. These revolutions are born of hope, and their philosophies are formally optimistic. Second, we find in our prerevolutionary society definite and indeed very bitter class antagonisms [...] Revolutions seem more likely when social classes are fairly close together than when they are far apart. "Untouchables" very rarely revolt against a God-given aristocracy, and Haiti gives one of the few examples of successful slave revolutions [...] Third, there is what we have called the transfer of allegiance of the intellectuals [...] Fourth, the governmental machinery is clearly inefficient, partly through neglect, through a failure to make changes in old institutions [...] Fifth, the old ruling class - or rather, many individuals of the old ruling class, come to distrust themselves [...]"
- "Opportunism"
 - <http://www.fifthinternational.org/index.php?id=167,755,0,0,1,0>
 - "Whilst Trotsky developed a series of demands linking the contemporary struggles of the working class to revolution, working class state power and a planned economy, Callinicos instead presents a series of disconnected reforms together with the vaguest possible explanation of the need for revolution – an explanation that **avoids any mention of the forms of struggle, types of organisation and mass actions** that would make a revolution a reality [...] For revolutionaries, a transitional programme is the "bridge" between the needs of the struggles of millions today and the need for revolution. Alex Callinicos' manifesto, on the other hand, is a bridge reaching out to liberal economists like Susan George and Monbiot... a bridge the working class components of the anti-capitalist movement must not cross."
 - Petit-bourgeois bridge: cooperativists, Georgists, etc.

Specific Ultra-Maximalist Critiques

- "Now a new Economism is being born. Its reasoning is similarly based on the two curvets: 'Right' – we are against the 'right to self-determination' (i.e., against the liberation of oppressed peoples, the struggle against annexations – that has not yet been fully thought out or clearly stated). 'Left' – we are opposed to a minimum programme (i.e., opposed to struggle for reforms and democracy) as 'contradictory' to socialist revolution." (<http://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1916/sep/00.htm>)

Specific Class-Strugglist Anarchist Critiques

- "The state"
- Civil society and Immanuel Kant
 - o "This does not mean, however, that we can abandon the concept 'public'. Instead, our task is to change the very meaning of 'public' - which is precisely what Kant did."
 - Again: *Transcritique: On Kant and Marx* by Kojin Karatani
[<http://books.google.com/books?id=mR1HIJVoy6wC&printsec=frontcover>]
 - o *For this enlightenment, however, nothing is required but freedom, and indeed the least harmful of anything that could even be called freedom: namely, freedom to make public use of one's reason in all matters. But I hear from all sides the cry: Do not argue! The officer says: Do not argue but drill! The tax official: Do not argue but pay! The clergyman: Do not argue but believe! (Only one ruler in the world says: Argue as much as you will and about whatever you will, but obey!) Everywhere there are restrictions on freedom. But what sort of restriction hinders enlightenment, and what sort does not hinder but instead promotes it? I reply: The public use of one's reason must always be free, and it alone can bring about enlightenment among human beings; the private use of one's reason may, however, often be very narrowly restricted without this particularly hindering the progress of enlightenment. But by the public use of one's own reason I understand that use which someone makes of it as a scholar before the entire public of the world of readers. What I call the private use of reason is that which one may make of it in a certain civil post or office with which he is entrusted. Now, for many affairs conducted in the interest of a commonwealth a certain mechanism is necessary, by means of which some members of the commonwealth must behave merely passively, so as to be directed by the government, through an artful unanimity, to public ends (or at least prevented from destroying such ends).*
 - <http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/ethics/kant/enlightenment.htm>
- "I also see some strengths in the weakness of the Kautskyan ambiguity regarding the state. Although these days there should be no doubt about its class character, leaving open for disagreement the post-revolutionary status of 'the state' allows class-strugglist anarchists (as opposed to the four other anarchist tendencies) and class-strugglist Marxists (as opposed to 'New Lefts' and intellectual philosopher-jackoffs) to work together." (Me)

An Anti-Religious Critique?

"I have never put this question this way to myself for a simple reason. I am convinced that the socialist idea would not have come into existence without Christianity. Christianity is the religion of charity. The politically correct word for charity is solidarity. Karl Marx saw this somewhat differently. He called religion 'opiate for the masses'. That is what he calls it in his *Theses on Feuerbach*. Religion at the time of Karl Marx played a different role than it does today. Today the question arises who in society is responsible for the promotion of values. Supermarkets cannot replace cathedrals." (Oskar Lafontaine)

In May 2010, *Die Welt* interviewed Oskar Lafontaine, an outgoing chairman of Die Linke (The Left party in Germany). This charismatic political figure started to establish his place on the left when in 2008 he called for including the phrase, "For exploitation veiled by religious and political illusions, [the bourgeoisie] has substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation" – from the Communist Manifesto – directly in the party program to succeed a much shorter programmatic summary. Later that same year, and during the inaugural congress of the Parti du Gauche (Left Party) in France, Lafontaine made an impressive speech that mentioned constant disappointment in the strategy of reformist parliamentary coalitions, saying that "this is exactly the big dilemma of these socialist parties: to formulate the principles of opposition at Epinay, and

the principles of government at Godesberg. The history of west European socialist parties in power is a long list of rotten compromises.” Finally, his charisma became distinctly avuncular when he proclaimed that “We want to overthrow capitalism” in a May 2009 interview with *Der Spiegel*. While Lafontaine is not a genuine revolutionary, he has at least followed the steps of the old Independent Social Democracy under the anti-war Hugo Haase: vacillation and renegacy during revolutionary periods, but political activism worthy of at least critical support outside such periods (not to mention being assaulted by a mentally deranged person).

The interview by *Die Welt* started by asking Oskar Lafontaine if he has thought about leaving the Roman Catholic Church – a religious institution which, even beyond state non-interference, is plagued by cases of clergy sex abuse and by demographic decline in the more developed states – and how he could reconcile his personal Catholicism with working alongside left-wing atheists. It should be noted that, in responding, he confused the *Theses on Feuerbach* – best known for concluding against intellectual isolationism such as “Academic Marxism” and post-modernist radicalism in declaring that “The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it” – with *A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right*. Also, the image of supermarkets is less powerful than the image of shopping malls representing a new opiate.

Nevertheless, the broader subject of organized religion and spirituality was discussed. **It is therefore important to go beyond the agitational talking point of 19th-century religion being “the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world [...] the soul of soulless conditions [and] the opium of the people.”** After all, modern consumptionism – as opposed to the proper “consumerism” of consumer activism and the belief that economies exist for the benefit of consumers – is a new opiate. Consumptionism can pertain to at least some discretionary goods, or it can pertain to less tangible things like the ever-notorious and fundamentally anti-political phenomenon that is infotainment.

Before recorded history, there was no organized religion, only spirituality (like belief in what is perceived to be supernatural). There were only basic rules on how not to exercise one’s personal spirituality and mainly on how not to interact with the world, rules which contemporarily speaking encompassed:

- 1) Rejecting ideas and practices associated with animism, pantheism, divine corporeal manifestation more generally, polytheism, trinitarianism or other kinds of henotheism – including human sacrifices and sex rituals, whether literal or metaphorical – and at the higher level of negative theology those of anthropomorphism (ascribing positive attributes to perceived deities);
- 2) Refraining from cursing even deities perceived to be false;
- 3) Refraining from murder, perjury in capital cases, and the Biblical capital offense of kidnapping (the real meaning of the famous Eighth Commandment against “stealing,” because kidnapping is in its own way taking an innocent life);
- 4) Refraining from typical adultery (as opposed to polyfidelity, responsible non-monogamy, etc.), bestiality, incest biologically or through in-law and step relations, and also pedophilia and rape;
- 5) Refraining from stealing possessions, cheating, committing acts of wage theft or fraud, and possessing false weights and measures;
- 6) Refraining from eating body parts of live animals or of any dead animal whose flesh was torn off while it was alive, and more generally from other acts of cruelty towards animal life; and
- 7) Establishing courts and systems of justice based on impartiality.

Moreover, there existed various negative and positive guidelines, such as:

- 1) Not neglecting someone in mortal danger, whether nearby or afar (hence Good Samaritans and supporting humanitarian work, respectively); not oppressing the weak; not cursing even the deaf, giving misleading advice as though they are stumbling blocks to the blind, misleading others more generally, spreading gossip as one going up and down tale-bearing, or embarrassing others publicly; not bearing grudges or seeking revenge; not accepting bribes; not consuming blood (as opposed to donating blood or receiving a blood transfusion);
- 2) Admitting wrongdoings and rebuking wrongdoers; respecting one’s own parents and the elderly; returning lost objects, making lost-and-found notices and even caring for lost animate objects such as pets; and helping even personal adversaries load and unload items for legal transport.

Unfortunately, with the emergence of class society came the emergence of organized religion, along with its priestly and other agents, and more barbaric beliefs and practices than than now: from human sacrifice to female genital mutilation, from generic sex rituals to same-sex rituals (as opposed to normal homosexual relationships, whether male or female), from the dominance of god-kings or sacred kings to the public depictions of their images and of them receiving “divine right” from their deities, and from myths of

cosmological warfare involving deities perceived to be false – or between perceived deities – to worldly religious crusades that may or may not curse deities perceived to be false but are nevertheless waged in the names of perceived deities.

This was paralleled economically by the sanction of chattel slavery, the ownership of or at least management over the great agricultural estates and other significant areas of land by priestly castes, the growth of cavalry-based war machines through god-kings accumulating too many horses, and of course the institution of blatantly elitist justice systems which favoured those of the upper classes.

Traditionally, the class-strugglist left has advocated for the complete separation of the church from political affairs (not just “the state”) and the school system beyond subjects of mere academic interest, for full freedom of religious and anti-religious speech or writings, for ending tax exemptions and other state subsidies for any politically active body of organized religion (a policy shared by the likes of the otherwise socially conservative “Kulturkampfische” Iron Chancellor Otto von Bismarck), and for the expropriation of all properties of organized religion not directly related to acts of prayer or worship. As the *Weekly Worker's* Peter Manson explained in response to the French ban on burqas:

Based on opposition to the all-pervading influence of the corrupt Catholic Church, this Jacobin anti-clerical secularism was based on a thoroughgoing statism. In actual fact the [French] left's 'secularism' is an impostor. Secularism demands not state bans, but state non-interference in the citizen's religious or non-religious beliefs and practices. The state must not accord privileges to a particular religion (as in the UK with the Church of England) nor discriminate against others. Genuine secularism insists on the equality of all in the eyes of the state, whatever their religion or lack of it. In other words, all citizens must be free to practise their beliefs - otherwise such 'equality' is totally meaningless.

Unfortunately, one particular phenomenon has posed problems for everything that the class-strugglist left has raised historically in regards to organized religion: megachurch businesses.

These behemoths are quite political beneath the thin veneer of anti-abortion and homophobic rhetoric, openly promote inequality in access to and distribution of free speech with their media infrastructure, are tax-exempt while operating like for-profit corporations, and have in place of the traditional land holdings and art treasures massive merchandise and service arms beyond media infrastructure to promote their brand: fitness facilities, food courts, investment partnerships, and aggressively selling books and DVDs specific to their brand. **How can the other extreme, as posed by the early Soviet League of the Militant Godless and its childish destruction of religious buildings and harassment of rank-and-file religious persons, be avoided?**

The answer can be found, surprisingly, in the development of multiculturalism and progressive criticisms of it. In 1971, Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau said that “national unity if it is to mean anything in the deeply personal sense, must be founded on confidence in one's own individual identity; out of this can grow respect for that of others and a willingness to share ideas, attitudes and assumptions. A vigorous policy of multiculturalism will help create this initial confidence.” Some have raised criticisms against multiculturalism, ranging from increases in hate crime to the voluntary geographic apartheid on the part of people sharing the same cultural background. **What the more progressive critics of multiculturalism are calling for is the aforementioned respect and intercultural exchanges.** The province of Quebec, for example, promotes the language of the majority (in this case French) as the public language for even minority groups, with the intention of forcing the kind of interaction needed between all residents in overcoming cultural and racial misunderstandings.

Likewise, all buildings of religious prayer or worship should be transformed into intercultural community centers shared by the various religious denominations. Although such a policy is a form of anti-clerical statism criticized by Peter Manson above, monumental displays of religious symbolism already go beyond full freedom of religious speech and writings. Prayer or worship services can be booked, and articles of prayer or worship should be stored in and brought out of storage areas in these intercultural community centers. Participation in political affairs, ownership land holdings or art treasures, investment partnerships, aggressive sales of books and DVDs specific to denominational brands, and management of media infrastructure in a way that promotes inequality in access to and distribution of free speech should still be prohibited for these denominations. Of course, ethnoreligious groups like Jews and Sikhs may not have to be as intercultural, since every cultural group should be entitled to its own community centers. However, synagogues and ethnic temples would have to be replaced by community centers of their respective cultural groups.

