

RU PARTICIPATING

MEMBERS | NETWORK PROJECTS | SOLIDARITY

From the Education & Skills Team

- **Parecon Summary Session**

The session on Parecon summary took place on Tuesday 20th of December at 22.30 CET/21.30 UTC.

- **RU 2 book:**

New submission for the RU 2 book from Alexandria and Michael arrived. The team discussed procedures through which the team can review and comment on the contributions without the need for everyone to be present in zoom. Eugene will write a proposal on the procedure.

Decided the team has to read all the articles for RU2 book until Tuesday 3rd of January and comment on them.

- **Video on “Edges”:**

Team agreed that Mark did a really good job with editing the video of the session with Michael about the “Edges” and Eugene can now publish it on Youtube.

- **Merchants of Death Tribunal:**

Alexandria informed the team that Kathy Kelly would be willing to do an E&S session on the Merchants of Death War Crimes Tribunal. Team will work to arrange the session. Emily volunteered as a contact person.



Photo: Bruno Barbey

Happy Cyclical Revolution!

Topaz

What's wrong with green power? Read the joke column to find out. The January issue of RU Participating calls 'em like RU members see 'em!

From a Slovenian conference with a strong RU presence written about by Urška Breznik, to the interview questions from Bridger Meehan, the news letter this month is informative and invigorating.

Vegan power represented at the conference shows the importance of sustainability and that cultural change is possible, embraceable and obtainable, without having to be 'antagonistic.' Since of course, for the conference being discussed, all antagonistic energy would be geared to freeing Assange.

Bridget's bio helps to (re)create an interest in Participatory Society and Economics, as well as providing a background in her interests and motivations. Did you know she was a fiction writer as well as an excellent editorialist?

Marcia Bookstein provides a strong critique of an age old dilemma, the 'pretty woman' mythology, and how that myth is destructive to social norms. As an intelligent man who has been in the less earning potential category for (cough) some time, her insights are poignant as well as refreshing. Kathy Kelly keeps RU updated with the Merchants of Death War Crimes Tribunal, and provides links for further information. Several suggestions from members round out the January edition, and I'd like to shake the hand of whoever rounded up the collection of jokes. Thanks for Participating!

From the Site Team

- **RU logo:**
Richard updated the RU logo
- **Map updates:**
New members locations have been added onto the map.
- **Groups joining RU:**
The team discussed the possibilities on how existing groups could join RU and how this might impact the site. Will wait to see what the actual proposal from an existing group is before making any decisions.
- **Actively seeking content:**
Some new articles have been added to the website and the team discussed where to add the members interviews. The latest edition of of RU newsletter was added to the website.
- **Sign up form:**
The team checked the sign up form to make sure it works and they will fix any problems identified..

From the Membership Team

- **Alternative time RU Garden:**
Membership team will schedule first RU Garden event on hours more convenient to our Asian and Australian members.
- **RU Gym:**
We are still looking for a person that would take point on organizing RU Gym.
- **I on I meetings:**
One on one meetings between members are back in swing. Write to Matic in order to join.

Reading the Word= Reading the World

Urška Breznik

A report from the conference on the autonomy of the media, strategies and visions for a post-capitalist society, Zinn's "A People's History" and the trial against Julian Assange

On the 25th of November 2022 the NGO Pekarna Magdalenske mreže from Maribor, Slovenia organized a conference Reading the Word= Reading the World where four Real Utopia members participated. You might recognize the title as a famous Paulo Freire statement and indeed it was used intentionally since the main topic of the conference was critical literacy. Critical literacy as a learning approach and a tool that encourages us to analyse power relationships in the society, discrimination, representation, justice, and values communicated through various forms of texts (written, visual, audiovisual, multimodal...) existing in various contexts (newspapers, social media, advertisements, school textbooks...).

