

# RU PARTICIPATING

MEMBERS | NETWORK PROJECTS | SOLIDARITY

## From the Outreach & Events Team

- Conferences:**  
 We re-added the Utopian Studies conference to our agenda as they finally got back to us with a positive reply. We informed the volunteer speakers about this development and are awaiting feedback.
- Joint Meeting (Z, PEP and RU):**  
 We are preparing for the next meeting with Z and the Participatory Economics Project. Which is scheduled for May 4th. Fintan will coordinate delegates from all three organizations.
- Global Green New Deal Letter:**  
 We discussed the letter that is being drafted calling for an International Coalition for a Global Green New Deal. The first draft should be completed by next week and will be circulated to all RU members for feedback.
- Content Generation Proposal:**  
 Continuing the work and coordination on Lonnie's content generation proposal. Lonnie is exploring the possibility of putting together a team for this and will be presenting again at future meetings for further feedback.
- Newsletter proliferation**  
 We are thinking about spreading the newsletter outside of RU.

## Živel prvi maj!

### topaz

If you are paying attention, too bad! It's a free newsletter. However you may have noticed that there is a name change. The new name RU Participating seems obvious in retrospect, yet there is a story.

During the newsletter team gathering, Mark, one of the founders of Real Utopia brought the idea of a name change to the table. After a moment or two of reflection, the name RU Participating was thrown in the hat. Following discussion, the team agreed that RU Participating was a good change, in part, because the abbreviation of Real Utopia, RU, helped to convey the real world implications of the self and the social. Utopia, of course conveying the social, and the phonetics of the letters RU able to be heard as 'are you,' reflecting the self.

During the business meeting of Real Utopia, where the vote to change the name of the newsletter to RU Participating was passed, the question was asked, about the new title, with a question mark? Because not using punctuation provides a broader sense of how RU Participating can be pronounced, the general consensus was to not utilize 'proper grammar,' or rather, to use poetic license. See? Poetry is everywhere!

Amusingly, someone pointed out that using punctuation created a sense of judgement in the question, yet the stance against the status quo is a type of judgement. A judgement against elitist practices on housing, healthcare, education, environment and definitely distribution of resources. Public resources, political responses, and pedantic replies, again and again, words are used to create connections, offering further elucidation of ideas and promoting diversity.

In May, RU Participating offers insights regarding International Worker's Day, as well as how the news, the press, and David Rovics one of 'our own' traveling troubadours, continue to affect what liberty means both in politics and in reality. The multiple levels of society which have reached critical stages is the topic of Mark Evans and Bridget Meehan's article 'The Labour Movement Crisis, the Climate Crisis, and the Green New Deal.' Including a few panels from Sean Michael Wilson, members press suggestions and a recipe for sugar-free-sugar cookies written in invisible ink, perhaps May's RU Participating lives up to the Slovenian slogan shared by Urska - Živel prvi maj! (Long live first of May!)



## From the Membership Team

### • **Weekly Welcome Meetings and Informative sessions**

We are hosting weekly Welcome meetings for new members or current members wanting a refresher on goings on. We are also hosting individually scheduled info sessions for prospective members. If you have a friend you would like to introduce to RU, let us know and we will set up a session with them.

### • **1 on 1 meetings:**

Just to remind, we are facilitating random one on one meetings between members in order for us to get to know each other better.

We are entering the fourth round of meetings and there is always a perfect time to get on board and get to meet our other members, discuss activism, politics, generally just have a nice chat or make international connections.

### • **Updated onboarding process for RU:**

Membership team has solicited and received feedback on the joining process and has taken steps to improve it. This means that there will be improvements in the automated welcome message and there will be more anonymity options for new members who fear persecution.

### • **Local chapter initiated**

Since starting to encourage members to connect locally there has been activation of a local chapter in Maribor, Slovenia where 3 members reside close together. They will begin with activities shortly and we can expect first reports when things get moving.

