

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1: OF PROGRAMS, PRESENTATION, AND GAME THEORY

CHAPTER 2: THE DEVELOPMENT OF CAPITALISM

Immiseration of Labour: Disproportionate

Transitional Sloganeering, Transformations, and Directional Demands

CHAPTER 3: BASIC PRINCIPLES

Class Strugglism

Social Labour

Class-Strugglist Social Labour: Transnational Emancipation

CHAPTER 4: THE PARTY QUESTION AND *PARTIINOST*

Fetishizing Decentralized Social Movements and So-Called "Spontaneity"

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

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

Transnational Organization and Modern *Partiinost*

Modern *Partiinost* as Revolutionary Centrism

CHAPTER 5: THE DEMOCRACY QUESTION

"Broad Economism"

Participatory Democracy and the Direct Democracy Question

The Demarchy Question

Non-Class-Based Approaches to Participatory Democracy

Class-Strugglist Democracy and the Demarchic Commonwealth

CHAPTER 6: "TO BEGIN WITH..."

32-Hour Workweek Without Loss of Pay or Benefits

Class-Strugglist Assembly and Association: Self-Directional Demands

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

Local Autonomy and Alternative Local Currencies

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

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

Socio-Income Democracy: Direct Democracy in Income Taxation

Progress, Poverty, and Economic Rent in Land

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

Against Modern Enclosures of the Commons: Intellectual Property

Pre-Cooperative Worker Buyouts

Die Medienfrage: The Mass Media Question

CHAPTER 7: MISCELLANEOUS QUESTIONS

CHAPTER 8: ECONOMIC "NATIONAL-DEMOCRATIZATION"

Classical Economic Rent and Self-Directional Demands

Financial National-Democratization

CHAPTER 9: PROGRAMMATIC DISCLOSURES

APPENDIX A: DRAFT FORMAL PROGRAM

The Development of Capitalism: Class Relations

The Development of Capitalism: The Disproportionate Immiseration of Global Labour

Basic Principles

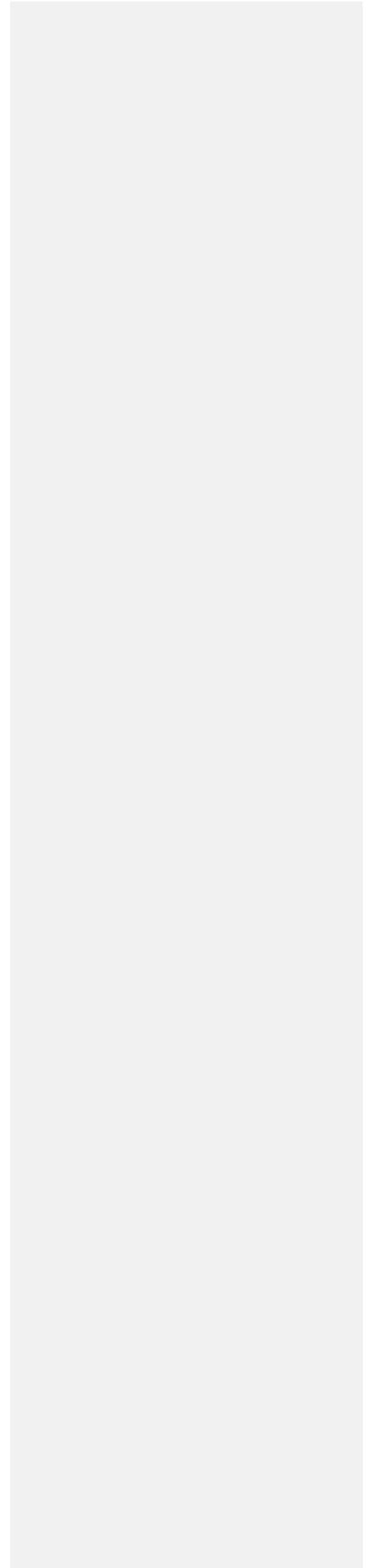
Minimum Demands on the Democracy Question

Minimum Demands for Transnational Opposition

Miscellaneous Questions

Minimum Demands for Classical Economic Rent and National-Democratization

APPENDIX B: THE SOCIAL-ABOLITIONIST AND SOCIAL-PROLETOCRATIC PROGRAMMATIC
DISCLOSURE-CRITIQUE
GENERAL REFERENCES
PROGRAMMATIC REFERENCES



"The program adopted by the German Social Democracy at Erfurt in 1891 divides itself into two parts. In the first place it outlines the fundamental principles on which Socialism is based, and in the second it enumerates the demands which the Social Democracy makes of present day society. The first part tells what Socialists believe; the second how they propose to make their belief effective. We shall concern ourselves only with the first of these parts. This again separates itself into three divisions: (1) an analysis of present day society and its development; (2) the objects of the Social Democracy; (3) the means which are to lead to the realization of these objects." (Karl Kautsky)

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Invitation to class-strugglist “anti-capitalists” of most trends: class-strugglist anarchists (not hooligans), left-communists, class-strugglist pareconists, class-strugglist “market” socialists (“economic democracy” advocates like David Schweickart), traditional Marxists, etc.

CHAPTER 1: OF PROGRAMS, PRESENTATION, AND GAME THEORY

“The program adopted by the German Social Democracy at Erfurt in 1891 divides itself into two parts. In the first place it outlines the fundamental principles on which Socialism is based, and in the second it

enumerates the demands which the Social Democracy makes of present day society. The first part tells what Socialists believe; the second how they propose to make their belief effective. We shall concern ourselves only with the first of these parts. This again separates itself into three divisions: (1) an analysis of present day society and its development; (2) the objects of the Social Democracy; (3) the means which are to lead to the realization of these objects." (Karl Kautsky)

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

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

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

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

So what kind of program should the Class-Strugglist Social Labour organization have? Because of the increased information content level in today's society, there needs to be a shift away from reductionist tendencies towards binary thinking. The program should address three or more types of demands, and in fact there are at least six types of demands. For the sake of non-reductionist simplicity this thesis will group them into three: maximalist demands, transformative demands, and lesser demands that are nevertheless structural, oppositionist, and directional to varying degrees.

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

- 1) **A truly reduced workweek** (32 hours, for example, and not 35 as in France). Already this demand surpasses the "maximum demands" of most modern "social-democratic" economists! According to the primarily single-issue Work Less Party in Canada (better marketed as "Work Less, Do More"), **this modern version of the historic struggle for the eight-hour workday**: reduces society's environmental footprint, reduces unemployment, promotes an increase in cultural activities and social life in general, and especially **promotes an increase in real political activity (both civic participation and heightened political activism as the bases of basic participatory democracy)** at the expense of "politics" as, in the words of the *Weekly Worker's* Mike Macnair, "a consumer good supplied by professional and semi-professional politicians who offer various competing 'brands' [...]"

Comment [AD1]: *The objectives of a reduced work week* by Conrad Schmidt [http://www.worklessparty.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=41&Itemid=71]

Comment [AD2]: *Bringing about a Marxist party* by Mike Macnair [<http://www.cpgb.org.uk/worker/641/macnair.htm>]

- 2) Full, lawsuit-enforced freedom of **class-strugglist** assembly and association, even within the military, **free from anti-employment reprisals, police interference such as from agents provocateurs, and formal political disenfranchisement.**
- 3) The expansion of "gun rights" (the right to bear arms and to self-defense in general), including **the formation of people's militias along the bourgeois-capitalist Swiss model**, thereby going beyond the recent District of Columbia vs. Heller case in the Supreme Court of the United States and even the rhetoric of the National Rifle Association, the most influential gun lobby group in the world.
- 4) The institution of proportional representation in the various legislatures (**preferably, for historically significant reasons explained in Chapter 5, of the closed-list variant that allows mere parties to arbitrarily appoint to and remove from legislatures the party-affiliated legislators, based on their submission to party decisions and on the need to combat degenerative personality politics**).
- 5) The institution of ever-progressive measures against the anti-meritocratic, upper-class inheritance of wealth in general and especially of productive and other non-possessive property, measures which include the abolition of all remaining monarchies.
- 6) Socio-income democracy through direct proposals and rejections, at the national level, regarding tax rates on all types of income, **including the ability to raise upper tax rates.**
- 7) The application of not some but all economic rent of land towards exclusively public purposes – such as the abolition of all indirect and other class-regressive taxation – by first means of land value taxation.
- 8) Guarantees of a real livelihood to all workers – **based on the aforementioned workweek** and beyond bare subsistence minimums – and for equivalent unemployment and work incapacitation provisions, including the universalization of annual, non-deflationary adjustments for all non-executive remunerations, pensions, and insurance benefits to at least match rising costs of living (not notorious government underestimations due to faulty measures like chain weighting, or even underhanded selections of the lower of core inflation and general inflation).
- 9) The institution of income-based or preferably class-based affirmative action (the former being tied to the erroneous "liberal-progressive" definition of "class"), especially in the sphere of education.
- 10) The mandatory private- and public-sector recognition of professional education, other higher education, and related work experience "from abroad," along with the international standardization of such education and the institution of other measures to counter the underemployment of educated immigrants.
- 11) The abolition of all intellectual property laws and of all restrictions on the non-commodity economy of peer-to-peer sharing, open-source programming, and the like.
- 12) The genuine end of "free markets" by first means of non-selective encouragement of, and unconditional economic assistance (both technical and financial) for, pre-cooperative worker buyouts of existing enterprises and enterprise operations, first as a counter to all workplace closures, mass sackings, and mass layoffs.

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

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

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

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

With this in mind, the demand to nationalize the Federal Reserve would be a nation-specific lesser demand that is structural and oppositionist.

Comment [AD3]: *The Economic Rape of America: What Can You Do About It* by Frederick Mann
[<http://www.buildfreedom.com/tl/rapecon.shtml>]

Those demands that are transformative should coincide with the non-revolutionary demands that nevertheless require a very directional break from bourgeois capitalism. For those subscribing to Trotskyist revisionism, such demands would also include whatever “transitional” sloganeering is left over, such as full and comprehensible transparency in all governmental, commercial, and other related affairs (not just the abolition of “business secrets”). Much like the not-so-dynamic Erfurt Program of the German Social-Democratic Party in 1891 and the “revolutionary” coating added by Karl Kautsky in 1892, the revisionist notion of the Trotsky’s program being “revolutionary” suffers from “apocalyptic predestinationism” (in Trotsky’s words, “the death agony of capitalism”).

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

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

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

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

Presentation and Game Theory

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

The rest of this programmatic thesis, building on the foundations set in *The Class Struggle Revisited* (as quoted above), elaborates upon the four parts of a formal program for Class-Strugglist Social Labour as an

Comment [AD4]: *The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International* by Leon Trotsky
[<http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1938/tp/index.htm>]

Comment [AD5]: *Report on the Unity Congress of the RSDLP* by Vladimir Lenin
[<http://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1906/rucong/>]

organization, again as highlighted by Kautsky: “an analysis of present day society and its development,” the “objects” (objectives) of Class-Strugglist Social Labour, “the means which are to lead to the realization of these objects” and, yes, how to make our “belief” in the “objects” and means most effective – “**kept consciously in view**” – as opposed to lesser degrees of effectiveness that make the class struggle “move forever in a circle.”

CHAPTER 2: THE DEVELOPMENT OF CAPITALISM

Modern Class Relations

- Class relations
 - o Worker issues: “low wage/high debt” model
 - <http://linchpin.ca/content/Economy/Debt-Exploitation-Coming-Economic-Crisis>
 - http://21stcenturysocialism.com/article/the_return_of_the_prophet_01780.html
- Bourgeois issues: consumptionism / consumption fetishism

Global Macro-Capitalism

Immiseration of Labour: Disproportionate

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

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

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

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

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

I shall return to the "free" state later.

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

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

Marx's valid rebuttal of the Malthusian background of the "Iron Law of Wages" and his reference to sponges notwithstanding, bourgeois capitalism has developed over enough centuries to crystallize Marx's concept of the immiseration of labour into an "iron law." Also, just for additional agitational effect, the "relative" immiseration of labour should henceforth be referred to as "disproportionate."

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

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

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

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

Transitional Sloganeering, Transformations, and Directional Demands

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[...]

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

[...]

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

As noted in my earlier work and in Chapter 1, the ten-point program outlined in the Communist Manifesto, while allegedly transitional back in the day, is to a large extent modest or “minimal” by modern standards – although the “equal liability of all to work” remains a transitional measure primarily against “those who acquire anything [but] do not work” and secondarily against those whose incomes are derived from unproductive labour on their own part. Meanwhile, Thalheimer’s and Trotsky’s common answer to the second question that the latter had in mind was, at best, rather mixed. Their usage of the word “transitional” scared away workers from struggling for numerous reforms of a primarily economic nature such that, to quote the latter’s remarks on the sliding scale of wages, it would be “easier to overthrow capitalism than to

realise this demand under capitalism. Not one of our demands will be realised under capitalism. That is why we are calling them transitional demands." Nowadays, however, many businesses offer pay raises on the basis of some sort of cost-of-living adjustment. On the other hand, the call to abolish "business secrets" and information asymmetry more generally may (in a very qualified sense) still be valid, simply because of the competitive business environment and because of bourgeoisie-worker relations.

[Note: From my own perspective, I would like to link this demand to both the efficient capital market hypothesis and definition of "fair market value" as applied to bourgeoisie-worker relations. In regards to the former link, the efficient capital market hypothesis states that no one can "outperform the market" (relative to share prices) on a consistent basis by using financial and other information already known to the broader capital markets. In broader terms, this hypothesis deals with the relationship between financial information and share price (hence "efficiency"). Numerous studies have suggested problems with this hypothesis, particularly with stronger assertions of efficiency, namely due to the issue of insider trading. In regards to the latter link, the lengthy legal definition of "fair market value," as applied to bourgeoisie-worker relations, is... the highest price available, expressed in terms of cash or cash equivalent, for an arm's length transaction on an open, unrestricted market between informed, prudent parties, with none of the parties acting under compulsion. Of course, there is a pro-bourgeoisie information asymmetry regarding the value of labour, and most workers are compelled to work in order to earn a living.]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This is a very timely transformative demand, when considering the scapegoating of immigrants that arises as a result of the increased mobility of labour on a global level, the overly lengthy processing of immigration documents by the various states, and the frequent underemployment of immigrants (if not illegal

compensation below subsistence levels). Since the aforementioned “anti-capitalist” social movements have not fully developed the “directional” programmatic development, a few more transformative demands will be considered, both raised (thankfully) by Marxists.

Given the recent hysterical fuss being made in the various bourgeois-capitalist media outlets about corporate welfare measures aimed at the financial measures industry, with many going to the point of reciting “Step Five: centralization of credit in the hands of the state” (quoting the Communist Manifesto in a woefully ignorant manner), it is timely indeed to revisit a similar demand made in *The Transitional Program*:

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

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

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

For this demand to become genuinely transitional, it should be extended to the transnational level. **The monopolization of all central, commercial, and consumer credit in the hands of a single transnational bank under absolute public ownership, while transformative, also facilitates the fulfillment of at least two other transformative demands, one more obvious than the other: the outright suppression of all public debts (though historically possible on its own in less financialized bourgeois-capitalist societies) and the end to imperialist conflicts generally, not just wars, as vehicles for capital accumulation.**

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

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

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

CHAPTER 3: BASIC PRINCIPLES

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

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

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

Class Strugglism

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Social Labour

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

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

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

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

[...]