The conference took place in a remarkable Gustaf Hall in Cultural Centre Pekarna in Maribor that usually hosts rock, punk and alternative music concerts. We started off with a media panel composed of RU member Alexandria Shaner and also an editor and contributor for ZNetwork (joining us on zoom), Kristina Božič, freelance journalist and activist, regular contributor to Mešanec, the left online media platform, Boris Vasev, foreign affairs journalist with Slovenian Public Service Broadcasting online portal and Žan Dolajš, journalist with Slovenian Public Service Broadcasting TV. In the extremely fruitful discussion the participants addressed the influence of the capital and the politics on the autonomy of the media, the incapability of the mainstream media on reflecting on their own societies, especially in foreign affairs, mainstream media avoiding sensitive subject such as Julian Assange or violence committed against Syrian, Afghan,, refugees in Europe, double standards in reporting about the war in Ukraine and in Yemen or Palestine, emergence of the independent media platforms and possible structural reasons for it. The contributions of the guests made the panel hands down the most interesting, insightful and smart conversation about the state and role of the media that most of us ever witnessed.

You can watch the discussion here. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4fnbmpLILco>



The conference continued with a panel on strategies and visions for a post-capitalist society. The guests were RU member Matic Primc, speaking about participatory society and Michele Raffaelli, a member of Extinction Rebellion. Matic answered questions about the four spheres of parsoc: economy, polity, kinship and community. He explained how workers and consumers councils would work, what balanced job complexes are, how collective decision making in nested councils would look like, and how patriarchy and blood kinship would be transcended. Michele spoke about some of the tactics of the ER movement and the introduction of the idea of the natural environment and all the species as a part of the community.

You can listen to the conversation here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vX6fDu33vgQ>

After a home cooked vegan meal that all the participants and visitors enjoyed in the 30 minutes break, the second part of the conference followed.

In the light of the publishing of the Slovenian translation of the *A People's History of the United States*, RU member Peter Bohmer (joining us on zoom) first gave his heartfelt introduction to Howard Zinn's life and activism and intertwined it with warm personal memories of Howard. A conversation with Slovenian historian Lev Centrih, who wrote the foreword to the translation, followed where we got to know all the hiccups that the editors and the translator came upon when working on this monumental book. Lev spoke about the politics of Howard Zinn, his sensitivity to racism, oppression of women, his understanding of socialism, the importance of the book for the historiography and the Slovenian examples of "*A People's History*". The latter connected to numerous writings and art of the partisan movement, accounts of women earning wages as wet nurses or maids with rich European families in Egypt from second half of the 19th century on, the accounts of the "erased"- the refugees from ex-Yugoslav countries that came to Slovenia during the Yugoslav wars and were left without official documents because Slovenian government could care less about them and, in the last years, accounts of refugees and asylum seekers from Syria, Erithrea, Afghanistan and Iraq living in Slovenia and some accounts of the Roma people.

You can listen to Peter (in English) and Lev (in Slovenian) here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XdZT2Y7NVBQ>

The highlight of the evening was a talk on Julian Assange by Craig Murray, the Scottish journalist, whistleblower and author. Craig, whom we invited to speak on zoom, decided that he would like to speak in Maribor in person not knowing at the time, that he would have to squeeze the Maribor talk between two talks in Germany the evening before and the evening after. Since he avoids travelling with planes due to climate change he mostly travels with trains and this is how he arrived to Maribor on a 12 hour train ride from Berlin only an hour and a half before his scheduled



talk. The hall got fuller and when he arrived there were some 50 people eagerly awaiting the in-depth presentation of the process against Assange, among them a British couple living in the nearby Austrian Graz. Since Craig is an experienced speaker with a good sense of humour he quickly had the audience intently listening to his every word. He started with a short introduction of himself and his previously privileged life as an ambassador that led him to become a whistleblower exposing the horrific human rights abuses committed by the Uzbek government with the full knowledge of the British government. He then explained the ABC of the Julian Assange case, why Assange and WikiLeaks are such threats to US (and other) governments, the psychological torture that Assange is exposed to for the past twelve years, the carefully scripted media campaign against him and the inconsistencies and absurdities of the trial. When asked, he said that he is convinced that one of the most important reasons why Jeremy Corbyn was so furiously campaigned against, is because with him as a prime minister Assange would never be tried. He ended his talk by announcing the new documentary *Ithaka* that tells the story of what Assange's family has been going through in the past few years and encouraging the audience to get involved in the campaign to release Assange by writing to their governments, media, organizing talks, screenings etc.