## The Labour Movement Crisis, the Climate Crisis, and the Green New Deal

**Mark Evans and Bridget Meehan**

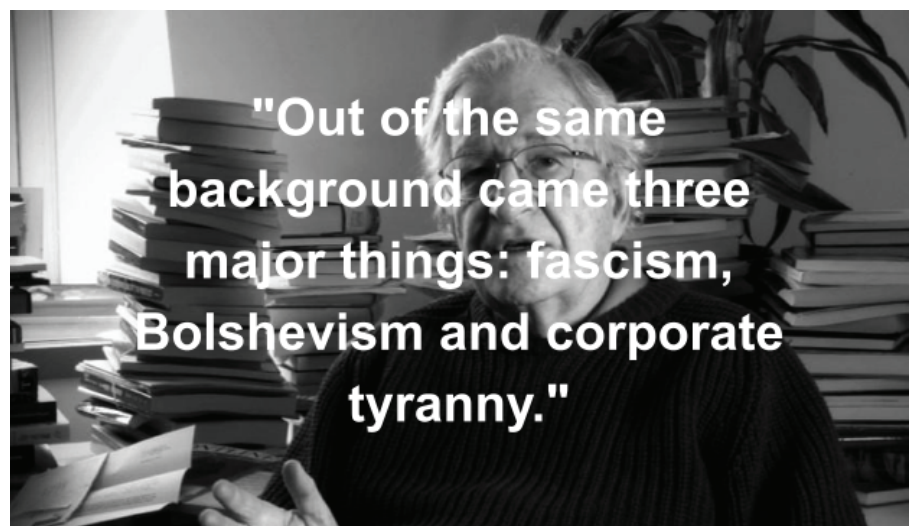
Today, May Day - otherwise known as International Workers' Day - is a good time to consider the question: *What is the future of organised labour?* This was the subject of a 2006 book, edited by Craig Phelan. The book has an interesting foreword by trade unionist, Dan Gallin. In it Gallin makes a number of important points. They include:

1. The labour movement is in crisis.
2. This crisis is usually attributed to the effects of neoliberal globalisation.
3. There is some truth to point 2 but these are only "partial truths and partial insights".
4. The deeper truth is that the crisis predates the onset of neoliberal globalisation and is the result of a "larger" and "broader" crisis within the labour movement.

Gallin goes on to argue that the root cause of the crisis within organised labour is, in fact, a crisis of "identity and orientation". As Gallin points out:

*"The need of the hour is a serious challenge to global transnational capital and to the world order it has fashioned, but such a challenge cannot be mounted unless the movement recovers a common identity based on an alternative vision of society."*

What is this alternative? As Gallin points out, "historically, this alternative has been socialism". As he also points out, however, "Socialism is also undergoing a crisis, and that is a crisis of the meaning of socialism". In response to this crisis Gallin asserts the need for a "common vision":



## From the Education & Skills Team

- **Educational events:**

Education and Skills team organized a 2nd session with Peter Bohmer participatory socialism and racial justice, with a focus on refugees and fascism.

- **Real Utopia 2 book:**

Extending the deadline for submissions and shortly publishing the 2nd call for contributions. Thinking of also inviting people outside RU.

- **Future events:**

Preparing a 3rd presentation and discussion on the topic of participatory socialism and racial justice with Peter Bohmer.



May first by Yakov Guminer, 1923  
Exhibited in Museum of Modern Art,  
New York

*“Clearly, we need to re-define socialism so it again becomes recognisable as the politics which are naturally ours, those of the historical labour movement - recognisable and acceptable even by those who have rejected, for good reason, the damaged goods sold under that label.”*

However, Gallin warns that we need to rebuild based on a “shared identity” and “shared values”. Organising around the “lowest common denominator” will not work. As he states, “that is what we have today and this movement, as it is, can only lose”. What we need, Gallin argues, is an “alternative explanation of the world, alternative goals for society and a program on how to get there that all can subscribe to”.

He continues:

*“A new international labour movement, armed with a sense of a broader social mission, can become the core of a global alliance including all other social movements that share the same agenda. Such a movement can change the world. It can again be the liberation movement of humanity it set out to be one hundred and fifty years ago.”*

But what might this social mission and shared agenda be? Here we would like to suggest that the Green New Deal fits the bill perfectly. The Green New Deal is typically understood to be a proposed solution to the climate crisis. Some may wonder, therefore, how the Green New Deal relates to the crisis of organised labour. The remainder of this article will attempt to demonstrate that these two crises and the Green New Deal are logically and intimately linked. That logic and intimacy goes something like this:

- The Green New Deal is the solution to the climate crisis.
- However, to make the Green New Deal a powerful international campaign, and simultaneously create a just transition, we need to revitalise organised labour.
- To revitalise organised labour we need, as already argued above, a new social mission.
- The Green New Deal is that new mission.

According to economist Ann Pettifor, the idea for the Green New Deal can be traced back to 2007 when journalist Thomas L. Friedman wrote an article for the New York Times titled “A Warning from the Garden”. Later that same year British based ex-GreenPeace campaigner, Colin Hines, assembled a group of like minded contacts to formulate a proposal for a Green New Deal. According to Pettifor, that proposal, which was published in 2008, and echoed Friedman’s earlier article, called for “joined up policies to solve the triple crunch of the credit crisis, climate change and high oil prices”. As the authors put it:

“These three overlapping events threaten to develop into a perfect

## From the Site Team

- **Internal skill building**

We made our general content updates and did some Notion training as well as discussions for processes for adding content to the website in order to streamline the process.

