

THE PARSOC BULLETIN

MEMBERS | NETWORK PROJECTS | SOLIDARITY

From the Outreach & Events Team

- Conferences:**
 We decided not to pursue participating in the Utopian Studies Conference. We decided, instead, to focus our efforts on participating in the Anarchist Futures Conference. Mark will be sending an email out to the RU members who expressed an interest in this over the next couple of days.
- Joint Meeting (Z, PEP and RU):**
 We are preparing for the next meeting with Z and the Participatory Economics Project. We will prepare information on the meeting when there is a proposed agenda.
- Global Green New Deal Letter:**
 We discussed the letter that is being drafted calling for an International Coalition for a Global Green New Deal. The first draft should be completed by next week and will be circulated to all RU members for feedback.
- Content Generation Proposal:**
 We talked about ideas for content generation and its implications for the Outreach and Events Team and RU in general. Lonnie is exploring the possibility of putting together a team for this and will be presenting again at future meetings for further feedback.



RU ready to rumble?

topaz

As a new member of RU, I can honestly say that the team which brought you the Bulletin this month grasps the meaning of participatory. Mark, and especially Matic have been invaluable to producing the finalized version you are reading. I was new to Discord, and have learned how to navigate in order to save what little face was left after a lot of questions. Being new in any organization creates challenges, and without exception, support and information were provided. There will be some changes to how the 'team,' will work, obviously, and what to not spend time with has become numbingly obvious. There are two articles which I have written here, both of which require that I thank Peter Bohmer for his time, and the idea, though the controversy and grammatical errors are in a nod for socialism, MINE ALL MINE!

Each article has brought new ideas, from Ty's teaching the offspring of the ultra rich, to Alexandria's informative short on International Women's Day, and Matic and Urška's notes on Michael Albert's No Bosses. Even the questions in the side regarding the Anarchist Futures Convention create thoughts rippling into reality, in a way that challenges the status quo.

Like ingredients in a soup, with the base flavor of equality, which spices stand out in the future will parallel the taste buds. Who participates, who dreams, and who keeps it real will all make up the flavors of the society we all know can happen, if enough of us stir up the primordial soup that is the world.

From the Membership Team

- **Team expansion:**
Membership team is happy about the new team member Alex from the UK.
- **Weekly Welcome Meetings**
We are hosting weekly Welcome meetings for new members or current members wanting a refresher on goings on.
- **Information session**
We are hosting individually scheduled info sessions for prospective members. If you have a friend you would like to introduce to RU, let us know and we will set up a session with them.
- **1 on 1 meetings:**
Just to remind, we are facilitating random one on one meetings between members in order for us to get to know each other better.
First round of one on one meetings has been concluded and we are now heading into the second round. Ten members are participating so far, however anyone wanting to join in is more than welcome and should let the membership team know so we can include you in the rotation.
- **Updated tasks on RU goals:**
Membership team has taken up new tasks in order to achieve RU Goals more effectively.
 - a) We will keep an eye on members geographical locations and where there are several members in close proximity we will encourage them getting together in person.
 - b) We will establish and curate a repository of materials used by RU members in their Parsoc related activism. We will notify members once it is set up.

Debating ParEcon with college students

Ty Saxon

Participatory Economics and the prospect of transcending capitalism has always been one of my major motivations for teaching economics. But when I began studying economics in graduate school, I quickly found that the entire field was deliberately structured in a way to either defend capitalism or to focus on small reforms that maintain the viability of the system. While a small minority of radical left economists exist within the field, they typically devote most of their teaching and research to criticizing capitalism, rather than proposing positive alternative systems.

Now in my seventh year of teaching, developing a new Economics 100 class that vaguely covers “introductory economic principles,” I was able to build into this class an entire section on how to overturn capitalism and what to replace it with. Since class sessions at my school are typically about 100 minutes long, I decided to devote an entire session to discussing and debating the merits of Parecon vs. capitalism. Prior to our in-class discussion, I assigned the students to read the first half of the Participatory Economics PDF found [here](#), and we had also previously discussed worker cooperatives. In previous courses, I had exposed students to the participatoryeconomics.info website, but I wasn’t able to get much buy-in from the students in these classes, which took place online and provided little to no opportunity for fully discussing Parecon. However, in my new Econ 100 class in March 2022, I was able to devote more class time to respond to students’ questions and common misconceptions about Parecon, and we were also able to hold in-person discussions for the first time since the start of the COVID pandemic. Unsurprisingly, this made a world of difference in the students’ responses.

