

# RU PARTICIPATING

MEMBERS | NETWORK PROJECTS | SOLIDARITY

## From the Education & Skills Team

- **Team Meetings:**  
The team meets every Tuesday at 9pm UTC. Every other week the members try to discuss various perspectives of kinship and the imagined participatory society versions. Everyone is welcome to these discussions.
- **Session on degrowth:**  
The team is in discussion with a climate scientist for a session on degrowth in May.
- **RU 2 book:**  
The book is coming along nicely. The team is happy to report that Cynthia Peters and Savvina Chowdhury will write an essay on kinship.

## From the Site Team

- **Updated maps:**  
The team has updated the membership map to reflect current membership.
- **Mobile version of the new homepage:**  
The team has fixed the Bylaws document so that it is usefully presented on the mobile devices.
- **New version of the website (nicknamed the RU2):**  
The team is continuing work on the website redesign and will soon showcase it.



## Long live May 1st!

### Topaz

On May 1st, several nations hold a place for workers. The importance of the day is perhaps noted by the different attitudes that political parties portray. Fear of the working class is noted by the separation of the U.S. celebration from the rest of the world. The International Labor Day's origins can be traced to (what became) the American Federation of Labor. The fight for a shorter work day, which began on May 1st, 1886 through a call for a general strike, that culminated in the Haymarket affair on May 3rd-4th was a pivotal moment for workers everywhere. The fact that in the U.S. and Canada Labor Day is celebrated in September has been attributed to the intention to remove the recognition of what unions are capable of from the violence of the Haymarket affair. In the U.S, perhaps the strategy(?) worked exceptionally, as today's workers are more likely to clamor for the legalization of drugs in order to do their jobs, instead of better working conditions, national health insurance or affordable housing. These issues are the basis of the Twenty Theses for Liberation which was unveiled to the world on May 1st. Alexandria Shaner, one of Real Utopia's members, and a founder of RU Participating has an article about these theses in the May issue. Real Utopia member Ferdia O'Brien answers the questions that are the get to know you portion.

A short essay from my book Poetic Phonetics: Post homeless Disorder is also included. In case my words aren't inspirational enough, in regards to what the movement of workers has been and what could happen today, I believe quoting Dylan Thomas is always acceptable: Do not go gentle into that good night. Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

## From the Outreach and Events Team

- **What RU talking about?:**

The team is continuing the conceptualisation of the more outreach oriented events, called "What RU talking about?"

They may just surprise us with an experimental first one which we could then debate and offer suggestions for improvements.

## From the Membership Team

- **Welcome meetings:**

Membership team runs open ended welcome meetings for new and current members every Tuesday at 4 pm EST. If you havent been, come join us for a chat.

- **First official Local chapter:**

Shortly the thus far informal Maribor RU chapter will make its bid to be recognized by members council. Membership team will use this to entice groups of members to do so as well. We invite anyone who would like to start organizing on the ground in their area to contact our team and we will assist as we can. Team is preparing assistance, mentoring and material as a kind of starter kit for local chapters to assist in setting them up and kicking off activities.

- **Paying gigs channel:**

We opened a new discord channel where members can post job openings for activism related gigs they come across.

# Labor #4Liberation

## Alexandria Shaner

On May 1, the *20 Theses for Liberation* was co-published by various media outlets and organizations. It is intended to become a widely shared but dynamic organizing strategy towards mutual aims where vision, values, policy, and prefiguring can converge in an accessible and actionable way for diverse organizers and movements. It aims to be a »living document« on an [online portal](#) for organizers and movement participants to engage with and adapt while connecting with one another in solidarity. The project uses the hashtag **#4Liberation** to connect across various social media platforms.

For the May issue of *RU Participating*, I was asked to comment on how the *20 Theses for Liberation* relates to the labor movement. I understand the relationship to have nested implications:

- First, the vision and strategy proposed by the 20 Theses helps us consider how we organize and progress internally, within work teams, networks, unions, federations, etc.
- Next, the 20 Theses are applicable to building solidarity and power within the broader labor movement beyond any one group or campaign and across industries and countries. It provides strategic norms for achieving broad worker solidarity.
- Third, the 20 Theses bears on inter-movement organizing when applied to building relationships and capacity for intersectional solidarity and action. For example, in building the urgently necessary power bloc that includes the labor and climate movements, in order to force the just transition to an economy and society that prioritizes people and planet over profit and the need for endless extractive growth.
- Finally, via these nested applications, the 20 Theses is also a shared vision and strategy that can be adapted to relate to diverse people from all over the world, by diverse people from all over the world. In this way, the outermost layer of all the nested applications is like a snowball picking up size and speed as it rolls onward, growing and being shaped by everyone who joins it.