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

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

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

Therefore, the second basic principle around which to unite is the full establishment of collective worker control and responsibility over an all-encompassing participatory economy – free from surplus labour appropriations by any elite minority, from private ownership of productive and other non-possessive property, from all forms of debt slavery, and from all divisions of labour beyond technical ones (overspecialization) – as a very realistic but basic means to end the exploitation and alienation of labour and of humanity as a whole.

Class-Strugglist Social Labour: Transnational Emancipation

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

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

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

In 1966, the Marxist Hal Draper wrote *The Two Souls of Socialism*, in which he used the term “socialism from above” to describe emancipation attempts coming from other classes. In the case of the both the bourgeoisie and petit-bourgeoisie, they have their private philanthropists and lesser-evil legislation (and regulation), the latter being enacted usually by “social-democratic” welfarists. In the case of those who, on a class basis, do not develop society’s labour power and its capabilities, such mainly “middle-income” semi-workers have their politics of provincialism, localism, and ever-atomizing individualism. In the more progressive case of Michael Albert’s coordinators, they have their scientific managers and social engineers.

In modern times, the slogan is used against vulgar “vanguardists” and their philosophical or conspiratorial circle-sects, as well as against labour bureaucrats, countering the notion that working-class emancipation can be the act of a tiny minority – and thus not rely on a highly class-conscious working class (much less one that is highly organized and especially independent in both political and ideological respects). There is, however, one lesser-known aspect of this slogan, which is directed against spontaneist “revolutionaries” and Bernstein’s “evolutionary-socialist” heirs. Both groups, in their vulgar materialism and organizational defeatism, leave the emancipation of the working class to mere material conditions and, when fashionable, to mere “identity politics.” In doing so, they facilitate class conciliation.

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

CHAPTER 4: THE “PARTY” QUESTION AND PARTIINOST

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

Fetishizing Decentralized Social Movements and So-Called “Spontaneity”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- 1) The suppression of all public debts outright and of the excessive capital mobility associated with capital flights, the end to imperialist conflicts (not just wars) as vehicles for capital accumulation, and the preclusion of all acts of legalized predatory lending to the working class – all by first means of monopolizing all commercial and consumer credit in the hands of a single transnational bank **under absolute public ownership**; and

- 2) The extension of litigation rights to include class-action lawsuits and speedy judgements against all private employers who extract **any sort of surplus value from their workers**, thereby recognizing in law that human labour (both manual and manual) and its technological, labour-saving equivalent are the only non-natural sources of value production (as established by Adam Smith, David Ricardo, and of course Karl Marx).

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

The rise of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the non-profit sector in the developing world has been the subject of several studies over the last twenty years. Revolutionaries have taken a highly critical view of this phenomenon, and this interpretation seems to be gaining credence in the broader radical left.

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

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

[...]

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

[...]

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

[...]

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

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

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

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

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

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

The aforementioned words, especially that last sentence, were written just after the outset of the mislabeled "First World War" by a Lenin who recalled earlier remarks made by a Kautsky who actually spoke against vulgar "centrism" – the advocacy of any sort of "unity for unity's sake" (false unity) with class accommodationists by, naturally, accommodating them. This is something that both "social-democratic" historians and "democratic-socialist" activists – and even most Marxists – ignore in portraying a consistently vulgar-centrist caricature of the leading theoretical authority in the Second International (or at least in its Marxist wing), as if he never succumbed to senility (which he certainly did when he descended into vulgar "centrism" and then renegacy).

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

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

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

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

We must raise the question of applying much of what is scientific and progressive in the Taylor system [...] The Russian is a bad worker compared with people in advanced countries. It could not be otherwise under the tsarist regime and in view of the persistence of the hangover from serfdom. The task that the Soviet

government must set the people in all its scope is – learn to work. **The Taylor system, the last word of capitalism in this respect, like all capitalist progress, is a combination of the refined brutality of bourgeois exploitation and a number of the greatest scientific achievements in the field of analysing mechanical motions during work, the elimination of superfluous and awkward motions, the elaboration of correct methods of work [...]** The possibility of building socialism depends exactly upon our success in combining the Soviet power and the Soviet organisation of administration with the up-to-date achievements of capitalism. We must organise in Russia the study and teaching of the Taylor system and systematically try it out and adapt it to our own ends.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Led by Georg von Vollmar, the south German forces gained sufficient support to get the 1894 Frankfurt party congress to pass a resolution calling for the adoption of an agrarian policy to be grafted onto the Erfurt program. Two things about the campaign particularly rankled Kautsky. One was the almost vituperatively anti-theoretical posture of the major proponents of the agrarian program. Over and over again these people scornfully rejected any theoretical objections to including peasants and small farmers among party

membership and to making special programmatic concessions to try to win their votes. Quite naturally Kautsky resented this attack on his special bailiwick. **Kautsky also opposed the suggestion that the exclusively worker character of the party should be violated. This was contrary to what was for him the most important basic political principle of any socialist party.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

Second, when such people from other classes join the proletarian movement, the first demand upon them must be that they do not bring with them any remnants of bourgeois, petty-bourgeois, etc., prejudices, but that they irreversibly assimilate the proletarian viewpoint. But those gentlemen, as has been shown, adhere overwhelmingly to petty-bourgeois conceptions. In so petty-bourgeois a country as Germany, such conceptions certainly have their justification, but only outside the Social-Democratic Labor party. If the

gentlemen want to build a social-democratic petty-bourgeois party, they have a full right to do so; one could then negotiate with them, conclude agreements, etc., according to circumstances. But in a labor party, they are a falsifying element. **If there are grounds which necessitates tolerating them, it is a duty only to tolerate them, to allow them no influence in party leadership, and to keep in mind that a break with them is only a matter of time.**

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

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

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

[...]

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

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

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

[...]

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

productive capacities'. Consequently, 'it becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish leisure time from work. In a sense, life becomes inseparable from work.' (Lazzarato, 1996: 137-8)

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

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

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

Substitutionism:

"Only after the proletarian dictatorship has wrested out of the hands of the bourgeoisie such powerful media of influence as the press, education, parliament, the church, the administrative machine and so on, only after the defeat of the bourgeois order has become clear for all to see, only then will all or almost all workers start to enter the ranks of the Communist Party." (Zinoviev:
<http://www.marxists.org/history/international/comintern/2nd-congress/ch03a.htm>)

Transnational Organization and Modern *Partiinost*

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

Contrary to the later similarity of *partiinost* ("partyiness") in the mid-to-late Soviet era with liberal-bourgeois political correctness in Western countries, the *partiinost* of the Second International best exemplified politico-ideological independence for the working class.

Modern *Partiinost* as Revolutionary Centrism

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

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

I shall conclude this chapter and transition to the next with a very lengthy quote, or rather a series of quotes, from one Mike Macnair's profoundly true and important series of articles (now compiled into the book

Revolutionary Strategy: Marxism and the Challenge of Left Unity) dating back to 2006 in the *Weekly Worker*, a British Marxist newspaper:

Down to 1914, Russian Bolshevism was a tendency within the centre, not a tendency opposed to it

[...] Without the centre tendency's international unity policy there would have been no RSDLP; without the lessons the Bolsheviks learned from the international centre tendency, there could have been no mass opening of the Bolshevik membership in 1905, no recovery of the party's strength through trade union, electoral and other forms of low-level mass work in 1911-14, and no Bolshevik political struggle to win a majority between April and October 1917.

[...]

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

[...]

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

[...]

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

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

[...]

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

[...]

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

[...]

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

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

*A different sort of impatience is offered by those who split prematurely and refuse partial unity in the hope of building their own 'Leninist party': the decision of the far-left platforms (Progetto Comunista and Proposta) to split prematurely from Rifondazione; the SAV's split orientation in the WASG-PDS fusion process; the splits of the Socialist Party and Workers Power from the Socialist Alliance; and the refusal of much of the left of the SA to work as a minority in Respect. **We find that, although these sects sell themselves as 'revolutionary', when they stand for election either to parliaments or in unions their policies are broadly similar to the coalitionists. They are still playing within the capitalist rules of the game.***

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

CHAPTER 5: THE DEMOCRACY QUESTION

"He who lets political freedoms wither or withholds them – he who keeps the proletariat from the struggle to win these freedoms and to extend them – that person is one of the proletariat's worst enemies." (Karl Kautsky)

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

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

Parliamentarianism and "Social Fascism" Revisited

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

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

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

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

“Broad Economism”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Looking even further back, the Communist Manifesto identified one particular “socialism” that was similar. Notwithstanding the eventual succumbing to cross-class, coalitionist “compromise” by the majority of the international social-democratic movement, the father of the revolutionary martyr Karl Liebknecht had, from

today's perspective, provided the historical link between the "socialist" economists and what the Manifesto identified as "True Socialists":

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In light of the modern social corporatism employing parliamentarism, it is not surprising in the least that the 750th issue of the aforementioned newspaper featured an article by the politically non-aligned Lars Lih

himself (on, among other things, pre-renegade Kautsky as an "honorary Bolshevik"), in which this poignant statement against broad economism was made:

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

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

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

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

Participatory Democracy and the Direct Democracy Question

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Although society has become too complex for the whole range of political decisions to be made by potentially time-consuming direct popular legislation, modern communication technology has made possible the revival of the ancient Greek body known as the Assembly, wherein any citizen (albeit exclusive of the female gender and the slave class status, but never exclusive of the remaining non-owners of property) was able to attend, make political speeches, and vote on decisions being discussed. The issues being discussed, of course, would have to be major ones, such as taxation levels and budgetary affairs (both discussed in Chapter 6), and even the age-old questions of war and peace.

The remaining range of political decisions would be left to specialized councils with combined legislative and executive-administrative power over their respective, parallel jurisdictions. How they are composed, and how the concept of representation must be redefined, is the subject of the next section.

The Demarchy Question

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

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

*There is one crucial thing we can learn from Athenian democracy in this respect. The ancient democracy was established by overthrowing tyranny and equipped itself with a meticulous device for preventing tyranny for reviving. **The salient characteristic of Athenian democracy is not a direct participation of everyone in the assembly, as always claimed, but a systematic control of the administrative power. The crux was the system of lottery: to elect public servants by lottery and to surveil the deeds of public servants by means of a group of jurors who were also elected by lottery [...]** Lottery functions to introduce contingency into the magnetic power center. The point is to shake up the positions where power tends to be*

*concentrated; entrenchment of power in administrative positions can be avoided by a sudden attack of contingency. It is only the lottery that actualizes the separation of the three powers. **If universal suffrage by secret ballot, namely, parliamentary democracy, is the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, the introduction of a lottery should be deemed the dictatorship of the proletariat.***"

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

The same principle of random selection was applied to the legal system, at the apex of which stood the historical high point of sovereign commoner juries, the judge-free People's Court. The enormous size of the peasant-dominated People's Court, anytime from 500 jurors to well over a thousand, served as protection against bribery. Elections were reserved mostly for generals, given the need for experience and specialized military knowledge.

A modern implementation of this kind of representation would be indeed on a statistical basis, as opposed to the blatant misrepresentation of age groups, gender groups, ethnicity groups, and certainly classes, all resulting from the bourgeois combination of universal suffrage and elections. The present misrepresentation is compounded by the time wasted on patronage, nepotism, and general questions of personalities – time that could have been better spent discussing and deciding upon issues. Although arguments can be made against pure random selection, they are ineffective against random selections based upon candidates meeting certain technical criteria. These qualified random selections would most certainly be applied to many specialized councils, such as one, for example, that has jurisdiction over an entire public health care system.

What about abusive officials in a modern demarchy, then? Contrary to potential claims by radical republicans, **the ability to recall any official immediately is by no means the exclusive property of that oligarchic principle known as elections**, since many bourgeois-capitalist states do not have this at all (and, in exceptional cases, limit it to the point of uselessness). It is in fact much closer to the concept of jurors collectively deciding upon a verdict. Also, this ability should be extended to jurors themselves and other legal officials since, as Marx noted, judicial bodies are less independent than depicted in the high halls of liberal idealism:

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

Non-Class-Based Approaches to Participatory Democracy

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

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

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

In hindsight, this was a primitive yet bold attempt at applying agency theory to the realm of politics and civil administration: **aligning the interests of "agent" officials with the interests of the "principal" population as a whole by means of aligning standards of living.** Nowadays, many public officials (and

most politicians) have so-called “second jobs” (petit-bourgeois or even bourgeois business activities) that distance them from dealing with the population at large, and abuse their public expense allowances to the point of increasing them in disproportion to pay increases for ordinary workers at large. A modern alignment of standards of living should be based on the median standard of living for professional and other skilled workers, since the statistical mean allows a small minority of high earners to skew the number upward, and should take into consideration expense allowances and related issues.

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

Class-Strugglist Democracy and the Demarchic Commonwealth

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

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

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

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

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

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

[...]

Without commitment to such a minimum platform, communists should not accept governmental responsibility [...] To accept governmental responsibility as a minority under conditions of revolutionary crisis is, if anything, worse than doing so in 'peaceful times': a crisis demands urgent solutions, and communists can only offer these solutions from opposition.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

return the man of their choice, be he rich or poor.” While the struggle against formal property qualifications was most progressive, even freely elected legislatures are almost devoid of the working poor, especially those who are women. Also, by no means does this demand preclude the disenfranchisement of the bourgeoisie (and other owners of the aforementioned types of property) as one of the political measures of a more obvious worker-class rule. In fact, the original Soviet constitution deprived voting rights from the bourgeoisie and others even on more functional criteria such as hiring labour for personal profit.