You can listen to Craig talking here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wrhu5rTRf-g>

A very rewarding conference was slowly coming to the end with one important act remaining. The Maribor crowd could hardly contain itself when Damir Avdić the Bosnian punk veteran musician whose lyrics harshly criticise today's society walked on the stage.

The evening continued in good spirits with a discussion on Assange, media, Scottish independence, music and a very international exchange of jokes. One could say that strategy and vision have been holding hands throughout the whole event, hopefully inspiring people to join the movements working tirelessly for the new world.

Why RU Participating, Bridget?

Bridget Meehan

My name is Bridget Meehan and I was born in Ireland, where I still live. I'm something of a home bird and although I lived outside of Ireland for a number of years when I was younger, I've lived in Ireland for the most of my life. I'm married and have one grown-up son. I currently work as a policy researcher for the independent advice sector (it's like citizens' advice, if that's a familiar concept to people). The organisation I work for is a decent employer and they treat me well, which is unusual in these times of eroded working conditions. But it's my interests outside of work that motivate me. I'm involved in social activism in my local region and I write articles for alternative media outlets such as ZNet. I love to write fiction too, and I devote a lot of my time and energy to that. To relax, I enjoy watching films.

Did you have any significant events in your life that ignited your interest in politics and social justice? I'm not sure if there is a specific event that ignited by interest in politics and social justice. My family was (is) very political so from an early age I have memories of being at political rallies, marches and meetings. Our politics was centred round the National Question which in Ireland means reuniting the country (Ireland was partitioned in 1921 by the British). The National Question was so predominated, that I was a teenager before I discovered there was more to politics than reunification and getting the British out of Ireland. At that stage, I began to see the bigger picture: that Ireland had been colonised; that many other countries around the world had been colonised too; and that colonialism was criminal, cruel and unjust and had to be resisted wherever it was found. I also began to make connections between capitalism and colonialism which set me on a journey of discovery about the economic, social and political systems which control society. Because of this background, I developed an inherent hatred of colonialism, a healthy disrespect for authority and authoritarianism, and a strong desire for justice.

In my late 20s, I stumbled upon Parecon. It was a game-changer. For years, I knew capitalism was wrong – an economic form of colonialism in some ways. But what could replace it? The works I was reading at the time really only focused on how capitalism could be made more palatable, less harsh. I could find nothing that called it out for the failure it was and offered a credible alternative. Until Parecon. I've been an advocate of Parecon ever since, and wherever I could, I talked to people about it and pointed them to reading materials. Now that RU exists, it feels like the theory has been brought to life in a sense, and I can point people to a

physical network of Parecon advocates. Although RU is in its infancy and still finding its feet, the fact that it exists is important because I'm convinced Parsoc can and will play a vital role in the transition to a post-capitalist world, if it becomes widely known.

There are several components of RU that appeal to me. I like that there's a network of people who share the Parsoc vision. RU allows us to connect with each other and shows us we're not alone. RU provides an excellent repository of reading materials and references relating to Parsoc. It's useful to have all that in one place. When I talk to people about Parsoc, I now have a set of resources and a community I can point them to.

I'm part of Collaboration for Change which is an all-Ireland network which helps grassroots activists to work together under a shared vision for a caring and resilient world that's good for people and the planet. Michael was invited as a guest speaker to our launch here in Derry back in 2018. I'm also part of a campaign to establish a mutual bank in the north of Ireland. The idea is that by having our own bank, we can control our money and make sure it's invested in businesses/cooperatives and projects that are environmentally and socially useful for the region, rather than being used to make profits for corporations and wealthy elites.

