

RU PARTICIPATING

MEMBERS | NETWORK PROJECTS | SOLIDARITY

From the Education & Skills Team

- Educational events:**
 On the next RU bussines meeting on the 6th of July the team asks network members if they would like an E&S session during the summer
- Real Utopia 2 book:**
 We continue our work on the Real Utopia 2 book. Discussed the chapters and contributions of RU 2 book. Call for contributions is still open in the summer. Thinking of inviting Noam Chomsky and Yanis Varoufakis to write a preface. Will also ask Cynthia Peters to contribute a chapter on kinship with the focus on sexuality, Cooper Sterling to collaborate on the chapter on art, Sean Michael Wilson to contribute few pages of a comics on parecon and Peter Bohmer to contribute a chapter on racial justice.
- Developing kinship sphere:**
 We are continuing with bimonthly meeting on kinship. Invitation to network members is open. Have asked Savvina Chowdhury to join and eagerly awaiting her answer. At the moment we are reading the follwoing articles/ books:
 - Chapter 4 of Occupy Vision: Kinship (Michael Albert);
 - Kinship Vision (Cynthia Peters);
 - Commoning Care and Collective Power (Michaela Zechner).



To whom it may concern

Urška Breznik

Hello, fellow RU members,

The title of this introduction is borrowed from a poem by Adrian Mitchell, a socialist anti-war poet and that you can read in this issue of RU participating. The poem starts with the verse “I was run over by the truth one day.” It seems to me that these words encompass what most of us have felt one time or another in our lives and that has prompted us to become active in planning and envisioning participatory society. In this issue before us you can learn more about Mark Evans who shares with us his motivation behind participating in RU, specifically the fact that our strategy is more informed by our vision and therefore we are more of a solution focused organisation than typical organisations on the left. The complimentary article to this one is the interview that Topaz did with Michael Albert and in which they elaborate on questions never asked before about participatory society. Sean Michael Wilson contributed a spread of his graphic novel about the environmental disaster in a Japanese coastal village that complements the article on ecological collapse and participatory society by Matic Primc, which we hope he will upgrade into a chapter for Real Utopia 2 book. You can also read about Peter Bohmer’s visit to Maribor (which, I was told, encouraged the debate on the height of some RU members) and member’s picks are definitely not to be missed. At the end an invitation to all who would like to contribute to the August RU Participating issue, the team will be happy to hear from you.

From the Membership Team

Weekly Welcome Meetings and Informative sessions:

We are hosting weekly Welcome meetings for new members or current members wanting a refresher on goings on. We are also 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. We are entering the eighth round of meetings and there is always a perfect time to get on board and get to meet our other members, discuss activism, politics, generally just have a nice chat or make international connections.

Bylaws:

The team reviewed the Bylaws proposal and found it consistent with norms of RU.

Survey:

We discussed Michael's proposal for a survey of members and find it to be a good initiative.

Local chapters:

Local chapter in Maribor hosted another member Peter Bohmer and thus organized first public event carried out by a local chapter, a discussion on movements with a group of activists in Maribor. The discussion was fruitful and it will be followed up with a presentation of participatory society theory.

Ecological collapse and participatory economy

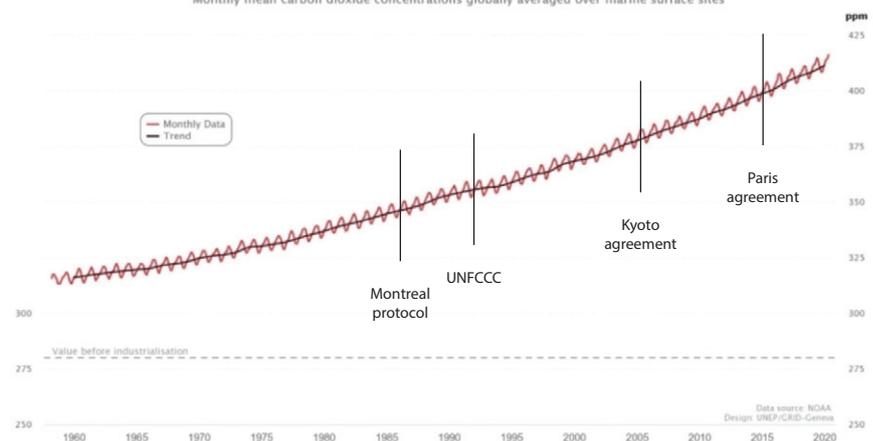
Matic Primc

Ecology of the planet is facing collapse. The fact that the natural world is under pressure is not new to many people. Media regularly report on the specific examples of climate change like new temperature records, fires, floods, storms and droughts. But media is also full of examples of governments dealing with the problems like pledging to be net carbon neutral by a certain year, or moving away from coal by certain year. Reports on governments taking action have been around for decades, recently they have been joined by reports of corporations taking action. To a casual observer this might look like the problem is being dealt with, however that is far from reality.

Just looking at CO₂ emissions, which are the focus of most attention, we see that every year the concentrations keep increasing and the increases are not even slowing. If we look at the passage of major climate change related agreements superimposed on the graph of CO₂ concentrations we notice zero effect from any of them and indeed, this year we broke the new all time CO₂ concentration record of 422 ppm. Indeed, the 1.5°C global temperature increase, the threshold deemed relatively safe, looks like it will be blown through with barely any action being taken. Indeed even the pledges that the countries have made are poised to take us to about 3°C global temperature increase which basically means not only ecological, but also societal collapse with parts of the Earth becoming uninhabitable, crop yields collapsing, severe water shortages coupled with extreme weather events on a regular basis, sea levels rising, all triggering societal upheaval on thus unprecedented scale.