- 4) All political and related administrative offices shall **operate on the basis of occupants' standards of living being at or slightly lower than the median equivalent for professional and other skilled workers**. On the one hand, formulations that demand compensation for such public officials to be simply no more than “workman's wage” fail to take into account the historic worker-class demand for legislators to be paid in the first place, first raised by the worker-class Chartists, “thus enabling an honest tradesman, working man, or other person, to serve a constituency, when taken from his business to attend to the interests of the country.” On the other hand, even freely elected legislators, many of whom have additional sources of income through businesses, tend to increase their collective level of expense allowances beyond the median equivalent associated with professional work. A combination of appropriate pay levels and expense allowances, mandated loss of regular occupations (since these offices should be full-time positions), and other measures can fulfill this demand.
- 5) All political and related administrative offices shall be **subject to immediate recall in cases of abuse of office**. This can be fulfilled effectively under a radical-republican system of indirect elections and hierarchical accountability, as opposed to the current system of direct electoralism (based on mass constituencies) that require significant numbers of constituents to sign recall initiatives. However, like the two preceding demands, this demand is best fulfilled not just when all such public offices function with the aforementioned hierarchical accountability, but also when all such public offices are assigned by lot, thereby minimizing interpersonal political connections.
- 6) There shall be an ecological reduction of the normal workweek – including time for workplace democracy, workers' self-management, etc. through workplace committees and assemblies – to a **participatory-democratic maximum of 32 hours or less without loss of pay or benefits**, the minimum provision of double-time pay or salary/contract equivalent for all hours worked over the normal workweek and over 8 hours a day, and the prohibition of compulsory overtime. In addition to the extensive analysis provided in the next chapter, it must be noted that proposals for an eight-hour day were made but not implemented within the Paris Commune, and that the development of capitalist production is such that time for workplace democracy and so on should be part of the normal workweek and not outside of it.
- 7) There shall be **full, lawsuit-enforced freedom of class-strugglist assembly and association for ordinary people, even within the military**, free especially from anti-employment reprisals, police interference such as from agents provocateurs, and formal political disenfranchisement. If one particular demand could neatly sum up the struggle for the politico-ideological independence of the working class – before and even just after having captured the full political power of a ruling class – it is this one by far.
- 8) There shall be an **expansion of the ability to bear arms** and to general self-defense towards **enabling the formation of people's militias based on free training**, especially in connection with class-strugglist association, and also free from police interference such as from agents provocateurs. The aggressive advocacy of this demand separates class-strugglists from the most obvious of cross-class coalitionists, even if the likes of Bernstein pushed for this demand in less formal workers' action programs.
- 9) There shall be full independence of the mass media from concentrated private ownership and control by first means of **workplace democracy over mandated balance of content** in news and media production, **heavy appropriation of economic rent in the broadcast spectrum**, unconditional economic assistance (both technical and financial) for **independent mass media cooperative startups – especially at more local levels, for purposes of media decentralization – and anti-inheritance transformation of all the relevant mass media properties under private ownership into cooperative property**. Although this is an applied combination of more general demands that are in and of themselves not necessary for workers to become the ruling class, a comprehensive solution to the mass media problem of concentrated private ownership and control (not to mention bourgeois cultural hegemony as discussed by the Marxist Antonio Gramsci) is a necessary component of any minimum program in the pre-orthodox sense.
- 10) **All state debts shall be suppressed outright**. Unlike the more transformative suppression of all public debts on a transnational scale, the minimum character of this demand was long established by the historical precedent of the 19th-century imperialist powers periodically going into debt to fund their wars and then defaulting upon them on an equally periodic basis.

- 11) **All predatory financial practices towards the working class, legal or otherwise, shall be precluded** by first means of establishing, on a permanent and either national or multinational basis, a **financial monopoly without any private ownership or private control whatsoever** – at purchase prices based especially on the market values of insolvent yet publicly underwritten banks – with such a monopoly inclusive of the general provision of commercial and consumer credit, and with the application of “equity not usury” towards such activity. The usage of the word “multinational” instead of “transnational” signifies the minimum character of this demand, given the multinational structure of the European Union and given that, as mentioned earlier, a single transnational equivalent should put to an end the viability of imperialist wars and conflicts more generally as vehicles for capital accumulation.
- 12) There shall be an enactment of **confiscatory, despotic measures against all capital flight of wealth**, whether such wealth belongs to economic rebels on the domestic front or to foreign profiteers. Ultimately, the flight of gold from Parisian banks by those in control over same banks weakened the workers of 1871 Paris and financed the ruthless suppression of the Paris Commune.

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

Revisiting the Party Question

- No to parliamentarianism and social fascism
 - o Disenfranchised working class
 - o *Communism, Social Democracy and the Democracy Gap* by Stefan Berger
[http://www.arbark.se/pdf_wrd/berger_int.pdf]
 - o Berger: “At the beginning of the 21st century the project of democracy needs rethinking. In the 1990s there was much talk about growing disillusionment of voters with political parties which found expression in lower and lower participation rates in elections. Increasing numbers of citizens withdrew even from the limited sphere in which they had previously been active: the ballot box. Their passivity seemed to threaten the legitimacy of representative democracies.”
 - o Undermine the specific combinations of “democracy” with “liberal,” “parliamentary,” “representative,” and other bourgeois adjectives
 - o “Side by side with social democracy, with whose aid the bourgeoisie suppresses the workers or lulls their class vigilance, stands Fascism [...] The combination of social democracy, corruption and active white terror, in conjunction with extreme imperialist aggression in the sphere of foreign politics [...] Social democracy itself often plays a Fascist role in periods when the situation is critical for capitalism. In the process of development social democracy reveals Fascist tendencies [...]”
(<http://marxistsfr.org/history/international/comintern/6th-congress/ch02.htm>)
 - o Social corporatism
- Revisiting the Party Question
 - o Elections as a protest tactic, even with mass support
 - o “And lastly the possessing class rules directly by means of universal suffrage. As long as the oppressed class – in our case, therefore, the proletariat – is not yet ripe for its self-liberation, so long will it, in its majority, recognize the existing order of society as the only possible one and remain politically the tail of the capitalist class, its extreme left wing. But in the measure in which it matures towards its self-emancipation, in the same measure it constitutes itself as its own party and votes for its own representatives, not those of the capitalists. Universal suffrage is thus the gauge of the maturity of the working class. It cannot and never will be anything more in the modern state; but that is enough. On the day when the thermometer of universal suffrage shows boiling-point among the workers, they as well as the capitalists will know where they stand.” (Engels)
 - <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1884/origin-family/ch09.htm>
 - o “Electoral platform” dissent
 - o Demarchy and centrality

CHAPTER 6: “TO BEGIN WITH...”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In between the two extremes stands a method that is dynamic (or broadly directional) yet structural and oppositionist. Part of this method coincides with some of the minimax “ideals” of even the most structurally interventionist of “social-democrats,” while a larger part already goes beyond them, but which in its entirety facilitates the issuance of either intermediate or threshold demands later on (for the sake of this work I will refer to this alternative to one Andre Gorz’s concept of “non-reformist reforms” as the “Hahnel criterion,” notwithstanding Hahnel’s erroneous stance on full-fledged Keynesianism as being reform-enabling) while simultaneously enabling the basic principles to be “kept consciously in view” (to quote Kautsky, hence the reference to this criterion as the “Kautsky criterion” for the sake of this work) – **through the emphasis on transnational class struggle in this method, specifically transnational pressure for legislative implementation (and not regulation by hardly accountable regulators) and politico-ideological independence for the working class.** Some of these demands are so dynamic that they transcend the political-economic divide of traditional “minimum” demands. The rest of this lengthy chapter will examine, on the basis of the Hahnel and Kautsky criteria provided above, various dynamic oppositionist demands.

32-Hour Workweek Without Loss of Pay or Benefits

"Capitalist philanthropy becomes constantly more timid; it tends more and more to leave to the workers themselves the struggle for their protection. The modern struggle for the eight-hour day bears a very different aspect from the one which was carried on in England fifty years ago for the ten-hour day. The property-holding politicians who are advocating the modern measure are moved, not by philanthropy; but by the necessity of yielding to their working-class constituents. The struggle for labor legislation is becoming more and more a class-struggle between proletarians and capitalists. On the continent of Europe and in the United States, where the struggle for labor laws commenced much later than in England, it bore this character from the start. The proletariat has nothing more to hope for from the property-holding classes in its endeavor to raise itself. It now depends wholly upon its own efforts." (Karl Kautsky)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*Already this demand surpasses the "maximum demands" of most modern "social-democratic" economists! According to the primarily single-issue Work Less Party in Canada (better marketed as "Work Less, Do More"), this modern version of the historic struggle for the eight-hour workday: reduces society's environmental footprint, reduces unemployment, promotes an increase in cultural activities and social life in general, and especially **promotes an increase in real political activity (both civic participation and***

heightened political activism as the bases of basic participatory democracy) at the expense of "politics" as, in the words of the Weekly Worker's Mike Macnair, "a consumer good supplied by professional and semi-professional politicians who offer various competing 'brands' [...]"

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

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

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

Class-Strugglist Assembly and Association: Self-Directional Demands

"The original organizations of the proletariat were modeled after those of the medieval apprentices. In like manner the first weapons of the modern labor movement were those inherited from a previous age, the strike and the boycott. But these methods are insufficient for the modern proletariat. The more completely the various divisions of which it is made up unite into a single working-class movement, the more must its struggles take on a political character. Every class-struggle is a political struggle. Even the bare requirements of the industrial struggle force the workers to make political demands. We have seen that the modern state regards it as its principal function to make the effective organization of labor impossible. Secret organizations are inefficient substitutes for open ones. The more the proletariat develops, the more it needs freedom to organize." (Karl Kautsky)

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

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

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

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

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

[...]

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

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

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

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

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

[...]

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

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

Next, consider the historical role of “the pigs” – police officers (not even the bourgeoisie are called “the pigs” by the class-strugglist left) – as obstacles to class-based assembly and association, **including but not limited to the usage of agents provocateurs to incite violence**, the suppression of mass strikes and wildcat strikes in general, the forced enforcement of lockouts or outright unemployment in response to sit-down strikes or even “recovered” factories, and so on. For the purposes of this lengthy chapter, this more direct consideration of the bourgeois-capitalist state’s “principal function [of making] the effective organization of labor impossible” will indeed be limited to the usage of agents provocateurs, especially in

recent years. That even paleoconservative reactionaries like Alex Jones and liberals like Steve Watson can mutually identify this expression of bourgeois-capitalist authoritarianism and (at least inadvertently) link it to class struggle is something to note:

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

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

*In Seattle in 1999 at the World Trade Organisation meeting, the authorities declared a state of emergency, imposed curfews and resorted to nothing short of police state tactics in response to a small minority of hostile black bloc hooligans. In his film *Police State 2*, Alex Jones covered the fact that the police allowed the black bloc to run riot in downtown Seattle while they concentrated on preventing the movement of peaceful protestors. The film presents evidence that the left-wing anarchist groups are actually controlled by the state and used to demonize peaceful protesters.*

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

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

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

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

[...]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[...]

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

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

[...]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Intimately linked with the self-directional demand for freedom of class-strugglist assembly and association is the demand for the formation of people’s militias. Even after the turn to minimalism, Bernstein never advocated the elimination of this crucial minimum demand in the Erfurt Program, which he himself wrote. Just two years before the outbreak of continental war in 1914, and not long after the turn to vulgar “centrism,” Kautsky made this remark in *The First of May and the Struggle against Militarism*:

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

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

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

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

Local Autonomy and Alternative Local Currencies

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

In spite of my criticism of decentralization fetishes in Chapter 4, there is a crucial difference between such fetishes and the modern, toned-down definition of *autonomia*, which the current Dalai Lama used as his stated objective for Tibet within modern China. The aforementioned demand for people’s militias is to a certain extent one for local autonomy from overbearing police and domestic military reserve operations. In regards to the above remarks by Engels on the Erfurt Program, a clear-cut example of this demand can be seen in Venezuela, as explained in 2007 by Josh Lerner of Z Magazine:

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

[...]

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

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

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

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

[...]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In short, local currency alternatives to government money would have to be an additional, subordinate form of the latter, also contrary to the highly reactionary fantasies of backing such currencies with precious metals, like as if they were hard money. The proliferation of one such hard money – the “liberty dollar” – warranted an FBI and Secret Service response in 2007 for overstepping local limits and competing directly with the US dollar, not to mention the possibility of dubious financial transactions surrounding the distribution of this rather private currency.

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

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

[...]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"A complete democracy is to be found nowhere, and everywhere we have to strive after modifications and improvements. Even in Switzerland there is an agitation for the extension of the legislative powers of the people, for proportional representation and for woman suffrage. In America the power and mode of selection of the highest judges need to be very severely restricted. Far greater are the demands that should be put forward by us in the great bureaucratic and militarist States in the interests of democracy." (K.J. Kautsky)

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

Much has been said time and again about the benefits of proportional representation (PR) over single-winner district "representation" (plurality/first-past-the-post, instant-runoff, and so on), in spite of the "pure PR" caricature presented by the Israelis. These benefits include the elimination of tactical voting for the "lesser of two evils" and the elimination of wasted votes for losing candidates and for winning candidates (excess votes in safe seats, usually due to the geographically seat-manipulative gerrymandering), thereby increasing voter turnout.

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

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

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

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

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

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

increased party memberships and increased participatory democracy at the expense of bureaucratic fetishes within the various political parties.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The second consideration is the very specific personal inheritance of productive property, itself being non-possessive. For example, in the sphere of productive property, the billionaire heirs of Sam Walton's wealth from the discount retail chain Wal-Mart, the bin Laden family and their construction conglomerate Saudi Binladin Group, and the hereditary ruling families of both the tourism-heavy United Arab Emirates and the oil-rich Saudi Arabia come to mind, but inheritances of sole proprietorships and partnership stakes are also relevant. **The public appropriation of productive property that would otherwise be immediately inherited through legal will or through "gifting" (the legal loophole associated with this specific inheritance) should, if the related business has "contract" or formally hired labour, at least be for the non-auctioning purpose of transforming such private property into cooperative property,** as elaborated upon later in this chapter. For small businesses whose owners do all the work, re-privatization through auctioning may be acceptable.

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

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

*Suppose the means of production transformed from private into social prosperity, then the right of inheritance (so far as it is of any social importance) would die of itself, because a man only leaves after his death what he possessed during his lifetime. **Our great aim must, therefore, be to supersede those***

institutions which give to some people, during their lifetime, the economical power of transferring to themselves the fruits of labor of the many. Where the state of society is far enough advanced, and the working class possesses sufficient power to abrogate such institutions, they must do so in a direct way.

[...]

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

Socio-Income Democracy: Direct Democracy in Income Taxation

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

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

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

[...]

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

[...]

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

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

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

In satisfying economically populist desires to overcome the politicians’ lobby-based reluctance to effectively tax the super-rich, let alone tax them at levels not seen since the mislabeled “Second World War” and the

accompanying post-war economic boom, socio-income democracy meets and exceeds the Hahnel criterion in one other way: **by planting additional seeds of participatory democracy to grow in other macroeconomic affairs.** This was alluded to in my earlier work and in the first chapter:

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

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

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

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

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

Progress, Poverty, and Economic Rent in Land

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

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

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

Now ask: "Will interest be any higher?"

"No!"

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

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

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

"Rent, and the value of land!"

"Then what should I do?" you beg.

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

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

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

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

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

[...]

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

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

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

Meanwhile, there are more immediate benefits to be realized in the application of all economic rent of land to exclusively public purposes (as opposed to the capture of some of the private economic rent of land), at least some of which also facilitate the fulfillment of other immediate demands. Besides the fact that landowners would be under economic pressure to develop vacant and underutilized land, tax avoidance and evasion by means of sales tax concealment, income tax deductions, and tax havens would be impossible.