I would like to see RU grow into a huge movement made up of millions of people from every country in the world. I believe RU has a credible vision for a better world and I want everybody to know about that vision. If there was ever a time that people needed to hear a positive message offering us a way out of the nightmare that capitalism has made, it's now.

As for the progressive left, to quote from Irish revolutionary James Connolly "I only want the earth". I want the left to win. I want capitalism and its disregard for people and our planet to be replaced with participatory economics. I want the existing authoritarian and democratic political systems to be replaced with participatory democracy. I want the existing racist, sectarian, sexist, homophobic and transphobic, patriarchal society to be replaced with participatory kinship. I don't see why this can't happen if RU can grow and convince other movements to accept the Parsoc vision.

Marriage as an economic arrangement?!

Marcia Bookstein

The other day I was driving in the car, thinking about my kids and how they were earning a living doing something meaningful for them. How lucky!

But they weren't earning much of a living, meaning. So, hey, maybe they'll marry a nice, well-off person, eventually being able to afford a house with a yard for their dog.

Oh. Wait a minute. Where did this thought come from? Why does there need to even be a choice between marrying someone with money or living poorly? All things being equal, would they marry someone who earns a living cleaning up streets, or the person going to law school at Yale?

Many years ago, waiting in line to pay for parking before a concert, I heard two young women excitedly discussing several men's bios on Match.com, commenting about how this one went to that Ivy League school, and that one is a distinguished professor. Oh, I thought. You're missing a good eighty-five percent of the population, some of the loveliest men you could possibly ever meet, by primarily being concerned with someone's earning power or ego-boosting fancy accomplishment.

The hugely powerful real estate moguls, from all around the world, have bought up much of the property in this country, and raised prices, so that the homeless become more and more numerous. Would a young woman consider marrying a homeless person? What a thought! But, a few years ago I met a wonderful man who was homeless. He was getting divorced and left the apartment to his wife and lived in his car, meanwhile teaching computer science to other homeless people. What a good

person! But until he gets a home together, is any woman going to be interested? And how can he do that when housing, including rent, is so expensive?

It seems that marriage, for eons now, has been an economic arrangement. I was shocked to learn, while reading *Capital in the 21st Century*, that the Jane Austen novels I loved so much were not about romance, but about marrying the man who would keep our heroine from being poor and lifting her from the life she had known with her widowed mother. It was usually the wealthy landowner, by the way. So exciting and romantic, yes? Please, please, notice how much you love her, and marry her, I would hope, most of the way through the novel. But I had no consciousness that it was about the wealth, vs the pittance that the minister got, who married the friend, or sister.

As for marriage itself, I see how the insignificant flock of crows from years ago have turned into a one hundred or more murder of crows, flying overhead to their nesting place in the evening. They mate for life, and it seems that this is helping them thrive. After reading *Sex at Dawn* with my sprout, Em, we came to different conclusions: they felt that marriage to one person for life was not in our nature, like other primates. My sentiment is that it is a good idea, just difficult. When have we humans ever shied away from a challenge? In our society, the additional challenge is to find a nurturing, understanding partner, preferably with a sense of humor (he has to live with you!) and work together to change society away from the emphasis on financial riches, moving to a life rich with adventure, love, art, friendship.

Newsletter Team

• Seeking new members:

We are looking for members to help out with the newsletter project. Our hope is to keep the newsletter going on a monthly basis but to do this we need more help. To help you to consider whether this is an option for you we have put together a simple chart that shows where we need help. If we can get six members to help produce the newsletter then it would mean that we would have to do only a small amount of work each month. If you are interested in helping out with this project and feel that you would like to take on board some of the responsibilities highlighted below then please get in touch.

- Layout (designing the newsletter)
- Editorial text (preferably rotating)
- Interviews with RU members
- Updates on RU teams' activities
- Images and Memes
- Members picks
- Articles - nudging RU members to submit articles

Please, contact us.