Getting more specific from these nested layers of strategic organizing, I have outlined some proposals that arise from applying the *20 Theses for Liberation* to the labor movement today. The first section deals with applying the 20 Theses as a lens to guide labor organizers, while the second section explores inter-movement organizing using the example of the labor and environmental movements.

### ***20 Theses for Liberation Inside Labor Organizing***

The history of strategic organizing in the labor movement has been marked by changing circumstances and challenges, and it has consistently evolved, sometimes more and sometimes less successfully, to adapt to the needs of workers and achieve their goals. Today's organizing efforts need to be inclusive, grassroots-driven, creative, legally and politically savvy, and focused on building public support. By applying lessons from the past, leveraging relevant strategies and tactics, and most importantly, by coalescing around shared vision and strategy towards mutual aims, the labor movement can make progress in advancing workers' rights, improving working conditions, and achieving economic justice in the present day while continuously pushing towards sustained, fundamental changes in labor relations across society.

In response to the current challenges of neoliberalism, neocolonialism, rapid technological innovation, and fossil-capitalism, the labor movement has already begun adopting new strategies and tactics like grassroots organizing, community-based campaigns, and alliances with other social movements, such as civil rights, environmental, and immigrant rights organizations. Labor unions have also used legal and political strategies to advocate for pro-worker policies, such as raising the minimum wage, expanding access to healthcare, and protecting workers' rights to organize and bargain collectively. The vision and strategy laid out in the *20 Theses for Liberation* is in alignment with these developments, and can be used to further demands and guide strategic organizing on an increasingly radical systemic trajectory while building collective power to achieve more, faster.

Labor organizing, through the participatory lens laid out in the *20 Theses*, would prioritize principles of economic democracy, equity, solidarity, and worker empowerment. The economic vision proposed in the *20 Theses* advocates for decentralized decision-making, collective ownership of productive assets, equitable distribution of resources and wealth, the protection of diversity, and ending class-based divisions of labor.

What would this mean specifically? It would look different across diverse contexts, as it should, however some concrete possibilities could develop in the following areas:

**Worker Self-Management:** The *20 Theses for Liberation* emphasizes worker self-management, which means that decisions about workplace conditions, production processes, and distribution of goods and services are made collectively by workers themselves. Labor organizing efforts would focus on empowering workers to have a meaningful voice and decision-making power in their workplaces, through mechanisms such as worker cooperatives, workplace councils, and democratic decision-making processes. This would involve organizing efforts to promote democratic governance structures in the workplace, where workers have control over their working conditions and the direction of their work.

**Economic Democracy:** The *20 Theses for Liberation* seeks to create economic systems that are democratic and participatory, rather than hierarchically controlled by a few individuals or corporations. Labor organizing through this lens would prioritize creating democratic economic structures, where workers have a say in the allocation of resources, investment decisions, and distribution of wealth. In today's context, this could involve advocating for policies that promote cooperative and collective ownership, profit-sharing arrangements, and participatory budgeting, where workers have a direct role in shaping economic decisions that affect their lives.

**Equity and Social Justice:** The *20 Theses for Liberation* places a strong emphasis on equity and social justice, with the goal of eliminating disparities in income, wealth, and access to resources. Labor organizing efforts would prioritize

addressing issues of inequality in the workplace, such as wage disparities, discriminatory practices, and unfair labor practices. This could involve advocating for fair labor laws, promoting pay equity, and challenging discriminatory practices that disproportionately affect marginalized workers, such as workers of color, women, LGBTQ+ workers, and workers with disabilities.

**Solidarity and Cooperation:** The *20 Theses for Liberation* promotes cooperation and solidarity among workers and communities, rather than competition and individualism. Labor organizing through this lens would prioritize building alliances and collaborative efforts among workers, unions, communities, and other social movements. This could involve forming coalitions with other labor unions, community organizations, and social justice groups to advocate for shared issues, such as worker rights, affordable housing, healthcare, education, and sustainability practices. It could also involve promoting cooperative networks, where workers and communities collaborate and support each other in economic activities.