Before discussing Parecon with students, I built and presented a short powerpoint presentation (available on the RU members Google drive) to review the basic concepts and to preempt some of the common criticisms related to efficiency and innovation. Then, we set up a brief debate between two of the students, preceded by 10-15 minutes of discussion by all (about 18-20) students in the class. I prefer to give students the opportunity to vote on the debate topic beforehand, so I gave them three options: (1) Which is **better** – Capitalism or Parecon? (2) Which is **more efficient** – Capitalism or Parecon? or (3) Which produces **more innovation** – Capitalism or Parecon? Students voted for the second option, and the class was divided into two groups, with each side randomly selected to argue one side of the debate. The course of the debate was heavily influenced by the fact that I had already spent some time discussing the concept of efficiency and how it is defined differently in Parecon from how it’s typically defined in capitalism and in most economics courses. In

From the Education & Skills Team

- **Educational events:**
Education and Skills team organized a session with Peter Bohmer on participatory socialism and racial justice.
- **Real Utopia 2:**
Prepared a call for submission for a new edited collection of essays on Real Utopia.
- **Future events:**
Preparing further presentation and discussion on the topic of participatory socialism and racial justice with Peter Bohmer. Organizing a graphic design skills workshop with Richard Schuitema.
Keep your eyes peeled for invitation emails.



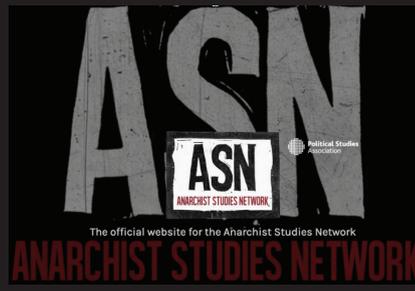
“Women's theoretical task was defined by the questions: how can women understand their particular oppression ... and how can they develop a new theory which understands the importance of reproduction, family, and sexuality as central to current analyses and future visions?”

(Lydia Sargent: Woman and Revolution)

economics, the esoteric concept of Pareto efficiency is used, primarily to supposedly prove that free markets achieve “efficiency” under the wildly unrealistic assumptions of perfect competition and perfect information. Since this debate took place during the final week of an 11-week course, by this time most students already understood pretty well that capitalism is most efficient at simply channeling profits up to the capitalist class. With Parecon’s definition of efficiency as “meeting our economic goals, with as little waste of resources, time, labor and energy as possible,” students generally agreed that tying workers’ pay to effort and sacrifice, as Parecon does, would be more effective at generating this more meaningful form of efficiency. Many students also recognized the inherent inefficiency in capitalism’s dependence on large numbers of managers to surveil, discipline, and control workers for the benefit of the capitalist owners. Without the need for these managers, Parecon can devote more workers to meaningful economic production.

In the end, most students voted that Parecon would be more efficient, and even among the students who were randomly selected to argue in favor of capitalism, most seemed to agree that Parecon would be more efficient. Of course, they generally agreed that it largely depends on how one defines efficiency. In the following class, we were able to discuss further if students felt like they would prefer a Parecon system overall. Most students seemed to like the idea of adopting some aspects of Parecon, particularly the idea of self-management. Most seemed hesitant to argue in favor of radically changing the entire economic system, however. In my experience teaching students in these 11-week courses, it’s been extremely difficult to convince students of abolishing capitalism entirely. It’s worth noting that my school is located in one of the wealthiest areas of the country, a mere 5-10 miles from the Washington homes of Jeff Bezos, Bill Gates, and Steve Ballmer. Most of the students are less than 22 years old, and many of them are still in high school, which means that they have relatively little experience working in the capitalist economy and still have enough faith that acquiring a college degree will provide them with a ticket to the American dream.