We're trialling notion and have spaces set up to store documents, etc.; we have a task database and we've organised our agenda to help us organise the team's work

We've copied our goals into notion and we'll be reviewing these on a weekly basis to monitor our progress

- **Website improvements**

We're continuing to refine the website and have identified elements of the site that still need some work

- **Privacy policy**

We've created a privacy policy that needs to be added to the site

## Revolution Z podcast



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

storm, the likes of which has not been seen since the Great Depression. To help prevent this from happening we are proposing a Green New Deal”.

From the very start, then, the Green New Deal was never only about addressing the climate crisis. Rather, it has always been about tackling the existential threat caused by man-made environmental change whilst also dealing with other crucial social issues, all of which have been exacerbated by the combined forces of austerity politics and neoliberal economic globalisation. As Pettifor puts it:

*“The Green New Deal demands major system change: both economic and ecological system change. It demands structural (government and inter-governmental) changes, not just behavioural, community or technological changes, in our approach to the financialised, globalised economy and ecosystem”.*

Clearly, given the urgency of the current situation, there is a dire need for an historically unprecedented popular movement. Such a movement will need to be based on an international campaign that has both a great slogan and well thought out policies to back it up. It is precisely this depth and broadness of the Green New Deal, as a campaign package, that gives rise to the potential for such a movement. Here is Pettifor again:

*“The Green New Deal can mobilise the efforts of millions of people standing up to the threat of earth system breakdown, financial sector failure and globalised economic inequality and insecurity. Beneath its canopy we hope to unite and inspire vast numbers of activists across the world and in turn to trigger state action to subordinate finance to the interests of society and the ecosystem - thereby ensuring a liveable planet for people alive today and for future generations.”*

In order to successfully build such a movement, however, it will be necessary to undo any confusion over the perceived contradiction between tackling the climate crisis, on the one hand, and improving general living standards and addressing high unemployment and income inequalities, on the other. In there book on the Global Green New Deal, Noam Chomsky and Robert Pollin make this point well:

*“A crucial factor in advancing this movement, in the developing countries and elsewhere, will be to demonstrate unambiguously how climate stabilization is fully consistent with expanding decent work opportunities, raising mass living standards, and fighting poverty in all regions of the world. This needs to be recognized as the core proposition under-girding the global Green New Deal. Advancing a viable global Green New Deal should therefore be understood as the means by which “optimism of the will” comes alive in defining the political economy of saving the planet.”*

As we can see from the quotes that run through this article, the aspirations of the Green New Deal, as expressed by Pettifor, Chomsky and Pollin are entirely compatible with those expressed by Gallin. In that sense, the Green New Deal is the “common vision” that Gallin is looking for and organised labour needs in order to revitalise. It could, however, be argued that the Green New Deal is not socialism and therefore does not actually meet Gallin’s criteria.

If by socialism we mean a classless economy/society then, strictly speaking, it is true that the Green New Deal is not socialism and the above criticism is valid. There are, however, different ways of looking at this. First of all we need to understand that there is no single thing that is socialism. As one socialist scholar - Bernard Crick - put it, “there are many varieties of socialism.” For example, there are “variations on Marx’s theme”, the “decentralist, syndicalist and cooperative tradition of socialism that stem from Proudhon and Robert Owen”. There are also the “managerial or mixed economy versions of socialism which emerged from both German revisionists and the British Fabians”. Then there are the “anarchist and communitarian” forms of socialism.

From this broader definition of what can constitute socialism, the Green New Deal may legitimately be considered socialist - perhaps as an example of the managerial or mixed economy versions of socialism - and therefore meet Gallin’s criteria for a common vision for a shared social mission. For those who don’t find this line of reasoning convincing, however, a couple of final points from Chomsky, with reference to the Green New Deal and socialism, are worth serious consideration:

*“A good argument can be made that inherent features of capitalism lead inexorably to ruin of the environment, and that ending capitalism must be a high priority of the environmental movement. There’s one fundamental problem with this argument: time scale. Dismantling capitalism is impossible within the time frame necessary for taking urgent action, which requires a major national - indeed international - mobilization if severe crisis is to be averted.”*



*“Furthermore, the whole discussion is misleading. The two efforts - averting environmental disaster, dismantling capitalism in favour of a more free and just and democratic society - should and can proceed in parallel. And can proceed quite far with mass popular organization.”*

In short, we need all trade unionists, world-wide, to come together in solidarity around the Green New Deal as a basis for the revitalisation of international organised labour in order to address the climate crisis and construct an alternative to austerity politics and neoliberal economic globalisation. If organised labour has a future - if any of us have a future - then the Green New Deal is it.