**Education and Empowerment:** The *20 Theses for Liberation* emphasizes the need for education and empowerment of workers to actively participate in economic decision-making. Labor organizing efforts would prioritize educating workers about their rights, labor laws, and economic principles, as well as building their capacity to engage in collective bargaining, negotiation, and decision-making processes. This could involve providing training, resources, and support for workers to understand and navigate the economic system, and empowering them to actively participate in shaping their own economic realities. It could also involve demands for redistributing workplace tasks in a non-hierarchical and fair way, so that empowering, rote, and care-work tasks are increasingly balanced across a workplace. In the context of the need to adapt entire industries to an ecological economy, it could also involve training and re-skilling workers preemptively to transition to green jobs, and to organize policy demands for achieving a just transition for all workers that gives voice to all workers.

**Sustainability and Environmental Justice:** The *20 Theses for Liberation* recognizes the importance of environmental sustainability and social responsibility in economic systems. Labor organizing efforts through this lens would prioritize advocating for environmentally sustainable workplace practices, addressing issues such as climate change, pollution, and resource depletion as well as simultaneously advocating for policies that guarantee the livelihoods of all people. This could involve promoting green jobs, advocating for environmental regulations, and ensuring that workers have a voice in shaping workplace practices that impact the environment. It could involve campaigns, in diverse contexts, for policies such as green job guarantees, universal basic income, broadening sustainable public provisioning systems for housing, transportation, communication, healthcare, education and food. It could mean participating in expanding



the commons to meet the basic needs of communities sustainably.

Through these potential applications, and through a diversity of other possibilities relevant to various contexts, labor organizing using the *20 Theses for Liberation* as a broad guiding framework would prioritize worker self-management, economic democracy, equity, solidarity, empowerment, and sustainability. It would seek to create workplaces and economic systems that are democratic, equitable, and socially and ecologically responsible, with the goal of empowering workers to have a meaningful voice in economic decision-making and promoting economic justice for all workers.

### Labor & Climate #4 Liberation

Inter-movement solidarity is a key aim of the *20 Theses for Liberation* and it plays a critical role in today's labor context by fostering collaboration, amplifying voices, and building collective power. By working together with other social movements, labor unions and worker organizations can address the complex challenges faced by workers today, such as inequality, discrimination and systemic racism, and precarious work, and advocate for policies and practices that promote economic justice and social equity. Inter-movement solidarity is an important strategy for labor organizing efforts to build a more inclusive, resilient, and impactful movement that advances the rights and well-being of all workers.

The example that must come to the forefront of labor intersectionality today is climate justice. All workers live on this Earth, and the more our economic and social systems are stressed by ecological collapse, the more workers will bear the brunt of the suffering. This is not a prediction — it is happening now, especially in the Global South, but does not exclude workers in the Global North. The people affected disproportionately by climate change are the very people who are affected disproportionately by unjust labor relations. **This is an opportunity for what could be the greatest grassroots power-bloc in history, and just might be our salvation as a species.**

The labor and climate justice movements must work together to advance their shared goals of addressing climate change by transforming our economy and society to promote wellbeing and fulfillment within planetary bounds, and advocating for workers' rights in all countries. The *20 Theses for Liberation* is relevant as a shared visionary and strategic framework to help bring these movements together, each taking leadership in their own areas of expertise while supporting and adding their perspectives and experience to collectively pursue mutual aims.

Getting more specific will require that participants continually examine their context to assess the relevance and potential impacts of organizing strategy. However, we can

begin to consider some potential strategies for collaboration and increased interdependence:

**Green Jobs and Just Transition:** As previously touched upon, the labor and climate justice movements can collaborate to promote the creation of green jobs and a just transition for workers in industries that are transitioning away from fossil fuels. This includes advocating for policies that support job training, retraining, and job placement for workers in industries such as coal, oil, and gas that will be impacted by climate action measures. It can also mean campaigning for green jobs guarantees, shorter workweeks with a living wage, UBI, and expanding public access to basic needs. By working together, the labor and climate justice movements can ensure that the transition to a more sustainable economy is equitable and inclusive, and that workers are not left behind. If any transition is to occur, workers must have a say in what this transition should look like, in which case they will become the powerful advocates needed to force meaningful action now.