Trends in Atmospheric Carbon Dioxide Concentration

Monthly mean carbon dioxide concentrations globally averaged over marine surface sites



The efficacy of combatting CO₂ emissions so far

All that upheaval is expected only from the climate change. Ecologists are tracking 11 ecological boundaries that are threatened, with 6 of them being exceeded, climate change being only one of them. The other exceeded boundaries are phosphorus cycle, nitrogen cycle, land-system change, genetic diversity and novel entities (man made chemical compounds introduced into nature) and all of them are exceeded just as much or more than climate change. Aside from the CO₂ emissions every economic activity impacts the environment as it requires either space, resources, or to serve as a waste basket. The material throughput of our economy on the environment means

From the Outreach and Events Team

- **Conferences:**
RU will participate with three presentations in the "Opening Utopia: New Directions in Utopian Studies" conference held from 13th - 15th of July. Can register at: [link](#)
- **Meeting (Z, PEP and RU):**
The meeting will be rescheduled to a later date and notifications will be sent when the new date is decided.
- **Ireland/UK meetup:**
There will be a meetup in Dublin between team members to coincide with Peter Bohmers arrival.
- **Content Generation Proposal:**
Lonnie is preparing an updated content generation proposal which will be presented to the network once ready.

Bylaws Team

- **RU Bylaws modifications:**
The Bylaws team was tasked at the start of the year to create a proposal for the Bylaws of RU which would, once adopted, introduce some formal structure into the operations of RU. The draft of the Bylaws has recently been discussed at the Business meeting on the 22th of June and several modifications have been suggested. Wording proposals for the modifications will be prepared by the Bylaws team and other teams and will be discussed at the business meetings.

The Bylaws draft document is available at [this link](#) and every RU member is encouraged to comment.

extracting approximately 100 billion tons of materials per year, with all the fossil fuels combined only accounting for 15% of the total. The carrying capacity of the Earth is estimated at 50 billion tons per year, thus we are already overshooting it by a factor of two. Material throughput is closely linked to and tracks GDP and there is no evidence of decoupling. As GDP grows, approximately 3% per year globally, that means that the GDP doubles roughly every 23 years and with it the material throughput. Following this trajectory will have us overshooting Earth's capacity by a factor of 16 by the end of the century. Evidently the ecosystems will collapse long before that point is reached.

How have we come into such dire straits and why are the policies trying to halt the harmful effects of even just one of the transgressed ecological boundaries having such little effect? A big part of the answer are the institutional characteristics of capitalism.

Private property of natural assets, to be used for the owner's benefit without regard for wider implications gives both the opportunity and incentive for maximizing the extraction of value from the property thus leading to unsustainable practices.

Profit motive. Every enterprise has only one purpose, by law as well as an incentive, to produce as much profit as possible for the owners. If a company fails in this task it ceases to exist, as the purpose of its existence, profit for the owner, is not realized. Any side effect on the society is irrelevant in this calculation.

Market competition. Our economies consist of millions of legal fictions, companies, each of which tries to grow as fast as possible. They compete in a market that functions as a vetting system where the ones that are efficient (meaning minimizing cost for owners and maximizing costs for consumers) remain and grow and the others are destroyed. Almost always, gaining competitive advantage means finding ways to not pay for costs incurred by either the production or consumption of a product.

The combination of these inherent characteristics of capitalism makes it nearly impossible to prevent ecological collapse. Policies that can be taken within the parameters of capitalism are only those that do not interfere with the one and only purpose of enterprises, increasing profits and growth. Thus the obvious policy goal, of reducing the volume of production and consumption, while removing CO₂ emissions from the process is not pursued as that would be counter to the capitalist logic. Crucially people's work and thus income is inextricably bound to the logic as well. If they are not generating profits for the owners they are deemed useless and become unemployed. Therefore, within this system, policies that would disrupt the capitalist logic would hurt workers the most and would thus cause them to fight against such policies themselves.

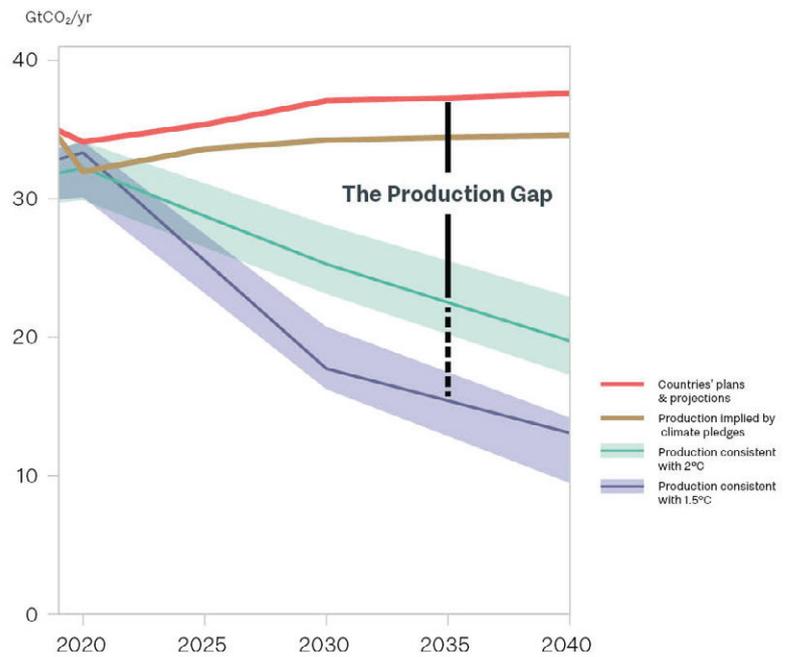
To avoid these pitfalls and keep the system, at least in appearance stable, every industrialized country in the world is therefore pursuing a policy named »green growth« in which they aim to continue the usual business practices of increasing production and consumption of the economy while removing CO₂ emissions. To present this policy as saving the environment, it is crucial to pretend that increasing the production (even when emitting no CO₂) does not harm the environment, therefore the only ecological boundary that is discussed is the CO₂ concentrations; all other boundaries, directly impacted by increased production, are left unmentioned.