Access to these intercultural community centers should nevertheless be denied to dangerous cults and the occult, which are defined more by what their adherents must do in the service of their living leaders and how, than by what those same adherents are prohibited from doing. For example, Jehovah's Witnesses prohibit blood transfusions, yet their meetings are open to strangers and adherents do not live in groups that refuse interaction with society at large. On the other hand, Scientology extorts large sums of money from its adherents in the name of "donations" for consultations or books.

It should be noted that, although this proposed curtailment of organized religion's influence is a radical reform that could be implemented by bourgeois societies like France, it is unclear how it enables further reforms, and the principle of social labour (against non-worker management, private ownership relations over productive and non-possessive property, debt slavery, and overspecialization of labour) is irrelevant when considering the unproductive nature of work in organized religion – despite the potential for these intercultural community centers and related media infrastructure to be publicly owned.

Critique for Direction Towards Cooperative Production

"Cooperative productions [...] were defeated not only by British corporations, but by a larger force: the mammoth German state capitalism. In fact, even English corporations declined during the process of heavy industrialization, defeated by the same force [...] Observing this, Engels as well as the Germany Social-Democratic Party came to appreciate mammoth corporations and conceived that socialization (state ownership) of them would necessarily lead to socialism, ignoring cooperative production." (Kojin Karatani)

Again in his usage of the philosopher Immanuel Kant to read Marx and vice versa, Kojin Karatani put into context how the so-called "nationalization" question achieved its historically disproportionate programmatic standing relative to other, more disparate economic demands raised by the class-strugglist left. This disproportion expressed itself fullest in the *Programme of the Communist International*. Here, co-authors Bukharin and Stalin himself outdid Trotsky in outlining an almost maximalist transitional program for "the revolutionary transformation of the property relations of capitalism into relationships of the socialist mode of production" based almost exclusively on "the expropriation of the landlords and capitalists, i.e., the conversion of the monopolist property of the bourgeoisie into the property of the proletarian State" in industry, transport and communication services, land estates, wholesale and retail trade, finance, housing, and "means of ideological influence" (the mass media).

Nowadays, the class-strugglist left is quite divided on this question, and would probably remain so after the introduction of "national-democratization" even on the level of reforms. Consider the *Weekly Worker's* Draft Program for a revived Communist Party of Great Britain:

The historic task of the working class is to fully socialise the giant transnational corporations, not break them up into inefficient national units. Our starting point is the most advanced achievements of capitalism. Globalised production needs global social control [...] However, specific acts of nationalisation can serve the interests of workers. We support the nationalisation of the land, banks and financial services, along with basic infrastructure such as public transport, electricity, gas and water supplies.

There is still too much discussion on nationalization, too little on the festering problem of small-scale production and the continued hiring of labour for profit at that level, and now too much vacillating on the huge grey area filled by "medium enterprises" in between small-scale production and the commanding heights.

On the other hand, the long-lived cooperative movement itself is far from blameless. Instead of adopting and improving upon one of the earlier "Socialist" political economies like "Ricardian Socialism" (the basis of economic republicanism), it spawned class-conciliationist distractions: consumer cooperatives such as The Co-operative Group in the UK, housing cooperatives, mutual insurance, and all forms of cooperative banking (since employee-owned cooperative banks still extract from society economic rent in the classical sense). **It is no accident that the cooperative movement, from which narrow economism first emerged, has avoided and continues to avoid political struggles, substituting the aim of class independence on a politico-ideological basis with the illusion of economic independence!** As Yuri Steklov noted in his book on the International Workingmen's Association:

At that time, most of the German workers still accepted the views and the political leadership of the liberal bourgeoisie which, denominating itself the Progressive Party (Fortschrittspartei) was then carrying on a struggle with the Prussian Government to secure the franchise. At the same time the Government, of which

Bismarck, the reactionary junker, was the chief, was endeavouring to win the support of the workers and to use them as tools in its contest with the bourgeois liberals.

The very few circles then extant for the promotion of the political education of the workers were dragged along in the wake of bourgeois liberalism. In the economic field, bourgeois propagandists urged proletarians to practise “self-help” and “thrift,” declaring that this was the only way of improving the workers’ lot. The chief exponent of this sort of humbug was Schulze-Delitzsch, a Prussian official, founder of co-operative associations and a people’s bank – a Prussian counterpart of the French bourgeois economist, Bastiat.

*In their attempts to secure independence of thought, the German workers had to free themselves from the influence both of conservative demagoguery and of liberal sophistry. A notable part in the liberation of the German proletariat from bourgeois influence in political matters was played by Ferdinand Lassalle, who was instrumental in founding the first independent working-class political organisation in Germany. This was known as the General Union of German Workers (Allgemeiner Deutscher Arbeiterverein – A.D.A.V.) and it came into being on May 23, 1853. The aim of the Association was to conduct a “peaceful and legal” agitation on behalf of manhood suffrage. This, Lassalle thought, would lead to extensive working-class representation in parliament, and eventually to the passing of a number of desirable laws. One of these would be a law for the **State aid of productive associations, whereby the workers would be freed from the tyranny of capital.***

*Lassalle was unable to fulfil his hopes for the speedy creation of a mass party of the workers. In the autumn of 1864, the membership was 4,600, and by the end of November, 1865, it was no more than 9,420, when the Association comprised fifty-eight branches. **But his brief and stormy agitation had the effect, in large measure of freeing the German workers from the dominion of liberal bourgeois ideas.***

Thus, this programmatic thesis has attempted to accommodate cooperative solutions within a rent-free and class-strugglist framework by listing three immediate reforms, one threshold reform, and one directional measure – all of which emphasize cooperative production and political action as the means to attain this:

- 1) The redistribution as cooperative property of not some but all productive property where the related business has contract or formally hired labour, and where such property would otherwise be immediately inherited through legal will or through gifting and other loopholes;
- 2) The non-selective encouragement of, usage of eminent domain for, and unconditional economic assistance (both technical and financial) for, pre-cooperative worker buyouts of existing enterprises and enterprise operations;
- 3) The heavy appropriation of economic rent in the broadcast spectrum, unconditional economic assistance (both technical and financial) for independent mass media cooperative startups – especially at more local levels, for purposes of media decentralization – and anti-inheritance transformation of all the relevant mass media properties under private ownership into cooperative property;
- 4) The protection of workers’ cooperatives from degenerating into mere business partnerships by means of prohibiting all subcontracting of labour, including whereby at least one contractual party is a workers’ cooperative; and
- 5) The enabling of society's cooperative production of goods and services to be regulated indicatively and directly by cooperatives under their common plans.

The festering problem of small-scale production and the continued hiring of labour for profit at that level could be addressed by modifying the directional measure:

The full replacement of the hiring of labour for small-business profit by cooperative production, and also the enabling of society’s cooperative production of goods and services to be regulated indicatively and directly by cooperatives under their common plans.

Should there be agreement upon and not mere acceptance of this directional measure, it can facilitate the nationalization debate but in a way such that private ownership of productive and other non-possessive property is altogether outside the boundaries of debate; there can be no advocacy on the class-strugglist left for a combination of small-scale cooperative production with “medium enterprises” still under private ownership.

Critique of Growing Wage Inequality: Educational Training Income Beyond Zero Tuitions

“Free education for all children in public schools. Abolition of children’s factory labour in its present form. Combination of education with industrial production, &c, &c.” (Karl Marx and Frederick Engels)

In June 2009, the National Union of Students in the UK called for the government to replace tuition fees with a graduate tax spread out over a number of years after graduates receive their degrees, based on progressive taxation. The *Guardian* called this move “a radical departure from decades of opposition to any form of payment for tuition.” A little over a year later, members of the new coalition government of Conservatives and Liberal Democrats, most notably the Business Secretary John Cable expressed support for this. **Traditionally, student politics has been bankrupt, ranging from post-modernist activism to mere “identity politics” to zero-tuition agitation (calling upon individual universities or colleges to scrap tuitions, not society at large), and it is this demographic that has the lowest voter turnout.**

What follows is an alternative analysis and brief policy that dispels illusions in graduate taxes being “a radical departure from decades of opposition to any form of payment for tuition” – courtesy of Paul Cockshott:

*Now the question is whether people who have had more education should be paid more. Now, in a capitalist economy, they get paid more if there is a shortage of that particular skill, particularly, for example, if you look at doctors in the United States. **They’re paid extremely highly because the American Medical Association acts to restrict the supply of doctors.** If, on the other hand, you have in a capitalist economy a profession which requires education, but there’s a lot of people being educated for it like Media Studies, for example. A lot of people are being educated to do Media Studies at the moment, and the salaries that they get from that are not above what you’d get as an average manual worker. The reason is supply and demand, in that case, but more generally **if you take professions which are paid highly in the capitalist world, it tends to be the case that the education is expensive and only rich families can afford to send their children to get that education, and therefore the supply is restricted. If the education is paid for by the state, and people are paid a salary whilst they’re students, then there is no particular reason why the individual should benefit from that.** The costs of education haven’t been met by the individual. They’ve been met by the taxpayer, and **if the restriction and entry due to lack of wealth is removed, one would expect to see that the shortage of supply is removed, as well.** If one compares the situation of doctors in the United States with the doctors in the Soviet Union, doctors in the United States are relative scarce and highly paid, [while] doctors in the Soviet Union or Cuba are plentiful and not particularly highly paid, but it doesn’t stop people wanting to become doctors because many people want to become doctors for humanitarian reasons.*

It should be noted that, with the expansion of consumer credit, more than just rich students can afford education in highly paid professions. Nevertheless, there are immediate and future costs associated with student debts and similar “efforts” that are “given up” for higher income later on. Also, the analysis above – as opposed to any of the analyses leading to the graduate tax scheme – actually addresses both supply and demand and **the structural role played by privately managed, mostly private-sector, and monopolistic or oligopolistic guilds-in-all-but-name (legally controlling the “professional labour” supply at the national and regional levels with their pre-entry closed shop modus operandi and petit-bourgeois apprenticeship requirements) – be they in medicine, securities trading, real estate brokerage, public accounting, law, engineering, or elsewhere.**

To be sure, a few demands were raised earlier to address the problem of growing wage inequality itself:

- 1) The March 2010 draft party program of Die Linke (The Left party in Germany) called for limiting manager salaries to “20 times the earnings of the lowest wage group in an enterprise” (again, an economic measure by virtue of indicating a single relative limit legislated into law);
- 2) An intermediate or threshold demand was raised for fuller socio-income democracy through direct proposals and rejections – at the national level and above – regarding the creation and adjustment of income multiples limits in all industries, for all major working-class and other professions, and across all types of income; and
- 3) A new meaning was given to “sliding scale of wages” whereby wages under the suggested, multi-factor “sliding scale” would fluctuate in accordance with rising real costs of living, with limits on high-wage incomes based on productivity growth in effect due to priority given to zero non-frictional unemployment (and the related public employment program of last resort for consumer services), and with income multiples limits in all industries, for all major working-class and other professions, and across all types of income.

However, in the here and now, there needs to be a policy that goes beyond the scope of the first demand above but can be implemented before the latter two demands. For the purposes of this discussion and elsewhere, this policy, as outlined by Cockshott above, will be called Educational Training Income.

The first concern is how Educational Training Income – most likely at living-wage levels – should be funded from society at large. **The primary funding can operate just like employers' portions of unemployment insurance and national pension plan contributions.** In this case, employers would have to pay a special tax, the proceeds of which would then be allocated towards post-secondary students as Educational Training Income. It would then be easier for employers to limit high-wage incomes based on the special taxation costs.

[Note: Some will undoubtedly rush to say that this proposal is a limited implementation of the post-modernist and *lumpen*-based call for unconditional basic income as discussed in Chapter 2. Unlike the implementation of that scheme under bourgeois society, with this proposal there is no monetization of social benefits through their privatization, and as mentioned above, the downward shift in wages is limited to high-wage incomes.]

Meanwhile, the secondary funding should have an underlying aim that is more difficult but nonetheless possible to attain: lowering the incomes of the ever-unproductive and really self-employed service providers with mainly middle incomes at the present time due to guild organization. Consider once more their pre-entry closed shop modus operandi and petit-bourgeois apprenticeship requirements. **One of the forms this funding could manifest itself is the elimination of tax deductions for membership dues paid to these guilds** and perhaps even a progressive income surtax (not mere "tax") levied on the guilds collectively but based on individual members' incomes.

The second concern is one of abuse. Without proper measures, there will undoubtedly be students taking degree programs their entire lives just for the sake of receiving Educational Training Income. Naturally, there should be **a limit on the number of degrees one can pursue while receiving Educational Training Income.**

The third concern is one of career availability: degree programs with career paths vs. those without. For example, career paths in philosophy only present themselves at the PhD level. Therefore, students in degree programs with career paths should be eligible to receive Educational Training Income, while students elsewhere, even in a zero-tuition education regime, wouldn't. Since in between are individual mixes of career-related courses and otherwise, **a minimum level of credit hours taken in career-related courses is necessary to get the full income,** below which income would be received on a pro-rated basis.