**Joint Campaigns and Actions:** The labor and climate justice movements can collaborate on joint campaigns and actions to advocate for policies and practices that prioritize workers' rights and environmental protections. This could include joint rallies, protests and other actions that raise awareness about the intersectionality of climate and labor issues, and demand action from policymakers and corporations. More importantly in today's context, moving beyond raising awareness to disruption, the mighty power of the strike must be included in the quiver of nonviolent civil-disobedience. By joining forces, the labor and climate justice movements can amplify their voices and increase their collective impact. By taking the struggle to production itself, something only workers can do, these actions will have the greatest impact.

**Solidarity on Environmental and Workers' Health:** The labor and climate justice movements can work together to address environmental and workers' health concerns. This includes advocating for safe and healthy working conditions, protection from hazardous substances and pollutants, and access to clean air and water for workers and communities. By collaborating on environmental and health-related issues, the labor and climate justice movements can promote policies and practices that prioritize the well-being of workers and the environment.

**Advocacy for Just Climate Policies:** The labor and climate justice movements can collaborate in advocating for just climate policies that prioritize the needs and rights of workers and communities, particularly those most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The labor movement needs to join the environmental movement in challenging the growth imperative and in advocating for policies that remove our economy's dependence on growth so that we can transition to production only of what is needed for the wellbeing of people and planet. This means an end to planned

obsolescence and fossil fuel subsidies, the downscaling of certain industries and the growth of other industries, debt forgiveness, funding public services, eliminating unnecessary waste, and ensuring that basic livelihoods are not tied to employment. It includes advocating for policies such as renewable energy incentives, climate mitigation and adaptation measures that green create jobs, and policies that promote energy democracy and community ownership of renewable energy resources. Here again, labor and environmental concerns are aligned in the need for increasing access to the things we need to live a good life - sustainable and good quality food, housing, transportation, and education, clean water, community, and self-determination. By anchoring organizing in shared vision and strategy, we avoid the trap of the false narrative that labor and climate concerns must be at odds. By working together, the labor and climate justice movements can advocate for policies that address both the environmental and social aspects of the climate crisis.

**Intersectional Approaches:** The labor and climate justice movements can adopt intersectional approaches that recognize the ways in which climate change disproportionately affects the Global South and marginalized communities, including low-income workers, people of color, indigenous communities, and other vulnerable populations. By acknowledging and addressing the intersectionality of climate and labor issues, the labor and climate justice movements can collaborate on solutions that are inclusive, equitable, and just, while attracting and engaging an ever increasing number of people from all walks of life.

**Consciousness Raising & Empowerment:** The labor and climate justice movements can collaborate on education and awareness-building efforts to highlight the connections between climate change and workers' rights. This includes raising awareness among workers and the broader public about the impacts of climate change on workers, the need for just transition policies, and the benefits of a sustainable and equitable economy. It means an outreach strategy that immediately engages workers and the public in democratic forums so that their voices are at the forefront of developing policy demands for a just transition. By empowering and mobilizing workers and the public, the labor and climate justice movements can build a broader base of support and increased participation towards their shared goals.

**Participatory Decision-Making:** The labor and climate justice movements can promote participatory decision-making processes that involve workers and communities in shaping the priorities, strategies, and tactics of their movements. This includes creating spaces for workers and community members to actively participate in decision-making processes, such as town halls, forums, people's assemblies, and participatory planning sessions. By promoting participatory decision-making, the labor and climate justice movements can ensure that the voices and perspectives of workers and communities are leading their efforts.

## Conclusions

The *20 Theses for Liberation* was co-authored by 29 activists, is co-hosted by multiple organizations, and draws on a broad range of thinking and movements from all over the world. It is intended to be continuously adapted by diverse people and movements to suit their own diverse contexts. It is a practice of commoning.

The above proposals are only one example of potential, immediate applications for this project, and like the *20 Theses* document itself, is not intended to be a fixed end, but rather the beginning of increased dialogue, deliberation, and collective action across all the interlinked spheres of life. The point of the *20 Theses for Liberation* project is to place a permanent value on uniting around positive vision and strategic norms towards mutual aims. We must build a culture of strategic organizing that returns again and again, over ever changing terrain and increasing urgencies, to clear sighted vision and to solidarity.