Comments & Updates from on Merchants of Death War Crimes Tribunal

Kathy Kelly

Realistically, the greatest terrors we grapple with are the terrors of what we're doing to our own environment and the potentially omnicidal terror of nuclear weapon proliferation. Does any military establishment defend people or help people find security in the face of these terrors? Militarized security exacerbates the grave problems humanity faces. Military competitions undermine the international collaboration so sorely needed to face climate catastrophes. Wars create soaring refugee populations and consume resources desperately needed to meet human needs. Militarists, most notably within the Pentagon, exacerbate dangerous levels

of carbon emissions. How can we hold accountable the major drivers of unbridled militarism, the war industrialists deriving enormous profits from selling weapons.

The Merchants of Death War Crimes Tribunal aims to put Boeing, Raytheon, Lockheed Martin and General Atomics on trial. The voices of those most vanquished will be featured as prominent evidence during the Tribunal to be held November 10, 12 and 13 in 2023. Volunteers to develop the Tribunal will be eagerly welcomed. Write: wartribunal2023@gmail.com

Tribunal updates:

- **Subpoena delivery to arms manufacturers:**

On November 10, 2022, in the D.C. area, subpoenas were delivered to offices of Boeing, Raytheon, Lockheed Martin and General Atomics. We then posted a subpoena on our website, merchantsofdeath.org, which people from any locale could download, print and deliver to any of the four weapon manufacturers with an office in or near their locale.

- **Johns Hopkins University teach in:**

We were encouraged by news of students at Johns Hopkins University who held a teach-in protesting their University's complicity with war profiteering corporations. They placed particular emphasis on Raytheon. Helen Lacey's report appears in the JHU newsletter. <https://www.jhunewsletter.com/article/2022/11/teach-in-addresses-universitys-complicity-in-war-and-climate-disaster>

- **Possible actions for RU:**

Delivering subpoenas or holding teach-ins are two actions Real Utopia might take. There's a fine history, in Derry, Ireland, of activists going after Raytheon. Their campaign persuaded Raytheon to leave Derry. <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/raytheon-to-close-its-plant-in-derry-1.1240692> An integral part of the campaign involved testimony by a Lebanese mother whose daughter was killed by a Raytheon manufactured Bunker Buster bomb launched during Israel's 2006 war against Lebanon. We'd surely welcome Real Utopia's help to research attacks, listed in the attached "atrocities list," which killed civilians, using weapons manufactured by U.S. weapon manufacturers.

- **Lecture:**

Here is a link to Azmat Khan's lecture, November 15, 2022, at the University of Massachusetts, regarding U.S. air wars. <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1XM15-725JTrwqlqyis2Mc5y7yzXjevGKK274kC0O7F8/>

- **Interview:**

Here is a link to Dr. Cornel West's recent interview on the Tribunal: <https://merchantsofdeath.org/2022/11/25/cornel-west-interview-clip-for-merchants-of-death-war-crimes-tribunal/>

Please, contact us.

Member's Picks

Articles:

What Does Hope Look Like?
by Alexandria Shaner

How hospice became a for-profit hustle?
by Ava Kofman

A Practical Guide to Revolution
by Andrew Sage

Videos:

The Conquest of Ale: Anarcho-Communism in Dwarf Fortress

Books:

The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism,
Metropolitan Books, 2007
by Naomi Klein

The Shock Doctrine retells the story of the most dominant ideology of our time, Milton Friedman's free market economic revolution. In contrast to the popular myth of this movement's peaceful global victory, Klein shows how it has exploited moments of shock and extreme violence in order to implement its economic policies in so many parts of the world from Latin America and Eastern Europe to South Africa, Russia, and Iraq.