But even if we look simply at CO₂ emissions we can see we are heading

From the Site Team

- Website improvements:**
 We are continuing to improve the website. We have addressed some security concerns, updated the teams page, added call for submissions, added some content and we are working to solve problems with uploading audio content to the website.
- Solidarity statement:**
 We wrote and published a statement of solidarity with the striking rail workers in the UK.
- Time zone display:**
 We are looking for ways to display members according to time zones in order to make it easier for members to connect.
- Page stats:**
 We are compiling site statistics in order to understand how and how much the site is used.

Global fossil fuel production



towards failure. One crucial element of the fight against emissions is that we need to leave the fossil fuels in the ground as every ounce of them, once dug up, are going to be burned. If we look at actual trends and stated plans of countries, we can see that they are planning an increase in fossil fuel production and ever new exploration and extraction permits are granted as a consequence of us being unable to, at the same time, transform existing energy and transport infrastructure while doubling the size of the economy every 23 years. Thus all new sustainable energy infrastructure is basically just covering the increases in global energy needs while not replacing fossil fuel infrastructure.

So looking at the operational logic of the current system as well as the actual trajectories for the future we see, that ecological collapse will not be prevented. The question is, could another institutional framework and different operating logic provide a different result. How would participatory economy (Parecon) fare in such a situation?

Private property of nature would be done away and would be managed through self-management norms by the society. Thus instead of individual people deciding and the rest of society having basically no say, the people affected by externalities caused by a particular use (or lack of use) of natural resources would have a say in decisions. The incentive for maximising extraction and offloading costs on others is thus removed.

Profit would not exist in participatory economy. Since there would be no private ownership of means of production, including natural resources, there would be no ability of extracting surplus value or other rents via enterprises and thus incentive for growth or increased intensity of exploitation is no longer built into the system. Production and consumption would be democratically planned and the purpose of enterprises would be to carry out the economic plan. When the purpose of production is no longer profit the built in need for growth also disappears. The economy would not collapse and groups of workers would not fall into destitution if volume of production is reduced due to environmental concerns as the amount of required work to fulfill the plan is automatically distributed throughout society. If there would

Revolution Z podcast



Our own Michael Albert runs a longstanding weekly podcast on issues related to participatory theory, vision and strategy. He shares his thoughts and also has interesting guests. Definitely a podcast to follow at:

<https://zcomm.org/revolutionz/>

be any workers (say coal miners or oil prospectors) whose work would not be deemed socially useful anymore because of environmental concerns, they would not just be fired and left unemployed because there are no jobs available. Instead they would be moved to other work and the average work load throughout society would be suitably adjusted to reflect the economic plan so that full employment for everyone wanting to work would be assured.

Market competition will be removed. With it the incentive to offload costs, maximise negative externalities and screw both workers and consumers arising from it will also be removed. In combination of abolishment of private property and introduction of democratic planning the situation of each enterprise being concerned only with the enterprises own bottom line would also be much reduced. Parecon type economy would include what is now called externalities into the prices of goods and services and thus when consumption choices are made, they are made with the fullest possible awareness of the implications. In the democratic planning process absolute limits could be set on use of certain resources on the level of whole economy and the planning process would be able to accomodate those limits within the plan.

We can see how the main inbuilt structural forces that drive ecological devastation in capitalism would be either removed or function differently in Parecon. How they would give different incentives for decision makers. How there would be different decision makers altogether and different decision making logics. Decisions could be made with much wider variety of purposes in mind, peoples fates would no longer be tied to the fortunes of a small majority of individuals for whose benefit the economy is run. However ecological sustainability, while not institutionally precluded, is not assured in participatory economy. Economic decision about production and consumption will be made democratically however that fact alone does not mean that decisions will be sustainable. It is possible, that people will democratically plan a gasoline powered car for every person. A democratically planned economy does not make us smarter, more morally aware or considerate towards nature, what it does is gives us an option to make decisions with our eyes wide open and with awareness of the consequences. Absent the perverse incentives and pressures of the current system I firmly believe decisions we would make would be far superior and we should strive to make participatory society a reality.

Peter does Maribor!

Maribor chapter of RU has become active in direct promotion of participatory society in the local community and has gotten lucky since Peter Bohmer, an RU member, political economist and activist in radical social movements, has decided to travel Europe right at this time. We have set up a discussion among activists in municipalist movements, environmentalists and artists. Peter shared his valuable experience on the characteristics of succesful movements and what they have to take in consideration to be sustainable and appealing for people to join. We also discussed kinship and community spheres of parsoc since people attending were very interested in how care work, adressing racism against Roma people and police violence would be addressed in parsoc. We also touched upon the decision making processes. The following day we took Peter around town, to see a bit of the city and the Museum of National Liberation Front dedicated to the Yugoslav partisan movement. In the afternoon we accompanied him back to Vienna where he introduced us to Thomas Stöelner, a member of Participatory Economy Project. We spent a lovely evening in a green garden discussing, among other more lowly things such as vegan recipes and what wine anarchists (red) and socialists (white) supposedly should drink, how climate crisis should be everyone' priority and how we could handle it in participatory economy. Coming next: Peter does Derry and Dublin!



A meetup with activists and discussion on movements



Discussion on lovely couch accompanied by a dog rug

Questions never asked before

topaz

In a sense, for me to be writing a review of Michael Albert's *No Bosses* highlights one of the foundations of the book. My pen, my thoughts about the economy and the modes of production as described by Albert linked to heavyweights Noam Chomsky and Yanis Varoufakis represents a change in social thinking. Establishing a baseline of harmony between self, culture and society is one of the main goals of *No Bosses*.