Getting organized will be the spark that ignites the changes that people are already not just longing for, but working for, though too often in relative isolation. When we have been focused so long on resisting what we don't want, that we lose sight of what we do want, we must return to positive vision. When we become oppressed by one another while struggling to change the very systems that promote these oppressions, we must return to practicing what we seek. When we get stuck in the specifics of policy and tactical decisions, or in contending or even conflicting interests, we must return to a shared framework to remain rooted in deep solidarity as we look for ways forward, together. When the truth is constantly obfuscated by the powerful, and by our hegemonic narratives, so that we think we are surrounded by enemies on all sides, we must return to the idea of interdependence and community. Here, we re-discover that what we need to do to live better lives now, is exactly what we need to do for our fellow workers, for our neighbors, for our brothers and sisters on the other side of the world, and for the planet itself.

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The *20 Theses for Liberation* can be **read in full [here](#)** and signed by any person or organization who wishes to engage with the ongoing project. #4Liberation

**20 Theses for Liberation Co-hosts & Co-Authors:** ZNetwork, DiEM25, MetaCPC, RealUtopia, Michael Albert, Renata Avila, Ramzy Baroud, Medea Benjamin, Peter Bohmer, Fintan Bradshaw, Jeremy Brecher, Urška Breznik, Noam Chomsky, Savvina Chowdhury, Devriş Çimen, Mark Evans, Andrej Grubačić, Jason Hickel, Kathy Kelly, Arash Kolahi, Bridget Meehan, Sotiris Mitralaxis, Jason Myles, Cynthia Peters, John Pilger, Matic Primc, Don Rojas, Stephen Shalom, Alexandria Shaner, Norman Solomon, Cooper Sperling, Yanis Varoufakis, Brett Wilkins, Greg Wilpert  
Progressive International has provided translations on **The Wire**.

# Why RU Participating, Ferdia?

## Ferdia O'Brien

**Tell us a bit about yourself. What is your name? Where were you born? Where do you live now? What kind of work do you do? What are your interests? What is your all time favourite book, film or piece of music? Anything that you feel comfortable sharing.**

Well, thank you for the opportunity. My name is Ferdia O'Brien, I was born and grew up in Dublin, Ireland, where I live today.

I trained as an electrical engineer but these days I'm a social cybernetician focused on investigating solutions to humanity's great problems. That work involves research, policy, and communications, organised as Bright Age Beyond ([brightagebeyond.com](http://brightagebeyond.com)), formerly After The Oligarchy.

I'm particularly interested in developing detailed models of postcapitalism. Anders Sandström and I are writing a book extending and revising Parecon. We also just submitted a journal article called 'Postcapitalist Retail and Accounting: Personal Consumption Planning in the Participatory Economy'. I have lots of projects up my sleeve, but that's enough for now.

As a proud generalist, my interests are very broad. Apart from social science, I'm particularly interested in pragmatist philosophy, philosophies for life (e.g. secular buddhism), complexity science, cybernetics, and technology. I've also been vegan for 10 years.

I'm adamantly pluralist and open-minded. Dogmatism is the norm, including among radicals. Identifying your self with an ideology is the death of thought. It's a constant struggle to keep my mind open but I try. My pragmatist philosophy helps.

Regarding postcapitalism, that means I read everything serious and I try to evaluate every proposal and proposal on its merits. I think parecon is very promising but it has its own gaps and flaws.

I've also been making music, writing poems, etc, for many years. That is a huge part of me but I don't advertise that. I'm also a big fan of rugby.

**Did you have any significant events in your life that ignited your interest in politics and social justice?**

Yes. Like many my age in Ireland, the formative political events were the 11th September attacks, Afghan War,

and War on Terror (2001), the Iraq War (2003), the Global Financial Crisis (2008), and the international horizontalist movements (2011+).

More specifically, I was born in 1993 into a very political middle class family, my parents being anti-clerical republicans. Ireland was still a Catholic theocracy (for example, homosexuality having only been decriminalised in the year of my birth); so my parents would have been pretty radical by mainstream standards, particularly my mother who has long been an ardent feminist. When I was growing up, they despised the two parties which had dominated the Republic of Ireland since the civil war in 1922, favouring the centre-left Labour Party. They were also very critical of British imperialism, sympathetic to Sinn Féin, Irish unification, and the armed struggle. So, I grew up being critical of the Catholic Church, the Empire (including the US empire), Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael.

My route to serious politicisation as a 15 or 16-year-old was atheism, Irish nationalism, internet 'conspiracy theories', and anti-corporate, anti-war material, much facilitated by the internet especially YouTube and Wikipedia.