There are two more concerns: full-time vs. part-time study, and pure supply and demand. For the former, part-time students with jobs should not be eligible to receive the full amount of Educational Training Income (or should at least reimburse the public for income received) that they would otherwise be eligible to receive as full-time students. For the latter, there are degree programs whose career choices are in demand, and there are those whose career choices are not, and therefore funding might have to be granted only to the former in order to prevent over-saturation in degree programs whose career choices are not in demand. Nonetheless, such funding would be leaps ahead of more typical government job training and retraining programs, an example of the latter having been described in 2011 by Elizabeth Olson of *Fortune* magazine:

Others say that such job training programs are too small to make a difference. "We need to triple and quadruple what we're doing at community colleges with retraining to really start moving the unemployment numbers," says William J. Holstein, author of the recently published book, The Next American Economy. "We need to think big, not incrementally."

Holstein agrees that the American workforce needs retraining, but "not all kinds of training and retraining are effective. Much of it is wasted effort."

The White House's new jobs council has offered familiar prescriptions to address the job conundrum like providing loans to small businesses, rather than proposing any cutting-edge solutions, underscoring just how difficult it is to create jobs.

The council has been tasked with coming up with broad fixes to create 1 million jobs in the next two years. And that would only account for a third of the jobs that have disappeared from American soil, according to U.S. Commerce Department data.

Now, does this reform facilitate the issuance of either intermediate or threshold demands? Like with mandatory private- and public-sector recognition in professional education, other higher education, and related work experience “from abroad,” **Educational Training Income is meant to pose at least intermediate questions about the continued existence of the “professional” guilds.**

Does this reform enable the basic principles to be “kept consciously in view”? The most obvious principle addressed here is class struggle, since historically the guild is a petit-bourgeois and not working-class form of economic organization. Why give free passes especially to anti-union politics encouraged by guild membership? On the question of social labour, **the divide between productive and unproductive labour will have to be addressed explicitly later on**, since career paths in areas like law and luxury fashion design, while covered initially under the Educational Training Income policy, are ultimately unproductive.

The most difficult principle is that of transnational politics. As noted by Martin Wolf of the *Financial Times* on the graduate tax scheme mentioned earlier:

As a tax, it would not cover non-residents and so would shift the burden from emigrants and students who come from the European Union (more than 100,000) on to those who remained in the UK. It would, presumably, not apply to those who obtained degrees abroad.

Like with parochial “stolen jobs” sentiments, there can be increased sentiments against international students. Already, they pay higher tuitions than immigrant or citizen students, since the parents of international students do not remit taxes to the country of study. **To what extent, if at all, should international students be eligible for Educational Training Income?**


APPENDIX A: DRAFT FORMAL PROGRAM

General Note: The most obvious shortcoming of the draft formal program (in fact a combination of the transformative program, the maximalist/maximax program, and a dynamic oppositionist program with somewhat more radical versions of the immediate demands listed in my earlier work) proposed below is that it does not take into full consideration national peculiarities. For example, in my earlier work, I mentioned the constitutional-democratic demand to nationalize the Federal Reserve in the United States, which is not mentioned below (but which on the other hand is already an integral part of the immediate demand for financial national-democratization).

The Development of Capitalism: Class Relations

There is still a third category of workers that has gone very far on the road to its complete development: the mainly “middle-income” professional workers. Long ago, higher education became a professional commodity, and while the measure of knowledge has increased greatly and grows daily, this commodification of higher education has facilitated rampant underemployment. Also long ago have the bulk of these workers been distinguished from other workers only by their petit-bourgeois and coordinator illusions, including principal-residence “home ownership.”

All the major economic functions of the tycoons and especially the money-capitalists are now performed by salaried, “white-collar” managers. The tycoons and especially the money-capitalists have no further economic function than that of receiving interest income, pocketing dividends, and gambling for gains on the capital market for bonds, stocks, foreign exchanges, and derivative speculations, where the different bourgeois capitalists despoil one another of their capital.

Overall, labour is exploited by the propertied classes, at various rates, when the labour-time embodied in the goods and services workers buy is less than the labour-time the workers expend to earn the wages with which they buy those products, because without these rates of exploitation, rates of profit cannot be positive. 

The Development of Capitalism: The Disproportionate Immiseration of Global Labour

Contrary to the bourgeois-apologist notion that “a rising tide lifts all boats,” the motions of the three “free and social” markets of bourgeois-fied commodity production, besides which no other economic gods may stand, necessitate the prevalence of the very iron law of the disproportionate immiseration (that is, impoverishment) of an already exploited global labour:

- 1) In the “trickle-down” best of times, the lot of workers’ rising incomes, be they high or low, grows worse in proportion as capital accumulates and the incomes of those above them rise further, and while immiserated further by costs on the growing but hidden consumer debt slavery that supports this disproportionate immiseration, they can be subject to the disproportionately immiserating effects of inflation;
- 2) When rates of industrial profit fall during recessions and otherwise, workers fall into precarity and their incomes are fully subject to the disproportionately immiserating pressure coming from elsewhere in the “freely” and “socially” exploited labour market – namely from the reserved armies of the unemployed – and specifically unprotected workers’ incomes are fully subject to the disproportionately immiserating effects of inflation;
- 3) When rates of non-industrial profit fall during recessions and otherwise, workers fall into precarity and much of their incomes are diverted to consumer and mortgage debt payments, while still fully subject to the disproportionately immiserating pressure coming from reserved armies of the unemployed and, for unprotected workers’ incomes, the disproportionately immiserating effects of inflation; and
- 4) During depressions, the absolute impoverishment of workers’ incomes towards subsistence levels is in full effect.

If certain, nation-based divisions of global labour are not as disproportionately immiserated in comparison to worldwide labour as a whole, it is because the iron law is devastating many other divisions of global labour, when considering:

- 1) Accumulations through dispossessions, from privatizations to intellectual property-as-theft monopolies;
- 2) Exports of commodities that “freely” result from the “social,” rampant wastages of wealth in the consumer goods and services market, otherwise known as anarchic overproduction and planned obsolescence;
- 3) The structure of modern business, being rife with consolidations at the top and littered with petit-bourgeois niches at the bottom – all for the sake of exercising as much monopoly power as permissible by anti-trust laws;
- 4) The further development of the credit system and the “free” capital market as a “social” whole through the expansion of financial leverage into ever more speculative forms;
- 5) Currency regimes and other monetary manipulations within bourgeois-capitalist states;
- 6) The global circulation of both labour and capital, including continuous imports of the latter which facilitates structural budget and trade deficits;
- 7) The ever-changing division of the global economy between privately-owned multinational enterprises and state-capitalist enterprises; and
- 8) Geopolitical considerations, especially competition for non-renewable sources of energy and other natural resources.

In spite of the aforementioned considerations, it would be easier to do away with the transnational rule of bourgeois law before realizing the extension of at least some of the considerations for the benefit of the working class, such as:

- 1) Eliminating information asymmetry by first means of establishing full, comprehensible, and participatory transparency in all governmental, commercial, and other related affairs;
- 2) Matching the transnational mobility of labour with the establishment of a transnationally entrenched bill of workers’ political and economic rights, and with a globalized and upward equal standard of living for equal or equivalent work realized on the basis of real purchasing power parity, thus allowing real freedom of movement through instant legalization and open borders, and thereby precluding the extreme exploitation of immigrants;

- 3) Legally considering all workplaces as being unionized for the purposes of political strikes and even syndicalist strikes, regardless of the presence or absence of formal unionization in each workplace;
- 4) Prohibiting employer lockouts and similar employer action against, as a demographic minimum, striking workers who are otherwise providing essential services to society at large;
- 5) Enabling the full replacement of the hiring of labour for small-business profit by cooperative production, and also society's cooperative production of goods and services to be regulated indicatively and directly by cooperatives under their common plans;
- 6) Abolishing all public debts outright, overtly and covertly suppressing excessive capital mobility associated with capital flights, ending the viability of imperialist conflicts and not just wars as vehicles for capital accumulation, and precluding all predatory financial practices towards the working class – all by first means of monopolizing all central, commercial, and consumer credit in the hands of a single transnational bank under absolute public ownership;
- 7) Applying not some but all economic rent beyond that of the natural environment towards exclusively public purposes;
- 8) Establishing an equal obligation on all able-bodied individuals to perform socially productive labour and other socially necessary labour, be it manual or mental; and
- 9) Extending litigation rights to include class-action lawsuits and speedy awards of punitive damages against all non-workers who appropriate surplus value atop any economic rent applied towards exclusively public purposes.

Basic Principles

[Note: In addition to using concepts from Lukacs and Gramsci, the next two sections unabashedly borrow from, in order: the actual Gotha Program, the *Communist Manifesto*, the actual Erfurt Program, the program of the historic [Left-]Communist Workers Party of Germany, Kautsky's *The Road to Power*, the program of the historic French Workers' Party, the International Workingmen's Association *Resolution of the [1871] London Conference on Working Class Political Action*, Kautsky's *The Class Struggle (Erfurt Programme)*, Marx's *The Civil War in France*, and Aristotle's *Politics*.]

- I) Once more, human labour power in productive labour, be it manual or mental and taking into account its technological, labour-saving equivalent, is the only non-natural source of value production.
 - II) The written history of all societies up to even the present is predominantly one of class struggles, whether open or limited, over the exploitation of this non-natural source of value production.
 - III) The modern bourgeois-capitalist society has by no means abolished the very non-conspiracist class antagonisms, but has instead established in place of the old ones new conditions of exploitation and alienation – primarily the various forms of wage labour, household debt slavery, and divisions of labour beyond technical ones – and new forms of class struggle, a socially scientific concept which, fundamentally speaking, can no longer be taken for granted.
- I) Nevertheless, without the technological, economic, political, and other developments associated with this society, there could not have come about the realistic possibility of abolishing the exploitation and alienation of human labour power in productive labour through,
 - i. Along with more emancipatory measures,
 - ii. The systemic establishment of worker management (that is, planning, organization, direction, and control) and responsibility over an all-encompassing participatory economy – free from surplus labour appropriations by any elite minority, from dispossession of the commons and more in the form of private ownership relations over productive and other non-possessive property, from all forms of debt slavery, and from all divisions of labour beyond technical ones.
 - II) This socially revolutionary transformation, along with secondary yet socially revolutionary transformations aimed at abolishing non-class oppression and alienation, amounts to the emancipation not only of human labour power in productive labour, but also of humanity as a collective whole.
 - I) Transnationally obstructing the realization of this maximalist, socially revolutionary program is the following:
 - i. Private philanthropy by “socially responsible” elements of the bourgeoisie and petit-bourgeoisie;
 - ii. Economic radicalism from the petit-bourgeoisie, ranging from radical equality of opportunity through equal private ownership relations over all productive and other non-possessive property, all the way to equality in outcomes regardless of need;
 - iii. Scientific management (that is, planning, organization, direction, and control) and social engineering by the nevertheless dispossessed coordinators;

- iv. "Socially just" but ultimately paternalistic welfare, general administration, and cultures of legalism under the ever-evil vigilance of the ready-made repressive instruments for the rule of minority classes;
 - v. So-called "vanguardism" and similar elitism on the respective parts of philosopher-kings, conspirators, and labour bureaucrats who do not rely on the participation of a highly class-conscious, organized, and politico-ideologically independent working class;
 - vi. Provincialism, localism, and ever-atomizing individualism on the part of unproductive and really self-employed service providers with mainly middle incomes;
 - vii. The fetish of spontaneous development and tyrannies of structurelessness, including the ever-pacifist politics of social evolution, fashionable identity politics, and the class conciliation accompanying both; and even
 - viii. Mere particular divisions of the working class itself.
- II) Only independently can a highly class-conscious and organized working class bring about the equally transnational emancipation of human labour power, which has nothing to lose but its chains.
 - III) It does this by moving to establish its own hegemony and to expropriate the full political power of a ruling class for itself in accordance with the slogan "WORKERS OF THE WORLD, UNITE!"
- I) Class-Strugglist Social Labour ("the Social-Labourists") disdains to conceal its views and its anti-capitalist tasks regarding the above versus barbarism, the common ruin of the contending classes.
 - II) Against the above obstructions, the working class in itself cannot directly act or move as a class for itself, let alone adopt as a historic aim the political and social expropriation of all ruling-class power, except by organizing institutionally and on the political and even culturo-demographic basis of workers-only, transnational "partyism" – distinct from and opposed to all non-worker parties, all class-conciliationist parties, their individual coalitions, and their combined hegemony.
 - III) Therefore, the merger of social labour and the worker-class movement that is Class-Strugglist Social Labour seeks to educate, agitate, and organize the various divisions of the working class and their struggles into a class-conscious, collectively unified, and politico-ideologically independent whole, thereby making that class fully aware of its historic aims and capable of choosing the most rational means to attain these aims.