Everyone obviously has ideas on how to improve the economy, yet as in the marketplace, the workplace has heavyweights. To hear that I wasn't asked to write an introduction to *No Bosses* is no surprise to anyone, though in the process of self management described by Michael Albert, I may have had a chance to write an introduction, depending on the vote, or, if Chomsky and I were considered to have equal skills and name recognition, a schedule.

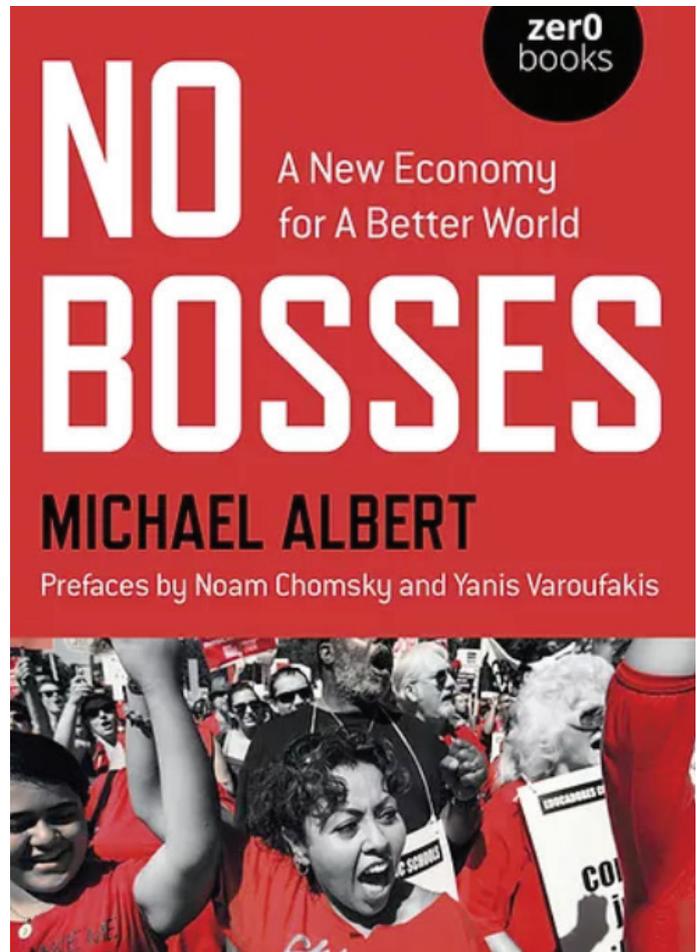
The emphasis on how to distribute workloads and emotional satisfaction of employment reveals the belief that creating an egalitarian society is necessary, through well thought out and described scenarios. On several levels, *No Bosses* is a journey of thought, and as Chomsky describes in his introduction, a thought provoking journey.

Being a poet, and having relied extensively on poetic license is almost the opposite of prose for publication. These two styles of writing, free-style or structured, if personalities, could be found in any workplace, and *No Bosses* creates an environment of unifying these personalities in a common goal. Through quotes and questions, with everyday language, Michael Albert describes the managerial differences between a work place for people and a workplace for profit.

By seemingly rearranging archetypes written about by other thinkers such as Karl Marx and Ayn Rand, Albert does not hesitate to divulge presumptions of others, or even to correct society for accepting sub-par economic philosophy. The ideas under discussion are centuries old, yet with new names for new implementations, Albert brings the reader into a thought space akin to one of Gene Wilder's lines in *Young Frankenstein* 'It Could Work!'

Of course, any opportunity to go directly to the horse's mouth is well worth the effort, and here, in Michael's own words are a few answers to a few questions.

Michael: I have to tell you, I have done probably a couple of hundred interviews and you managed to ask five questions none of which has ever been even approximately asked before. As to the value your questions, or my answers have - well that's another matter...



RU Participating: Are you aware of any direct connections between the ideas in *No Bosses* and the origins of International Worker's Day? Which early Worker's Movements do you believe Participatory Economics and Participatory Socialism are rooted in?

Michael: This depends a great deal on what you mean by "rooted in." In one sense, after all, everything that comes after is rooted in everything that comes before—and some would even say the reverse, too. But, the vision participatory economics is for a classless economy, an equitable economy, a solidarity economy, a self managing economy, and even, in my view, an artistic economy, so I suppose you could say it springs from, in some sense, all prior efforts to move beyond capitalism toward such ends. I would narrow the influence, however, perhaps more in tune with your question's intent. Parecon's lasting lineage from way back owes to anarchism's elevation of freedom for what has evolved into parecon's self management and arguably also owes to anarchism's views on class for what has evolved into balanced job complexes—and owes to councilism's councils for what has evolved into workers and consumers self managing councils.

RU Participating: To update a famous quote from Karl Marx, today it may as well be said that opium is the opiate of the masses. Do you believe that the ease of acquiring drugs prevents a build up of social pressure / disease which could lead to protests and change such as the Haymarket Riots? How are jobs which essentially require drugs as in the movie THX1138, which showed administered sedatives to improve accuracy on the job, considered in the Participatory scheme?

Michael: Well, I suppose for some people, if their addiction were suddenly ended, activism might promptly begin. But while that might happen, I rather doubt there is a direct link of that sort, or even a more than quite weak connection. Drug use, while often debilitating and even deadly, is not among the main impediments to people opposing injustice. There may be a kind of reverse analogy, though. That is, looking down on the religious and looking down on those addicted are both elitist though the former is even more so, and is also worse, I think, from the point of view of winning a new world.

