

GEO

Grassroots Economic Organizing



THE NEWSLETTER FOR DEMOCRATIC WORKPLACES & GLOBALIZATION FROM BELOW

COOPERATIVES AS A RESPONSE TO TERRORISM

As the Bush Administration launches a massive military response to the tragic terrorist attacks in New York and Washington on September 11, those who have opposed past U.S. interventions in such places as Vietnam, Nicaragua, Grenada, Panama, Iraq, and Yugoslavia, fear further deaths of innocent civilians— from bombardment, destruction of infrastructure, future cycles of retaliatory violence, and – what is already happening – a mass exodus of refugees. Many of us are organizing to oppose such military intervention by the U.S. (and certain of its allies), suggesting that it is at least conceivable that a liberal capitalist state could restrain itself by the requirements of international law and just war principles. It is nevertheless hard to resist the generalization that capitalism on a global scale requires imperialism, to protect its property “rights” and to secure access to cheap labor and markets. It thus becomes all the more important, while we take immediate action to minimize the destruction, to reflect on alternatives: those that have proven successful (typically with shortcomings), those that have failed (to identify the causes of failure), and those in the making (to assess where they are headed and what are the dangers ahead).

In May 2001, the International Institute for Self-management (IIS) met in Dubrovnik, Croatia, on the theme, “*Self-Management in War and Destruction, Growth and Boom: Cooperatives in the Shareholder Capitalism of the 1990s.*” In this issue of *GEO* we share some of the papers presented there; additional papers will appear in the next issue. **Branko Horvat** focuses on the system of worker self-management that flourished in Yugoslavia from the 1950s until the breakup of Yugoslavia in 1991. He offers an analysis of the system of self-management or economic democracy, and an explanation of why the system was dismantled— not because of economic failings as

some have argued, but because of nationalism, political incompetence, and corruption.

Included also are comments on the Sept. 11 tragedy by IIS founder **Gabriele Herbert**. Gabi argues that cooperative development is a reasonable response to a political economy of poverty. And she makes the further case that if “first world” powers are unwilling to accept fair terms of trade and conditions for development in the “third world”, they will fail to address the root causes of terrorist violence. In support of cooperative development as a strategy for the third world, **Rommel Gonzalez Dias** offers evidence from the promising emergence of a self-consciously cooperative network in the Yucatan and Campeche provinces of Mexico.



Dubrovnik, Croatia. See feature article on Self-Management and the fall of Yugoslavia, page 2.

Those of us who met in Dubrovnik found in these examples encouragement and hope. Even though the self-managed system of Yugoslavia has been dismantled, the core ideas of human dignity, equality, and democratic participation live on. After the experiences of the last decade we harbor few illusions. Still, the conversations in the IIS are animated by hope for the long haul. This contrasts starkly with the dark despair manifest in both the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and Washington’s response. It is surely an act of utter hopelessness to throw

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Self-Management and the Fall of Yugoslavia

by Branko Horvat, as summarized by Mike Howard

Introduction: Stages in the Development of Democracy

No country is a full democracy.

1. With the French Revolution democratic ideas became widely known under the banner of “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity.” The liberty established was such that not everyone was able to use it. In a famous phrase, everyone is free to sleep under the bridge. Equality was only formal, equality before the law. There was little fraternity left under capitalist competition; it was left to humanitarianism but not integrated in the formal organizations of society.

2. Social Democracy enabled societies, through government agencies, to care for the poor, provide education, and offer other features of the welfare state. These societies remained capitalist, however, and political democracy as it is understood in capitalist societies is limited. Party leaderships choose the candidates for elected office and the outcomes are determined largely by the power of money. Then politicians are beholden to vested interests, as was Bush when he refused to sign the Kyoto Agreement. Furthermore, there is no freedom in the workplace. We have advanced from slavery, through serfdom, to wage labor. But, under wage labor, although one is free to move about, it is still necessary to sell one’s labor power in order to survive. Political democracy only offers freedom to each as a citizen. But we are also consumers and producers. Social democracy addressed our status as consumers.