Though Parecon’s institutions were appealing to many students, many were also hesitant about the idea of revolutionizing the economy because of the uncertainty that could come with this process. On the other hand, the experience of the pandemic has clearly increased many students’ interest in radical change and their intolerance for the capitalist status quo. Overall, I found the students to be quite receptive to Parecon, when given a solid hour or two to really discuss it in depth. It will just take more time and more work to convince people that these changes are something that we require to get rid of this unbearable criminal system of capitalism and that we **can** achieve them.



The official website for the Anarchist Studies Network

Anarchist Studies Network // 7th International Conference // Online

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Call for Papers: Anarchist Futures
The theme of this years ASN conference - Anarchist Futures - seems perfect for RU participation. A list of suggested topics includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- How do we imagine the future?
- What does an anarchist society look like?
- How do we imagine a world without prisons, the state or police?
- How did anarchists in the past imagine the future? Did we get there?
- How does literature and art envision an anarchist future?
- How do we act for the future now?
- What is needed to change the future?
- Who are the actors of change?
- What is the role of imagination in changing the world?
- What is the relationship between anarchist theory and the future?

The Outreach and Events Team are busy organising a RU panel to present on various aspects of participatory theory, vision and strategy. If you are interested in this then please let us know. We will keep you all up to date with any progress.

Reaching out to the Parsoc Community

Fintan Bradshaw and Bridget Meehan

As RU members will be aware, there are three groups (that we know of) spread across the globe advocating for the participatory vision of the world: our very own Real Utopia; Participatory Economic Project; and ZNet. While each of these has participatory vision in common, they have distinct differences in the focus of their activity.

Real Utopia (RU) is a participatory, international network open to members from all walks of life and committed to promoting a participatory society; within its projects and teams, RU runs its projects and teams according to Parsoc of self-management and participatory organizing. Then there's Participatory Economy Project (PEP), a group of people that includes Robin Hahnel, who focus specifically on Parecon and who run a website, social media channels and a newsletter. The final group is ZNet which is an independent Left media project that provides general media content as well as content on Parsoc theory, vision and strategy.

There is overlap between these groups, and in a lot of ways all three are trying to achieve the same thing albeit through different approaches. In the true spirit of Parsoc, there was a sense that we should seek to build a better relationship between the three groups and to work more collectively. With this in mind, it was decided to hold a meeting with a number of representatives from each group. This meeting took place on 2 March.

The meeting started with introductions where everybody said a bit about themselves and the group they were representing. The remainder of the meeting was taken up with a discussion about what was the ideal situation for promoting participatory socialism/society, what were the possible obstacles in doing so and how they could be overcome.

The RU delegates said that their ideal situation would be a movement of organisations with a shared vision and set of values that could attract a variety of people and connect Parsoc with existing struggles. ZNet maintained a similar position. PEP's preference was to continue to specialise in doing research and advocacy but to find harmonious ways to advance common goals and to make more efficient use of our limited resources.

The possible obstacles voiced by RU were the language used to describe vision and strategy which could be overly complex at times and the lack of organisations implementing Parsoc ideas in practise. PEP pointed out the need to do more to connect the vision to real-life practical implementation and that some of the spheres such as Kinship and Community were insufficiently developed.

As a way forward, it was agreed that we needed further discussion and joint action. Regarding further discussion, we decided to hold intergroup

Member's Picks



Books

The Nutmeg's Curse: Parables for a Planet in Crisis, Amitav Ghosh

Undoing Privilege, Unearned Advantage and Systemic Injustice in an Unequal World, Bob Pease

Humankind: A Hopeful History, Rutger Bregman

Partisan Ruptures: Self-Management, Market Reform and the Spectre of Socialist Yugoslavia
Gal Kirn

Articles

A provisional manifesto for invigilator-friendly artworks, your artwork is an invigilators' labour conditions, Invigilator Research Network

TV Series

Severance 2022, Dan Erickson
Mark leads a team of office workers whose memories have been surgically divided between their work and personal lives.

Documentary

Even the Rain 2010, Icíar Bollain
As a director and his crew shoot a controversial film about Christopher Columbus in Cochabamba, Bolivia, local people rise up against plans to privatize the water supply.