The funds associated with the public capture of all economic rent of land would more than make up for the shortfalls resulting in the populist abolition of indirect and other regressive taxation (to be examined in the next section) and in the equally populist elimination by referendum of income taxation for at least low-income workers (as implied in the previous section).

Does this reform enable the basic principles to be “kept consciously in view”? Like with socio-income democracy, there are complications in meeting that all-important Kautsky criterion. Without the existence of class-based income taxation (approximated somewhat by progressive income taxation) – the purposefully second demand in the Communist Manifesto’s ten-point program – the stand-alone implementation of this reform would be, in Marx’s words above, “simply an attempt [...] to save capitalist domination and indeed to establish it afresh on an even wider basis than its present one.” On social labour and the transition to such, collective worker responsibility is key, hence the public application but not outright elimination of capturing economic rent of land. According to Jerry Jones of the Labour Land Campaign:

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

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

The Abolition of Indirect and Other Class-Regressive Taxation

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

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

Contrast that to the existence of such taxation regimes in the welfare states par excellence known as Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. Each of those states, which are derided as “socialist” by right-wing groups, has a value added sales tax rate of 25 percent on most goods and services, a rate that is comparable to what has been and is being proposed by American right-wing groups through their “Fair Tax” lobbying (replacing income taxation with a sales tax of about 30 percent, after token rebates for the poor).

“Sliding Scale of Wages”: Cost of Living Adjustments and Living Wages

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

Shortly after writing the Communist Manifesto, Marx and Engels were tasked by the Communist League in Germany to draft a list of seventeen demands that would be released as the underrated *Demands of the Communist Party in Germany*. Notwithstanding issues arising from potential interpretations of this demand – originally for minimum wages to be at “living wage” levels – to mean the unconditional basic income

demand critiqued in Chapter 2, consider this American analysis of the “iron law” (to borrow again from Lassalle) of the disproportionate immiseration of labour at work, courtesy of William Tabb of the *Monthly Review*:

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

[...]

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

[...]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[...]

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

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

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

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

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

However, as remarked by Mike Macnair in 2007:

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

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

Does this reform facilitate the issuance of either intermediate or threshold demands? Considering the sorry state of unionized labour, not least of which due to the outright cross-class coalitionism of the "yellow" *tred-unionism* in full control over most union bureaucracies (which in turn happen to be oversized), this comprehensive demand strikes at the very heart of "yellow" *tred-unionism* by rendering collective bargaining

for wage increases here and there practically obsolete. The oversized union bureaucracies would be forced to cut back on their respective sizes and adapt to functioning in the role of what Marx and one Jules Guesde called a “workers’ statistical commission” on the “legal minimum wage” in their joint 1880 work known otherwise as the *Programme of the French Workers Party* (as a minimum demand and not a pseudo-“transitional” one), and any internal struggle for the democratization of unionized labour would reach new heights, all in accordance with the aforementioned Hahnel criterion.

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

- Gun rights and citizens’ militias (in *connection* with class-strugglist association), again free from police agents such as agents provocateurs
 - o Again a “self-directional demand”
 - o “Failing to call for workers’ self-defence and a popular militia to replace the standing armed forces, the police included, almost means defeat before the battle has even started. Let us note that even Eduard Bernstein, father of revisionism in the Second International, demanded a popular militia.” (<http://www.cpgb.org.uk/worker/716/fromcadets.html>)
- The “corporate person”
- Abolition of indirect / sales taxes and other regressive taxes (does not consider possible reinstatement through “Lassalleian” taxation)
 - o “Undoubtedly the victorious proletariat would also make fundamental reforms in taxation. It would endeavor to abolish all the taxes that today rest upon the laboring population – first of all the indirect ones that increase the cost of living.” (<http://www.marxists.org/archive/kautsky/1902/socrev/pt2-1.htm>)
- “Right to the City”: tenants’ rights and associations
 - o “Now, actually, [Soviet Russia] also had factory committees, elected factory committees, and God knows what else, elected block – tenants had the elected block committee for their housing block or street committee, or something like that. Masses of these organizational forms running in parallel...” (Mike Macnair)
 - o <http://www.righttothecity.org/even-renters-who-are-paid-up-are-getting-kicked-out.html>
 - o “By making such commitments part of everybody’s concern you gradually erode the rationale for absentee landlordism” (<http://www.revleft.com/vb/housing-issues-and-t110969/index.html>)
- Income-based or preferably class-based affirmative action
- Recognition of professional education from abroad, professional education standardization, etc. to counter the underemployment of educated immigrants
- Open source and the peer-to-peer movement as a nascent form of non-commodity economy
 - o <http://www.marxist.com/intellectual-property-rights221105.htm>
 - o Ben Franklin’s autobio: <http://www.ushistory.org/franklin/autobiography/page55.htm>
 - o http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/technology/2009/06/a_swing_to_the_pirates.html
 - o <http://www.revleft.com/vb/chavez-may-end-t112178/index.html>
 - o
 - o <http://www.revleft.com/vb/transitional-program-updated-t99491/index.html>
 - o Already cited in the references: *Crisis and defensive demands* by Mike Macnair [<http://www.cpgb.org.uk/worker/751/crisisand.html>]
 - o Kautsky’s copyright ended in 2008
 - o “Happy Birthday To You”
- “Abolition of all restrictions on the non-commodity economy, such as “peer-to-peer” sharing and “open source” programming. Abolition of “intellectual property” laws.” (http://www.workers-party.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=54&Itemid=62)

Against Modern Enclosures of the Commons: Intellectual Property

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

But how is this need a reform that facilitates the issuance of either intermediate or threshold demands, as opposed to being some sort of "transitional" demand? There are many millions of ordinary workers holding economically liberal, social-democratic, or even conservative outlooks while at the same time deploring the concept of intellectual property for what it has (rather naturally) become.

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

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

Pre-Cooperative Worker Buyouts

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

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

Does this reform facilitate the issuance of either intermediate or threshold demands? It does indeed meet the Hahnel criterion, since more general demands may eventually have to be made regarding unconditional economic assistance – from the more technical aspects of drafting startup plans and operations management issues to the more financial aspects such as monetary and physical assets provided) for cooperative startups of sufficient mass (as opposed to business partnerships without employees), and since demands will eventually have to be made regarding necessary restrictions on subcontracting (especially amongst workers’ cooperatives) and regarding the necessary restriction of competition amongst workers’ cooperatives. Even in a more limited application – such as countering a workplace closure, mass sacking, or mass layoff – this revival of one of the truly and radically social-democratic measures enacted by the Paris Commune suggests the need for more creative and pro-active approaches towards countering unemployment. More important, however, is the fate of “free markets” in general – their genuine elimination, and not mere regulation, arising from means other than dirigisme, or selective mercantilism. Even the anarchist Michael Bakunin had this to say about the historic Eisenach Program’s call for “state support of the cooperative system and state loans for free producers’ cooperatives subject to democratic guarantees”:

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

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

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

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

[...]

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

Notwithstanding the scathing criticism, this call for the formation of producer cooperatives with state aid had a class-strugglist advantage: while forcing the hand of the state, **this call forced the feeble, sectional struggles for such cooperatives to become part of the political struggle of the worker-class movement (in short, open class struggle).**

The demand for the encouragement of, and unconditional economic assistance (both technical and financial) for, pre-cooperative worker buyouts of existing enterprises and enterprise operations – particularly in light of the recent “occupied factory” movements – improves upon this history with regards to class independence. The very premise of pre-cooperative worker buyouts is that the workers themselves “call into being” these cooperatives like they did in the Paris Commune, especially if they are about to lose their jobs in the ensuing workplace closure, mass sacking, or mass layoff. Yes, there is encouragement (but not actual establishment by the bourgeois-capitalist state) and “state aid,” but given the necessity to get past the Erfurt Program's precedent for both the excessive “orthodox Marxist” phobia of cooperativism and over-reliance on the state structure (i.e., continued over-emphasis on state-based social welfare schemes, topped with “Marxist”-based “socializations” all over the place, which in fact perpetuate wage labour and capitalism itself as a money-commodities-money process, or the famed M-C-M abbreviation), these are limited specifically to the pre-cooperative worker buyouts – thereby preserving the politico-ideological independence of the working class – and these are qualitatively superior to the “privatize the gains, socialize the losses” effects of perpetual corporate welfare (further examples of which have arisen recently in the financial services industry).

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

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

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

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

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

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

Die Medienfrage: The Mass Media Question

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

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

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

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

[...]

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

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

[...]

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

[...]

*Thus anyone for whom political freedoms have high or intrinsic value should be sympathetic toward the Russian Lenin of *What Is to Be Done?*, who operates in a context that highlighted the role assigned by Social Democracy to political freedom in the fight for socialism. **By the same token, they should be wary***

of the European Lenin of State and Revolution, who fully embraces Social Democracy's blind spot about the role of political freedom in the good society.

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

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

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

- 1) Firstly, there should be **workplace democracy over mandated balance of content in news and media production**. The originally liberal-bourgeois concept of an independent press covers the obvious need and mandate for factual coverage of events. However, balance of content in news also means minimizing, if not totally eliminating, bias in providing analysis (to prevent the degeneration of such into so-called "spin"). Four or more decades ago, the news media in the most developed bourgeois regimes had, albeit relative to the politically correct mainstream, this journalistic balance. Balance of content in other media production primarily refers to the quality of, and airtime allocated for, documentaries and other educational programs (probably at its qualitative peak in the immediate post-Cold War period), cultural programming, of course sports and entertainment. As for workplace democracy, the least it can do is minimize the arbitrary power of news editors and programming coordinators.
- 2) Secondly, there should be **heavy appropriation of economic rent in the broadcast spectrum** (that part of the electromagnetic spectrum most suitable for telecommunication, from radio broadcasting to high-definition television). There are obvious parallels here between railroad land grants for privatized economic rent in land since the 19th century and the corporate commodification of the broadcast spectrum. Although frequencies are still generally not yet privatized officially (as opposed to huge swaths of communication grids in some countries), they are leased for token change in various murky arrangements. Most "profits earned" by mass media companies are in fact economic rent in the classical sense (as discussed in a later section).
- 3) Thirdly, **pre-cooperative worker buyouts of existing mass media enterprises and mass media operations should be extended to all mass media cooperative startups, again with unconditional "state support" (or, more notoriously phrased, "state aid")** in both technical and financial aspects. Again, even the anarchist Michael Bakunin that such a measure could turn the tables on the media moguls. Meanwhile, such economic assistance would undoubtedly be funded by appropriated economic rent in the broadcast spectrum.
- 4) Fourthly, **local autonomy would be enhanced beyond obviously political and economic concerns if media decentralization were one of the aims** of the aforementioned economic assistance. Concentrated private ownership and control in the mass media is mainly ignorant of local issues and local culture, unless the relevant localities are at least somewhat metropolized.
- 5) Lastly, **anti-inheritance measures regarding the mass media should be aimed explicitly at transforming the relevant private property into cooperative property**. Notwithstanding the continued proliferation of heirs to various media empires, the appropriation of the relevant private property for, on the one hand, the sake of mere auctioning would be a step sideways and, on the other

hand, for the sake of complete “public ownership” under the control of bourgeois-capitalist states would only strengthen the bourgeois cultural hegemony, or dominance.

CHAPTER 7: MISCELLANEOUS QUESTIONS

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

- Qualified support for reforms that meet the Hahnel criterion but not the Kautsky criterion
 - o Threshold, directional, “velvet,” and revolutionary demands render the Hahnel criterion irrelevant
- Trade union bureaucracy
- Nation-state considerations
 - o “The proletariat of each country must, of course, first of all settle matters with its own bourgeoisie [...] Since the proletariat must first of all acquire political supremacy, must rise to be the leading class of the nation, must constitute itself the nation [...]” (Karl Marx and Frederick Engels)
 - o Russian fable: “Eagles may at times fly lower than hens, but hens can never rise to the height of eagles.” (<http://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1922/feb/x01.htm>)
 - o Rudolf Hilderfing: <http://www.solidarity-us.org/node/1817>

One final nation-state consideration needs to be addressed: that of operating under authoritarian regimes. In 1922, Lenin quoted a Russian fable about eagles and hens, how the former could fly lower at times than the latter, but also how the latter could never rise to the height of the former. Had a lived a further decade, he might have reconsidered his opinion of a secondary renegade who became an eagle on the question of authoritarianism, as noted by one William Smaldone in 1998:

Rudolf Hilferding rose to prominence within the Austrian and German socialist movements prior to the First World War. He began his career as a student of Karl Kautsky, the most important socialist theoretician at that time, and in 1903 he became a regular contributor to Kautsky's journal, the Neue Zeit.

In 1910 Hilferding published his great work of political economy, Finance Capital, which catapulted him into the front rank of social democracy's leading theoreticians. Regarded by many as the fourth volume of Marx's Capital, Hilferding's book examined the ongoing and, at that time, little-studied fusion of bank and industrial capital, its relationship to intensifying imperialist rivalries among the great powers, and its role in increasing the likelihood of a major war.

[...]

In October 1933 Hilferding argued that the SPD had two main tasks: first, to organize illegal operations in Germany and build cadre that would take over the movement's leadership; second, to prepare itself intellectually in order to lead the fight and to exercise power after the revolution.

Hilferding argued that the current situation necessitated reorganizing the SPD along decentralized, conspiratorial lines that would make underground operations in Germany possible. Such activities would allow the movement to lead the popular forces that he believed would eventually smash Nazism in a civil war.

It would then fall to social democracy to establish a revolutionary government that would, at a minimum, destroy the fascist regime, condemn Nazi criminals, purge the bureaucracy, the courts, and the military, staff these organizations with revolutionaries, and expropriate heavy industry, the banks and semi-feudal landed estates.

Such actions, he thought, would avoid the mistakes made during the German Revolution of 1918, from which many of the old imperial institutions had emerged unscathed only to topple the republic later on.

[...]

Hilferding had called on social democracy to prepare itself to lead a clandestine struggle against fascism and, ultimately, a civil war. He resisted using the term "dictatorship" to describe the regime that would replace Nazism, but envisioned a revolutionary government able to wield extensive power and open the road to socialism. Now his sense of principle prevented him from taking this step, and he attempted to distance himself from the SPD's warring factions. Ultimately, their conflicts remained unresolved and the movement ineffectual until the Second World War destroyed the Nazi state.