I was captivated by the British oppression of Ireland and its other colonies. The US wars against Iraq and Afghanistan impressed me greatly. To me they epitomised pure and needless evil, and with much guidance from my brother I tried to understand how to stop the war machine. That eventually led to learning about something called 'capitalism' which seemed to tie it all together.

I was reared without religion and taught to think for myself, so I've always been an atheist. That immediately made me an outsider, and as I got older it became clear that the Catholic Church stood for everything I opposed. It didn't help that I've wanted to be a scientist since I was a small child. Around 2008, the Church was hit by abuse allegations which stuck – and, in hindsight, permanently broke their moral authority – and that catalysed me in wanting to tear them down.

I was born into a household where domestic abuse was the norm (my father), and that also made me an outsider in ways I've only come to understand recently. I think that made me more sensitive to suffering and injustice but retarded me in other ways. My parents split in 2004, and my brother, sister, and I went with my mother. She had to go into a lot of debt. Then the 2008 crisis hit her physio practice hard. In effect, we were declassified. In

wider society, the system was collapsing and people were looking for answers. I went to student protests; I saw a classmate drawing the word 'SOCIALISM', and looked it up. I've been a self-described socialist since age 17. As usual, Chomsky helped a lot. I'll stop the story there.

I can trace this simple narrative in hindsight, but of course it isn't clear at the time. We tend not to think that we are people of our time, but we are; even the most free-thinking of us. In any case, in my life I've been different people. Nature is a powerful factor, but I know that in different circumstances I would be a different person today.

Today my mission is to help transform human society. Everything else is secondary. That is the great mission of our time, and I'm in it to win it.

### **What attracted you to RU? Why did you join?**

I joined Real Utopia primarily because of my interest in postcapitalist vision, and specifically in the participatory economy. I'd like to be much more active in RU but I haven't found the time so far.

Also, because I've formed relationships with quite a few RU members. Mark Evans in particular gently encouraged (and reminded) me to join a few times.

### **Which aspect of RU appeals to you the most?**

Mainly that Real Utopia is one of very few organisations which takes systemic vision seriously.

The default on the Left is to ignore the question of where we are going. To say that is impractical is an understatement. There are some short-to-medium-term programmes, such as the Green New Deal. There is a lot of protest. There is a lot of analysis of the system, and what is wrong with it. Sometimes there is discussion of strategy. I always wonder what the purpose of a strategy is if you don't know your destination.

This is all necessary. But we need a clear plan for the economic and political institutions of the future. Otherwise, we aren't really socialists, we're just anti-capitalists. The movement should be prioritising solutions, including solutions in 'political' democracy. If we do, we could still open a new enlightened epoch for humanity (a bright age beyond, if you will). If we don't, we're doomed. Either way, I don't believe in giving up. That doesn't compute, you always try in whatever situation you're in.

### **Are you engaged in any other organisations? If so, which ones? What appeals to you about them?**

Yes. I'm a member of the Democracy in Europe Movement 2025 (DiEM25), and a member of the

Participatory Economy Project (PEP).

I joined DiEM25 at the beginning of 2020. I had become extremely disillusioned with the Left and in 2019 Yanis Varoufakis' writings and talks helped me regain confidence that socialism was a viable project. I looked into DiEM25 and it seemed the most promising political project which I could find. DiEM has its flaws, but I appreciate its spirit of democracy, innovation, and hard-headed policy, and I think we are doing a good job of forging a new democratic socialism.

In October 2021, I co-founded our Postcapitalism Collective. In November 2022, we created a Task Force on Postcapitalism Policy whose purpose is to develop DiEM25 policy on postcapitalism in accordance with the views of the membership.

This is very significant. If you're aware of another party or movement - outside of self-described socialist countries - with a detailed programme for the transition to postcapitalism, let me know. To me that seems either highly rare or non-existent. If we're serious about achieving postcapitalism, we need practical policy which parties, movements, unions, and concerned citizens, can use to create the next civilisation.

DiEM's Green New Deal for Europe and its European New Deal policy papers are 94 and 102 pages respectively. I aspire to something at least as detailed for achieving postcapitalism in Europe.

As to the Participatory Economy Project, I got involved in early 2022 after interviewing Prof. Robin Hahnel. I admire PEP's focus, efficiency, and collegiality, and I think it's a great vehicle for researching the participatory economy model and communicating about parecon to a wider audience.