### Notes:

- All Gallin quotes are from: Craig Phelan (Ed) The Future of Organised Labour: Global Perspectives. (2006)
- All Ann Pettifor quotes are from: The Case for the Green New Deal. (2020)
- All Noam Chomsky and Robert Pollin quotes are from: Climate Crisis and the Global Green New Deal. (2020)
- All Bernard Crick quotes are from: Socialism. (1987)

### Authors Info:

Mark Evans is a healthcare worker and trade unionist who lives and works in Birmingham (UK).

Bridget Meehan is a writer and activist based in Ireland who is co-founder of the Northern Mutual bank campaign and member of Collaboration for Change, a grassroots activists’ network promoting collective activism.

They are both members of Real Utopia: Foundation for a Participatory Society.

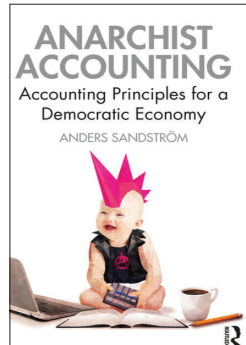
# Member's Picks

## Books

Anarchist Accounting, Routledge, 2020

Anders Sandström

This book is about accounting in an alternative libertarian socialist economic system. It explores what information and transactions we need to enable democratic and effective financial decisions by those affected by the decisions. Based on the economic model, participatory economics, the author proposes a set of accounting principles for an economy comprised of common ownership of productive resources, worker and consumer councils, and democratic planning, promoting the model's core values.



Eurocentrism, Monthly Review Press, 1989

Samir Amin

Since its first publication more than twenty years ago, Eurocentrism has become a classic of radical thought. Written by one of the world's foremost political economists, this original and provocative essay takes on one of the great "ideological deformations" of our time: Eurocentrism. Rejecting the dominant Eurocentric view of world history, which narrowly and incorrectly posits a progression from the Greek and Roman classical world to Christian feudalism and the European capitalist system, Amin presents a sweeping reinterpretation that emphasizes the crucial historical role played by the Arab Islamic world.

Towards a Libertarian Socialism: Reflections on the British Labour Party and European Working-Class Movements

G.D.H Cole, Edited by David Goodway.

Silicon Values: The Future of Free Speech Under Surveillance Capitalism

Jillian C. York

## Music

The Worst Excuses,

Border Patrol

Try not to take the lord's name in vain, but don't ever be a goddamn scab

Lonnie Ray Atkinson

## Petition

#FreeAssange: sign this petition opposing Julian Assange's extradition to the United States!

Reporters Without Borders (RSF) urges #FreeAssange supporters around the world to mobilise during this crucial four-week period by signing this petition calling on the Home Secretary to refuse the extradition request. On 20 April, the Westminster Magistrates' Court signed an order confirming the alarming next step in the more than decade-long case against Wikileaks publisher Julian Assange. Following more than two years of extradition proceedings in UK courts, Assange's fate has once again become a political decision for the Home Secretary – the very office that made the political decision to green-light the US extradition request in 2019.



## Documentary

The Seasons in Quincy: Four Portraits of John Berger,

The four essay films which comprise 'The Seasons in Quincy' each take different aspects of British writer and thinker John Berger's life in the Haute-Savoie, and combine ideas and motifs from Berger's own work with the atmosphere of his mountain home.

The Coconut Revolution, 2001

This is the modern-day story of a native peoples' remarkable victory over Western Colonial power. A Pacific island rose up in arms against giant mining corporation Rio Tinto Zinc (RTZ) - and won despite a military occupation and blockade.

The Take, 2004

It tells the story of workers in Buenos Aires, Argentina who reclaim control of a closed Forja auto plant where they once worked and turn it into a worker cooperative.

Women Hold Up the Sky, 2019

Follow the powerful stories of African women and their fight for justice against dirty energy and development projects that destroy their lands, lives and communities.

## Interviews

After the Oligarchy: Participatory Economics -Optimal Plan, Worker Control, Consumers with prof. Robin Hahnel

Hahnel talks to After the Oligarchy about an optimal/efficient plan in Parecon, accounting in socialism, enterprise incentives, worker control, and consumer satisfaction.

A conversation with the 2022 St. Louis Literary Award recipient Arundhati Roy

Arundhati Roy speaks about the violence of Hindu nationalism and horrible violence towards Muslims in India, the relations between race, caste and imperialism and the importance of resistance.