3. It remained for Economic Democracy to take into account our status as producers. The Yugoslav Revolution, with its program of worker self-management, offered a new interpretation of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. This experiment with a new stage of development of democracy was, however, cut short by the breakup of Yugoslavia. These remarks will briefly review the self-management period, and then trace the fate of self-management in the successor states.

Part I: Economic Democracy in Yugoslavia

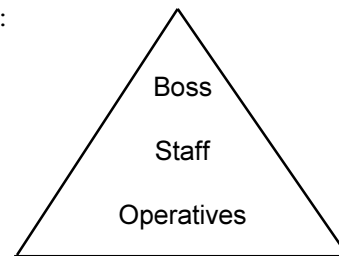
Yugoslavia is the only country that has gone through capitalism, fascism, socialism, etatism, and capitalism all in a couple of generations. Under the monarchy the society enjoyed a growth rate only a third of that under self-management, and it was two and one half times less productive. Between the early 1950’s and mid-1980 Yugoslavia enjoyed the fastest growth rate in Europe. If we

make a global comparison of the productivity of labor and capital, we find that, while the USSR was low, Yugoslavia had the highest increase in the world. Consider the UN statistics for 60 countries measuring quality of life by indicators of life expectancy, health and medical services, and education (literacy, etc.). These statistics show that quality of life per capita, at a particular level of development, was worst in the capitalist countries including the U.S., better in Social Democracies, and best in the etatist states, but highest of all in Yugoslavia.

The period from 1945 to 1991 was the longest period of peace in Yugoslavia. One of the strongest factors in all this was self-management.

One may contrast self-management with capitalism with the following pyramids:

1. Capitalism:



Cooperatives as a Response *continued from page 1...*

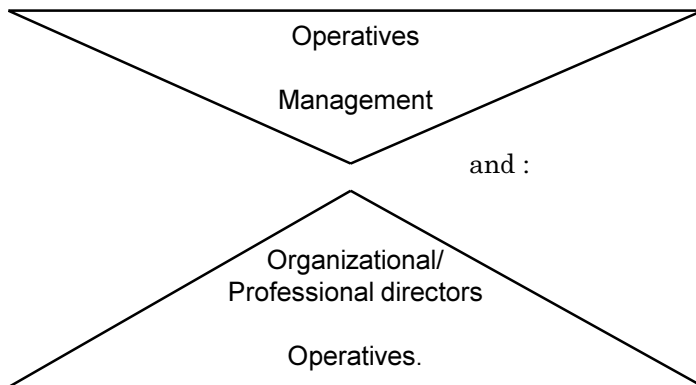
oneself and scores of innocent travelers into a skyscraper, killing thousands more. The World Trade Center may have been a symbol of American global capitalism, but it was also an example of what can be done with public investment—one of the two towers was owned by the New York Port Authority—and a place where thousands worked, as janitors, secretaries, for public interest organizations, from many nationalities. In hindsight we can say that it was a place where people were willing to be vulnerable in order to work together.

The future requires that we embrace that vulnerability and carry on. In the calls for retaliation (including some calls for use of nuclear weapons!), there is on the contrary a desperate attempt to restore a sense of invulnerability based on dominance that has all along been an illusion. If in the short run terrorists must be brought to justice and prudent measures taken to guard against them, in the long run only addressing the root causes—inequality, poverty, violence, lack of democracy, double standards, etc.—can bring about one world where all are safe.

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with commands flowing from the top down. This pyramid was modified somewhat after the 1930s with the role of unions. Under etatism you get the same pyramid, extended to the whole society.

2. Self-management:



The upside-down pyramid represents the flow of political directives concerning income differentials, mergers, etc. from operatives to management. The right-side-up pyramid beneath it represents the flow of organizational/professional directives from managers to workers.

As a last point, it should be noted that it makes a lot of difference whether self-management is an island in a capitalist sea or whether it operates in a self-management environment. This environment includes cooperative banks, which will never dictate terms to the cooperatives, and other supporting structures such as those recommended by Jaroslav Vanek. Under these conditions investment can proceed largely out of internally generated funds. In Kerala, India, to give one example, a cooperative network that began with 24 workers has developed so successfully in ten years that the enterprise is now making loans to the government.