What I take it you mean by the participatory scheme will have to acknowledge, at least as far as I am aware of my own and other advocate's attentions, that it has likely given near zero time to considering the role of drugs on any side of life, much less on production in the economy. This would be true, however, even if I thought there was a there, there, to consider. Participatory economics, that is, at least as I understand it, isn't about telling future people what to decide about their choices, such as whether to use drugs, be religious, or whatever else. It is instead about doing the best we can to understand what steps have to occur in order for future people to have the means and circumstances to freely make their own decisions, rather than their being hyped and typed by structures and leaders into doing other than what they would otherwise prefer. And it is about then trying to accomplish those steps.

RU Participating: No Bosses builds on the idea that most people are inherently good. What level of trust and skill would be required for people whose work gives them access to money, drugs or weapons? Would the idea of Internal Affairs in those workplaces be solely self managed?

Michael: Let me put the question, if it is okay, a little more generally. Does parecon assume people are saintly and thus never do anything unworthy, or even just harmful or vile? Or, put another way, does a parecon, or the society of which it is part, include rules, laws, and means to deal with violations (whether in neighbourhoods, workplaces, or anywhere else)? First, I would say parecon does assume that though there are exceptions, people are capable of doing a mix of some empowering and some disempowering tasks. I would

say it also assumes that though people are certainly capable of greed, violence, etc. (just look around) only in rare exceptions are such drives wired in such as to predominate in guiding behavior. I would say we don't know much about the details of human inclinations and potentials, and I don't see much point in trying to predict the extent to which people in a classless, feminist, intercommunalist, self managing, participatory society will, at times, violate other people—whether getting drunk and disorderly, or committing mayhem or murder. I would bet that anti-sociality won't all simply disappear in a participatory society, though I think we can very confidently say that it will drastically decline. That being so, just like we will have people trained to address other problems, so too we will have people trained to deal with anti-social violations. But such trained actors will have balanced job complexes, equitable incomes, and operate, as everyone should, not only in light of their own inclinations individually and as a group, but in accord with broader agreed social norms. I think, that is, that there may be confusion lurking in your question over the concept self management. Self management only quite rarely means that in self managing you can act like, well, John Galt, without concern for and even obedience to norms agreed more broadly. That a person has a say in decisions in proportion as they are affected by them, means, if the decision affects others, those others have a say as well.

RU Participating: The achievements of government and Participatory society each seem to stand on the integrity of participants. Regarding your thoughts on the recent Florida laws affecting Disney, do workplaces engaged in Participatory practices replace government? Are corporations a better guard of environment and social structure in Participatory Economics than government?

Michael: First, a corporation has nothing in common with a participatory workplace. The former is privately owned, lorded over by a few, has a corporate division of labor, remunerates for property and power, operates in a market, seeks profit, and so on. The latter is not owned at all, is self managed by its workforce in concert with and in light of the self managing impact of others beyond its border, has balanced job complexes, remunerates duration, intensity, and onerousness of socially valued labor, operates amidst participatory planning, and seeks fulfillment and development of all impacted by its efforts. Even so, some tasks are economic, some are not. I believe a participatory society has a polity, like it has culture, kinship—lots of stuff—and an economy. The polity will legislate, adjudicate, and also implement certain collective functions. The economy will not violate the environment and will be part of the social structure. If people violate the social structure in some serious way, I would guess that would more often than not be a matter for the polity, not the workplace.

To whom it may concern

Adrian Mitchell

I was run over by the truth one day.
Ever since the accident I've walked this way
So stick my legs in plaster
Tell me lies about Vietnam.

Heard the alarm clock screaming with pain,
Couldn't find myself so I went back to sleep again
So fill my ears with silver
Stick my legs in plaster
Tell me lies about Vietnam.

Every time I shut my eyes all I see is flames.
Made a marble phone book and I carved all the names
So coat my eyes with butter
Fill my ears with silver
Stick my legs in plaster
Tell me lies about Vietnam.

I smell something burning, hope it's just my brains.
They're only dropping peppermints and daisy-chains
So stuff my nose with garlic
Coat my eyes with butter
Fill my ears with silver
Stick my legs in plaster
Tell me lies about Vietnam.

Where were you at the time of the crime?
Down by the Cenotaph drinking slime
So chain my tongue with whisky
Stuff my nose with garlic
Coat my eyes with butter
Fill my ears with silver
Stick my legs in plaster
Tell me lies about Vietnam.

You put your bombers in, you put your conscience out,
You take the human being and you twist it all about
So scrub my skin with women
Chain my tongue with whisky
Stuff my nose with garlic
Coat my eyes with butter
Fill my ears with silver
Stick my legs in plaster

Tell me lies, tell me lies about Afghanistan.
Tell me lies about Israel.
Tell me lies about Congo.
Tell me, tell me lies Mr Bush.
Tell me lies Mr B-B-Blair, Brown, Blair-Brown.
Tell me lies about Vietnam.

Meeting with "One Project"

On Wednesday 15th June 2022, a meeting took place between Real Utopia and the One project, which describes itself as "a non-profit initiative working globally with communities to design, implement, and scale new forms of governance and economics that are equitable, ecological, and effective". The One Project has also produced a book titled **The New Possible: Visions of Our World Beyond Crisis** with an introduction written by Kim Stanley Robinson. The meeting was set up by the RU Outreach and Events Team and took place via Zoom. The meeting went very well and we are hopeful that additional meetings will take place where we can further explore possibilities for collaboration between the two organisations.

Why RU Participating, Mark?

Mark Evans

My name is Mark Evans. I currently live in Birmingham (UK). Before this I lived in London for about ten years but I was born in Stoke-on-Trent. My mum was a hairdresser and my dad a bricklayer. I have two sisters, both a bit older than me. I have had a lot of different jobs over the years but I currently work in healthcare (on the nursing side) and have done so for what must be coming up to about twenty years now.