### **What are your hopes for RU and the progressive left more generally?**

As to RU, that's a good question. If an organisation isn't clear on its objectives, it will fail. I haven't been involved enough to have a strong opinion on that. Given that disclaimer, here are some thoughts. There are many, many, leftist activist organisations, so the question is RU's distinctive contribution. I see RU's distinctive role in its focus on systemic vision; that is, answering the question 'what are you for?'. Thus, internal and external education about that is an important goal. Furthermore, I think RU can facilitate developing policy, whether in the kinship, political, economic, or community spheres. Generally, I think without working towards a policy programme, people will talk in circles or engage in reactive protest. As to the 'progressive left', I've said quite a bit about that so I won't add to the word count.



# Working Class Calculus

## Topaz

No, Really. I know many of us have memories of asking math instructors, ‘When will I ever use math?’ Well, the truth is putting on your pants in the morning is math. I am not an exceptional visual artist, so I will use a word problem to ‘prove’ that we all use math daily.

A pair of pants traveling at a speed of 32 centimeters every half second is moving to meet your foot from 75 centimeters above ground and 18 centimeters away from your waist. If, because of a jay walking accident, you are only able to raise your right foot 18 centimeters off of the ground, at what point after the pants have started moving should you raise your foot to still look somewhat smooth to the nurse watching? \*

See? Math! Given the ‘proof’ that everyone has the ability to process math non-verbally, since we all know how to put on pants, why is so much importance placed on verbal and written expression through testing? The instruction of math provides a clue. The fact that what

Antonio Gramsci terms as ‘normative language,’ is used to instruct math seems to create an unfortunate bias against some cultures and economic levels in learning the languages of numerical expression. The question arises then, has the instruction of math remained unchanged because normative ‘language is the product of conflict, including cultural and political struggle?’ Since we all have the ability to perform math and even teach math by playing catch with our children, why are some expressions of math valued more than others? We have already seen that being able to speak about math is better than not, in regards to financial rewards. Yet non verbal math is demanded in manufacturing, in kitchens, and on the sports field. In a way (cough) it’s fair, since reimbursement for working class calculus is directly related to how well you calculate under pressure.

\*Not a real math problem. The numbers are made up. The answer is sit on the bed.

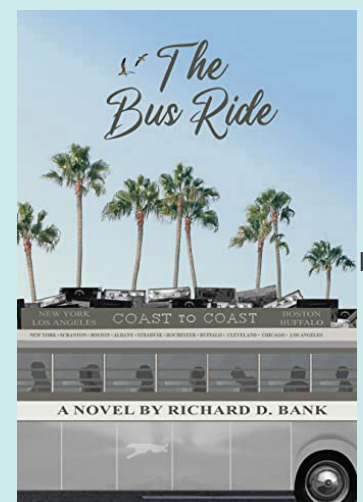
## What got U started?

What got me started in participatory economics was my own family background. My paternal grandfather, David Bank (originally “Mikalbank” from Ukraine), was a penniless immigrant who settled in Philadelphia and found work in the garment industry sweatshops. David Bank was a socialist and a union organizer who was fired from his job and eventually blacklisted from employment by the rest of the factory owners. Like many other sweatshop workers in the garment industry, he became infected with tuberculosis and died at a very young age leaving my grandmother with two children, including my Dad, to support without any help except from some of her relatives. As a socialist David Bank was active in socialist politics and actively campaigned for Eugene Debs, the socialist candidate for president in 1924.

As an active RU member (as well as an active member of the Democratic Party in New Jersey) I feel like I am carrying on with my grandfather’s legacy.

I should also mention that my brother, Richard Bank, has written many books and novels based on historical fiction and personal experiences. He recently published a book about my Dad’s experiences growing up in the Great Depression, including many references to my grandfather’s socialism, atheism and his struggle to achieve social and economic justice even as he was dying from tuberculosis. I can think of no better example to follow. My brother’s book is available on Amazon, though hope someday it will be available from other sources, such as coops and nonprofit collectives, that are not predatory or exploitive. Here is the link: [The Bus Ride: Bank, Richard D](#)

Ken Bank





# Member's Picks

## Articles:

### AR6 Synthesis Report: Climate Change 2023

The IPCC finalized the Synthesis Report for the Sixth Assessment Report during the Panel's 58th Session held in Interlaken, Switzerland from 13 - 19 March 2023.