Some Questions from the Audience, and Answers

Q: What about conflicts within firms? Was there not, in the self-managed enterprise, an internalization of the visible conflict of boss and worker, into a conflict between the worker and the requirements of the market?

In Yugoslavian firms, conflict revolved around the differences between the political and professional. These differences were not fully understood, as the self-management period provided too short a learning time.

Q: Is the distinction between political and professional really sustainable? If the design of the product is professional, then the main decisions are given over to "professionals" who make all the policy decisions for the firm.

If you read Cassells, on the network society, he argues that in the Fordist system there were a few engineers

coupled with a mass of unskilled workers. But in the post-Fordist factory we have robots together with highly skilled teams, and management becomes one among other groups of professionals.

Q: What is the role of competition between self-managing firms, and the place for bankruptcy? Generally, what is the place for the entry and exit of firms?

Networks don't compete but cooperate, or at least cooperation becomes more important. As we know from game theory, competitive games produce maximin results, but cooperative games result in maximax results. In the face of world competition governments should have national planning to minimize risks and to provide information to firms. A self-managed market economy is not an economy without planning.

Part II. Yugoslavia in the Nineties

Ten years ago many economists, such as Jeffrey Sachs, were announcing a transition from "administered" economies to "market" economies. This analysis never really applied to Yugoslavia, since the market had already existed there. Now, no one talks of the alleged administered/market shift. It is clear that the actual transition was from socialism to capitalism. The IMF and World Bank were unwilling to say what they meant.

This situation should be placed in historical context. The French Revolution was denounced by Edmund Burke, and today we see similar denunciations of the Yugoslav, Chinese, and other revolutions. Yet today we view the French Revolution as democratic. In fact, it too was followed by a period of Restoration. By 1815, the ancien regime was restored; from 1815 to 1830 the Bourbons ruled France; and from 1830-48, Louis Phillippe was the "citizen king." The revolution of 1848 was still capitalist in character. The Paris Commune of 1871, on the other hand, was the beginning of socialist revolution. This revolution was crushed in France, however, down through the Fifth Republic.

In Yugoslavia, it is often said, self-management was eliminated because it was not efficient. This is nonsense. What we have to understand is why it was tactically necessary to dissolve Yugoslavia, because of historical reasons relating to the nationalities. The so-called nations of Yugoslavia were unfinished nations. National culture, identity, and consciousness did not have time to develop. Compare Western Europe, where nations took shape over centuries. Moreover, two thirds of the population were peasants, who were transferred to the cities, with only 15% remaining in agriculture (only 7% in Croatia)—a tremendous transfer from traditional society to a very unfamiliar modernity. Most have been unaware of what happened in the last ten years. In Serbia they don't know that Serbs were responsible for the war. NATO bombing was seen as

an external assault not provoked by Milosovich. Also in Croatia, people don't see that the Croatian army intervened in Bosnia, clandestinely, without identification. One such infiltrator destroyed the Mostar Bridge. Given this shock of change and this ignorance of politics, the potential for manipulation of the people was great. Given one year, anyone could persuade an unfinished nation to be anything. The exception is Slovenia, more culturally developed, which showed some continuity under Kucan.

There were mistakes and atrocities committed under the socialist government. But because of a lack of political democracy, these were not dealt with properly. After Tito's death, the makeshift adaptation of a collective presidency was introduced. Before the collective presidency collapsed, multi-party democracy was brought in, and with it came restoration of capitalism. (The change is also due to incompetents after Tito). Competition among the parties was fertile ground for nationalist demagogues, who engineered the war.

Part III: From Socialism to Capitalism: Croatia

The so-called "transition" began with a proclamation, by the chauvinist government in Croatia that "social ownership has no known owner," and that without a known owner there could be no market economy. This is nonsense. A market requires a buyer and a seller, and transactions in which commodities exchanged for money. There is a transfer of ownership of the commodity. Social owners can certainly be buyers and sellers in such transactions. To function markets need to be backed by law, police, etc. But this requirement is not at all incompatible with social ownership of enterprises. To underscore this, I note that there are, in capitalist societies, institutions with no known owners, namely non-profit corporations. I once asked an economist, Professor Lewis, a Nobel Prize winner from Princeton, "who owns Harvard University?" He couldn't give me an answer, but Harvard, nevertheless, buys and sells labor, goods, and services, and functions quite well—as does the market of which Harvard is a part.