CHAPTER 8: ECONOMIC "NATIONAL-DEMOCRATIZATION"

"Non-capitalistic development does not ensure an immediate transition to socialism. But it is the start of a social-economical development that creates the necessary base to form a socialist society." (Veniamin Evgenevich Chirkin)

Except for the commentary on the directional demand regarding the monopolization of all commercial and consumer credit in the hands of a single transnational bank under absolute public ownership, not much else has been said on the so-called "nationalization" question, precisely due to its historically disproportionate programmatic standing (relative to other, more disparate economic demands raised by the class-strugglist left) and also due to its national nature or, in the case of a political entity like the European Union, its multinational nature (thereby putting material limits to the potential for transnational class struggle on this question). With all the half-hearted, debt-heavy "nationalizations" that have occurred as of late in the leading bourgeois-capitalist nations, and even with the historical record of "social-democratic" nationalizations, **it is no longer sufficient to advocate nationalizations even on the minimum level of reform-enabling reforms – much less lump the alternative with other economic reform demands that are more disparate but transnational in scope.**

"National-Democratization" and "Industrial Complexes"

During the 24th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1971, party leader Leonid Brezhnev suggested "non-capitalist development" in the former colonial countries, referring specifically to the superfluous role of the bourgeoisie in the money-commodities-money process, known otherwise as capital (while Mao polished China's relations with the most reactionary bourgeois-capitalist governments). This was elaborated upon further by academician Veniamin Evgenevich Chirkin in his *A Socialist-Oriented State: Instrument of Revolutionary Change*. Notwithstanding a scathing but ultimately poor rebuttal by the "anti-revisionist Marxist Leninist" Ludo Martens later on in his *Leonid I. Brezhnev and the National-Democratic Revolution*, and notwithstanding the irony that was lost on the Soviet government, Chirkin did indeed have in mind the rebuttal of one Eugen Duhring by Frederick Engels, better known nowadays as *Anti-Duhring*:

The period of industrial high pressure, with its unbounded inflation of credit, not less than the crash itself, by the collapse of great capitalist establishments, tends to bring about that form of the socialisation of great masses of means of production which we meet with in the different kinds of joint-stock companies. Many of these means of production and of communication are, from the outset, so colossal that, like the railways, they exclude all other forms of capitalistic exploitation. At a further stage of evolution this form also becomes insufficient: the official representative of capitalist society – the state – will ultimately have to undertake the direction of production.

[...]

If the crises demonstrate the incapacity of the bourgeoisie for managing any longer modern productive forces, the transformation of the great establishments for production and distribution into joint-stock companies and state property shows how unnecessary the bourgeoisie are for that purpose. **All the social functions of the capitalist are now performed by salaried employees. The capitalist has no further social function than that of pocketing dividends, tearing off coupons, and gambling on the Stock Exchange, where the different capitalists despoil one another of their capital.**

[...]

But the transformation, either into joint-stock companies, or into state ownership, does not do away with the capitalistic nature of the productive forces. In the joint-stock companies this is obvious. And the modern state, again, is only the organisation that bourgeois society takes on in order to support the general external conditions of the capitalist mode of production against the encroachments of the workers as well as of individual capitalists. **The modern state, no matter what its form, is essentially a capitalist machine, the state of the capitalists, the ideal personification of the total national capital. The more it proceeds to the taking over of productive forces, the more does it actually become the national capitalist, the more citizens does it exploit.** The workers remain wage-workers – proletarians. The capitalist relation is not done away with. It is rather brought to a head. But, brought to a head, it topples over. **State ownership of the productive forces is not the solution of the conflict, but concealed within it are the technical conditions that form the elements of that solution.**

As a small tribute to Chirkin's economic elaboration of the Soviet government's "national-democratic revolution" concept, the term "national-democratization" – the combination of "nationalization" and "democratization" (hence the hyphen) – should be used when referring to "anti-capitalist" nationalization reforms and multinational equivalents directed democratically against private ownership and elite control of significant productive and other non-possessive property, **especially those generating merely, to use the language of classical political economy, economic rent** (not taking into account Marx's expansion of this term towards equivalence with surplus value).

Just how significant are the "significant" productive and non-possessive properties? Consider a key remark in the farewell address of US president Dwight Eisenhower:

*This conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry is new in the American experience. **The total influence – economic, political, even spiritual – is felt in every city, every statehouse, every office of the federal government.** We recognize the imperative need for this development. Yet we must not fail to comprehend its grave implications. **Our toil, resources and livelihood are all involved; so is the very structure of our society. In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex.** The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist. We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes.*

Although Eisenhower referred to the military-industrial complex, other "industrial complexes" – not just mere "industries" – have arisen from many of these "significant" productive and non-possessive properties, each of which has "unwarranted [private] influence," and each of which constitutes a part of the commanding heights of any given national economy. Once more, the rather incomplete "totality" of the suggested national-democratization measures is, since the measures themselves are or have proven to be quite achievable (less the "democratization") under bourgeois capitalism, on the minimum level of reform-enabling reforms. **The reform measures themselves are by no means intended to appear "transitional" or even be such in the post-bourgeois sense,** contrary to the intentions of the "expropriation of separate groups of [commanding-heights] capitalists" as elaborated upon in that Trotskyist sacred cow known otherwise as *The Transitional Program*.

Compensation and Capital Flight

"The difference between these demands and the muddleheaded reformist slogan of 'nationalization' lies in the following: (1) we reject indemnification; (2) we warn the masses against demagogues [...] who, giving lip service to nationalization, remain in reality agents of capital; (3) we call upon the masses to rely only upon their own revolutionary strength; (4) we link up the question of expropriation with that of seizure of power by the workers [...]" (Leon Trotsky)

As elaborated upon earlier, despite the broad economism inherent in that Trotskyist sacred cow known otherwise as *The Transitional Program*, there are a number of points in that “transitional” approach worth salvaging.

Classical Economic Rent and Self-Directional Demands

"In the first place it is self-evident that [the proletariat] would recover what the bourgeoisie has lost. It would sweep all remnants of feudalism away and realize that democratic programme for which the bourgeoisie once stood. As the lowest of all classes it is also the most democratic of all classes." (Karl Kautsky)

As elaborated upon in Chapter 5, contrary to established Marxist tradition, *demokratia* – the non-electoral rule of the common people – or even radical republicanism was never the political program of the bourgeoisie, contrary to Kautsky's unfortunate concession of “the battle of democracy” above in *The Social Revolution*. Moreover, his musings on the anti-feudal revolution are overly brief. To get a clearer picture of this anti-feudal revolution, an excellent starting point would be Marx's *The Poverty of Philosophy*, a critique of the anarchist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (again, known most notably for his assertion that “Property is Theft”):

But we all know that competition was engendered by feudal monopoly. Thus competition was originally the opposite of monopoly and not monopoly the opposite of competition. So that modern monopoly is not a simple antithesis, it is on the contrary the true synthesis.

Thesis: Feudal monopoly, before competition.

Antithesis: Competition.

Synthesis: Modern monopoly, which is the negation of feudal monopoly, in so far as it implies the system of competition, and the negation of competition in so far as it is monopoly.

Thus modern monopoly, bourgeois monopoly, is synthetic monopoly, the negation of the negation, the unity of opposites. It is monopoly in the pure, normal, rational state.

In light of the recent economic crisis, Professor Michael Hudson, a former Wall Street economist, invoked classical political economy to elaborate upon the aforementioned historical development. Contrary to popular myth, even Adam Smith, best known for conceptualizing “free markets,” meant for it to mean something completely different from the definition used by the modern bourgeoisie. “Free markets,” according to classical political economy, were to be free primarily from economic rent derived from special privilege – the economic core of feudalism – thereby ensuring that income and wealth would be obtained only through personal labour (the role of workers) and through personal enterprise (the role of “industrial” capitalists and petty proprietors). Taxation, therefore, would be based primarily on the collection of this economic rent – most obviously ground rent, but more importantly royalties, monopoly rent, and interest – and its application towards public purposes.

The political debate at that time was between the position of reducing governments **as a means to minimize the collection of economic rent for non-public purposes** (as opposed to the vulgarized sloganeering of “small government” that is heard today) and the position of increasing the role of governments as a means to achieve the exact same purpose. In his article on Orwellian doublethink being applied to the government bailouts, Hudson wrote:

*All this history of economic thought has been as thoroughly expunged from today's academic curriculum as it has from popular discussion. Few people remember the great debate at the turn of the 20th century: **Would the world progress fairly quickly from Progressive Era reforms to outright socialism – public ownership of basic economic infrastructure, natural monopolies (including the banking system) and the land itself (and to Marxists, of industrial capital as well)?** Or, could the liberal reformers of the day – individualists, land taxers, classical economists in the tradition of Mill, and American institutionalists such as Simon Patten – retain capitalism's basic structure and private property ownership? If they could do so, they recognized that it would have to be in the context of regulating markets and introducing progressive taxation of wealth and income. This was the alternative to outright “state” ownership. Today's extreme “free market” idea is a dumbed-down caricature of this position.*

[...]

*As public relations advocates for the vested interests and special rentier privilege, today's "neoliberal" advocates of "free" markets seek to maximize economic rent – the free lunch of price in excess of cost-value, not to free markets from rentier charges. So misleading a pedigree only could be achieved by outright suppression of knowledge of what Locke, Smith and Mill really wrote. Attempts to regulate "free markets" and limit monopoly pricing and privilege are conflated with "socialism," even with Soviet-style bureaucracy. **The aim is to deter the analysis of what a "free market" really is: a market free of unnecessary costs: monopoly rents, property rents and financial charges for credit that governments can create freely.***

[...]

*Reformists and more radical socialists alike sought to free capitalism of its egregious inequities, above all its legacy from Europe's Dark Age of military conquest when invading warlords seized lands and imposed an absentee landlord class to receive the rental income, which was used to finance wars of further land acquisition. **As matters turned out, hopes that industrial capitalism could reform itself along progressive lines to purge itself of its legacy from feudalism have come crashing down. World War I hit the global economy like a comet, pushing it into a new trajectory and catalyzing its evolution into an unanticipated form of finance capitalism.***

It was unanticipated largely because most reformers spent so much effort advocating progressive policies that they neglected what Thorstein Veblen called the vested interests. Their Counter-Enlightenment is creating a world that would have been deemed a dystopia a century ago – something so pessimistic that no futurist dared depict a world run by venal and corrupt bankers, protecting as their prime customers the monopolies, real estate speculators and hedge funds whose economic rent, financial gambling and asset-price inflation is turned into a flow of interest in today's rentier economy. Instead of industrial capitalism increasing capital formation we are seeing finance capitalism strip capital, and instead of the promised world of leisure we are being drawn into one of debt peonage.

[...]

Shifting the tax burden off wages and profits onto rent and interest was the core of classical political economy in the 18th and 19th centuries, as well as the Progressive Era and Social Democratic reform movements in the United States and Europe prior to World War I. But this doctrine and its reform program has been buried by the rhetorical smokescreen organized by financial lobbyists seeking to muddy the ideological waters sufficiently to mute popular opposition to today's power grab by finance capital and monopoly capital. Their alternative to true nationalization and socialization of finance is debt peonage, oligarchy and neo-feudalism. They have called this program "free markets."

Particular attention should be paid towards his mention of "Social Democratic reform movements," which before the war demanded the "socialism" defined by Hudson above. Shortly after that inter-imperialist war, the political spectrum of political economy, including the position of "social democracy" itself, shifted from the classical center to the price economics of the so-called "neo-classical" (marginalist) right-wing, with Austrian pseudo-economics at the far-right. This shift demonstrated irrefutably the inconsistency of the classical liberal position of socializing economic rent while retaining private ownership over properties that generate economic rent. Meanwhile, the spectre of fascism, again mistakenly called "corporatism" by the Italian Fascist tyrant Benito Mussolini (mistaken only in the sense that fascism is actually a subset of corporatism), rose to haunt Europe. While Trotsky emphasized the small-business owners, the self-employed, and the lumpen as being the social base of fascism, he erroneously downplayed the role of the classical economic rentiers – a mistake not made by the very "Stalinized" Comintern that he criticized for its programmatic observation of "social fascism":

The merging of industrial capital with bank capital, the absorption of big land ownership into the general system of capital organisation, and the monopolist character of this form of capitalism transferred the epoch of industrial capital into the epoch of finance capital. "Free competition" of the period of industrial capitalism, which replaced feudal monopoly and the monopoly of merchant capital, became itself transformed into finance capital monopoly. At the same time, although capitalist monopolist organisations grow out of free competition, they do not eliminate competition, but exist side by side with it and hover over it, thus giving rise to a series of exceptionally great and acute contradictions, frictions and conflicts.

[...]

*In squeezing enormous sums of surplus profit out of the millions of colonial workers and peasants and in accumulating colossal incomes from this exploitation, **imperialism is creating a type of decaying and parasitically degenerate rentier-class, as well as whole strata of parasites who live by clipping coupons.***

[...]

Side by side with social democracy, with whose aid the bourgeoisie suppresses the workers or lulls their class vigilance, stands Fascism.

[...]

*The combination of social democracy, corruption and active white terror, in conjunction with extreme imperialist aggression in the sphere of foreign politics, are the characteristic features of Fascism. In periods of acute crisis for the bourgeoisie, **Fascism resorts to anti-capitalist phraseology, but, after it has established itself at the helm of State, it casts aside its anti-capitalist prattle and discloses itself as a terrorist dictatorship of big capital. The bourgeoisie resorts either to the method of Fascism or to the method of coalition with social democracy according to the changes in the political situation; while social democracy itself, often plays a Fascist role in periods when the situation is critical for capitalism.***

Social corporatism, indeed! Nowadays, the only material difference between rent-based "social democracy" and its other corporatist twins is its dedication to capture a small slice of the private economic rent for various "social justice" issues that tend to be diversionary from class interests or, in older socialist language, "sops." On the other hand, in *Finance Capitalism Hits a Wall*, Hudson praised "Stalinist Russia and Maoist China" for purging rentier income in developing their respective economies, and wrote:

But the question must now be raised as to whether only socialism can complete the historical task that classical political economy set out for itself – the ideal that futurists in the 19th and 20th centuries believed that an unpurified capitalism might still be able bring about without shedding its legacy of commercial banking indebtedness property and carving infrastructure out of the public domain.

Because the answer to the aforementioned fulfillment of the anti-feudal revolution is undoubtedly in the affirmative, classical economic rent should be connected to Marx's expansion of economic rent towards equivalence with surplus value. On the one hand, this connection may be as brief as the mention of "venture" (read: vulture) capital for relatively new businesses that cannot raise equity capital in the stock markets, complete debt offerings, or secure bank financing.

On the other hand, this connection may be as protracted as connecting the various forms of economic rent with their underlying productive and other non-possessive property, as well as with self-directional demands. **The application of not some but all economic rent beyond that of land towards exclusively public purposes poses immediate, intermediate, and threshold concerns, as well as poses the purely transitional concern of surplus value.**

Financial National-Democratization

"Even the *Financial Times* now warns in its editorials that it may not be possible to avoid much longer the issue of really taking the whole banking system into public ownership, given its current dysfunctionality. Indeed, there has long been a strong case for turning the banks into a public utility, given that they can't exist in complex modern society without states guaranteeing their deposits and central banks constantly acting as lenders of last resort." (Leo Panitch)

It is interesting to note the market-socialist David Schweickart referred to and approved of the same editorial alluded to by Leo Panitch, one by Willem Buiter, a professor of European political economy at the London School of Economics and the former head of the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development. In *The end of American capitalism as we knew it*, Buiter wrote:

Is the reality of the modern, transactions-oriented model of financial capitalism indeed that large private firms make enormous private profits when the going is good and get bailed out and taken into temporary public ownership when the going gets bad, with the taxpayer taking the risk and the losses?