### Statement of the Workers Party of Ireland on the presence of the US President in Ireland. No to Biden! No to NATO!

by Workers party of Ireland

## Books:

### Bootstrapped: Liberating Ourselves from the American Dream (Ecco, 2023)

by Alissa Quart

A long time journalist who also worked for years with Barbara Ehrenreich the Economic Reporting Project. The book examines the culture of bootstrapping in the US, where it came from and how it was promoted, and offers a critique and shows the damage that it has done and continues to do. It also offers some good strategy for changing this culture and examples of where the cracks in this narrative are already prominent. It's short and easy to read.

## Videos:

### Roger Hallam, Chris Hedges: The System is Not Moving Fast Enough

Roger Hallam, the co-founder of Extinction Rebellion argues the climate crisis calls for revolution.

### Inside Vio.Me, Greece's factory run by workers with no boss

TRNN goes inside the Vio.Me factory in Thessaloniki, Greece, which is the country's only worker-managed factory that doesn't have any bosses. This video is part of a special 'Workers of the World' series on the cost of living crisis in Europe.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UzPsTOo5ONw>

## Podcasts:

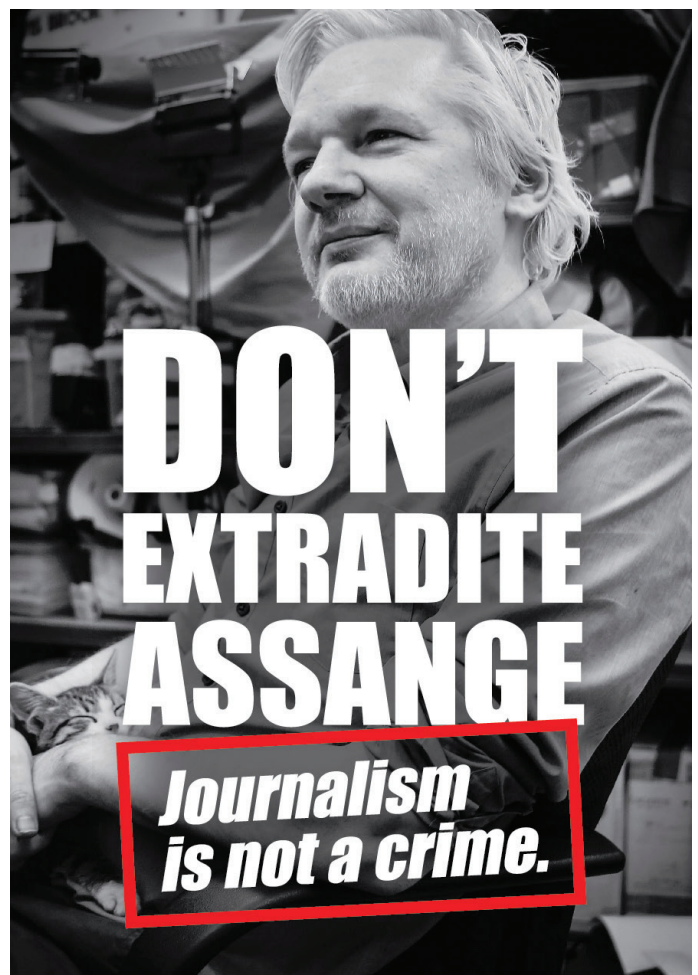
### Embracing a childfree life

Helen Pidd always thought she would have children, but after three unsuccessful rounds of IVF, she reimagines her life with the help of people who are childfree by choice.

### RevolutionZ, Ep 224: Greece Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow with Sotiris Mitralaxis

Episode 224 of RevolutionZ has as guest Sotiris Metralaxis and discusses the Greek experience and current resistance trying to tease out lessons bearing on their and really on everyone's future

[Real Utopia: Foundation for a Participatory Society](#)





# RU Serious?

... it's memeing time.

## ANTI-CAPITALIST AFFIRMATIONS

- i am allowed to spend my time creating things, even if they are not beautiful.
- there is no such thing as a "real job". all forms of work are real and valid.
- there is nothing that i need to accomplish to be worthy. i am already worthy.
- doing nothing is good for my soul.
- i am not defined by what i produce.
- my worth cannot be measured by my paycheck, my job title, or a list of professional or academic achievements.
- i do not need to monetize my hobbies, it is enough to spend time doing something i love.
- I will not let society decide what success looks like. I can define what successful life looks like for me.