The Croatian government proclaimed that privatization was needed to bring about a market economy. To do this what was required? Nationalization! (Will the newspapers dare to publish a critique of this?) After nationalization the state sold the capital, robbed from the citizens, to its supporters. By contrast, social ownership meant that every citizen had a virtual share. (See Aleksander Bajt on this in the case of Slovenia.)

I brought a court case against the Tadjman government for unconstitutional acts, taking away the guaranteed property of the citizens. Under the law, self-management associations could be created to do business. Whoever made the investment out of their own resources is entitled to a share and can't have it expropriated. The judges deliberated for six years! In their ruling, they didn't

mention a single legal argument, only that there had been a "change in ideology," but this has no legal relevance.

Croatia witnessed a twelve-fold increase in wealth through the investments of self-managing workers. The self-managed enterprise was in a way completely private property, the most private system in Europe, since there were no state enterprises whatsoever. Self-management requires social (not state) property, and vice-versa. However, if social ownership equals government ownership, and the latter is totalitarian, then by expropriating self-managed enterprises, the Tadjman government was proclaiming the Croatian government to be totalitarian.

The first result was that self-managing workers were thrown out. Unemployment is 23 percent. Why? Because enterprises were sold for cheap prices to government supporters. The new owners were mostly incompetent and interested in self-enrichment. They proceeded to destroy these companies. The longest economic crisis in the history of the country is from 1991 to the present. Per capita incomes today are at 80 percent of their 1989 level. At 4 percent annual growth it would take six more years to reach the level of 1989 (altogether, 18 years)! The second result is that corruption is at one of the highest levels anywhere in the world, compared to a very low level before 1989. One illustration of corruption is a recent shootout between two mafias in Zagreb, something unknown before. There is now a traffic in women. A general despair has overtaken the citizens, making the youth want to leave. Of those graduating in economics, for example, 72 percent hope to emigrate. War was the natural outcome, with 250,000 killed.

Some Questions from the Audience, and Answers

Q: What is the status of social property in the case of bankruptcy? Isn't the possibility of bankruptcy necessary to keep enterprises efficient?

Social property entails a right to employment. This can be in existing firms or through provision for entry of new firms and there need to be investment funds for this. Bankruptcy, more likely in a real market economy, is the exit of a firm, but it is not an inherently desirable thing, given the dependence of all the workers on it. The workers in a self-managed firm are representatives of society, which has entrusted them with social capital. If managed without losses there is no interference in the operation of the firm. But if there are losses, a social agency is entitled to interfere. If the firm were unviable, it would be put in receivership and reorganized.

Q: What has happened in Serbia?

Milosovich claimed to be a socialist and to be governing

Yugoslavia, and so preserved the appearance of continuity with the old system. Yugoslavia originated under Alexander's dictatorship and always meant Greater Serbia. During World War II, Croatia and Bosnia provided the majority of Partisans, and were willing to accept a multinational Yugoslavia. But Serbia lacked the cultural heritage to resist becoming aggressive. After the breakup Serbia has followed the Croatian pattern: a law authorizes nationalization, followed by privatization. It is the IMF program. Like Milosovich in Serbia, Tudjman in Croatia also needed outside support for his transition.

Incidentally, Joseph Stiglitz, whom I know, couldn't endure the World Bank environment, which is totally backward.* World Bank economists have no concept of social ownership. They have no knowledge of Berle and Means [who had argued for the thesis that there is a separation of ownership and control in the capitalist firm].

Q. Why was it so easy to dismantle self-management in Croatia?

There are several reasons:

1. Top-down change: self-management was originally given from above, and consequently it was not felt as a loss when it was taken away.