Music

Pieces of a Man 1971, Gil Scott-Heron

Novels for the times

Homage to Catalonia 1938, George Orwell

meetings every two months with the next one scheduled for May. Regarding joint action, we settled on two areas of work:

- a) to develop a shared vision statement of the main features of a participatory society/socialism;
- b) to develop a strategy where we set some realistic objectives for the next few years and how we might work together to achieve them. PEP also agreed to provide updates on their work for the RU newsletter.

This meeting was a very positive first step for RU, PEP and Z and bringing the groups together in this way should prove to be an important initiative in advancing the cause of Parsoc. One thing is for certain though: there's a lot of work to be done and there's room for every one of us to make a contribution.

International Women's day

Alexandria Shaner

IWD was originally a revolutionary socialist holiday, rooted in women organizing for workers' rights and against war. The holiday has now been almost totally co-opted by capitalism, where being a feminist somehow means being a "girl-boss." It has become a day when women should become super-consumers, with sales and promotions targeting their wallets and commodifying both their worth and their satisfaction. IWD is actually a holiday that began by women coming together to use their collective power to change the world for the better. I propose that RU keep this in our sights for next year, and consider organizing a collaborative event, article, or some other creative response, to give voice to the revolutionary merits of this day and to raise awareness of how even impactful actions and traditions can be co-opted. Liza Featherstone, a fellow SSCC instructor, wrote a great article on the history of IWD: <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2022/03/international-womens-day-socialist-antiwar-movement>



Reflections: Participatory Socialism

topaz - poeticphonetics.com

If one were to cross reference a Who's Who of Social Justice in the U.S. and a seven degrees of (your favorite revolutionary here,) there is a strong chance that Peter Bohmer would be on the combination of those lists. I had the opportunity to speak with him a few days before his lecture to RU participants regarding Participatory Socialism and Racial Justice. In several ways, the conversation reflected listening to a tribal elder, as a number of the ideas or individuals I brought in to the talk he had heard of, or in the case of bell hooks, had taught in his classes. Being an activist as well as an academic, his exploits in San Diego protesting munitions being shipped to Vietnam have caught the attention of a film maker. Peter was interviewed for 16 hours regarding setting rail road ties on fire to stop the trains.

I can't be sure of a cosmic connection between sixteen hours of interviews, and the Merle Travis song Sixteen Tons, yet it's a good segue into what Participatory Socialism and Racial Justice have in common, and I'm going to use it. Peter invoked some of the ideas of Ted Allen, whose statements regarding the inherent clash between the working class and the capital class parallel the differences between individuality and the collective social ideology, or as we shall see, cultural traditions.

While finding and strengthening ties between Participatory Socialism and older tribal and cultural values seems to be a good approach for people in undeveloped nations, the idea isn't actually a new one, A new book, called Arise, Africa! Roar, China! By Gao Yunxiang explores how African American luminaries Paul Robeson and W.E.B. DuBois used points from the teachings of Confucius and the Tao Te Ching to reinforce the enlightened intelligence of African civilization, and to counter act 'primitivism,' in relation to colonial hegemony.

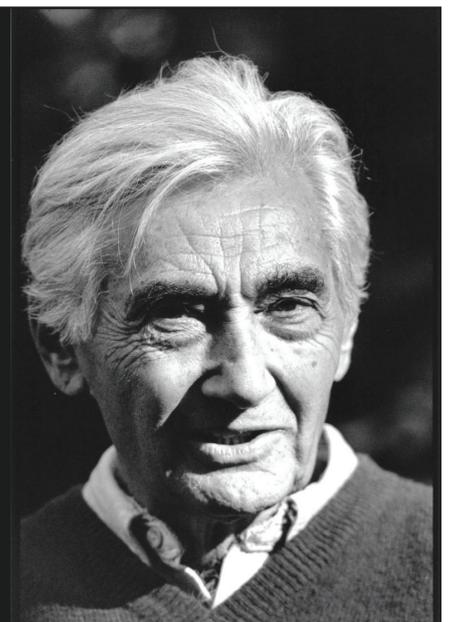
Since the fact that these ideas have persisted over millennia cannot be disputed, then the recognition of their natural place becomes imperative in reestablishing harmony between earthlings and the earth. In a brief synopsis, there are two ideas which Peter spoke of that reflect values from the Tao, which of course, implies a cross-cultural wisdom. In his definition of socialism, point three refers to self management, that is, worker control of the work place. I'm struck by the similarity to verse 33 in the Tao Te Ching which says self mastery is strength. The correlation here is that self management in the workplace provides the structure and energy to ensure the proper functions of all other departments in the organization.