## Press, Poets, Precedence

topaz - poeticphonetics.com

On April 23rd in Brussels, Real Utopia participant David Rovics was a performer and an emcee for a rally to free Julian Assange. Among the speakers were Stella Assange, Jeremy Corbyn and Deepa Driver. Because I had recently spoken with David about his previous trip to the EU, some parallels of being a journalist and a musician struck a chord. David's comments on Iceland were similar to what an impartial observer would notice, that in the service positions there, most of the employees were eastern Europeans. In a poem, his words are interesting, in print, he would be a journalist.

As a good lyricist knows, the backdrop of wind and volcanoes in Iceland, the geographical beauty David noticed, become important in creating an emotional backdrop for the story or a song. While factual songs like 'Sunday, Bloody Sunday,' and 'The Star Spangled Banner,' have literally become anthems, apparently to take facts and report them as facts, rather than in verse is criminal. As David pointed out, in places such as Turkey and Russia, the memory of oppression in a cultural region cannot simply be erased, and sooth sayers, truth sayers and newspapers stand against the patriarchal hegemony of war, representing the emotional truth of the people. Facts create an opportunity for change, and therefore some facts will naturally oppose a military or political solution.

In David's opinion, the current social response to the war, honoring Ukrainian composers and playing the Ukrainian national anthem during events is an unfortunate answer to President Zelensky's call to not be silent. The cathartic release for the audience allows for politicians to continue as is, with no change to the agenda, which unfortunately, is to feed the war in the name of peace.

While today's musicians face a funnel of algorithms for financial stability through businesses like Spotify, according to David, like Julian Assange, the avant garde news reporters face legal limitations in pursuit of linguistic liberty. How would truth, for instance, affect International Workers' Day? How do events of the past affect us today? The facts are definitely filtered through information channels.

Ask yourself, agenda or Assange? Corporations or chords? As the sixties' singer Donovan crooned, in the



information age, the truth is worth its weight in saffron.

The Haymarket riots, which began on May 1st 1886, were protests to establish as law an eight hour work day, and unfortunately resulted in police and protester deaths. The fact that Labor Day in the U.S. is celebrated in September, separating U.S. workers from celebrating with workers in the rest of the world is interesting. The truth as to why is both a record of past events, and a political choice.

Chicks on Speed, another of the acts which performed at the rally, sang over the Jefferson Airplane song 'White Rabbit.' That fact, to use a phrase from the Haldane Society of Socialist Lawyers' Deepa Driver demonstrates the 'phenomenal reach' that providers of emotions and truth have throughout time, and how factual reporting is a necessary antidote to ignorance and corporate hegemony.

The previous day, somewhere in the heart of the beast, Congresswoman Marjorie Green provided further context into the importance of factual continuity.

The lawyer attempting to disqualify her from re-election due to her participation in the events of January 6th 2021, recognized one of her statements. He asked her if she stole the lines from the film Independence Day. At least one other reporter knew the most probable source of her statement 'aren't the people who will go quietly into the night,' is from, arguably, the most famous villanelle poem in English.

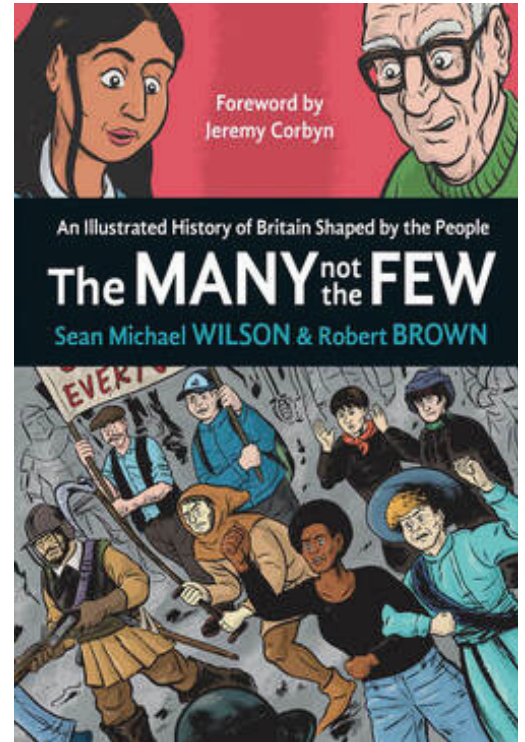
Recognizing how truth affects society, how lyrical philosophers such as David Rovics represent the voice of the people, and how to face political machinations has been eloquently stated by Dylan Thomas. 'Do not go gentle into that good night. Rage, rage against the dying of the light.'