Minimum Demands on the Democracy Question

- I) The more completely the various divisions of the working class unite into a single worker-class movement, the more the struggles against bourgeois-capitalist exploitation of their labour must necessarily take on a political character. Every open class struggle is a political struggle, when considering that the requirements of the economic struggles force groups of workers to make political demands.
 - II) This is more so when considering that institutional organization on the basis of the aforementioned "partyism" – again distinct from and opposed to all non-worker parties and to all class-conciliationist parties – is indispensable in order to ensure the aforementioned emancipation of the working class.
 - III) Without having for itself full freedom of class-based political assembly and association – free especially from anti-employment reprisals, police interference as from agents provocateurs, and formal political disenfranchisement – the working class cannot carry on its economic struggles and develop its economic organization.
- I) Nevertheless, the working class cannot simply administer the bourgeois state order or wield other ready-made repressive instruments for the rule of minority classes, either in a coalition or by itself for its own purposes.
 - II) Whether in the name of "liberal democratic socialism" or not, this dead end and all its related parliamentary, pseudo-representative, and other non-class-strugglist roads, have time and again compromised the politico-ideological independence and overall political culture of the working class to the point of being delegitimized by that class itself through cynical but ever-ineffective abstention, having been disenfranchised in all but the formality of universal suffrage.
 - III) Class-Strugglist Social Labour merely seeks to delegitimize these further by helping turn this mass passive resentment into mass political action of legal sorts where possible, of extra-legal and illegal ones like disobedience when necessary, and with the non-worker authorities themselves determining the level of peace or violence.
- I) The only road to the aforementioned emancipation of the working class by that class itself is necessarily class-strugglist – rife with necessarily sharpened class antagonisms – but by definition also necessarily participatory-democratic.

- II) Along this road of class-strugglist democracy, the merger of social labour and the worker-class movement that is Class-Strugglist Social Labour seeks to expand the political, economic, and cultural power of the worker-class supermajority as a whole, thereby providing it with the strength and rational maturity that will finally enable it to expropriate the full political power of a ruling class – thus ending the current polyarchies and oligarchies whereby this supreme authority is in the hands of the bourgeoisie, the wealthy minority, and among other non-worker classes that, relative to the working class, are also a minority.

This highest form of class-strugglist democracy – continuous with the advocacy of ancient democracy as the rule by, of, and for the working poor in those times – achieves a minimum program of the following minimum demands, additional political demands, and key socioeconomic demands:

- 1) All assemblies of the remaining representative democracy and all councils of an expanding participatory democracy shall become working bodies, not parliamentary talking shops, being **legislative and executive-administrative at the same time and not checked and balanced by anything more professional than universal, full adjudication by commoner jury** that dispenses with judges altogether;
- 2) All political and related administrative offices shall be **assigned by *kleros* (random selection or lot) as a fundamental basis of the demarchic commonwealth**, since the elections of such would be in fact oligarchic in the classical sense;
- 3) All political and related administrative offices, and also the ability to influence or participate in political decision-making, shall be **free of any formal or *de facto* disqualifications due to non-ownership of non-possessive property or, more generally, of wealth**;
- 4) All **jurisdiction over regular socioeconomic politics shall be materially transferred to sovereign socioeconomic governments directly representative of ordinary people** – separate from structures responsible for high politics, security politics, and all other related state politics;
- 5) All political and related administrative offices shall **operate on the basis of occupants' standards of living being at or slightly lower than the median equivalent for professional and other skilled workers** – based on appropriate compensation and expense allowances, on mandated loss of other occupations alongside employment transition programs for occupants leaving office, and on other measures; and
- 6) All political and related administrative offices shall be **subject to immediate recall from any of multiple avenues, especially in cases of abuse of office**.

The struggle for this minimum program of class-strugglist democracy, while far from realizing the principles of social labour, transforms political enfranchisement from a mere gauge of worker-class maturity at best and a liberal instrument of deception at worst – through polyarchic or oligarchic selections held once every few years to decide which individuals, particularly non-workers, would misrepresent the worker-class supermajority in the various legislative bodies into a necessarily class-antagonistic instrument of emancipation for the worker-class supermajority.

Minimum Demands for Transnational Opposition

[The first, theoretical part of this section unabashedly borrows from Kautsky's *The Class Struggle (Erfurt Programme)*, Engels' *A Critique of the Draft Social-Democratic Program of 1891*, Lincoln's 1861 State of the Union Address, Engels' *The Communists and Karl Heinzen*, and Lenin's *Draft Programme of the RSDLP*.]

In keeping the common historic aim of manual, clerical, and mainly "middle-income" professional workers consciously in full view, reform Social Labourists fight for a complete policy alternative of immediate but real, reform-enabling reforms of a politically, economically, and transnationally oppositional character, which in turn help the working class in itself achieve politico-ideological independence for itself.

Despite contentions of part of economic apologists of the bourgeois status quo, these specific demands are possible and merely give a much deservedly higher consideration to human labour, the superior of that mere fruit of human labour known otherwise as money-capital. However, their consistent, preferably simultaneous, obviously complete, and especially lasting implementation – for the sake of not losing or losing again what has already been won – can only be achieved by transnational class struggle. These additional demands of a specifically legislative and not regulatory nature are, to begin with:

- 1) The ecological reduction of the normal workweek even for working multiple jobs – including time for workplace democracy, workers' self-management, broader industrial democracy, etc. through workplace committees and assemblies – to a **participatory-democratic maximum of 32 hours or**

- less without loss of pay or benefits** but with **further reductions corresponding to increased labour productivity**, the minimum provision of double-time pay or salary/contract equivalent for all hours worked over the normal workweek and over 8 hours a day, the prohibition of compulsory overtime, and the provision of one hour off with pay for every two hours of overtime;
- 2) **Full, lawsuit-enforced freedom of class-strugglist assembly and association for people of the dispossessed classes, even within the military**, free especially from anti-employment reprisals, police interference such as from agents provocateurs, and formal political disenfranchisement;
 - 3) The **expansion of the abilities to bear arms**, to self-defense against police brutality, and to general self-defense, all toward **enabling the formation of people's militias based on free training**, especially in connection with class-strugglist association for people of the dispossessed classes, and also free from police interference by the likes of agents provocateurs;
 - 4) The expansion of local autonomy for equally local development through **participatory budgeting and oversight by local assemblies**, as well as through unconditional economic assistance (both technical and financial) for localities seeking to **establish local currency alternatives to government money**;
 - 5) The combating of two-party facades and degenerative yet professional personality politics in the various legislatures and executives by subjecting legislative, cabinet, and chief executive positions to no disqualifications based on not owning property or wealth, to mandated loss of other occupations alongside employment transition programs for occupants leaving office, to compensation being at or slightly lower than the medium equivalent for professional and other skilled workers, and to the **closed-list representative form that both achieves full or near-full proportionality** and allows mere parties, including smaller ones, to arbitrarily appoint to and remove from the halls of power those with party affiliations;
 - 6) The **combating of the anti-meritocratic personal inheritances of both poverty by children and ruling-class wealth**, with the latter entailing the **abolition of all remaining nobilities** and the application of all funds derived from **public, anti-inheritance appropriations of not some but all the relevant productive or other non-possessive properties** (that would otherwise be immediately inherited through legal will or through gifting and other loopholes) towards exclusively public purposes;
 - 7) The **abolition of legal personhood**, most notably with respect to corporations, and the **prohibition of legally defined political contributions made by non-government entities other than eligible voters**;
 - 8) Socio-income democracy initially through **direct proposals and rejections, at the national level and above, regarding all formal and effective tax rates on all types of income** – such as ordinary employment income, real self-employment and managerial income, individual property income such as interest, both individual and corporate business income, both individual and corporate dividend income, and both individual and corporate capital gains – **annual plebiscites with the ability to create or raise upper tax rates on a steeply graduated basis**, including changes to alternative minimum tax rates, transfer pricing tax rates, and gross-ups or multipliers for income outside of ordinary employment;
 - 9) The **application of not some but all economic surplus or rent of land towards exclusively public purposes** – such as the **abolition of all indirect taxation and other class-regressive taxation based on labour and on consumer goods and services** – by first means of land value “taxation”;
 - 10) The combating of residential gentrification and speculation by first means of expanding resident association guarantees beyond the privilege of homeowners and towards the **formation of separate tenant associations, limiting all residential writs of possession and eviction for the benefit of private parties to cases of tenant neglect**, and establishing **comprehensive tax and other financial preferences for renting over home ownership**;
 - 11) **Direct guarantees of a real livelihood to all workers**, including unemployment provisions, voluntary workfare without means testing, and work incapacitation provisions – all based on a participatory-democratic normal workweek, all well beyond bare subsistence minimums, and all before any indirect considerations like public health insurance – and including the **universalization of annual, non-deflationary adjustments for all non-executive and non-celebrity remunerations, pensions, and insurance benefits to at least match rising costs of living** (not notorious government underestimations due to faulty measures like chain weighting, or even underhanded selections of the lower of core inflation and general inflation);
 - 12) The wholesale absorption of **all private-sector collective bargaining representation into free and universal legal services** by independent government agencies acting in good faith and subjecting their employees to full-time compensation being at or slightly lower than the median equivalent for professional and other skilled workers;
 - 13) The **institution of affirmative action policies based either on income and other socioeconomic factors or preferably on class**, especially in the sphere of education;

- 14) The **mandatory private- and public-sector recognition in professional education, other higher education, and related work experience “from abroad,”** along with the wholesale transnational standardization of such education and the implementation of **other measures to counter the underemployment of guest workers and all other immigrants;**
- 15) The **abolition of all patent, non-commons copyright, and other intellectual property laws, as well as of all restrictions on the non-commodity economy** of peer-to-peer sharing, open-source programming, and the like;
- 16) The genuine end of “free markets” – including in unemployment resulting from workplace closures, mass sackings, and mass layoffs – by first means of non-selective encouragement of, **usage of eminent domain for,** and unconditional economic assistance (both technical and financial) for, **pre-cooperative worker buyouts of existing enterprises and enterprise operations** as even an alternative to non-insolvency restrictions like legally binding workplace closure vetoes and coupling prohibitions on mass sackings or mass layoffs with socially secure transfers to more sustainable workplaces; and
- 17) Full independence of the mass media from concentrated private ownership and management by first means of **workplace democracy over mandated balance of content** in news and media production, **heavy appropriation of economic rent in the broadcast spectrum,** unconditional economic assistance (both technical and financial) for **independent mass media cooperative startups – especially at more local levels, for purposes of media decentralization – and anti-inheritance transformation of all the relevant mass media properties under private ownership into cooperative property.**

Once more, the consistent, preferably simultaneous, obviously complete, and especially lasting implementation of these demands – for the sake of not losing or losing again what has already been won – can only be achieved by transnational class struggle of legal sorts where possible, of extra-legal and illegal ones like disobedience when necessary, and with the non-worker authorities themselves determining the level of peace or violence.

Miscellaneous Questions



While pro-reform Social-Labourists fight for a complete policy alternative of immediate but real, reform-enabling reforms that keep the common, historic aim of manual, clerical, and mainly “middle-income” professional workers consciously in full view, more radical reforms must be given due consideration. Included in this due consideration are reforms belonging to the maximum possibly achievable under any form of bourgeois-fied commodity production, including but not limited to:

- 1) The institution of **normalized planning and policy pertaining to reductions in the normal workweek below the participatory-democratic threshold** and to related increases in labour productivity;
- 2) **Full communal power replacing at least municipal power,** from the neighbourhood level to the metropolitan level to even the megapolitan level;
- 3) Fuller socio-income democracy through **direct proposals and rejections – at the national level and above – regarding the creation and adjustment of income multiples limits** in all industries, for all major working-class and other professions, and across all types of income;
- 4) The **shifting away of all tax burdens on labour,** whether such burdens are direct or indirect (via consumption), towards capital;
- 5) The structural imposition of **real austerity on the wealthiest minority of society** by first means of **exercising pro-labour eminent domain** aimed at growing the public ownership and rental tenure over all environmental commons, recycling or reconfiguring the biggest luxury goods, and especially **restructuring related luxury enterprises and industries into ones more susceptible to technological advance and more directly sustaining the workers' consumption bundle;**
- 6) **Public ownership and rental tenure over all land,** preferably arising out of earlier applications of economic rent in land;
- 7) The realization of zero unemployment structurally and cyclically by means of expanding public services to fully include **employment of last resort for consumer services** and even to fully socialize the labour market as the **sole de jure employer of all workers in society, contracting out all labour services to the private sector on the basis of comprehensive worker protections;**
- 8) The protection of workers' cooperatives from degenerating into mere business partnerships by means of **prohibiting all private-sector subcontracting of labour, including whereby at least one contractual party is a workers' cooperative;** and

- 9) The implementation of **economy-wide indicative planning based on extensive mathematical optimization**.

Minimum Demands for Classical Economic Rent and National-Democratization

[Note: The first, theoretical part of this section unabashedly borrows from Engels' *The Principles of Communism* and uses a phrase from *The General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money* by John Maynard Keynes.]