In the Participatory Socialism area of his notes, under B: 3 and 4, challenging hierarchy and creating balanced job complexes combine as workplace empowerment. The similarities here are perhaps subtle, yet nature itself provides a comparison. Allowing that the 'king' in chapter 25 is an autonomous individual, the 'Man follows earth. Earth follows Heaven. Heaven follows the Tao. The Tao follows what is natural.' speaks to balanced relationships, whether they are at home, or in a working environment.

As you have seen, the ideas promoted as Participatory Socialism have existed well before the phrase. Peter humbly presents his thoughts with the backing of thousands of years of evolution, and to be able to discern the heart and compassion of the ideas creates a voice of solidarity well worth listening to.

**They say we're
disturbing the
peace, but there is
no peace.
What really bothers
them is that
we are disturbing
the war.**

- Howard Zinn



Sundays at the Advocacy Gym

Alexandria Shaner

The April/May session of [SSCC](#) is now starting and still accepting enrollments. The course, [No Bosses: Life After Capitalism](#) is available for free to all RU members.

The course is a presentation of Participatory Economics, hosted by Michael Albert, and includes both text and video lectures, as well as additional readings of various articles.

Every aspect of the course is optional, but for me, the most valuable resources are the weekly Sunday zoom sessions. All participants have the opportunity to take turns presenting, defending, and critiquing the material - like an advocacy gym.

This is where my personal review comes in - I was recently interviewed alongside fellow course participant and RU member, Bridget, for an activist program called 2 Minutes 2 Midnight. We were given the opportunity to talk about Parsoc and RU on their platform.

Luckily for us, we received an interview outline ahead of time, so that we could prepare and hope to sound smarter than we felt. But of course, as is inevitable, once we got there the interviewer threw us some curveballs...

The interviewer asked Bridget (out of left field, when we were previously discussing planning) how artists would fare in a parecon, would they be somehow constrained? I saw her smile and remain perfectly calm and say, "well this is actually something that people ask about all the time..." My inner cheerleader was jumping up and down. Bridget gave a great answer showing how a parecon would actually be liberatory for creative types, and gave examples of how artists and anyone with a creative idea could go about pursuing it as work in a parecon.

We were asked a few more unexpected questions, all of which we had previously come across in SSCC discussions - both about parecon and strategic activism in general. We had a quick chat together after the interview, which consisted of a big exhale and me exclaiming "phew!! All those No Bosses sessions comin' through!"

Bridget and I are not famous and this interview was probably no big deal - but no one likes to be recorded and displayed, no matter how small the platform,

feeling like they just served up an ugly plate of word salad while resembling a deer in headlights. We were pretty pleased with our little contribution to promoting parsoc, and the producer must have been too, because he asked us more questions about RU and even for our advice on a strategic question for his program, after the recording was finished. This led to a referral for more RU members to be interviewed.

You can start to see all the little steps, one by one, leading to bigger leaps. Take a course, show up and participate at the discussions, use your new skills at an interview, get more interviews for your network, use your path to inspire others to try the same....and so we grow and build.

All the SSCC courses, and specifically the No Bosses course, are not just intellectual pursuits - this is a chance to learn AND to practice advocacy and debate skills, to shop talk implementing ideas into your real life, to get your analytic and creative reflexes in gear, maybe turn a conversation into an article or some other project. Whether you'd like to be able to critique and express various ideas to people casually, or more formally, I can't recommend enough to give an hour or two for a few consecutive Sundays to this course. Your activism and your future will thank you for it, ten fold.

sscc.teachable.com

Members' Links

What are we publishing, where are we appearing?

We only want the Earth,

"Our demands most moderate are: we only want the earth."

- Bridget Meehan, Counterpunch

War and Warring Thoughts: Reasons to Rebel,

"Whatever the motive of this invasion, all people of good will and human caring, much less leftists seeking a truly better world, need to steadfastly oppose it and, in particular, to support those opposing it around the world, especially inside Russia itself."