I have two main interests in life. One is social justice. The other is mental health. I trained as a mental health nurse but sadly it turned out that I could not work in the field as I found psychiatry highly problematic. Psychiatry poses as a branch of medicine but in my view this is a farce propped up by power not science. I also feel that overall psychiatry probably does more harm than good. As a result, I work as an auxiliary nurse on a neurosurgical ward.

My first political teacher was Bob Marley, who I started to listen to in my early teens. It was through him that I got my first impressions of how the world really works. Many years later I stumbled across the writings of Noam Chomsky. Whilst he helped to fill in many of the details of my world view, my primary experience of reading Chomsky was one of confirmation. He was the first intellectual I came across that I trusted and what he said chimed with my intuition and experience. I always joke that the same parts of my brain light-up when I listen to Bob Marley and when I read Noam Chomsky, but I suspect it is true.

When I was about seven years old I told myself that when I grow-up I will write something that will convince the British people to get rid of the Royal family. I guess this would have been after I watched some TV programme about the Queen. So it seems that my opposition to privilege and leanings towards what I would today call a participatory society started early.

That said, despite growing up during major political events such as the 1980s miners strike, I never really found myself being drawn to the left. This changed after reading Chomsky who introduced me to the left-libertarian tradition, which I now identify with.

Reading Chomsky opened up a whole world for me. In his writings he often references other people's work. There are too many thinkers to name but some important ones for me have been Erich Fromm, Bertrand Russell and Rudolf Rocker. But by far the most important group of people who Chomsky led me to were those developing participatory theory, vision and strategy for a participatory society. This, of course, includes Michael Albert, Lydia Sargent, Steve Shalom, Cynthia Peters and Robin Hahnel. My feeling is that the body of work

generated by these people takes the left-libertarian tradition to the next level. And it is, of course, this body of work that informs Real Utopia.

For me, it is all about organising. However, it seems to me that the left's typical approach to organising involves highlighting what is wrong in the world whilst simultaneously having very little to say about what a good society might look like. In other words, left strategy is mostly informed by analysis of the problem. Furthermore, this analysis can get very very detailed and it can sometimes feel like you need to have a PhD in history, philosophy, psychology, etc to fully engage in leftwing debates.

RU takes a different approach to organising. Whilst we are interested in understanding the nature of the problem our strategy is more informed by our vision. So you could say that RU is more of a solution focused organisation than you typically find on the left. Personally I find this very appealing and I hope that a shift in emphasis - from analysis informed strategy to vision informed strategy - will occur throughout the broader progressive left.

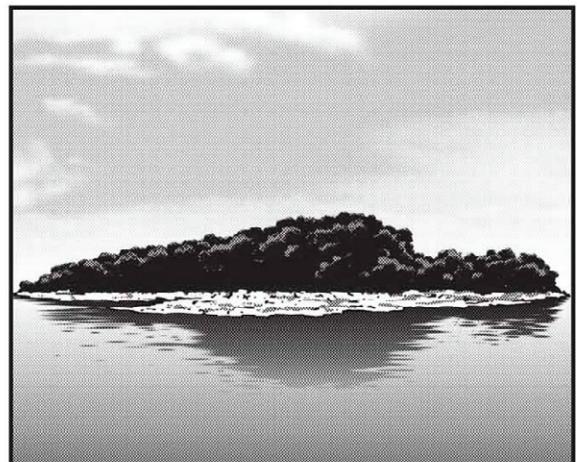
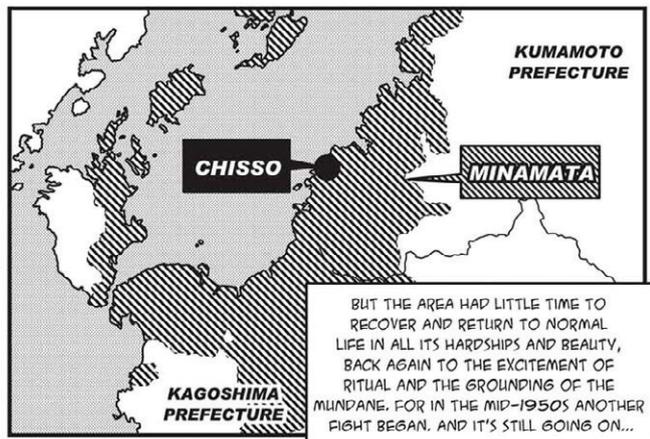
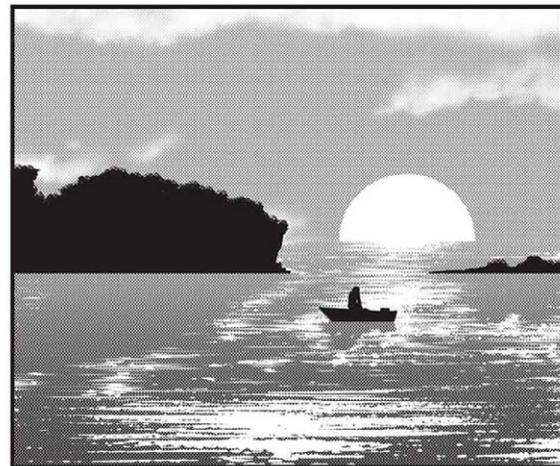
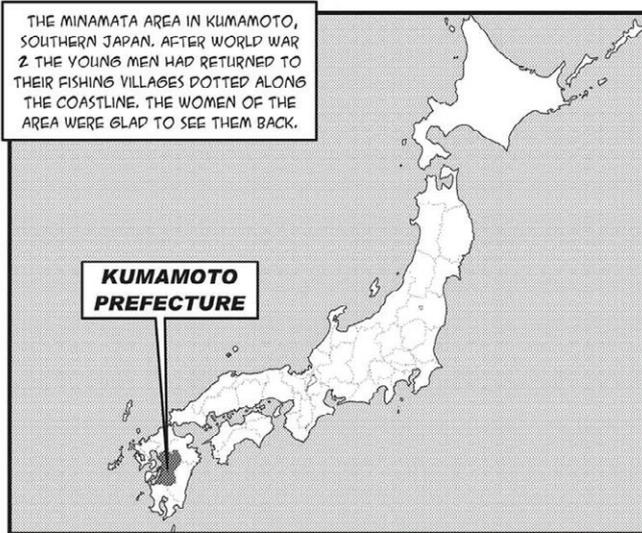
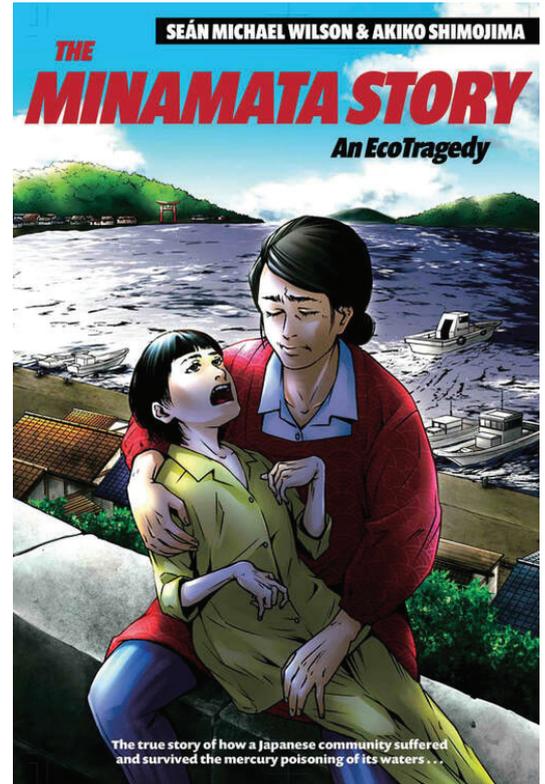
I am very concerned about the climate crisis and as a result I have engaged in arrestable actions with XR. That, however, was before lockdown. Since then I tend to see the Green New Deal (GND) - as articulated by Ann Pettifor or Robert Pollin and Noam Chomsky - as the only realistic solution. My feeling is that there needs to be some kind of international coalition formulated around the GND as a basis for building a historically unprecedented popular movement to make the GND a reality.