Of course, at the national or multinational level, democracy in general and participatory democracy in particular would be wholly valueless to manual, clerical, and mainly "middle-income" professional workers if not used immediately, in a class-strugglist manner, for that "somewhat comprehensive socialization of investment" known otherwise as economic national-democratization – that is, worker-compensated "anti-capitalist" nationalization reforms on a unilateral or joint venture basis, as well as multinational equivalents, implemented by sovereign socioeconomic governments directly representative of ordinary people and accompanied by other democratization measures, all against private ownership and elite management of classical economic rent and of the underlying significant productive and other non-possessive property – preferably with minimum compensation to affected non-workers based on proven need and on the insolvency-per  market values of relevant enterprises, thereby further ensuring the livelihood of the working class.  prevailing over lower-level equivalents like municipalization, the specifically legislative (not regulatory) policy demands for these are, to begin with:

- 1) The permanent suppression of all private banks and their elite bankers by a **national-democratized financial monopoly** – at purchase prices based especially on the market capitalization values of insolvent yet publicly underwritten banks – along with the extension of this public monopoly on money supply management into the general provision of commercial and consumer credit, as well as the full application of "**equity not usury**" towards such activity;
- 2) The **abolition of foreign ownership stakes** in the domestic economy **except national-democratized ones providing technical expertise** in joint ventures;
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)
- 6) The takeover of the **health-industrial complex and all assets of workers' insurance and private pension funds into permanent public ownership**, with levies against enterprise assets for any fund deficits, with appropriate pro rata transfer provisions for prospective pensioners, and with **decisive worker participation in their administration**; and
- 7) The enactment of **explicitly confiscatory, despotic measures against all capital flight of wealth, investment strikes, and other elitist economic blackmail**, whether the related wealth belongs to economic rebels on the domestic front or to foreign profiteers.

APPENDIX B: THE SOCIAL-ABOLITIONIST AND SOCIAL-PROLETOCRATIC PROGRAMMATIC DISCLOSURE-CRITIQUE

"The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degree, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralise all instruments of production in the hands of the State, i.e., of the proletariat organised as the ruling class; and to increase the total productive forces as rapidly as possible. Of course, in the beginning, this cannot be effected except by means of despotic inroads on the rights of property, and on the conditions of bourgeois production; by means of measures, therefore, which appear economically insufficient and untenable, but which, in the course of the movement, outstrip themselves, necessitate further inroads upon the old social order, and are unavoidable as a means of entirely revolutionising the mode of production."
(Karl Marx and Frederick Engels)

These words in the Communist Manifesto immediately precede the ten-point program, which mentions inheritance and progressive income taxation, free education for all, and both centralization and

monopolization of credit through the state, among other points. At the present time, much hysterical fuss is being made in the various bourgeois-capitalist media outlets (including business newspapers) about that last point being part of the corporate welfare measures aimed at the financial services industry, in spite of their common ignorance of the programmatic method employed in the words above and of **self-critical words written in 1872**:

*Here and there, some detail might be improved. The practical application of the principles will depend, as the Manifesto itself states, everywhere and at all times, on the historical conditions for the time being existing, and, for that reason, **no special stress is laid on the revolutionary measures proposed at the end of Section II.** That passage would, in many respects, be very differently worded today. In view of the gigantic strides of Modern Industry since 1848, and of the accompanying improved and extended organization of the working class, in view of the practical experience gained, first in the February Revolution, and then, still more, in the Paris Commune, where the proletariat for the first time held political power for two whole months, **this programme has in some details been antiquated.***

Considering the aforementioned criticisms of Trotsky's specific "transitional" approach and its spontaneist "directional" modifications by various "anti-capitalist" social movements, a return of sorts to the more self-critical transitional method of Marx and Engels themselves is necessary, **especially for those who emphasize the full abolition of both wage slavery and money-capital.** This original, groundbreaking transitional method has the benefit of addressing both immediate transitional measures that truly could not be carried out under any period of bourgeois-fied commodity production (in spite of Trotsky's programmatic pretensions) and measures to be enacted later on during the protracted transitional period from bourgeois-fied commodity production to proper "communism" – **in spite of the intentionally misleading bourgeois insistence in academia on the absence of even a sketchy blueprint (which is so "utopian")** of the aforementioned transitional period in Marx's writings.

The Basics of Social-Abolitionism and Social Proletocracy Revisited

In my earlier work on the "profoundly true and important" (to use Lenin's words) Marx-Engels-Kautsky merger formula as defined best by the Lost Bolshevik-Pope and true founder of "Marxism" (quoted at the beginning of Chapter 4), I defined **proletocracy (initially a contraction of proletarian democracy and identical with the classical, revolutionary social democracy before succumbing to cross-class coalitionist "compromise") and the synonymous ergatocracy** as a social system that encompasses the following:

- 1) The establishment of ever-increasingly participatory democracy, as discussed more fully (as demarchy) in Chapter 5;
- 2) The revolutionary (as opposed to reformist) extension of this "participatory democracy" to socioeconomic affairs (that is, the implementation of neither state-capitalist ownership nor state-capitalist management, but rather the implementation of societal ownership and societal management); and
- 3) The revolutionary worker-class-strugglist emphasis of the two features above (that is, at the expense of other classes, such as the bourgeoisie).

That is one side of the specific incarnation of the merger formula addressed in my earlier work. On the other side, however, is something far more socially revolutionary than even the aforementioned revolutionary social democracy of the Lost Bolshevik-Pope and true founder of "Marxism," his most well-known disciple, and even the revolutionary martyr Rosa Luxemburg (whom that disciple commended in 1922 for declaring German social democracy a "stinking corpse" in 1914): social-abolitionism.

Where does "communism" fit into all of this? As quoted in my earlier work, an aging Frederick Engels had this to say about "communism":

I do not consider the term "communism" suitable for general use today; rather it should be reserved for cases in which a more exact description is required and even then it would call for an explanatory note having virtually fallen out of use for the past thirty years.

Notwithstanding the subsequent hijacking of that term by monetary social-statists – bureaucratic opportunists, sectoral-chauvinist "workerists," sectarians, and even class-conciliationist reformists – Engels was correct about the imprecision of "communism" as a term.

Now, consider the historic abolitionism directed against “slavery” (chattel slavery, to be more precise). What succeeded “slavery” was wage slavery, a continuation of surplus labour above socially necessary labour – the strictest definition of “social labour.” Consider this modern rendition of a statement by Engels in *The Principles of Communism*:

*The slave is sold once and for all; **the proletarian must sell himself [hourly, monthly, yearly, or per temporary contract].** The individual slave, property of one master, is assured an existence, however miserable it may be, because of the master’s interest.*

The individual proletarian, property as it were of the entire bourgeois class, which buys his labour only when someone has need of it, has no secure existence. This existence is assured only to the class as a whole.

The slave is outside competition; the proletarian is in it [through the existence of reserve armies of labour, both unemployed and underemployed].

The slave counts as a thing, not as a member of society. Thus, the slave can have a better existence than the proletarian, while the proletarian belongs to a higher stage of social development and, himself, stands on a higher social level than the slave.

The slave frees himself when, of all the relations of private property, he abolishes only the relation of slavery and thereby becomes a proletarian; the proletarian can free himself only by abolishing private property in general.

Less than twenty years later, Marx went beyond the legal formality of property relations in the means of (societal) production to address the monetary wage labour system itself:

*[Workers] ought to understand that, with all the miseries it imposes upon them, the present system simultaneously engenders the material conditions and the social forms necessary for an economical reconstruction of society. Instead of the conservative motto, “A fair day’s wage for a fair day’s work!” they ought to inscribe on their banner the revolutionary watchword, **“Abolition of the wages system!”***

In Volume II of *Das Kapital* (which along with Volume III makes for a more interesting read than the presently hyped Volume I), while analyzing “the reproduction and circulation of the aggregate social capital,” **Marx suggested a very practical solution for this seemingly utopian call to reconcile the expansion of socially necessary labour with the abolition of surplus labour and even the very departure from the commodity mode(s) of production:**

*In the case of socialised production the money-capital is eliminated. **Society distributes labour-power and means of production to the different branches of production.** The producers may, for all it matters, receive paper vouchers entitling them to withdraw from the social supplies of consumer goods a quantity corresponding to their labour-time. **These vouchers are not money. They do not circulate.***

*We see that inasmuch as the need for money-capital originates in the length of the working period, it is conditioned by two things: First, that **money in general is the form in which every individual capital (apart from credit) must make its appearance in order to transform itself into productive capital; this follows from the nature of capitalist production and commodity-production in general.***

[Note: In this fuller-than-full realization of societal management over the economy – through detailed management over its collective labour-time, as opposed to management through monetary mechanisms – “producers” refers to both actual producers and those benefitting from the “common funds” mentioned in the *Critique of the Gotha Programme* and the *Anti-Duhring*, such as retirees and the disabled. As for this “sketchy blueprint,” it was elaborated upon in 1930 by the left-communist Group of International Communists of Holland in their woefully underrated work *Fundamental Principles of Communist Production and Distribution*, which illustrated how “the proletarian revolution must summon forth the power to implement in society the system of Average Social Reproduction Time.”]

To be sure, there are problems with 19th-century or Catalonian paper vouchers as labour credit for the purposes of personal consumption, per se. Even tickets, which Marx compared these vouchers to, can be circulated “under the table” (the modern equivalent of these tickets would be retail gift cards) – not least of which in order to hire wage labour. These tickets can even be counterfeited! However, the development of information technology, of plastic card technology in general (debit, credit, gift, etc.) and of the “food stamp”

program in the United States (especially with the advent of electronic benefit transfers) has made possible the attribution of labour-time to specific individuals.

In my earlier work, I gave the face of Lenin to the monetary social-statism of revolutionary social democracy. However, of all the revolutionaries of his day, **it was ironically Lenin who came closest to breaking away from commodity production masquerading as “the lower phase of communism” though state money, when he quoted the relevant sections of the *Critique of the Gotha Programme* in his work *The State and Revolution*.** Commodity production masquerading as “the lower phase of communism” through state money was something subscribed to by the likes of Trotsky, Luxemburg, and even many left-communist elements back in the day, all due to their common agreement with what the true founder of “Marxism” said much earlier, in *The Social Revolution*:

*I speak here of the wages of labor. What, it will be said, will there be wages in the new society? Shall we not have abolished wage labor and money? How then can one speak of the wages of labor? These objections would be sound if the social revolution proposed to immediately abolish money. I maintain that this would be impossible. Money is the simplest means known up to the present time which makes it possible in as complicated a mechanism as that of the modern productive process, with its tremendous far-reaching division of labor, to secure the circulation of products and their distribution to the individual members of society. It is the means which makes it possible for each one to satisfy his necessities according to his individual inclination (to be sure within the bounds of his economic power). **As a means to such circulation money will be found indispensable until something better is discovered.** To be sure many of its functions, especially that of the measure of value, will disappear, at least in internal commerce.*

So, what is commodity production, from petty-commodity modes of production in the past (Euro-feudal, Oriental, Ancient Middle Eastern, etc.) to the bourgeois introduction of and power over generalized commodity production, in the first place? Well, commodity production and the commodity mode(s) of production are tied to the various forms of commodity trade, almost all of which involve money, and all of which involve exchange values:

- 1) M-C (a sum of money purchases a commodity);
- 2) C-M (a commodity is sold for money);
- 3) M-M' (a sum of money is lent out at interest to obtain more money, or, one currency or financial claim is traded for another);
- 4) C-C' (a barter trade, whereby a commodity trades directly for a different commodity, perhaps with monetary units used for accounting purposes);
- 5) C-M-C' (a commodity is sold for money, which buys another, different commodity with an equal or higher value);
- 6) M-C-M' (a simple capital process where money is used to buy a commodity which is resold to obtain a larger sum of money); and
- 7) M-C...P...-C'-M' (the modern process of Capital which, unlike previous modes of production, has at its disposal both labour markets and capital markets from which to purchase labour-power and means of production to create a new commodity for selling at a profit).

The aforementioned abolition of both wage slavery and money-capital, not just of the legal formality of non-possessive property “rights” (to borrow from contemporary anarchism’s abbreviation for private property in the means of production) and the related debt slavery, and not just of economic anarchy in the consumer goods and services market, forms the core of social-abolitionism: abolition of the commodity mode(s) of production towards a higher mode of production.

However, social-abolitionism does not stop there or even at the abolition of both classes and the repressive instruments for the rule of minority classes, known collectively as the state. There are other “socially revolutionary transformations aimed at abolishing non-class oppression and alienation” (Appendix A). Even the aforementioned emancipation of human labour power is only partial.

Social-Abolitionism and the Division of Labour

Were it not its direct association with the anti-Semite Eugen Dühring and his combination of bourgeois egalitarianism and excessive decentralization, and were it not for potential association with ever-rich and fashionable socialites, the word “socialitarianism” could have been used in addition to “social-abolitionism,” further marking a break with the overly broad term “socialism” (without at least the “participatory” adjective).