- Michael Albert, Alexandria Shaner, Common Dreams

Riding the Blockchain: Can Tech Be Revolutionary?

"We can and should revolutionize the digital space, but alas, the revolution will not be digitized."

- Alexandria Shaner, Common Dreams

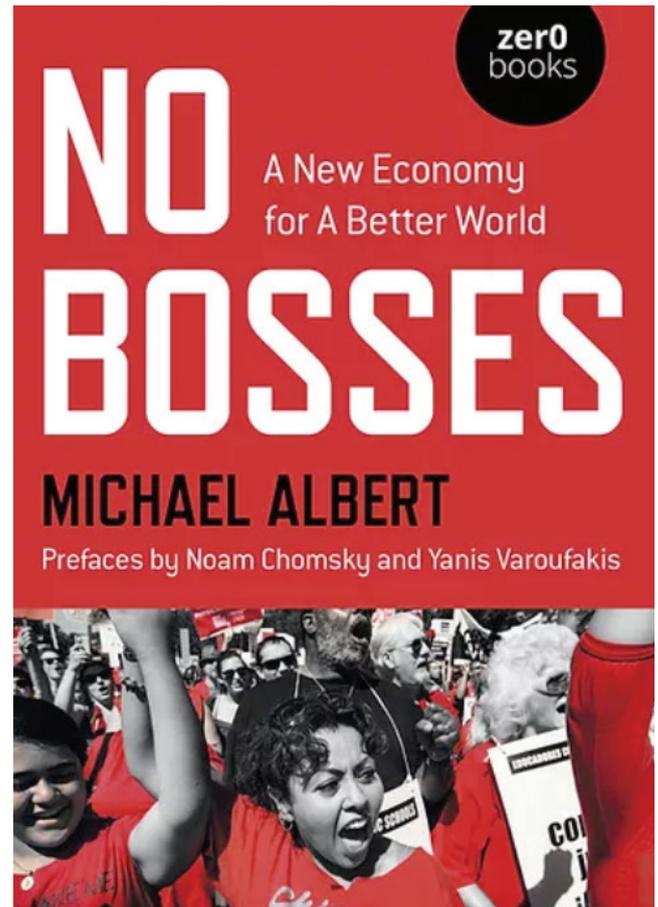
Some thoughts about No Bosses

Urška Breznik and Matic Primc

Humanity is certainly living through »interesting times«. It's not that the past was placid. The past was replete with wars, genocides, imperialism, dispossession, abuse on a gargantuan scale. The past century alone was marked with two world wars and the first use of nuclear weaponry, that ever since then hangs as the sword of Damocles over humanity's head. This century seems to be even more »interesting« as environmental collapse looms on the horizon and capitalist economy seems increasingly unable to do anything to prevent it. As we are treated to bizarre media narratives about countries coming together to solve the crisis, we are, in the same media, watching billionaires flying into space on ten minutes joyrides where they waste precious financial and material resources while at the same time they waste many lifetimes worth of emissions of the citizens of the global South. In the meantime an Oxfam report from January 2022 states that the world's ten richest men doubled their fortunes during the pandemic from \$700 billion to \$1,5 trillion and they now have six times more wealth than the poorest 3,1 billion people combined. Oxfam conservatively estimates that this inequality kills 21 000 people each day.

At this point in time *No Bosses* offers a rational vision of an alternative economy that must surely follow this loony present day reality.

This alternative economy has been named participatory economy and is a part of a wider vision of the participatory society. At the end of the book Michael Albert credits the inspiration behind the vision of participatory economy, a concept some 30 years old, to many works, among them Anton Pannekoek's *Worker's Council*, Herbert Marcuse's *One Dimensional Man*, Murray Bookchin's *Post Scarcity Anarchism*, Noam Chomsky's *Government in the Future* and Ursula Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*...to name but a few. Participatory economy is a vision of classless economy run with principles of self management that is democratically planned. The question of allocation of goods and services is crucial. It proposes that workers get income for duration, intensity, and onerousness of the socially valued work they do. Additionally, the people who cannot work (children, elderly, sick...) should get an average share. Some of society's product should also go to collective needs such as health care, public schools, public



I took her to a supermarket
I don't know why but I had to start it
Somewhere,
So it started there.