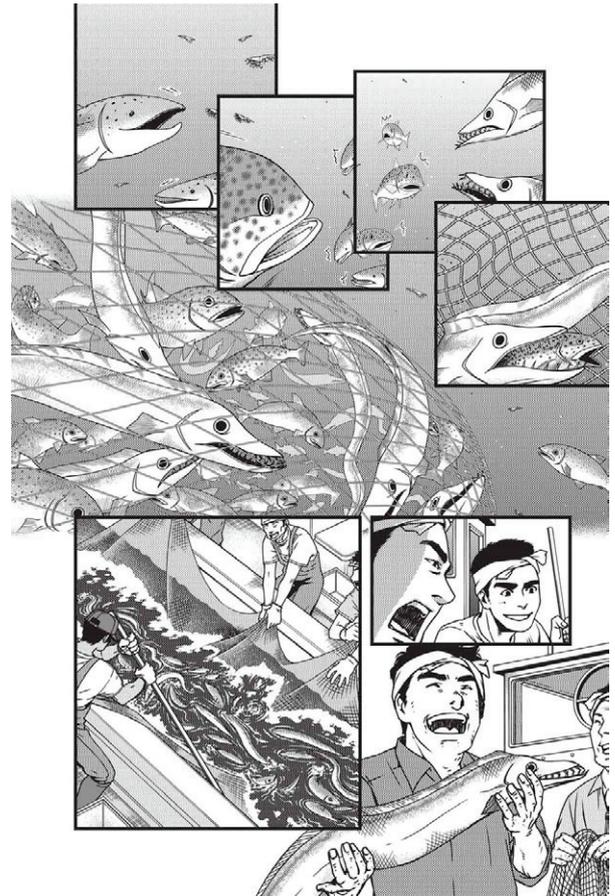
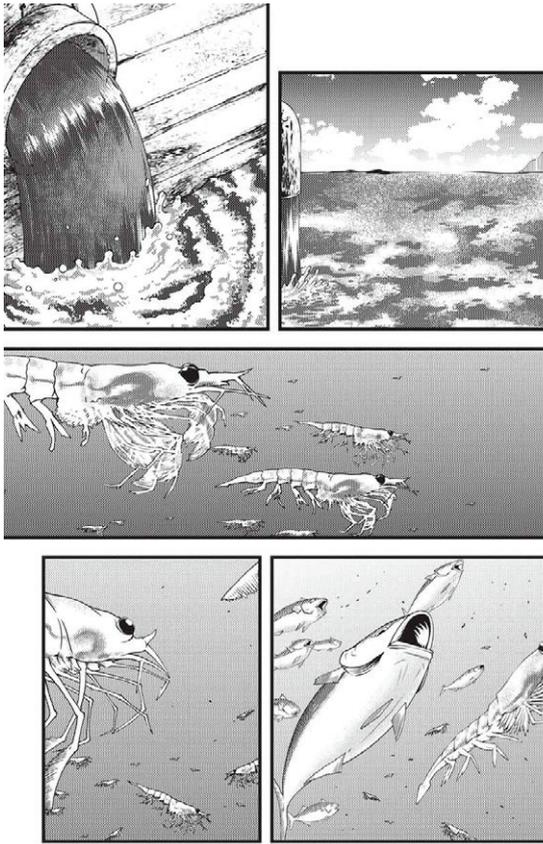
I went down to the recent We Demand Better TUC march and rally in London with my union (UNISON). However, I ended up marching with War on Want who were there campaigning for a Global Green New Deal. It would be great to see the TUC adopt the GND as its official position in opposition to austerity politics and neoliberal economics. This, in my opinion, is what the world really needs.