As mentioned above, societal control over the economy has to be total, even going into direct and detailed control over collective labour-time by getting past monetary mechanisms. One of the reasons behind the “socialitarian” suggestion is that the “total” emancipation of human labour power, without going into the bourgeoisie’s usual hysteria over its crafted term “totalitarianism,” necessarily addresses the division of labour. In fact, there two divisions of labour and not one.

- “By social division of labour we mean the stratification of society into those who spend their (working) lives primarily engaged in unskilled, skilled, nurturing, creative, or governing activities. Within each category of activity there are many functional divisions. The abolition of the social division of labour is a necessary condition for the abolition of social classes and the oppression and subordination that go with them. This is perfectly consistent with the existence of a functional division of labour, with people engaging in one or more functional specialism within each category of activity in the course of their working lives. The experience thus gained would contribute to self-development and provide people with the capabilities necessary for effective participation in deliberative decision-making.” (Pat Devine)
 - o <http://matisse.univ-paris1.fr/heterodoxies/heter040519b.pdf>
- Cross- and multi-functional development
- “If there is an analytical lesson to be learned from the demise of Soviet-type societies, it is not about capitalism’s future as much as it is about the socialist alternative itself. Specifically, it is about the role of modern bureaucracy during the transition to socialism. The place of such administration is quite unclear in Marx’s and Engels’s famous but terse exposition of the transition to socialism. With Lenin and Mao, modern bureaucracy became an object of opprobrium. But socialism, like capitalism, is a system of division of labor. Its long-term feasibility has to be based on members of the workforce consenting to their assignments and subordination within the workplace, which is precisely what did not occur in Soviet-type societies [...] Theories of possible future socialisms thus need to address not only the role of modern bureaucracy but also its political implications during and after the transition to socialism. They must not disregard Weber as previous theories and practice of socialism did.” (Eddy U)
 - o <http://books.google.com/books?id=bciQpfRc871C&printsec=frontcover>

The Social Abolition of Non-Class Oppression and Alienation

The “socialitarian” suggestion expresses its “total” character by going beyond just the emancipation of human labour power and dealing with the social abolition of non-class oppression and alienation.

- “Economic family”
 - o *Over 30, And Still Looking For Roommates* by Zachary Fryer-Biggs
[<http://columbianewsservice.com/2011/03/over-30-and-living-with-strangers-again/>]
 - o *The Roommate Revolution: Why Living Alone is Overrated* by Leilani Clark
[<http://www.yesmagazine.org/happiness/the-roommate-revolution-why-living-alone-is-overrated>]
 - o Me (<http://www.revleft.com/vb/urban-communes-alternative-t103794/index.html>): As long as the economic family (contracts and generally male-determined division of labour in the home) goes the way of the dinosaur, I don’t care what social fancies concerning “families” arise, as long as they aren’t the product of “bourgeois feminism” like that of some posters on this board.
 - o Paul (<http://www.revleft.com/vb/venezuela-and-xxi-t138726/index3.html>): Domestic production would shrink in two ways: 1. the provision of increasing number of child care facilities and restaurants 2. the experimental introduction of communal forms of living after the style of Phalanstère or Kibbutzim
- Productive vs. unproductive labour
 - o Paul (<http://www.revleft.com/vb/venezuela-and-xxi-t138726/index3.html>): Self employed production would persist in some areas, particularly in agriculture. If one looks at Europe or North America, where family farms are already highly mechanised, the gains from collectivisation or cooperative farming would be much lower than they were in less industrialised economies so one would expect private farms to continue but selling primarily to public marketing boards under planned contracts drawn up based on nutritional need. Replacement of paper money by electronic labour accounts would ensure that self employed

people could not be credited with more labour hours than was allowed by working time directives -- say 48 hours in non agricultural activity, longer perhaps in farming. This would prevent speculation and private profiteering.

Transformative Critique: Direction on Syndicalism and Revisiting Mass Strike Strategies

"Imagine all the workers of the world truly, actually uniting... and then striking. It would be a world-transforming action." (Jack Harden)

In Chapter 6, I wrote about one of the highest freedoms of class-strugglist assembly and association: **all workplaces being legally considered to be unionized explicitly for the purposes of political strikes and even syndicalist strikes, regardless of the presence or absence of formal unionization in each workplace, and going beyond crude calls for universal unionization.** This is deemed to be a directional measure, since it is tied explicitly to some form of revolutionary upheaval.

In my earlier work as quoted in Chapter 1, I wrote that one of the forms of extralegal "revolution" happens to be a euphemistically "well-defended" version of the suggestion of mass strikes by the likes of Bakunin, Sorel, and Luxemburg. When Lenin deemed strategies of strikes for revolutionary upheaval as being economic, it was because the proponents misidentified the revolutionary capacity of the proletariat as being in the ability to withdraw one's labour. From this, it was hoped that political struggles would grow out of economic mass strikes. **That more basic political struggles rarely grow out of mere labour disputes and other basic economic struggles at the "point of production" should dispel such illusory hopes.**

Reconsider, on the other hand, revolutionary centrism as accounted by Mike Macnair in his profoundly true and important book on revolutionary strategy:

*The centre tendency in the German Social Democratic Party and Second International was also its ideological leadership. In spite of eventually disastrous errors and betrayals, this tendency has a major historical achievement to its credit. It led the building of the mass workers' socialist parties of late 19th and early 20th century Europe and the creation of the Second International. **The leftist advocates of the mass strike strategy, in contrast, built either groupuscules like the modern far left [...] or militant but ephemeral movements (like the Industrial Workers of the World).***

[...]

For the centre tendency, the strength of the proletariat and its revolutionary capacity flows, not from the employed workers' power to withdraw their labour, but from the power of the proletariat as a class to organise. It is organisation that makes the difference between a spontaneous expression of rage and rebellion, like a riot, and a strike as a definite action for definite and potentially winnable goals [...] The second central feature of the strategic understandings of the centre tendency was that the socialist revolution is necessarily the act of the majority.

[...]

*The centre tendency drew two conclusions from this understanding - against the left, and against the right. The first was rejection of the mass strike strategy. On this issue, the centre presented the anarcho-syndicalists and the left with a version of Morton's Fork. The first limb of the fork was that a true general strike would depend on the workers' party having majority support if it was to win. **But if the workers' party already had majority support, where was the need for the general strike? The workers' party would start with [...] a mandate for socialism, rather than with the strike.** It was for this reason that the centre, in Bebel's resolution at the 1905 Jena Congress of the SPD, was willing to demand the use of the mass strike weapon in defence of, or in the struggle for, universal suffrage.*

The second limb of the fork was that the strategy of the working class coming to power through a strike wave presupposed that the workers' party had not won a majority. In these circumstances, for the workers' party to reach for power would be a matter of 'conning the working class into taking power'. However formally majoritarian the party might be, the act of turning a strike wave into a struggle for power would inevitably be the act of an enlightened minority steering the benighted masses.

The argument against the right was also an argument against minority action - but minority action of a different kind. The right argued that the workers' party, while still a minority, should be willing to enter coalition governments with middle class parties in order to win reforms. The centre argued that this policy was illusory, primarily because the interests of the middle classes and those of the proletariat were opposed.

[...]

*When we have a majority, we will form a government and implement the whole minimum programme; if necessary, the possession of a majority will give us legitimacy to coerce the capitalist/pro-capitalist and petty bourgeois minority. **Implementing the whole minimum programme will prevent the state in the future serving as an instrument of the capitalist class and allow the class struggle to progress on terrain more favourable to the working class.***

It should be noted that Macnair did not dismiss the mass strike weapon for revolutionary upheaval, simply because, as a cynical political proverb goes, if voting changed anything, "they" would make it illegal.

Majority political support by the working class for a program is not the same as mere electoral support for registered "parties," since the latter can entail protest votes like modern Russian liberal dissidents voting for official Communists "for democracy" against the ruling elite in the Kremlin, and since the former can be found in other areas like spoiled ballot campaigns and especially honest membership itself in a political party.

However, there are two ways around Morton's Fork as presented above, and both can intersect with one another. The first is when a revolutionary program is supported by only fifty-percent-plus-one of the working class. That is figure is a minority of the population as a whole is irrelevant (as pointed out on a class basis by an enraged Lenin in his primary counter-polemic with the senile renegade who was his most influential theoretical mentor), but the concern is that the program is not supported by a supermajority of the working class. The French Marxist Jules Guesde once said, "At all times there have been, if I may so express myself, two proletariats in the proletariat. One is the proletariat of ideas, aware, knowing what it wants and where it is going; the other is the proletariat of facts, undecided if not refractory, that has always had to be towed along. And it will continue to be thus up to the revolution." Unfortunately, history has a tendency of not waiting.

The other way around Morton's Fork is implied in the Communist Manifesto itself:

The immediate aim of the Communists is the same as that of all other proletarian parties: formation of the proletariat into a class, overthrow of the bourgeois supremacy, conquest of political power by the proletariat.

[Note: In modern parlance, the first two goals are the transformation of the working class in itself into a class for itself and the establishment of worker-class hegemony at the expense of bourgeois hegemony. The third goal expresses itself in the implementation of minimum programs like the one in Chapter 5, whereby individual demands could easily be implemented without eliminating the bourgeois state order, but whereby full implementation would mean that the working class will have expropriated ruling-class political power in policymaking, legislation, execution-administration, and other areas. No so-called "bourgeois workers party" that lays claim to "Labour" or "Social-Democratic" or even "Democratic Socialist" labels aspires towards any of these goals, while "petit-bourgeois workers parties" do not aspire towards the last goal and seek to replace bourgeois hegemony with some other form of non-worker hegemony. For obvious reasons, vulgar "vanguardists" and their philosophical or conspiratorial circle-sects don't bother with the first goal and substitute themselves for the working class in the third goal.]

Suppose such a worker-class movement (since real parties are real movements and vice versa) does come to power and implement a minimum program like the one in Chapter 5, but on the whole does not support the maximalist program of social-abolitionism (in other words, the communist mode of production in all its forms) or harbours cynicism towards the notion of even wrongly perceived "vanguardists" and "elitists" being in power. What should these minority social revolutionaries, who even with sufficient mass do not have majority political support from the working class, do then?

Recall that the "struggle for socialism" is economic and not political, that open class struggle is political and not economic, and that broad economism misunderstands the respective characters of these struggle as being the reverse. In this scenario, the working class is already the ruling class, so unless the minority social revolutionaries irresponsibly break from the worker-class political power, there is no conning of the class towards some form of political struggle. Here, all-out syndicalism of the apolitical

type (in contrast to sociopolitical syndicalism), One Big Union arising from further globalization of trade union organization, and mass strike strategies can together be one of at least a few directional roads to social labour, especially given their intentions of non-violent social revolution. Concluding with Jack Harden and his proposal, *Global Trade Unionism as the Vanguard of a Non-violent Marxist Revolution*:

*The problem I see with a vanguard party that does not consist entirely of the workers is that it presents the danger of a small group delegating what is in the best interest of the whole. **The workers should be the ones making their own decisions.** The global trade union would fit such a description for Marx. The proletariat should take it upon itself to organize and lead the revolution. Anything less might lead to more division than unity.*

[...]

The concern about nonviolence is also relevant to what kind of society might emerge if created through solidarity and nonviolence in comparison to one created through violence and the competition of one class against another. I would argue that the violent competition of class versus class is just a remnant of our capitalist mindset. Marx might argue that revolution is the last use for such competition, and thereafter harmony will be the rule. However, constructing a society based on solidarity requires the fostering of such solidarity amongst all. This way, class antagonisms will be lessened on all sides, and the urge for violence reduced.

[...]

*What happens after the strike? Who would be in charge? The strike would be a display of the solidarity of the proletariat against the wrongs committed against them under capitalism. The demands would certainly be the conversion of the capitalist structures to socialism. The proletariat would take charge of the means of production and distribution [...] Ideally, the people would rule themselves in a democratic fashion. **This is where the solidarity that was fostered previous to the revolution would show its strength. The people would feel actively involved in deciding what is best for everyone.***

Transformative Critique: Direction on Property Rights Laws

Like what the typical Trotskyist “transitional” critic would say, the list of directional measures preceding the Basic Principles is not as exhaustive as it should be from a social-abolitionist perspective, and may not be as exhaustive as it could be from even a proletocratic perspective. Some of the measures look like they could easily fit into the principles.

Consider one particular measure raised by Mike Macnair in his book on revolutionary strategy – for some reason as an “immediate” measure but tied to his background as a legal academic:

Abolition of constitutional guarantees of the rights of private property and freedom of trade.