I said, "Pretend you've got no money,"
She just laughed and said, "Oh, you're so funny."
I said, "Yeah?"
Well, I can't see anyone else smiling in here."
(Pulp: [Common People](#))

communal services etc. And none should go to anyone because they own productive assets. However, as Albert points out »the dominion that the ownerships currently conveys is not only about income, but also about control«, we should apply the concept of the Commons. An important part of the book explains the ties between the economy and other spheres of life (polity, kinship, community), showing their interconnectedness. It showcases the problems in the spheres of community and kinship that have been shown as particularly acute during the times of Coronavirus pandemic.

The book is not an exercise in academic posturing as many books and articles which discuss economics are, even when doing so from the leftist point of view. The vision is being presented in an understandable fashion without the use of difficult theoretical concepts. It is apparent that it draws lessons from various economic and social theories that can only be explained simply by someone very well versed in them. It shows the authors honest effort in finding a concrete vision which can be worked on step by step even today and is written in a way that can illuminate aspects of how it might work and feel when fully implemented. Only someone who has ample experience and understanding of the importance of

collective action and solidarity can present this vision as a scaffold and not as a prescription, fully trusting future communities/ generations to find their own specific solutions within the value framework and proposed institutions.

And the people have the power
To redeem the work of fools
From the meek the graces shower
It's decreed the people rule

(Patti Smith: [People Have the Power](#))

Poets' Corner

by topaz - poeticphonetics.com

Mimas

Saturday, ruled by Saturn,
surly o'erseer of strength.
The sharpest of thoughts,
sailing through space,
split, with timely precision,
as approaching the sound
rings through to truth and marrow.
Spirit, sensing Sublime emanation,
realizes ego is all
Death's scythe can harvest.
To be or not to be
is no longer the question,
instead,
Satori through smoke,
or Satori through spirits?
'Or, perhaps both?'
wonders the beautiful woman
Janus calls Cerebellum.

First Rhythms

Camping in the car,
orienting by stars,
home warmed heart and hearth
are miles or a dream away.

Rivers, bounded by burl'd trees
of oak and dream and might,
kept sacred by innocent eyes,
loosing blood, once caught
in the white washed rocks
by the otherwise
calm surface.

Is there a prayer
for those who are prey?
For strength and sinew
create not courage.
Fierce vision enhanced
with need to feed,
set fires aglow
with ancient urges.

Strange how atomic attributes
atrophy into carnivorousness;
cleaving spirit from sanctified flesh.

This dream, this vision,
this portent of death,
offerings to gods unmade and manifest.
Land and Breath, Motion and Blood,
thrown and shaped and
tossed in The Kiln.

Instant awakening, a thing of the past?
The dogma of thought, the last enchantment cast?
Symbols sputtering without dinosaur dough,
the very carriage I ride, draining my soul.