*If so, then why not keep these activities in permanent public ownership? **There is a long-standing argument that there is no real case for private ownership of deposit-taking banking institutions, because these cannot exist safely without a deposit guarantee and/or lender of last resort facilities, that are ultimately underwritten by the taxpayer.***

Even where private deposit insurance exists, this is only sufficient to handle bank runs on a subset of the banks in the system. Private banks collectively cannot self-insure against a generalised run on the banks. Once the state underwrites the deposits or makes alternative funding available as lender of last resort, deposit-based banking is a license to print money.

*That suggests that either deposit-banking licenses should be periodically auctioned off competitively or that deposit-taking banks should be in public ownership to ensure that the taxpayer gets the rents as well as the risks. **The argument that financial intermediation cannot be entrusted to the private sector can now be extended to include the new, transactions-oriented, capital-markets-based forms of financial capitalism.***

“National-Democratized Construction-Industrial Complex”

“The struggle against unemployment is not to be considered without the calling for a broad and bold organization of public works. But public works can have a continuous and progressive significance for society, as for the unemployed themselves, only when they are made part of a general plan worked out to cover a considerable number of years.” (Leon Trotsky)

- NATIONAL-DEMOCRATIZATION
 - o Chirkin: <http://www.getcited.org/pub/101936343>
 - o Martens: <http://www.icsbrussels.org/ICS/2000/2000en/ludo1.htm>
 - o Engels: <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1877/anti-duhring/ch24.htm>
- Compensation and Capital Flight
 - o “Despotic” exception: confiscatory measures against capital flight (“Confiscation of the property of all emigrants and rebels”)
 - o “Direct confiscation would complete this quickly, often at one stroke, while confiscation through taxation permits the disappearance of capitalist property through a long drawn out process proceeding in the exact degree in which the new order is established and its benevolent influence made perceptible [...] Confiscation in this way loses its harshness, it becomes more acceptable and less painful. The more peaceably the conquest of the political power by the proletariat is attained and the more firmly organized and enlightened it is, the more we can expect that the primitive forms of confiscation will be softened.” (<http://www.marxists.org/archive/kautsky/1902/socrev/pt2-1.htm#s3>)
 - Meidner Plan in Sweden: http://www.voiceoftheturtle.org/show_article.php?aid=330
 - o Schweickart: <http://www.zcommunications.org/znet/viewArticle/18962>
 - o Let us imagine a quick transition from the deeply irrational, ultimately unsustainable economic system we presently inhabit to a democratic, socialist economy, one in which enterprises are run democratically, and economic stability no longer requires keeping our capitalists happy. Suppose we do get a financial meltdown on the scale of the Great Depression. And suppose we had a government newly elected, determined to effect this transition.
 - o [Paragraph break]
 - o The first thing would be to assure everyone, a la Franklin Delano Roosevelt, that there's nothing to fear but fear itself. I mean, we are not talking about a meteor crashing into the earth, or an incurable plague, or a nuclear war. Pieces of paper have suddenly lost their value. Our resources are still intact. Our skill base is still intact. There's no reason for ordinary people to lose their jobs or see their incomes plummet-no material reason, that is.
 - o [Paragraph break]
 - o What next? Well, since the stock market has tanked, let the government step in and buy up those now near-worthless shares of the publicly-traded non-financial corporations. (The price tag may well be less than Paulson's \$700b. The government can print the money, if need be. In a depression it's essential to stimulate the economy by pumping money into it.) Suddenly

our government has controlling interest in all the major corporations. (Notice, these assets are not "expropriated" by the government. They are paid for at full market value.)

- Financial National-Democratization

- o The permanent establishment of a **national-democratized financial monopoly** in basic regards to ownership of and control over banks – at purchase prices based especially on the market values of insolvent banks – along with the extension of that monopoly into the general provision of commercial and consumer credit, as well as the full application of “**equity not usury**” towards such activity
 - o Paulo L dos Santos: http://www.oid-ido.org/article.php3?id_article=711
 - o There is a simple, rational alternative that needs urgent public discussion. Expropriate the banks - or, for those partial to more diplomatic language, nationalise them at the market prices that would prevail had the public not poured hundreds of billions into them. Then run the banks under the sole imperative of stabilising the financial system and paving the way for economic recovery, with no constraints imposed by the need to attract private capital or maintain future private franchise value.
 - o [Paragraph break]
 - o Expropriation would lower the fiscal impact of state intervention. It would also curb the massive hoarding currently taking place as banks try to build up capitalisation levels. State banks could maintain lower capital reserves - after all, the only thing maintaining public confidence in the solvency of banks are state guarantees. This would allow additional room for credit creation, and render recent interest rate cuts effective.
 - o [Paragraph break]
 - o State banks would also be able to provide relief on the debts currently saddling many households, helping provide a welcome boost to aggregate demand. Lastly, state banks could curb the more egregious practices of private banks: exorbitant account, overdraft and transaction fees; interest rates on credit to households; gains made on trading and own accounts at the expense of retail savers; and, of course, bonuses.
 - o [Paragraph break]
 - o These measures are unlikely to be taken by currently dominant political forces, even though such policies are neither socialist nor in themselves steps towards socialism. They are just rational attempts to stop the current economic bloodletting. Economic recovery will require taking on the long-term systemic economic imbalances that conditioned the current meltdown. Those include falling real investment by non-financial corporations, mediocre productivity growth, growing private provision of pensions, health and education, and rising inequality. Addressing those issues will require significant socialist inroads into the functioning of the economy and dramatic political changes. They also require an integrated, long-term understanding of the current crisis and secular developments in the real economy. Stay tuned.
 - o <http://www.revleft.com/vb/equity-vs-interest-t90921/index.html>
 - o Schweickart:
http://books.google.com/books?id=A_0afomkjQYC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_summar_y_r&cad=0
 - o It is true that some capitalists innovate, reorganize, and manage, but it is also true that many do not. This fact, if not its ethical implications, is acknowledged by most economists; it is reflected, for example, in the standard distinction between interest and profit. Profit is the residual accruing to the entrepreneurial after wage, rental, and interest accounts have been paid.
 - o [Paragraph break]
 - o The basic problem for one trying to justify capitalism (noncomparatively) is precisely this category: interest, a return that requires neither risk nor entrepreneurial activity on the part of the recipient.
 - o [Paragraph break]
 - o Time preference need not enter into the explanation of the capitalist's behavior any more than the entrepreneur's. If Marx and Weber are right, the motivational structure for the paradigmatic capitalist is accumulation, not consumption. Moneymaking becomes an end in itself. The capitalist qua capitalist invests now not to have more to consume later but to have more to invest later. As Marx puts it, "Accumulate, accumulate. That is Moses and the prophets."
- National-democratization: "Construction-industrial complex"
- o Obama's public works plan
(<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/07/us/politics/07radio.html?bl&ex=1228798800&en>)

- "The struggle against unemployment is not to be considered without the calling for a broad and bold organization of public works. But public works can have a continuous and progressive significance for society, as for the unemployed themselves, only when they are made part of a general plan worked out to cover a considerable number of years." (Transitional Programme)
- National-democratization: "Energy-industrial complex"
 - "Downstream" electricity, natural gas, oil, hydro and other renewable energy, etc.
- National-democratization: "Agriculture-industrial complex"
 - Third World underdevelopment arising from farm subsidies
 - Kautsky: http://www.cpgb.org.uk/worker/404/capital_and_land.html
- National-democratization: Monopoly on foreign trade
 - "All foreign trade must pass through the hands of the state. Thus trade would no longer be controlled by private monopolies that regulate imports and exports with no care for the consumers' interests. Invaluable advantages for the great masses would arise from this intervention between national production and the world market. Thus only the state, ruled by the workers, would really control all foreign commerce for the benefit of the collectivity." (<http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1934/06/paf.htm>)
- National-democratization: "Transport-industrial complex"
 - "The starting point of this great economic revolution is the expropriation of the landlords and capitalists [...] The confiscation and proletarian nationalisation of private capitalist railway, waterway, automobile and air transport services (commercial and passenger air fleet) and the transference of all State and municipal transport services to the Soviets." (<http://www.marxists.org/history/international/comintern/6th-congress/ch04.htm>)
- National-democratization: "Communication-industrial complex" (communication infrastructure, NOT media enterprises)
 - "The starting point of this great economic revolution is the expropriation of the landlords and capitalists [...] The confiscation and proletarian nationalisation of private capitalist communication services (telegraph, telephones and radio) and the transference of State and municipal communication services to the Soviets." (<http://www.marxists.org/history/international/comintern/6th-congress/ch04.htm>)
- National-democratization of other natural monopolies
 - "These private monopolies have become unbearable, not simply for the wage-workers, but for all classes of society who do not share in their ownership. It is only the weakness of the bourgeois world, as opposed to capital, which hinders it from taking effective action against these monopolies. A proletarian revolution must from its very necessity lead to the abolition of private property in these monopolies. They are to-day very extensive and dominate in a high grade the whole economic life and develop with great rapidity. Their nationalization and communalization signifies simply the domination of the whole productive process by society and its organs [...]" (<http://www.marxists.org/archive/kautsky/1902/socrev/pt2-1.htm#s2>)
 - Classical political economy: <http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=12418>
- National-democratization: Social Security and the "health-industrial complex"
 - The takeover of the **health-industrial complex and all assets of workers' insurance and private pension funds into permanent public ownership**, with levies against corporate assets for any fund deficits, and with **decisive worker participation in their administration**
 - "Takeover by the Reich government of the entire system of workers' insurance, with decisive participation by the workers in its administration." (Erfurt Programme)
 - "Full social insurance of workers: for all forms of wage-labour; for all forms of disablement, namely, sickness, injury, infirmity, old age, occupational disease, child-birth, widowhood, orphanhood, and also unemployment, etc.; all insurance institutions to be administered entirely by the insured themselves; the cost of insurance to be borne by the capitalists; free medical and medicinal aid under the control of self-governing sick benefit societies, the management bodies of which are to be elected by the workers." (<http://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1917/reviprogram/ch04.htm>)
 - "Pension fund socialism"
 - Sovereign wealth funds: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sovereign_wealth_fund#Largest_sovereign_wealth_funds

CHAPTER 9: PROGRAMMATIC DISCLOSURES

The Trotskyist Critique

- "It's transitional!"
 - o RSDLP program: "State insurance for workers covering old age and total or partial disablement out of a special fund formed *by a special tax on the capitalists.*"
- "Opportunism"
 - o <http://www.fifthinternational.org/index.php?id=167,755,0,0,1,0>
 - o "Whilst Trotsky developed a series of demands linking the contemporary struggles of the working class to revolution, working class state power and a planned economy, Callinicos instead presents a series of disconnected reforms together with the vaguest possible explanation of the need for revolution – an explanation that **avoids any mention of the forms of struggle, types of organisation and mass actions** that would make a revolution a reality [...] For revolutionaries, a transitional programme is the "bridge" between the needs of the struggles of millions today and the need for revolution. Alex Callinicos' manifesto, on the other hand, is a bridge reaching out to liberal economists like Susan George and Monbiot... a bridge the working class components of the anti-capitalist movement must not cross."
 - o Petit-bourgeois bridge: cooperativists, Georgists, etc.

The Ultra-Maximalist Critique

- "Now a new Economism is being born. Its reasoning is similarly based on the two curvets: 'Right' – we are against the 'right to self-determination' (i.e., against the liberation of oppressed peoples, the struggle against annexations – that has not yet been fully thought out or clearly stated). 'Left' – we are opposed to a minimum programme (i.e., opposed to struggle for reforms and democracy) as 'contradictory' to socialist revolution." (<http://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1916/sep/00.htm>)
-

The Class-Strugglist Anarchist Critique

- "The state"
- "I also see some strengths in the weakness of the Kautskyan ambiguity regarding the state. Although these days there should be no doubt about its class character, leaving open for disagreement the post-revolutionary status of 'the state' allows class-strugglist anarchists (as opposed to the four other anarchist tendencies) and class-strugglist Marxists (as opposed to 'New Lefts' and intellectual philosopher-jackoffs) to work together." (Me)

APPENDIX A: DRAFT FORMAL PROGRAM

General Note: The most obvious shortcoming of the draft formal program (in fact a combination of the transformative program, the maximalist/maximax program, and a dynamic oppositionist program with somewhat more radical versions of the immediate demands listed in my earlier work) proposed below is that it does not take into full consideration national peculiarities. For example, in my earlier work, I mentioned the constitutional-democratic demand to nationalize the Federal Reserve in the United States, which is not mentioned below (but which on the other hand is already an integral part of the immediate demand for financial national-democratization).

The Development of Capitalism: Class Relations

There is still a third category of workers that has gone very far on the road to its complete development: the mainly “middle-income” professional workers. Long ago, higher education became a professional commodity, and while the measure of knowledge has increased greatly and grows daily, this commodification of higher education has facilitated rampant underemployment. Also long ago have the bulk of these workers been distinguished from other workers only by their petit-bourgeois and coordinator illusions, including principal-residence “home ownership.”

All the major economic functions of the tycoons and especially the money-capitalists are now performed by salaried, “white-collar” managers. The tycoons and especially the money-capitalists have no further economic function than that of receiving interest income, pocketing dividends, and gambling for gains on the capital market for bonds, stocks, foreign exchanges, and derivative speculations, where the different bourgeois capitalists despoil one another of their capital.

The Development of Capitalism: The Disproportionate Immiseration of Global Labour

Contrary to the bourgeois-apologist notion that “a rising tide lifts all boats,” the motions of the three “free and social” markets of bourgeois capitalism, besides which no other economic gods may stand, necessitate the prevalence of the very iron law of the disproportionate immiseration of an already exploited global labour:

- 1) In the “trickle-down” best of times, workers’ incomes do not rise as rapidly as the incomes of those above them, and while immiserated further by interest on the growing but hidden consumer debt slavery that supports this disproportionate immiseration, they can be subject to the disproportionately immiserating effects of inflation;
- 2) When rates of industrial profit fall during recessions and otherwise, workers’ incomes are fully subject to the disproportionately immiserating pressure coming from elsewhere in the “freely” and “socially” exploited labour market – namely from the reserved armies of the unemployed – and specifically unprotected workers’ incomes are fully subject to the disproportionately immiserating effects of inflation;
- 3) When rates of financial profit fall during recessions and otherwise, much of workers’ incomes are diverted to consumer and mortgage debt payments, while still fully subject to the disproportionately immiserating pressure coming from reserved armies of the unemployed and, for unprotected workers’ incomes, the disproportionately immiserating effects of inflation; and
- 4) During depressions, the absolute immiseration of workers’ incomes towards subsistence levels is in full effect.