While this looks like it could easily fit into the maximalist program of social-abolitionism, there is an element of subtlety that makes it only directional but nevertheless nothing less than directional: constitutional guarantees. For example, Betsy Bowman and Bob Stone of the magazine *Dollars and Sense: Real World Economics* noted in 2006 that the Venezuelan government engaged in similar measures to the one enacted by the Paris Commune on cooperatives:

*In a more typically confrontational example, displaced workers first occupied a sugar refinery in Cumanacoa and restarted it on their own. **The federal government then expropriated the property and turned it over to cooperatives of the plant's workers. The owners' property rights were respected inasmuch as the government loaned the workers the money for the purchase, though the price was well below what the owners had claimed.** Such expropriated factories are then often run by elected representatives of workers alongside of government appointees.*

*There are strings attached. "We haven't expropriated Cumanacoa and Sideroca for the workers just to help them become rich people the day after tomorrow," said Chávez. "This has not been done just for them—it is to help make everyone wealthy." Take the case of Cacao Sucre, another sugar mill closed for eight years by its private owners, leaving 120 workers unemployed in a neighborhood of grinding poverty. The state's governor put out a call for the workers to form a co-op. After receiving training in self-management, the mill co-op integrated with the 3,665-strong cane growers' co-op. In July 2005, this large cooperative became the first "Social Production Enterprise." **The new designation means that the co-op is required to set aside a portion of its profits to fund health, education, and housing for the local population, and to open its food hall to the community as well.***

While the technical assistance was certainly not unconditional on the part of the Venezuelan government's usage of eminent domain or compulsory purchase (a widespread power among even developed bourgeois-capitalist states that ironically violates the more proprietarian Article 17 of the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights"), the previous owners did not enjoy property rights akin to those secured by the US constitution's Fifth Amendment on "just compensation."

Even trade-union disputes and other mere labour disputes set the stage for a possible application of this directional measure. There are ongoing discussions in multiple countries on banning strikes by workers in so-called "essential services," yet their strikes have been both moderate and innovative, from rotating strikes to bus drivers and rail conductors refusing to collect fares. These affect employer revenues and expenses, but allow for continued services to the public at large. Contrast these strikes to employer lockouts and political spin against workers being locked out of their workplaces. Even with all workplaces being legally considered to be unionized explicitly for the purposes of political strikes or syndicalist strikes, regardless of the presence or absence of formal unionization in each workplace, **the question of employer lockouts in so-called "essential services" and perhaps other economic activity can only be solved by, among other measures, applying the abolition of constitutional guarantees of the rights of private property in the form of prohibitions on those same employer lockouts.**

Another application of this directional measure can be applied to interest (usury). Before extending litigation rights to include class-action lawsuits and speedy awards of punitive damages against all non-workers who appropriate surplus value atop any economic rent applied towards exclusively public purposes, a society seriously intent upon the maximalist program of social-abolitionism would have to enact more stringent measures against interest beyond "equity not usury" – if not ban it altogether by introducing a transitional, purely electronic, and personally identifiable "currency" that does not circulate (but is a step below non-circulable labour credit due to the continued existence of wage slavery) – **like prohibiting civil courts from enforcing the collection of the interest portion of debt payments, or imposing severe criminal penalties on those who use threats of harm to extort interest.** Otherwise, it would be more profitable to earn large amounts of interest in bank accounts than to use the money to employ workers.

As a legal academic, Macnair asserted that the very notion of law, from the very dawn of class society, is intrinsically tied to property rights:

*Lawyers are notoriously expensive, obscure and troublesome: this has been a common theme of satire since Roman times. **Moreover, not all historical societies do use law and few – most notably the later Roman empire – have been as 'law-saturated' and obsessed with law as the late 20th and early 21st century world.***

*To start with adjudication: it seems that adjudication as a mode of decision-making presupposes and is adapted to disputes about private property. The 'justice' which a judge or arbitrator is to deliver is at its core the restoration of prior ownership, or compensation for the loss of ownership. From this core, which appears at the heart of early legal systems, law is extended by analogy: a crime is a 'taking from the state' or a 'taking from the society'; jurisdiction, or decision-making power, is treated as a kind of property right. **But the sanctity of property remains the core basis of legal reasoning.***

[...]

The sanctity of private property is embedded in every 'human rights' document, from the English Petition of Right (1627) through to the Charter of rights in the draft constitution of the European Union. It is reflected in constitutional prohibitions on expropriation and in 'restrictive construction' in favour of the property owner of tax laws, laws controlling property use, and so on. The role of lawyers in the construction of certainty inexorably carries with both 'tax avoidance' and 'regulatory failure': ie, the use of the requirement of predictability to undermine for the benefit of the rich the effect of rules made by parliaments. It carries with it

'inequality of arms': ie, that the rich can afford more and better legal services than the poor. These phenomena are commonly attributed to judicial bias: the truth is that the biases are inherent in the idea and practice of law itself.

It should be apparent on the basis of this analysis that 'the rule of law' is under present conditions a euphemism for the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie.

For some reason, apart from banning employer lockouts in so-called "essential services," the abolition of all constitutional guarantees of the rights of private ownership of productive and other non-possessive property is missing from the list of directional measures. It is obvious that neither the most social-democratic form of bourgeois-fied commodity production (that is, on the threshold) nor mere petty-capitalist social relations can or will accomplish this, but why are certain directional measures that are incompatible with present and past class societies listed (against information asymmetry, socialization of all economic rent up to and including surplus value, and full extension of labour litigation rights in accordance with the Socially Necessary Labour Theory of Value) and this one omitted? Is the "bridge" between an analysis of capitalism and its development on the one hand, and on the other the Basic Principles meant to be so indirect about the question of property rights?

One more issue to consider is that related to the question of private ownership of productive and other non-possessive property is the notion of Maximum Allowable Wealth or Maximum Allowable Personal Wealth. The notion of **society directly establishing populist limits on non-possessive property ownership and adjusting it by mass democratic means** was mentioned briefly in Chapter 1, as part of what Robley George called "socioeconomic democracy" (the other part dealing with basic income, which has already been critiqued in various areas of this programmatic thesis). Notwithstanding the fact that this, also omitted from the list of directional measures, is quite **dependent upon the more general measure above on private ownership**, it is significant for two other reasons:

- 1) It goes beyond the anti-inheritance measures discussed in Chapter 6 by going after the wealth of living capitalists; and
- 2) It is perfectly compatible with the economic goals of workers' parties which – while striving to organize the working class as a whole into a politico-ideologically independent class (that is for itself), establish worker-class hegemony at the expense of more elite hegemony, and expropriate all political power (policymaking, legislative, and executive-administrative power) for the class – may not necessarily have the maximalist program of social-abolitionism (or, to be more blunt, may not necessarily be communist).

Transformative Critique: Direction on Money and Revisiting Eugen Duhring

"In the first place, such a misuse of Owen's labour-notes would require their conversion into real money, while Herr Duhring presupposes real money, though attempting to prohibit it from functioning otherwise than as mere labour certificate. While in Owen's scheme there would have to be a real abuse, in Duhring's scheme the immanent nature of money, which is independent of human volition, would assert itself; the specific, correct use of money would assert itself in spite of the misuse which Herr Duhring tries to impose on it owing to his own ignorance of the nature of money." (Frederick Engels)

In envisioning a society full of economic communes interacting with one another on a separate but labour-mobile basis, the anti-Semite Eugen Duhring provided the basis of various market-socialist models not influenced by Marx at all. They range from the self-management trusts of Oskar Lange to the industrial cooperatives and Israeli settlement cooperatives of Franz Oppenheimer to even the People's Communes that were formed during China's catastrophic Great Leap Forward. It is in this context that Duhring suggests a means of exchange other than modern money and the means of exchange prevailing under detailed societal management over its own collective labour-time.

When petty-commodity modes of production began, the predominant form of commodity trade was C-C' or a barter trade, whereby a commodity trades directly for a different commodity. According to traditional economic accounts, the difficulty of having a double coincidence of wants between the buyer and seller was what led to the creation of money as a means of exchange and of specifically storing wealth in time preference for some future purchase. Thus, commodity trade expanded to include M-C and C-M, whereby commodities were bought with and sold for money, respectively. It was also expanded to include C-M-C', whereby a commodity is sold for money, which in turn is used to buy another, different commodity with an equal or higher value. **However, traditional economic accounts already fail to account the more insidious purpose of money: accumulation for its own sake.** Already in petty-commodity modes of

production there were instances of M-M', or simply the lending of money at interest. Moreover, the very process that is money-capital was facilitated by the merchants: M-C-M', or the purchase of a commodity with money for resale at a higher price. **The bourgeois introduction of and power over generalized commodity production broadened the existing process of money-capital**, now having at its disposal both labour markets and capital markets from which to purchase labour-power and means of societal production to create a new commodity for selling at a profit, thus M-C...P...-C'-M'.

The societal abolition of the commodity mode(s) of production towards a higher mode of production where there exists detailed societal management over its own collective labour-time, over all use values, and thus over the allocation of all productive and other non-possessive property necessarily involves the replacement of money-capital with a system of non-circulable (and necessarily electronic) labour credit. This dispenses with M-M', C-M-C', M-C-M', and of course M-C...P...-C'-M', while the broader and complete convergence between socially necessary labour and surplus labour eliminates exchange value (again, not to be confused with use values) and thus commodities altogether.

In the meantime, however, the lack of almost any sort of public management (that is, planning, organization, direction, and control) over M0, M1, M2, and the entire money supply generally is problematic, to say the least. While the monopolization of all central, commercial, and consumer credit in the hands of a single transnational bank under absolute public ownership or the lesser national-democratizations of finance and their extension into the general provision of credit go a long way towards establishing public management over the money supply, by themselves they do not address the problems of investment strikes (not investing as required by government plans towards maintaining or expanding production), asset stripping (the wholesale liquidation of business assets for a gain), short selling or derivatives trading, and more typical monetary capital flight.

While detailed societal management over its own collective labour-time involves the gradual institution of a societal planning apparatus that can allocate even intermediate products on an in-kind basis – something well beyond the abilities of a planning apparatus for a monetary economy, like *Gosplan* (All-Union State Planning Commission, later the State Planning Committee of the USSR) – more radical directional inroads can be made against money-capital. **One such measure is the disabling of the circulation of money at every point where legitimate intermediate transactions (most notably those of intermediate products like raw materials and assets used in or arising from the production of the means of production) are not involved, such as the end-consumer point.** This necessarily means replacing modern money with a purely electronic and personally identifiable currency. The very idea of cash is then left to criminals and black markets, and all the costs associated with counterfeiting prevention and even money laundering (circulation that conceals the identity, source, or destination of illegally obtained money, and which is related to capital flight in the common usage of tax havens and shell or dummy companies) can be diverted towards computer crime prevention and easier crackdowns on any form of black market currency. Furthermore, this measure prevents investment strikes and even monetary capital flight through short selling or derivatives trading (while asset stripping, without the ability of employees to elect the majority of at least the board of any company, could hypothetically still be done through illegal barter).

[Note: At this point, technical and financial assistance for localities seeking to establish local currency alternatives to government money would end except for those localities that would suffer from having to get rid of their currencies and adopt the new electronic currency.]

However, until there is a societal planning apparatus that can allocate even intermediate products on an in-kind basis, **this currency in the sphere of legitimate intermediate transactions should be allowed to circulate by means of transfer.** Consider this example, which contrasts the end consumer with transactions between public enterprises:

John Smith works at Public Enterprise A, which produces various kinds of machinery. Credits in the form of non-circulable (at least on his end), personally identifiable electronic currency are created for his work and credited to his account. According to Engels, this is where one Weitling replaces anonymous cash "by a 'ledger', in which the labour-hours worked are entered on one side and means of subsistence taken as compensation on the other." After keeping the currency for a week, he then goes to Public Enterprise B to purchase consumer goods, thus redeeming his electronic currency. Whether these credits remain with Public Enterprise B or are eliminated, in the meanwhile that enterprise purchases new machinery from Public Enterprise A. While the form of purchase could be different, the substance remains the same; at a minimum, double-entry recordings and the related price calculations are made by both parties to account for this transaction. **Both machinery and something else of value are exchanged between the two parties.**

With this specific electronic currency, society can determine its other functions. Disabling this currency's ability to generate interest (going beyond prohibitions on civil courts from enforcing the collection of the interest portion of debt payments, or severe criminal penalties being imposed on those who use threats of harm to extort interest, thus possibly making them redundant) would prevent any prospects of profitable gains through idle savings, and would go a long way towards turning it purely into a means of exchange. Tying this currency or an earlier, pre-transitional one like modern money to labour-hours or some other unit of labour-time, by means of a widely publicized labour-time-to-money ratio, would be an enormous step forward in exposing bourgeois and petit-bourgeois exploitation while addressing the anti-inflationary grievances against fiat currencies (under which, according to Chartalist views on money, government money is created only by persistent government deficit spending, and under which governments must spend first before collecting taxes) made by those with nevertheless bogus fetishes for gold and other physical commodities (hence the discarded gold standard). Making this currency expirable like cheques and money orders would prevent currency hoarding.