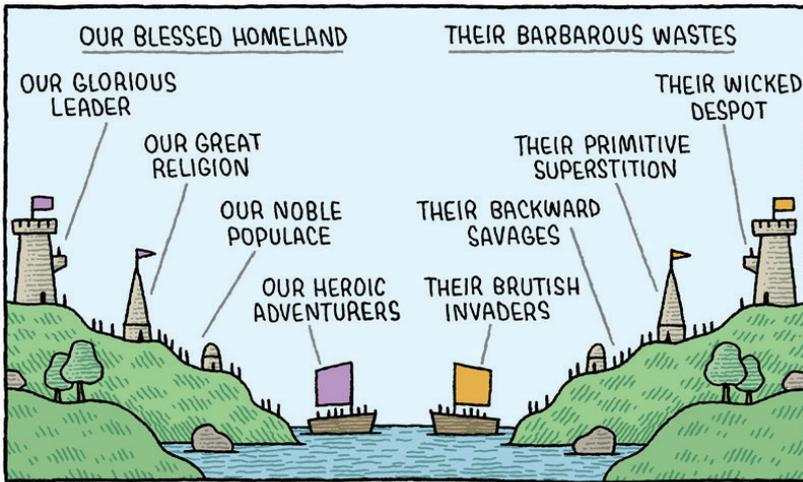
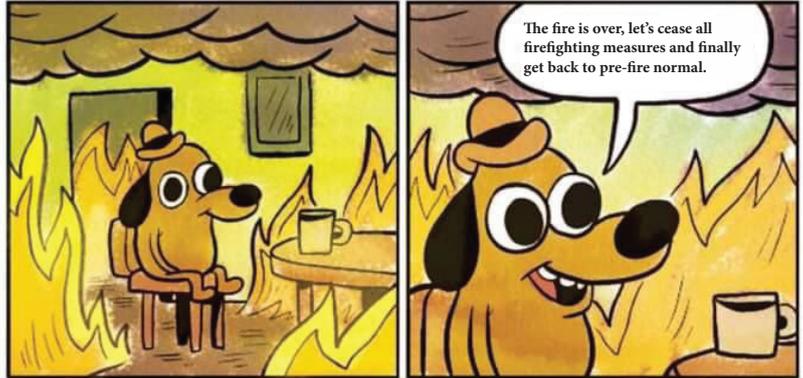
Aurora Borealis, lighting the sky.
Hope in the dark!
Burned matchsticks fly.
Laugh, weep, dance,
And sweep away finally;
the last broken thoughts.

RU Serious?

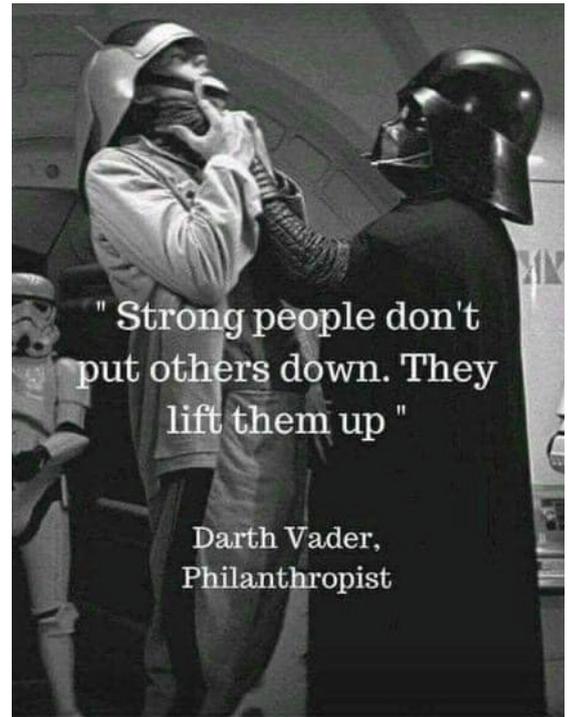
... it's memeing time.

"If I cannot meme to it then it is not my revolution!"

-Emma, probably



TOM GAULD



Carlos Martinez
@agent_of_change

I've been wondering how they'll put a negative spin on China's high-speed rail network. Well done guys. Hope someone got a decent pay rise out of this.

MailOnline

China plans 'Doomsday trains' that could transport nuclear missiles around the country and even carry out launches which are hard to detect

- China could use 'doomsday trains' to transport and even fire nuclear missiles
- New research suggests rail is better than roads for weapon 'concealment'
- In less than 20 years Beijing has built the world's largest high-speed rail network
- State-of-the-art DF-41 rockets were reportedly test launched from trains in 2015

Satire writes itself.

Today
BBC Radio 4, 1 December 2021

In an item about Chinese 'debt trap' diplomacy we interviewed Professor Deborah Brautigam, who explained that this 'is the idea that China is deliberately luring countries into borrowing more money than they can afford with the goal of using that debt for strategic leverage, to seize assets of some kind or otherwise push the country to do China's bidding.' She went on to give an example of the Sri Lankan port of Hambantota, saying it was used by the Trump administration to promote this theory.

However Professor Brautigam's further point, that these ideas have little basis in fact, was edited out of the broadcast interview. In fact Professor Brautigam's research shows that Chinese banks are willing to restructure the terms of existing loans and have never actually seized an asset from any country, much less the port of Hambantota.

We apologise for the error.

7/02/2022