If certain, nation-based divisions of global labour are not as disproportionately immiserated in comparison to worldwide labour as a whole, it is because the iron law is devastating many other divisions of global labour, when considering:

- 1) Accumulations through dispossessions, from privatizations to intellectual property-as-theft monopolies;
- 2) Exports of commodities that “freely” result from the “social,” rampant wastages of wealth in the consumer goods and services market, otherwise known as anarchic overproduction and planned obsolescence;
- 3) The structure of modern business, being rife with consolidations at the top and littered with petit-bourgeois niches at the bottom – all for the sake of exercising as much monopoly power as permissible by anti-trust laws;
- 4) The further development of the credit system and the “free” capital market as a “social” whole through the expansion of financial leverage into ever more speculative forms;
- 5) Currency regimes and other monetary manipulations within bourgeois-capitalist states;
- 6) The global circulation of both labour and capital, including continuous imports of the latter, thereby facilitating the maintenance of structural budget and trade deficits;
- 7) The ever-changing division of the global economy between privately-owned multinational enterprises and state-capitalist enterprises; and
- 8) Geopolitical considerations, especially competition for non-renewable sources of energy and other natural resources.

In spite of the aforementioned considerations, it would be easier to do away with the transnational rule of bourgeois law before realizing the extension of at least some of the considerations for the benefit of the working class, such as:

- 1) Eliminating information asymmetry by first means of establishing full, comprehensible, and participatory transparency in all governmental, commercial, and other related affairs;
- 2) Matching the globalized mobility of labour with the unconditional establishment of equal rights for all ordinary people and real freedom of movement through instant legalization and open borders, thereby precluding the extreme exploitation of immigrants;
- 3) Legally considering all workplaces as being unionized for the purposes of collective bargaining and strikes, regardless of the presence or absence of formal unionization in each workplace;
- 4) Abolishing all public debts outright, suppressing excessive capital mobility associated with capital flights, ending the viability of imperialist conflicts and not just wars as vehicles for capital accumulation, and precluding all predatory financial practices towards the working class – all by first means of monopolizing all central, commercial, and consumer credit in the hands of a single transnational bank under absolute public ownership;
- 5) Applying not some but all economic rent beyond that of land towards exclusively public purposes;
- 6) Establishing an equal obligation on all able-bodied individuals to perform socially necessary labour, be it manual or mental; and
- 7) Extending litigation rights to include class-action lawsuits and speedy judgements against all non-workers who appropriate surplus value atop any economic rent applied towards exclusively public purposes.

Basic Principles

[Note: In addition to using concepts from Lukacs and Gramsci, the next two sections unabashedly borrow from, in order: the actual Gotha Program, the *Communist Manifesto*, the actual Erfurt Program, the program of the historic [Left-]Communist Workers Party of Germany, Kautsky's *The Road to Power*, the International Workingmen's Association *Resolution of the [1871] London Conference on Working Class Political Action*, Kautsky's *The Class Struggle (Erfurt Programme)*, Aristotle's *Politics*, Marx's *The Civil War in France*, and the program of the historic French Workers' Party.]

Once more, human labour – be it manual or mental – and its technological, labour-saving equivalent are the only non-natural sources of value production. The written history of all societies up to even the present is predominantly one of class struggles, whether open or limited, over the exploitation of these non-natural sources of value production. The modern bourgeois-capitalist society has not abolished the very non-conspiracist class antagonisms, but has instead established in place of the old ones new conditions of exploitation and alienation – primarily the various forms of wage labour, hidden debt slavery, and divisions of labour beyond technical ones – and new forms of class struggle, a socially scientific concept which, fundamentally speaking, can no longer be taken for granted.

Nevertheless, without the technological, economic, political, and other developments associated with this society, the realistic possibility of abolishing the exploitation and alienation of human labour through, along with more emancipatory measures, the full establishment of collective worker control and responsibility over an all-encompassing participatory economy – free from surplus labour appropriations by any elite minority, from private ownership of productive and other non-possessive property, from all forms of debt slavery, and from all divisions of labour beyond technical ones – could not have come about. This socially revolutionary transformation, along with secondary yet socially revolutionary transformations aimed at abolishing non-class oppression and alienation, amounts to the emancipation not only of labour, but also of humanity as a collective whole.

Transnationally obstructing the realization of this maximalist, socially revolutionary program are the following: private philanthropy by the bourgeoisie and petit-bourgeoisie; scientific management and social engineering by the coordinators; redistributions, general legislation, regulations, and general administration within the framework of the bourgeois-capitalist state, especially mere lesser-evil ones initiated by the aforementioned classes; so-called “vanguardism” and similar elitism on the respective parts of philosophers, conspirators, and labour bureaucrats who do not rely on a highly class-conscious, organized, and politico-ideologically independent working class; provincialism, localism, and ever-atomizing individualism on the part of mainly “middle-income” semi-workers; and the politics of spontaneous development, including the ever-pacifist politics of social evolution, fashionable “identity politics,” and the class conciliation accompanying both. The equally transnational emancipation of labour, which has nothing to lose but its

Comment [DS6]: “Labour is the source of wealth and all culture [...]” (W. Liebknecht, Gotha Programme)

Comment [DS7]: “The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight [...]” (Marx and Engels, Communist Manifesto)

Comment [DS8]: “The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones.” (Marx and Engels, Communist Manifesto)

Comment [DS9]: “This social transformation amounts to the emancipation not only of the proletariat, but of the entire human race, which is suffering from current conditions.” (Kautsky and Bernstein, Erfurt Program)

Comment [DS10]: “The KAPD thus struggles for the realisation of the maximum revolutionary programme [...]” [Schroeder, KAPD Program]

chains, can only be brought about by a highly class-conscious and organized working class independently, capturing the full political power of a ruling class for itself in accordance with the slogan "WORKERS OF THE WORLD, UNITE!"

Class-Strugglist Social Labour ("the Social-Labourists") disdains to conceal its views and its anti-capitalist tasks regarding the above versus barbarism, the common ruin of the contending classes. Against the above obstructions, the working class in itself cannot directly act as a class for itself, let alone as one aware of its historic aim, except by organizing on the political and even culturo-demographic basis of workers-only, transnational "partyiness" – distinct from and opposed to all non-worker parties, all class-conciliationist parties, and their combined hegemony. Therefore, the merger of social labour and the worker-class movement that is Class-Strugglist Social Labour seeks to educate, agitate, and organize the various divisions of the working class and their struggles into a class-conscious, collectively unified, and politico-ideologically independent whole, thereby making that class for itself aware of its historic aim and capable of choosing the best means to attain this aim.

Minimum Demands on the Democracy Question

The more completely the various divisions of the working class unite into a single worker-class movement, the more the struggles against bourgeois-capitalist exploitation of their labour must necessarily take on a political character. Every open class struggle is a political struggle, when considering that the bare requirements of the economic struggles force groups of workers to make political demands, and when considering that the organization of the working class on the basis of the aforementioned "partyiness" – again distinct from and opposed to all non-worker parties and to all class-conciliationist parties, given their disposition towards maintaining the repressive instruments for the rule of minority classes – is indispensable in order to ensure the aforementioned emancipation. Without political rights and especially real political enfranchisement, the working class cannot carry on its economic struggles and develop its economic organization.

Once more, there can be no parliamentary, pseudo-representative, liberalized, or other non-class-strugglist roads to the aforementioned emancipation of the working class. Class-Strugglist Social Labour seeks to delegitimize further these dead ends which have, time and again, compromised the politico-ideological independence of the working class and have been delegitimized by that class itself through abstention, having been disenfranchised in all but the formality of universal suffrage.

The only road to the aforementioned emancipation of the working class by that class itself is necessarily class-strugglist – rife with necessarily sharpened class antagonisms – but also necessarily participatory-democratic. Along this road of class-strugglist democracy, the merger of social labour and the worker-class movement that is Class-Strugglist Social Labour seeks to expand the political, economic, and cultural power of the worker-class supermajority as a whole, thereby providing it with the strength and maturity that will finally enable it to capture the supreme authority that is the full political power of a ruling class, which under the current oligarchy is in the hands of the ever-wealthy bourgeoisie, a minority alongside other non-worker classes. This highest form of class-strugglist democracy also fulfills these minimum demands, among others:

- 1) All assemblies of the remaining representative democracy and all councils of an expanding participatory democracy shall become working bodies, not parliamentary talking shops, being **legislative and executive-administrative at the same time and not checked and balanced by anything more professional than sovereign commoner juries**;
- 2) All political and related administrative offices shall be **assigned by lot as a fundamental basis of the demarchic commonwealth**, since the elections of such would be in fact oligarchic in the classical sense;
- 3) All political and related administrative offices shall be **free of any formal or de facto disqualifications due to non-ownership of non-possessive property or, more generally, of wealth**;
- 4) All political and related administrative offices shall **operate on the basis of occupants' standards of living being at or slightly lower than the median equivalent for professional and other skilled workers**; and
- 5) All political and related administrative offices shall be **subject to immediate recall in cases of abuse of office**.

Class-strugglist democracy, although not yet functioning on the principles of social labour, transforms political enfranchisement from a mere gauge of worker-class maturity at best and an instrument of deception at worst – through oligarchic selections held once every few years to decide which individuals, particularly

Comment [DS11]: "The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win." (Marx and Engels, Communist Manifesto)

Comment [DS12]: "The social revolution for which the proletariat strives cannot be realized until it shall have captured political power." (Kautsky, The Road to Power)

Comment [DS13]: "Proletarians of all countries, unite!" (Marx and Engels, Communist Manifesto)

Comment [DS14]: "The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions." (Marx and Engels, Communist Manifesto)

Comment [DS15]: "A fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes." (Marx and Engels, Communist Manifesto)

Comment [DS16]: "Considering, that against this collective power of the propertied classes the working class cannot act, as a class, except by constituting itself into a political party, distinct from, and opposed to, all old parties formed by the propertied classes [...]" (Marx, Resolution of the London Conference on Working Class Political Action)

Comment [DS17]: "Social Democracy as the Merger of the Worker Movement and Socialism [...] The task of Social Democracy is to make the class struggle of the proletariat aware of its aim and capable of choosing the best means to attain this aim." (Kautsky, Das Erfurter Programm)

Comment [DS18]: "The more completely the various divisions of which it is made up unite into a single working-class movement, the more must its struggles take on a political [...]"

Comment [DS19]: "This constitution of the working class into a political party is indispensable in order to ensure the triumph of the social revolution and its ultimate end – the abolition of classe [...]"

Comment [DS20]: "Without political rights, the working class cannot carry on its economic struggles and develop its economic organization." (Kautsky and Bernstein, Erfurt Program)

Comment [DS21]: "Democracy is when there is a majority of free, poor men who have authority to rule, while oligarchy is when it is in the hands of [...]"

non-workers, would misrepresent the worker-class supermajority in the various legislatures – into a necessarily class-antagonistic instrument of emancipation for the worker-class supermajority.

Minimum Demands for Transnational Opposition

[The first, theoretical part of this section unabashedly borrows from Kautsky's *The Class Struggle (Erfurt Programme)*, Engels' *A Critique of the Draft Social-Democratic Program of 1891*, Lincoln's 1861 State of the Union Address, Engels' *The Communists and Karl Heinzen*, and Lenin's *Draft Programme of the RSDLP*.]

In keeping the common, historic aim of manual, clerical, and mainly "middle-income" professional workers consciously in full view, pro-reform Social Labourists fight for all immediate but real, reform-enabling reforms of a politically, economically, and transnationally oppositionist character, which in turn help the working class in itself achieve politico-ideological independence for itself.

Despite contentions on the part of economic apologists of the bourgeois status quo, these demands are possible and merely give a much deservedly higher consideration to human labour, the superior of that mere fruit of human labour known otherwise as money-capital. However, their consistent, preferably simultaneous, obviously complete, and especially lasting implementation – for the sake of not losing or losing again what has already been won – can only be achieved by transnational class struggle. These additional demands of a specifically legislative and not regulatory nature are, to begin with:

- 1) The ecological reduction of the normal workweek – including time for workplace democracy, workers' self-management, etc. through workplace committees and assemblies – to a **participatory-democratic maximum of 32 hours or less without loss of pay or benefits**, the minimum provision of double-time pay or salary/contract equivalent for all hours worked over the normal workweek and over 8 hours a day, the prohibition of compulsory overtime, and the provision of one hour off with pay for every two hours of overtime;
- 2) **Full, lawsuit-enforced freedom of class-strugglist assembly and association for ordinary people, even within the military**, free especially from anti-employment reprisals, police interference such as from agents provocateurs, and formal political disenfranchisement;
- 3) The **expansion of the ability to bear arms** and to general self-defense towards **enabling the formation of people's militias based on free training**, especially in connection with class-strugglist association, and also free from police interference such as from agents provocateurs;
- 4) The expansion of local autonomy on questions of local development through **participatory budgeting and oversight by local assemblies**, as well as through unconditional economic assistance (both technical and financial) for localities seeking to **establish local currency alternatives to government money**;
- 5) The combating of two-party facades and degenerative yet professional personality politics in the various legislatures and executives through the institution, on the basis of compensation being at or slightly lower than the median equivalent for professional and other skilled workers, of the **closed-list, proportionally representative form** that allows mere parties, including smaller ones, to arbitrarily appoint to and remove from the halls of power the party-affiliated legislators, cabinet officials, and chief executives;
- 6) The **combating of the anti-meritocratic personal inheritances of both poverty by children and ruling-class wealth**, with the latter entailing the **abolition of all remaining nobilities** and the application of all funds derived from **public, anti-inheritance appropriations of not some but all the relevant productive or other non-possessive properties** (that would otherwise be immediately inherited through legal will or through gifting and other loopholes) towards exclusively public purposes;
- 7)
- 8) Socio-income democracy through **direct proposals and rejections, at the national level and above, regarding all formal and effective tax rates on all types of income** – such as ordinary employment income, self-employment and managerial income, individual property income such as interest, both individual and corporate business income, both individual and corporate dividend income, and both individual and corporate capital gains – **annual plebiscites with the right to create or raise upper tax rates on a steeply graduated basis**, including changes to alternative minimum tax rates, transfer pricing tax rates, and gross-ups or multipliers for income outside of ordinary employment;
- 9) The **application of not some but all economic rent of land towards exclusively public purposes** – such as the **abolition of all indirect and other class-regressive taxation** – by first means of land value "taxation";
- 10)
- 11) **Direct guarantees of a real livelihood to all workers**, including unemployment and work incapacitation provisions – all based on a participatory-democratic normal workweek, all beyond bare

Comment [DS22]: "Instead of deciding once in three or six years which member of the ruling class was to misrepresent the people in Parliament, universal suffrage was to serve the people, constituted in Communes [...]" (Marx, *The Civil War in France*)

Comment [DS23]: "Universal suffrage which will thus be transformed from the instrument of deception that it has been until now into an instrument of emancipation [...]" (Marx and Guesde, *Program of the French Workers Party*)

Comment [DS24]: "So long as socialist production is not kept consciously in view as its object, so long as the efforts of the militant proletariat do not extend beyond the framework of the existing method of production, the class-struggle seems to move forever in a circle." (Kautsky, *Das Erfurter Programm*)