As for personal savings and credit, they will continue to exist even with less motivations, since time preferences for purchases are independent of time preferences for incomes. Paul Cockshott and Allin Cottrell suggested in *Towards a New Socialism* a couple of means to reconcile societal priorities with personal savings and credit within reasonable limits. Although they pertain to non-circulable labour credit, similar suggestions can be made for electronic currencies that circulate in the sphere of legitimate intermediate transactions:

1) *Current labour tokens may be **freely exchanged for some kind of retirement asset (e.g. one which pays out an annuity starting at a specified future date or contingency)**. Such transactions would be conducted through a unified state-run 'financial system' so that their aggregate volume can be monitored by the planning agency.*

[...]

2) *To permit a shorter-term flexibility, current labour tokens might also be **exchangeable for consumer saving deposits**, from which labour tokens may be withdrawn at a later date in order to purchase various consumer durables, vacations, etc.*

[...]

3) *Aside from the above recognised forms of saving, individuals are not able simply to hoard labour tokens. **Hoarding, which would disrupt the labour allocation plan, is avoided by having [them] expire after a specified date**, much as the banks refuse to honour personal cheques after a specified period in the current system.*

[...]

Note that as the productivity of labour grows over time, and the labour content of specific goods falls, labour tokens will in effect become 'worth more': there is a form of implicit interest on labour-token savings. It is reasonable that people should be able to collect this 'interest' on their long-term savings, since their non-consumption makes possible an accelerated accumulation of means of production which in turn helps to bring about increased labour productivity, but there is no call for any additional payment.

Of course, given the problematic issues raised by geomagnetic storms and computer crime, the electronic systems associated with this directional measure should have as a backup a more manual currency system not unlike that behind the Kautsky-inspired Soviet ruble in its fourth, fifth, and sixth denominations (1924-1947, 1947-1961, and 1961-1991). Under these denominations, money was primarily a unit of accounting for the implementation of the Five-Year Plans (notwithstanding exchange values involved in the transition between one denomination and another, or cost accounting being oriented towards "socialist profit," or lack of planned approvals for exchanges exercised between directors on behalf of their respective state enterprises). Unlike those denominations, this backup should not be able to generate interest other than the implicit "interest" associated with increased labour productivity and decreased labour content in specific products.

Overall, it should be noted once more than “no special stress is laid on the [directional] measures.” With all that has been said above, the diagram in the very first chapter defines the transformative program in general as being the definite sum of directional demands and pre-orthodox minimum demands (threshold demands pertaining directly to the expropriation of ruling-class political power), but also being the broader sum of the aforementioned demands and generic demands on the threshold (again, the maximum that could possibly be achieved within bourgeois-fied commodity production but outside the pre-orthodox minimum program).

- State vs. Demarchic Commonwealth beyond considering the state as the sum of the repressive instruments for the rule of minority classes, the material separation of state politics from regular socioeconomic politics, etc.
 - o Civil bureaucracy already addressed in above commentary on Pat Devine
 - o Security forces in the DOTP?
 - <http://www.revleft.com/vb/security-forces-dotpi-t146182/index.html>
 - “Given all the news of police brutality, private prisons, etc. one would be tempted to shout the slogan “abolition of the police” from the days of the Paris Commune. However, there are various types of security forces in modern society since the mid 20th-century. Here’s a short list of some of them:
 - 1) Investigative units (like detective work)
 - 2) Foreign intelligence and domestic counter-intelligence units (for both espionage and sabotage, like part of the NKVD and later KGB)
 - 3) Surveillance operations in the armed forces (not just political oversight by a commissar, like part of the NKVD and later KGB)
 - 4) Paramilitaries
 - 5) Prison security (like the NKVD and the gulags)
 - 6) Typical police forces
 - 7) “Secret police” organizations
 - In the case of the seventh and perhaps fourth, I’m inclined to think that the profiling, ostracizing, etc. that occurred to operatives after the collapse of Soviet-aligned regimes may be more instructive on how a DOTP should handle all those who worked in bourgeois “national security” organs than mere abolition. So, to what extent is “abolition of the police” still applicable, and to what extent is it obsolete (i.e., that the DOTP - in spite of recallability, random selections where needed, and other radical democratic oversights - needs “Chekists”)?” (Me)
 - “As for so-called “typical police”, it is rather complicated question. I would propose using late-Soviet experience of creating “people’s militias” (narodnye druzhiny in Russian, as opposed to practically police-like “official” Soviet militsiya) for conducting patrol/traffic surveillance activities, perhaps, with the assistance of former members of professional police force.” (Kiev Communard)
 - o Standing armed forces?
 - <http://revleft.com/vb/political-oversight-over-t157827/index.html>
 - “I’ve stated before the need not to turn swords into plowshares by dismantling engineer and other non-commanding specialists [...] The zampolit as an institution should be re-examined further as a potential DOTP instrument in the future [...] I perceive the DOTP’s military model to be a combination of soldier unionization and intra-military democratic rights (like recallability) with the old Armed Forces of the USSR (not the preceding “Workers and Peasants Red Army”), its zampolit apparatus, and its supporting defense industry [...] Well, I can think about democratic discussions on strategy, but not about tactics. Tactics require extensive knowledge of field manuals, thinking outside the limits of said field manuals, and related expertise taught in military schools. Not even the grunts of ancient Athens discussed or voted upon this stuff [...] The election or random selection, plus recallability, of commanding officers doesn’t mean there’s no need for commanding officer positions in the first place, hence my reference to the post-WWII Armed Forces of the USSR.” (Me)
 - o No-Party state vs. genuine one-party system
 - “Against the collective power of the propertied classes the working class cannot act, as a class, except by constituting itself into a political party, distinct from, and opposed to, all old parties formed by the propertied classes.¶This constitution of the

working class into a political party is indispensable in order to insure the triumph of the social revolution and its ultimate end -- the abolition of classes. ¶The combination of forces which the working class has already effected by its economical struggles ought at the same time to serve as a lever for its struggles against the political power of landlords and capitalists.¶The lords of the land and the lords of capital will always use their political privileges for the defense and perpetuation of their economical monopolies and for enslaving labor. To conquer political power has therefore become the great duty of the working [class]." (Marx)

- *Resolution by the Hague Congress on the Establishment of Working-Class Parties* by the International Workingmen's Association
[<http://www.marxists.org/history/international/iwma/documents/1872/hague-conference/parties.htm>]
- Review Lewin's "no-party state"
- Razlatzki vs. Schwartz on pluralism: <http://books.google.com/books?id=ppZlhynKp0wC>
- <http://www.revleft.com/vb/workers-power-rule-t160796/index.html>
- "In all, there can be three distinct groups in a genuine one-party system: the political, mass, worker-class party-movement proper, the professional or full-time state/polity 'party,' and the purely administrative state/polity 'party.'" (Me)
- <http://www.revleft.com/vb/all-power-independent-t155105/index.html>
- "With regards to the German Revolution, had the very ultra-left formation of the KPD not occurred and had the renegades in the USPD been given the boot, I'm sure the MSPD-USPD experiences in parliamentarism, cabinet coalitions (through the Rat der Volksbeauftragten, or Council of People's Representatives), and the Arbeiterrate ("Workers Councils") would have prompted a USPD with majority working-class political support to simply claim "All Power to Independent Social Democracy!" Arbeiterrate be damned." (Me)
- <http://www.revleft.com/vb/deleon-vs-khrushchev-t161755/index.html>
- "From the other side there's another system of economic institutionalism, this time conceptualized and partially implemented by Nikita Khrushchev. His take on the "withering away of the state" involved massive reorganization of the "ruling party" such that direct administration over the economy, at the expense of state and/or polity organs, would be the primary focus and that cultural, political, and other non-economic functions would be prioritized further down or outsourced to youth organizations (Komsomol), trade unions, public-sponsored mass vigilante groups (druzhinniki, or auxiliary citizen militiamen), "comrades courts," etc. Other than the hare-brained scheme of specifically bifurcating the "ruling party" into specialized sections for "Industry" and "Agriculture," the key flaw in Khrushchev's approach to the "withering away of the state" was the absence of a mass party-movement with an explicitly political character, in relation to which all members of the "ruling party" would be merely non-voting members. This merely goes back to Lenin's own fundamental error with regards to the dumbing down of politics during the transitional period. Assuming the existence of a mass party-movement with an explicitly political character in both cases, how should workers go about economic administration on an institutional basis?" (Me)
- "For me, there's no right or wrong answer here. Personal inclinations depend on whether or not a comrade supports a genuine one-party system, and even then there are still possibilities. For those comrades who knowledgeably and understandably still oppose a genuine one-party system, SIU/RIU/SPS is the way to go, though it should be cautioned that the One Big Union under any of the DeLeonist variants (especially the newer ones) risks losing its political character by diving into systemic, collective workers management over the economy. For those comrades who do support a genuine one-party system, some may not buy the "withering away of the state" argument posed by Khrushchev and may completely side with Zhdanov & Kuznetsov to make doubly sure there's redundant political character for the "ruling party," in relation to Razlatzki's actual political party-movement constitutionally entrenched as the ruling party proper. Personally, whatever happens with the "ruling party," I still see a mix that includes a DeLeonist variant. One can't swing from Zhdanov-Kuznetsov all the way to Khrushchev or back again re. "party political work" vs. direct economic management, without crossing paths with Malenkov first (the Stalin and Brezhnev eras saw waffling between Z-K and M), and a Malenkov-style

apparatus just doesn't have the numbers to chug along just fine without the DeLeonist variant.” (Me)

- *The Split in Stalin's Secretariat, 1939-1948* by Jonathan Harris [http://books.google.com/books?id=ghOox8ijs1MC&printsec=frontcover]
- Consider Kaganovich re. preceding Malenkov (by splitting Orgraspred)
 - *The Communist Party of the Soviet Union* by Leonard Schapiro [http://books.google.com/books?id=VrsOAAAQAAJ&printsec=frontcover]

Social-Abolitionist and Social-Proletocratic Notes on the Draft Program

Having discussed in this Appendix what needed to be discussed on social-abolitionism and social proletocracy, I will conclude with notes on drafting a Social-Proletocratic Draft Program on the basis of my Draft Program, especially the Basic Principles.

- The directional measure on the socialization of all profits and all other surplus value (“rent beyond that of the natural environment”) should be followed by **“The abolition of all constitutional guarantees of the rights of private ownership of productive and other non-possessive property”** – though this missing directional measure could be inserted into other appropriate areas of the list.
-
- “The written history of all societies up to even the present is predominantly one of class struggles, whether open or limited, over the exploitation of this non-natural source of value production” should read **“Together with commodity production, the written history of all societies up to even the present is predominantly one of class struggles, whether open or limited, over the exploitation of this non-natural source of value production.”**
- “The modern bourgeois-capitalist society has by no means abolished the very non-conspiracist class antagonisms, but has instead established in place of the old ones new conditions of exploitation and alienation – primarily the various forms of wage labour, hidden debt slavery, and divisions of labour beyond technical ones – and new forms of class struggle, a socially scientific concept which, fundamentally speaking, can no longer be taken for granted” should read **“Bourgeois-fied commodity production, along with the accompanying bourgeois society, has by no means abolished the very non-conspiracist class antagonisms, but has instead established in place of the old ones generalized commodity production, new conditions of exploitation and alienation – primarily the various forms of wage labour, hidden debt slavery, and divisions of labour beyond technical ones – and new forms of class struggle, a socially scientific concept which, fundamentally speaking, can no longer be taken for granted.”**
- “The systemic establishment of worker management (that is, planning, organization, direction, and control) and responsibility over an all-encompassing participatory economy – free from surplus labour appropriations by any elite minority, from dispossession of the commons and more in the form of private ownership relations over productive and other non-possessive property, from all forms of debt slavery, and from all divisions of labour beyond technical ones” should be broken down into the relevant components of the maximalist program of social-abolitionism: **“The abolition of private ownership relations over all productive and other non-possessive property; The abolition of all forms of debt slavery; The abolition of all forms of management that facilitate surplus labour appropriations by any elite minority, and their systemic replacement with collective worker management (that is, planning, organization, direction, and control), and responsibility; The abolition of wage slavery and money-capital and their systemic replacement with extended collective worker management, directly over its own collective labour-time and over individual compensation based directly on it, and discarding any means of exchange that can be circulated or hoarded; and The abolition of all divisions of labour beyond technical ones.”**
- “This socially revolutionary transformation, along with secondary yet socially revolutionary transformations aimed at abolishing non-class oppression and alienation, amounts to the emancipation not only of human labour power in productive labour, but also of humanity as a collective whole” should be broken down into the remaining relevant components of the maximalist program of social-abolitionism: **“Along with the abolition of classes and of the repressive instruments for the rule of minority classes, this abolition of all commodity modes of production, along with the abolition of the economic family and other secondary yet socially revolutionary transformations aimed at abolishing non-class oppression and alienation, amounts to the emancipation not only of human labour in productive labour, but also of humanity as a collective whole.”**

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