# The many not the few

Sean Michael Wilson and Robert Brown

I thought I should show some pages from my various comic books that are about political issues. I have done several of these, including PARECOMIC with Michael Albert, and featuring Noam Chomsky, which is specifically about participatory economics. The images below are from THE MANY NOT THE FEW which myself and Robert Brown did with New Internationalists and the GFTU (General Federation of Trade Unions). It has a foreword by Jeremy Corbyn, the then leader of the Labour Party, of course, and he launched the book with a lovely speech in May 2019.

“With a mix of serious research and family jokes old union rep, Joe, and his granddaughter, Arushi, go into the complicated history, the ideological battles, the class conflict, a consideration of what unions are for, and what the future of unions may be. Starting way back with the 14th-century Peasants’ Revolt, taking in the Levellers and the Luddites, the expansion of the unions in the 19th century, the height of their power in the ‘70s, the great conflicts and decline of the ‘80s, and considering the future positive role for unions.”



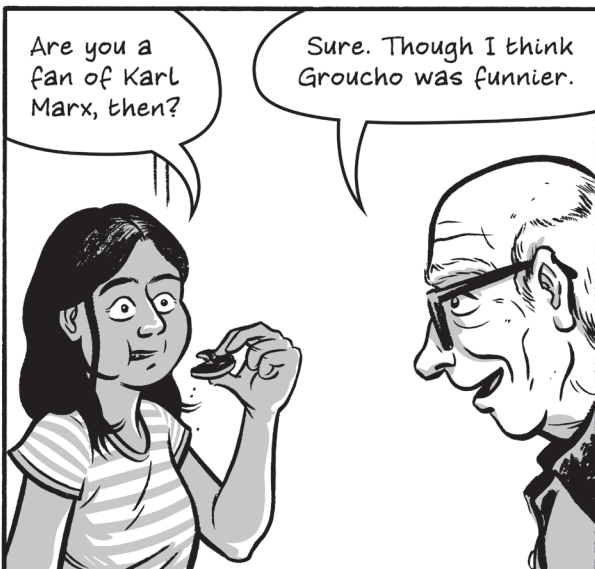
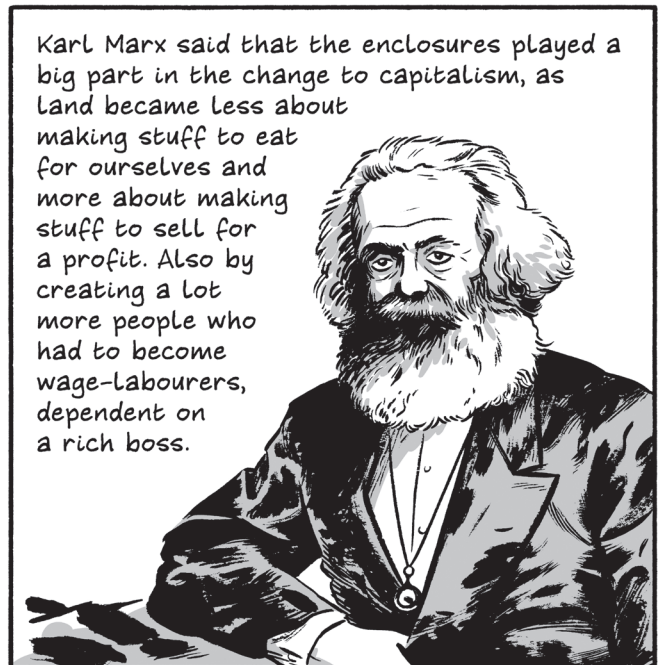
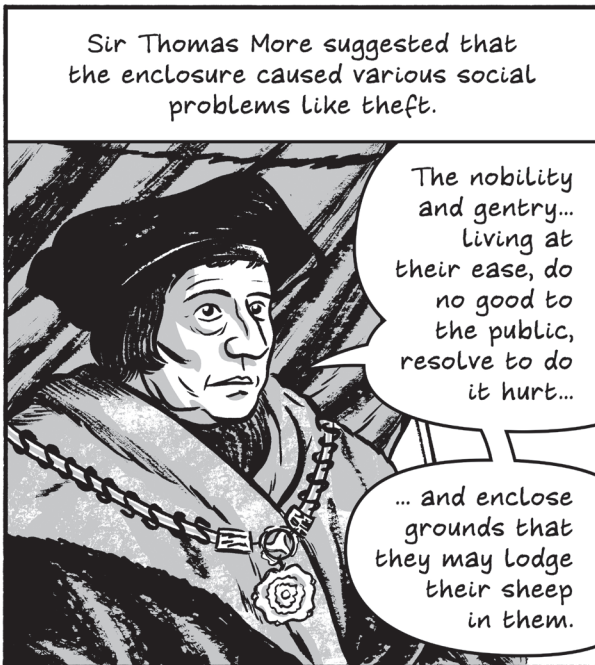
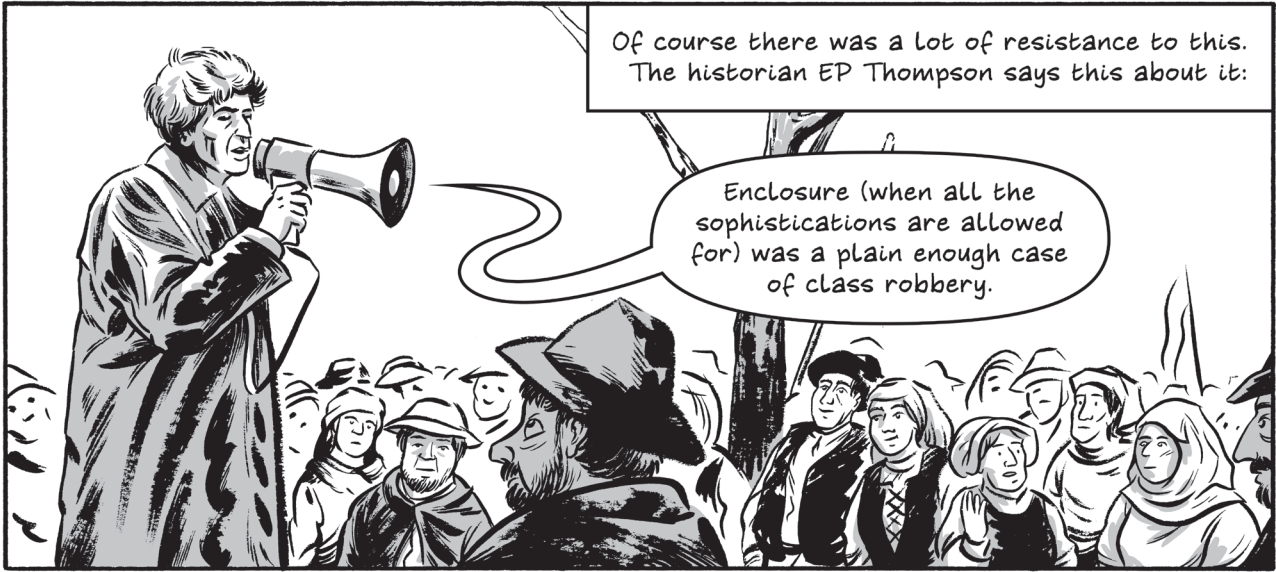
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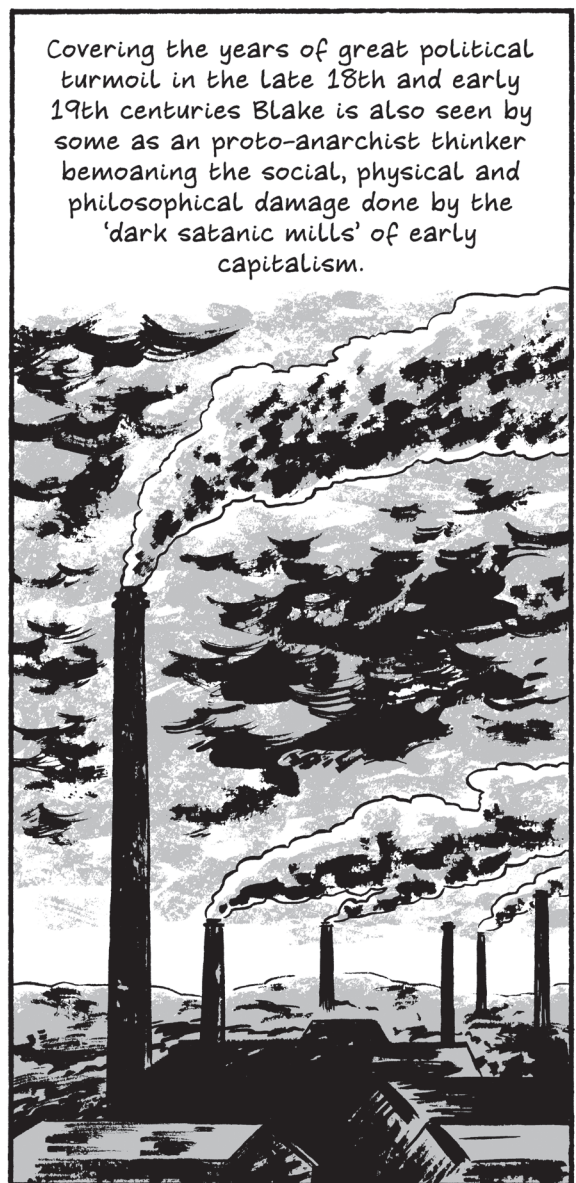


I wish I could say that what we saw then, or now, was a united movement of the working classes, but that would be untrue. In the mid-19th century skilled workers jealously guarded their corner against unskilled people.