As indicated above, I would like to see the left unite around the GND on an international scale. RU already stands in solidarity with the Progressive International's call for such action (see our Solidarity page for details). In parallel with this, I would also like to see RU continue to grow. We currently have 70 plus members in about six different countries. It would be great to see these numbers increase to 700, then 7000, and so on, and for members to start to meet in their own communities and workplaces where they can engage in on the ground organising, putting self-management into practice in real world situations. Forming local groups in this way is what laying the foundation for a participatory society will look like and it is this that RU is all about.

The Minamata story

Our member Sean Michael Wilson sent us a few spreads from a graphic novel about an environmental disaster that befell the coastal village of Minamata in Japan. It looks at the devastating effect of mercury poisoning by chemical company of coastal communities of Japan, especially the fishing village of Minamata. It unfolds a tale of corporations evading responsibility, government cover ups and the very moving story of the local people who suffered the consequences with bitterness and pain, but with deep strength and courage.







Dear RU Network members!

The Education & Skills Team is calling on RU members and friends to contribute to a new edited collection. This book will be made up of chapters, stories, poems, comics, drawings, etc.... about participatory theory, vision, and strategy, including examples of movements and campaigns that prefigure or contribute to participatory vision. Submissions can be theoretical, practical, or both; they can be artistic, creative or a standard book chapter. Here are some examples that might inspire your own ideas:

- **Chapter: “Parsoc - why is it necessary now more than ever”**
- **Poem on complementary holism**
- **Chapter: “Beyond ACAB: Participatory Politics and the Police”**

- **Comic about participatory strategy**
- **Chapter: “Cooperative housing in Slovenia”**
- **Song lyrics about parecon**
- **Chapter: “Inside Real Utopia: what RU is doing and why it’s different”**

We hope this book will bring a new audience to the ideas of participatory theory and to Real Utopia as an organization. To make a submission, please send a short description/abstract of your proposed contribution, or a draft of the contribution to: eugenulman@gmail.com.

The deadline for proposals has been extended to the **end of August**. Please note, you only need to have an idea for what you want to contribute by this time, not the completed submission.

Best wishes,
Education & Skills Team

Member's Picks

Books

We Must Fight In Solidarity With Trans Youth
by Interrupting Criminalization

A comprehensive brief to empower activists and organizers with practical strategies for supporting trans youth. It ties in lots of topics to the trans rights movement, from the defund police movement to single-payer healthcare, and it identifies the institutions that we need to change and what we can do to change them.

Romantic Outlaws: The Extraordinary Lives of Mary Wollstonecraft & Mary Shelley (Random House, 2015)
by Charlotte Gordon

Romantic Outlaws is the first book to tell the story of the passionate and pioneering lives of Mary Wollstonecraft – English feminist and author of the landmark book, *The Vindication of the Rights of Women* – and her novelist daughter Mary Shelley, author of *Frankenstein*.

Trail of Tears: The Rise and Fall of the Cherokee Nation
(Anchor Books, 1997)
by John Ehle

One of the many ironies of U.S. government policy toward Indians in the early 1800s is that it persisted in removing to the West those who had most successfully adapted to European values. As whites encroached on Cherokee land, many Native leaders responded by educating their children, learning English, and developing plantations. Such a leader was Ridge, who had fought with Andrew Jackson against the British. As he and other Cherokee leaders grappled with the issue of moving, the land-hungry Georgia legislators, with the aid of Jackson, succeeded in ousting the Cherokee from their land, forcing them to make the arduous journey West on the infamous "Trail of Tears."

Shuggie Bain (Grove Press, 2020)
by Douglas Stuart

Shuggie Bain is the unforgettable story of young Hugh "Shuggie" Bain, a sweet and lonely boy who spends his 1980s childhood in run-down public housing in Glasgow, Scotland. Thatcher's policies have put husbands and sons out of work, and the city's notorious drugs epidemic is waiting in the wings.

Articles

In Ukraine, Diplomacy Has Been Ruled Out
Chomsky and Barsamian

Noam Chomsky puts the Ukraine War in the largest and most devastating context possible.

India is becoming a Hindu-fascist enterprise

The practice of bulldozing Muslim homes and businesses for purely punitive reasons is proof that India is 'transitioning pretty brazenly into a criminal Hindu fascist enterprise', says author Arundhati Roy.



Podcasts:

Tech Empire with Michael Kwet and Tshi Malatji

Tech Empire addresses challenges posed by the information society. Hosted by Michael Kwet at Yale University, it takes a global perspective on 21st century politics. This show challenges the tech-driven status quo being created by state and corporate power, and explores how we can create a world where technology makes life better for everyone.

Video interview

Eating Meat is the New Oil: Aaron Bastani meets George Monbiot

In the 1990s, decarbonisation was seen as the goal for many environmentalists. Since then the key focus of the green movement has to stop extracting fossil fuels and move to renewable energy. In a new book, one of the world's foremost environmental campaigners argues that there is a far bigger existential threat to the vertebrate life on earth: Animal Agriculture.

When you try to leave work a little early, but your boss reminds you that you have 7 hrs left..



RU Serious?

... it's memeing time.



On Thursday, NHTSA said it had discovered in 16 separate instances when this occurred that Autopilot “aborted vehicle control less than one second prior to the first impact,” suggesting the driver was not prepared to assume full control over the vehicle.

CEO Elon Musk has often claimed that accidents cannot be the fault of the company, as data it extracted invariably showed Autopilot was not active in the moment of the collision.

While anything that might indicate the system was designed to shut off when it sensed an imminent accident might damage Tesla’s image, legally the company would be a difficult target.