Gramsci's Politics of Language
by Peter Ives

Antonio Gramsci and his concept of hegemony have permeated social and political theory, cultural studies, education studies, literary criticism, international relations, and post-colonial theory. The centrality of language and linguistics to Gramsci's thought, however, has been wholly neglected. In Gramsci's Politics of Language, Peter Ives argues that a university education in linguistics and a preoccupation with Italian language politics were integral to the theorist's thought. Ives explores how the combination of Marxism and linguistics produced a unique and intellectually powerful approach to social and political analysis.

A Fine Balance, Vintage, 2001 (first published in 1995)
by Rohinton Mistry

The time is 1975. The place is an unnamed city by the sea. The Indian government has just declared a State of Emergency, in whose upheavals four strangers—a spirited widow, a young student uprooted from his idyllic hill station, and two tailors who have fled the caste violence of their native village—will be thrust together, forced to share one cramped apartment and an uncertain future



Gaza: An Inquest into Its Martyrdom, University of California Press, 2018

by Norman G. Finkelstein

Based on scores of human rights reports, Norman G. Finkelstein's book presents a meticulously researched inquest into Gaza's martyrdom. He shows that although Israel has justified its assaults in the name of self-defense, in fact these actions constituted flagrant violations of international law.

Questions n' Yo mamma:

Why do anarchists only drink herbal tea? Because all proper tea is theft.

Why don't anarchists drink green tea? Because it fights free radicals.

What's your favorite anarchist joke? Mine is anarcho capitalists.

Why are dogs used to find anarchists? Because they can track dissent.

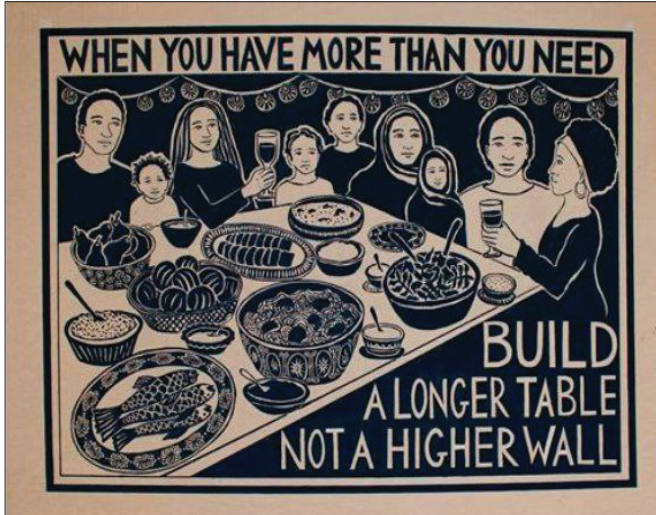
How many Marxists does it take to change a lightbulb? None. The bulb contains the seeds of its own revolution.

How many neoliberals does it take to change a lightbulb? None. The lightbulb will be changed by the invisible hand of the market.

Yo mamma is so classless, She's like a balanced job complex.

RU Serious?

... it's memeing time.



someone once asked me why i was so worried about the environment
 i just said "i live there"
 and they looked at me as if that fact had never once occurred to them

Being fiscally conservative means limiting what rights workers get.
 Being socially conservative means limiting what workers get rights.
 Which part of that belongs in a labor movement?

squishyproductions Follow

So, Dwarf Fortress had deep financial system at one point.
 Dwarves had currency and made wages and paid for food and housing and could invest their money.
 A few dwarves early on would come into money then invest more than the rest which started a snow ball effect. A few dwarves made infinitely more money while the rest dropped into poverty.
 Impoverished dwarves needed constant employment to afford food and housing. So you had to keep them working constantly or they'd be evicted and starve.
 One favorite tactic players had was to build room full of levers that didn't do anything and assigning all the unemployed dwarves to endlessly pull the levers. In this way they were "doing a job" and make wages enough to live.
 The deep economic system of Dwarf Fortress has long been removed due to every society unavoidably becoming a depressing mess of starving dwarves doing meaningless busywork.
 Which did not make for a fun game.

gossipgita Follow

Simply makes you think!!!!

Interviewer: Why do you want this job?
 Me: I've always been passionate about being able to afford food