# RU Serious?

... it's memeing time.

WSJ | OPINION

OPINION | LETTERS

## An Unintended Consequence of Student-Debt Relief

Will young Americans volunteer for the armed forces in adequate numbers?

April 13, 2022 12:55 pm ET



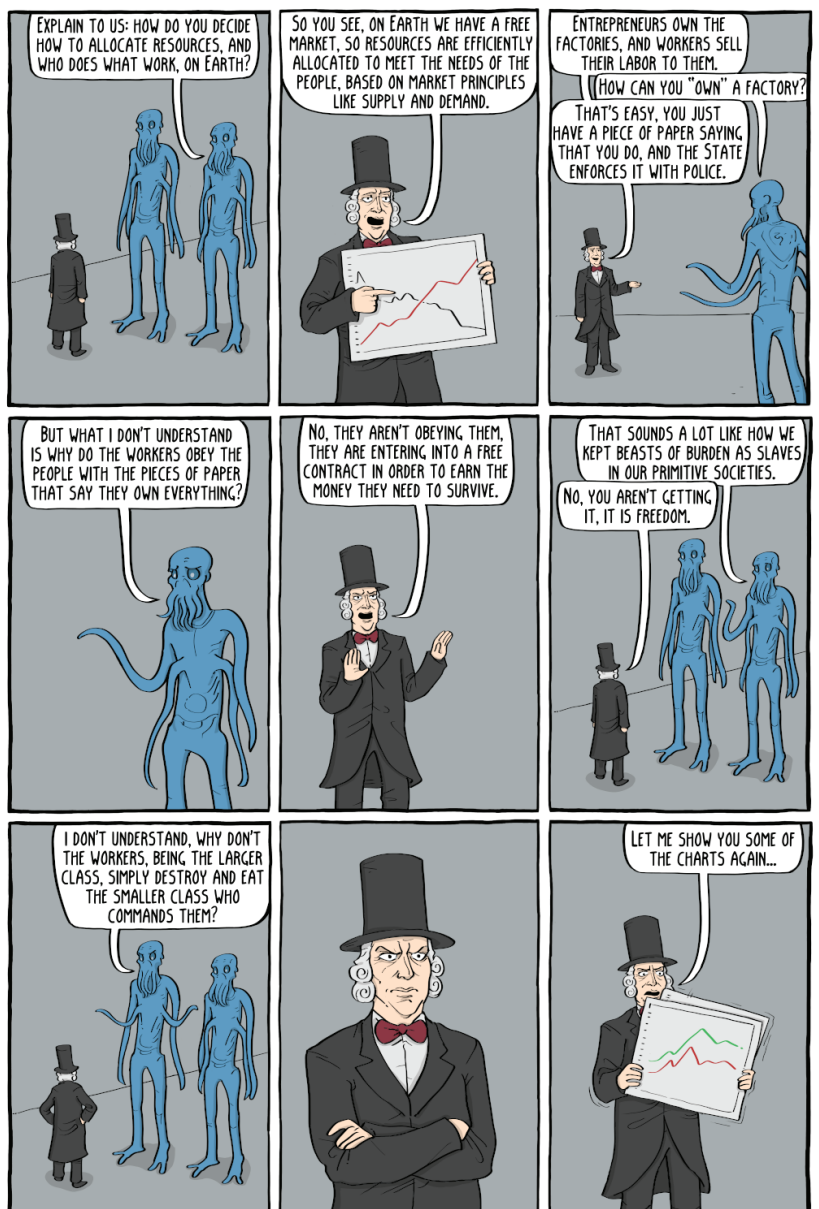
### Chess Tip!

While pawns can move forward, they cannot capture pieces moving directly forward.

The reason for this is because if they look their opponent in the eye while they kill them, they will see only their own face: that of a worker. The truth will dawn on them, that their enemy is their comrade and their king is their enemy.



"Congratulations - you should be very proud of what you've gone into debt for."



Existential comics