Comment [DS25]: "Social Democracy fights for all demands which help it approach this goal." (Engels, *Critique of the Erfurt Program*)

Comment [DS26]: "They are possible, despite all the difficulties and disadvantages which are alleged against them by economists, because these very difficulties and disadvantages will compel the proletariat to go further and further until private property has been completely abolished, in order not to lose again what it has already won." (Engels, *The Communists and Karl Heinzen*)

Comment [DS27]: "Labor is prior to and independent of capital. Capital is only the fruit of labor, and could never have existed if labor had not first existed. Labor is the superior of capital, and deserves much the higher consideration." (Lincoln, 1861 State of the Union Address)

Comment [DS28]: "For its part, the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party is firmly convinced that the complete, consistent, and lasting implementation of the indicated political and social changes can be achieved only by overthrowing the autocracy and convoking a Constituent Assembly, freely elected by the whole people." (Lenin, *Draft Programme of the RSDLP*)

subsistence minimums, and all before any indirect considerations like public health insurance – and including the **universalization of annual, non-deflationary adjustments for all non-executive remunerations, pensions, and insurance benefits to at least match rising costs of living** (not notorious government underestimations due to faulty measures like chain weighting, or even underhanded selections of the lower of core inflation and general inflation);

- 12) The **institution of income-based or preferably class-based affirmative action**, especially in the sphere of education;
- 13) The **mandatory private- and public-sector recognition of professional education, other higher education, and related work experience “from abroad,”** along with the transnational standardization of such education and the institution of **other measures to counter the underemployment of educated immigrants;**
- 14) The **abolition of all copyright, patent, and other intellectual property laws, as well as of all restrictions on the non-commodity economy** of peer-to-peer sharing, open-source programming, and the like;
- 15) The genuine end of “free markets” – including in unemployment resulting from workplace closures, mass sackings, and mass layoffs – by first means of non-selective encouragement of, and unconditional economic assistance (both technical and financial) for, **pre-cooperative worker buyouts of existing enterprises and enterprise operations.**
- 16) Full independence of the mass media from concentrated private ownership and control by first means of **workplace democracy over mandated balance of content** in news and media production, **heavy appropriation of economic rent in the broadcast spectrum,** unconditional economic assistance (both technical and financial) for **independent mass media cooperative startups – especially at more local levels, for purposes of media decentralization – and anti-inheritance transformation of all the relevant mass media properties under private ownership into cooperative property.**

Once more, the consistent, preferably simultaneous, obviously complete, and especially lasting implementation of these demands – for the sake of not losing or losing again what has already been won – can only be achieved by transnational class struggle.

Miscellaneous Questions

Minimum Demands for Classical Economic Rent and National-Democratization

[Note: The first, theoretical part of this section unabashedly borrows from Engels' *The Principles of Communism* and uses a phrase from *The General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money* by John Maynard Keynes.]

Of course, at the national or multinational level, democracy in general and participatory democracy in particular would be wholly valueless to manual, clerical, and mainly “middle-income” professional workers if not used immediately, in a class-strugglist manner, for that “somewhat comprehensive socialization of investment” known otherwise as economic national-democratization – that is, “anti-capitalist” nationalization reforms and multinational equivalents directed democratically against private ownership and elite control of classical economic rent and of the underlying significant productive and other non-possessive property, preferably with minimum compensation to affected non-workers based on proven need and on the insolvency-period market values of relevant enterprises, thereby further ensuring the livelihood of the working class. The specifically legislative (not regulatory) demands for these are, to begin with:

- 1) The permanent suppression of all private banks and their elite bankers by a **national-democratized financial monopoly** – at purchase prices based especially on the market values of insolvent yet publicly underwritten banks – along with the extension of that monopoly into the general provision of commercial and consumer credit, as well as the full application of “**equity not usury**” towards such activity;
- 2)
- 3) The takeover of the **health-industrial complex and all assets of workers' insurance and private pension funds into permanent public ownership**, with levies against corporate assets for any fund deficits, and with **decisive worker participation in their administration;** and
- 4) The enactment of **confiscatory, despotic measures against all capital flight of wealth**, whether such wealth belongs to economic rebels on the domestic front or to foreign profiteers.

Comment [DS29]: “Democracy would be wholly valueless to the proletariat if it were not immediately used as a means for putting through measures directed against private property and ensuring the livelihood of the proletariat.”
(Engels, *The Principles of Communism*)

APPENDIX B: THE SOCIAL-ABOLITIONIST AND SOCIAL-PROLETOCRATIC PROGRAMMATIC DISCLOSURE-CRITIQUE

“The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degree, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralise all instruments of production in the hands of the State, i.e., of the proletariat organised as the ruling class; and to increase the total productive forces as rapidly as possible. Of course, in the beginning, this cannot be effected except by means of despotic inroads on the rights of property, and on the conditions of bourgeois production; by means of measures, therefore, which appear economically insufficient and untenable, but which, in the course of the movement, outstrip themselves, necessitate further inroads upon the old social order, and are unavoidable as a means of entirely revolutionising the mode of production.”
(Karl Marx and Frederick Engels)

These words in the Communist Manifesto immediately precede the ten-point program, which mentions inheritance and progressive income taxation, free education for all, and both centralization and monopolization of credit through the state, among other points. At the present time, much hysterical fuss is being made in the various bourgeois-capitalist media outlets (including business newspapers) about that last point being part of the corporate welfare measures aimed at the financial services industry, in spite of their common ignorance of the programmatic method employed in the words above and of **self-critical words written in 1872:**

*Here and there, some detail might be improved. The practical application of the principles will depend, as the Manifesto itself states, everywhere and at all times, on the historical conditions for the time being existing, and, for that reason, **no special stress is laid on the revolutionary measures proposed at the end of Section II.** That passage would, in many respects, be very differently worded today. In view of the gigantic strides of Modern Industry since 1848, and of the accompanying improved and extended organization of the working class, in view of the practical experience gained, first in the February Revolution, and then, still more, in the Paris Commune, where the proletariat for the first time held political power for two whole months, **this programme has in some details been antiquated.***

Considering the aforementioned criticisms of Trotsky's specific “transitional” approach and its spontaneist “directional” modifications by various “anti-capitalist” social movements, a return of sorts to the more self-critical transitional method of Marx and Engels themselves is necessary, **especially for those who emphasize the full abolition of both wage slavery and money-capital.** This original, groundbreaking transitional method has the benefit of addressing both immediate transitional measures that truly could not be carried out under any period of bourgeois capitalism (in spite of Trotsky's programmatic pretensions) and measures to be enacted later on during the protracted transitional period from bourgeois capitalism to proper “communism” – **in spite of the intentionally misleading bourgeois-capitalist insistence in academia on the absence of even a sketchy blueprint (which is so “utopian”)** of the aforementioned transitional period in Marx's writings.

The Basics of Social-Abolitionism and Social Proletocracy Revisited

In my earlier work on the “profoundly true and important” (to use Lenin's words) Marx-Engels-Kautsky merger formula as defined best by the Lost Bolshevik-Pope and true founder of “Marxism” (quoted at the beginning of Chapter 4), I defined **proletocracy (a contraction of proletarian democracy and identical with the classical, revolutionary social democracy before succumbing to cross-class coalitionist “compromise”)** and the **synonymous ergatocracy** as a social system that encompasses the following:

- 1) The establishment of ever-increasingly participatory democracy, as discussed more fully (as demarchy) in Chapter 5;
- 2) The revolutionary (as opposed to reformist) extension of this “participatory democracy” to socioeconomic affairs (that is, the implementation of neither state-capitalist ownership nor state-capitalist control, but rather the implementation of societal ownership and societal control); and
- 3) The revolutionary worker-class-strugglist emphasis of the two features above (that is, at the expense of other classes, such as the bourgeoisie).

That is one side of the specific incarnation of the merger formula addressed in my earlier work. On the other side, however, is something far more socially revolutionary than even the aforementioned revolutionary social democracy of the Lost Bolshevik-Pope and true founder of "Marxism," his most well-known disciple, and even the revolutionary martyr Rosa Luxemburg (whom that disciple commended in 1922 for declaring German social democracy a "stinking corpse" in 1914): social-abolitionism.

Where does "communism" fit into all of this? As quoted in my earlier work, an aging Frederick Engels had this to say about "communism":

I do not consider the term "communism" suitable for general use today; rather it should be reserved for cases in which a more exact description is required and even then it would call for an explanatory note having virtually fallen out of use for the past thirty years.

Notwithstanding the subsequent hijacking of that term by monetary social-statists – bureaucratic opportunists, sectoral-chauvinist "workerists," sectarians, and even class-conciliationist reformists – Engels was correct about the imprecision of "communism" as a term.

Now, consider the historic abolitionism directed against "slavery" (chattel slavery, to be more precise). What succeeded "slavery" was wage slavery, a continuation of surplus labour above socially necessary labour – the strictest definition of "social labour." Consider this modern rendition of a statement by Engels in *The Principles of Communism*:

*The slave is sold once and for all; **the proletariat must sell himself [hourly, monthly, yearly, or per temporary contract].** The individual slave, property of one master, is assured an existence, however miserable it may be, because of the master's interest.*

The individual proletariat, property as it were of the entire bourgeois class, which buys his labour only when someone has need of it, has no secure existence. This existence is assured only to the class as a whole.

The slave is outside competition; the proletariat is in it [through the existence of reserve armies of labour, both unemployed and underemployed].

The slave counts as a thing, not as a member of society. Thus, the slave can have a better existence than the proletariat, while the proletariat belongs to a higher stage of social development and, himself, stands on a higher social level than the slave.

The slave frees himself when, of all the relations of private property, he abolishes only the relation of slavery and thereby becomes a proletariat; the proletariat can free himself only by abolishing private property in general.

Less than twenty years later, Marx went beyond the legal formality of property relations in the means of production to address the monetary wage labour system itself:

*[Workers] ought to understand that, with all the miseries it imposes upon them, the present system simultaneously engenders the material conditions and the social forms necessary for an economical reconstruction of society. Instead of the conservative motto, "A fair day's wage for a fair day's work!" they ought to inscribe on their banner the revolutionary watchword, "**Abolition of the wages system!**"*

In Volume II of *Das Kapital* (which along with Volume III makes for a more interesting read than the presently hyped Volume I), while analyzing "the reproduction and circulation of the aggregate social capital," **Marx suggested a very practical solution for this seemingly utopian call to reconcile the expansion of socially necessary labour with the abolition of surplus labour:**

*In the case of socialised production the money-capital is eliminated. **Society distributes labour-power and means of production to the different branches of production.** The producers may, for all it matters, receive paper vouchers entitling them to withdraw from the social supplies of consumer goods a quantity corresponding to their labour-time. **These vouchers are not money. They do not circulate.***

*We see that inasmuch as the need for money-capital originates in the length of the working period, it is conditioned by two things: First, that **money in general is the form in which every individual capital***

(apart from credit) must make its appearance in order to transform itself into productive capital; this follows from the nature of capitalist production and commodity-production in general.

[Note: In this fuller-than-full realization of societal control over the economy – through detailed control over its collective labour-time, as opposed to control through monetary mechanisms – “producers” refers to both actual producers and those benefitting from the “common funds” mentioned in the *Critique of the Gotha Programme* and the *Anti-Duhring*, such as retirees and the disabled. As for this “sketchy blueprint,” it was elaborated upon in 1930 by the left-communist Group of International Communists of Holland in their woefully underrated work *Fundamental Principles of Communist Production and Distribution*, which illustrated how “the proletarian revolution must summon forth the power to implement in society the system of Average Social Reproduction Time.”]

To be sure, there are problems with 19th-century or Catalonian paper vouchers as labour credit for the purposes of personal consumption, per se. Even tickets, which Marx compared these vouchers to, can be circulated “under the table” (the modern equivalent of these tickets would be retail gift cards) – not least of which in order to hire wage labour. These tickets can even be counterfeited! However, the development of information technology, of plastic card technology in general (debit, credit, gift, etc.) and of the “food stamp” program in the United States (especially with the advent of electronic benefit transfers) has made possible the attribution of labour-time to specific individuals.

In my earlier work, I gave the face of Lenin to the monetary social-statism of revolutionary social democracy. However, of all the revolutionaries of his day, **it was ironically Lenin who came closest to breaking away from monetary social-statism, when he quoted the relevant sections of the *Critique of the Gotha Programme* in his work *The State and Revolution*.** Monetary social-statism was subscribed to by the likes of Trotsky, Luxemburg, and even many left-communist elements back in the day, all due to their common agreement with what the true founder of “Marxism” said much earlier, in *The Social Revolution*:

*I speak here of the wages of labor. What, it will be said, will there be wages in the new society? Shall we not have abolished wage labor and money? How then can one speak of the wages of labor? These objections would be sound if the social revolution proposed to immediately abolish money. I maintain that this would be impossible. Money is the simplest means known up to the present time which makes it possible in as complicated a mechanism as that of the modern productive process, with its tremendous far-reaching division of labor, to secure the circulation of products and their distribution to the individual members of society. It is the means which makes it possible for each one to satisfy his necessities according to his individual inclination (to be sure within the bounds of his economic power). **As a means to such circulation money will be found indispensable until something better is discovered.** To be sure many of its functions, especially that of the measure of value, will disappear, at least in internal commerce.*

The aforementioned abolition of both wage slavery and money-capital, not just of the legal formality of non-possessive property “rights” (to borrow from contemporary anarchism’s abbreviation for private property in the means of production) and the related debt slavery, and not just of economic anarchy in the consumer goods and services market, forms the core of social-abolitionism.

However, social-abolitionism does not stop there or even at the abolition of both classes and the repressive instruments for the rule of minority classes, known collectively as the state. There are other “socially revolutionary transformations aimed at abolishing non-class oppression and alienation” (Appendix A). Even the aforementioned emancipation of labour is only partial.

Social Abolitionism and the Division of Labour

Were it not its direct association with the anti-Semite Eugen Duhring and his combination of bourgeois egalitarianism and excessive decentralization, and were it not for potential association with ever-rich and fashionable socialites, the word “socialitarianism” could have been used in addition to “social-abolitionism,” further marking a break with the overly broad term “socialism.”

As mentioned above, societal control over the economy has to be total, even going into direct and detailed control over collective labour-time by getting past monetary mechanisms. One of the reasons behind the “socialitarian” suggestion is that the “total” emancipation of labour, without going into the bourgeoisie’s usual hysteria over its crafted term “totalitarianism,” necessarily addresses the division of labour. In fact, there two divisions of labour and not one.

The Social Abolition of Non-Class Oppression and Alienation

The "socialitarian" suggestion expresses its "total" character by going beyond just the emancipation of labour and dealing with the social abolition of non-class oppression and alienation.

Transformation Critique

Like what the typical Trotskyist "transitional" critique would say, the list of transformative demands may not be as exhaustive as it could be, and some of them look like they could somehow fit into the Basic Principles. On the other hand, it should be noted once more than "no special stress is laid on the [transformative] measures."

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