2. Lack of democracy: recall that in the Austro-Hungarian Empire only 2 percent of Croats could vote.

3. Aggression by Milosovich: he embarked on his campaign against Croatia in the name of "socialism" and "Yugoslavia." Nationalism was the reaction, and anything "socialist" or "Yugoslav" was therefore opposed.

4. Fear of resisting: there was only one socialist party in Croatia, founded in 1992, and one of its executive committee members was killed, probably by someone from government circles. In general during these years, people have been afraid to speak against the government in support of self-management.

5. Complete control of the media: this has had an effect such as Goebels had in Nazi Germany. The Croats have ruined their own country. There are now 400,000 unemployed. Living standards are lower than before the breakup; and the human rights record is bad. In the local elections just yesterday (May 2001), the nationalists have won in many cities and counties.

After the death of Tito there followed a succession of politically incompetent people. For example, an advisor of Karadjic, was one of those leaders. Between 1980 and 1985 all the republics sought proof that they were exploited by the others, and there was an atmosphere of distrust. In fact Croatia developed faster than Serbia, contrary to popular belief. 1986 was the beginning of 3 years of stagnation, followed by nationalism and a fall in the absolute magni-

tude of the GNP by 30%. For comparison, in Slovenia, the Vice Prime Minister prevented the destruction of self-management, and Slovenia has emerged as the strongest economy of the former republics. In Serbia the story is different. In Croatia, nationalism was financed by an external Ustashe—that is, a group of émigré fascists. There is documentation of collaboration between Tudjman and Milosevic during this period.

Conclusion

To sum up, Yugoslavia under self-management was an economic success. It expanded at the fastest rate in Europe between 1950 and 1985. It had the best quality of life relative to level of development. Yugoslavia was destroyed not because of self-management, but for political reasons.

* "The Globalizer Who Came in From the Cold," *Observer*, London, Sunday, April 29, 2001, available at the following website: <http://www.gregpalast.com/>

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Civil War in the Global Village

by Gabriele Herbert

The reaction of the “First World” (as it was called, when there were still three worlds) to the terrorist action against its symbols, the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, showed unfortunately that the prediction, “nothing will be as it was before,” was quite wrong.

The reaction of politicians and the media was exactly as it always was, just louder. Again it was amazing how the automatic pilot of the American investigations immediately turned to the main current “terrorist on duty,” Osama Bin Laden. After all, there were other experiences of the same kind, if not as immense, like the Oklahoma Bombing, perpetrated by an American terrorist with a right wing network behind him, or the Japanese religious sect that gassed the Tokyo subway. Some early commentator on the September, 11th events suggested that the attack might be a revenge for the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the anniversary of which had just past. All these terrorist attacks, like the bombing of the train station of Bologna and the Munich Oktoberfest—to name only some—had shown before that mass murder of ordinary citizens is the classic attack of the Right Wing of the world.



The reaction of the investigators, however went straight away in only one direction. Inside their countries the political leaders of the First World take the opportunity to try to abolish civil rights that were guaranteed to the citizens of the “Free World” for centuries, and, in order to deliver an immediate “interior enemy”, they do not clearly distinguish between alleged terrorists that happen to be Muslims and the ordinary Muslim citizen. As every country of the First World has its Muslims (often not very welcome ones, as for example, Afghan refugees), it is a safe move to point first in their direction, so that people can get rid of their horror and the need to “punish” somebody. Only after two weeks and reluctantly, politicians give little preambles about “there being uninvolved Muslims” as well.

So—in spite of being told the world will never be the same again, it turns out to be exactly the same again: the first and only reaction of the US is to point to a perpetrator that will justify the political direction so well known to the world: to strengthen the military-industrial complex of the US and to take the opportunity to try to get unlimited access to the yet undeveloped oilfields of Tadjikistan. The ultimatum that Bush gave to the Taliban (for example: unlimited movement for the US inside Afghanistan) showed clearly that whatever happens is taken as an opportunity to follow the main interest of America in the world: to get hold of the main oil supplies. The “human right” to cheap oil prices for the average American Citizen and to the

unlimited profit to be achieved by the industries of the First World throughout the world (see the South African court case against the American and European pharmaceutical industry about the AIDS-drugs)—these are the essence of “our civilization” central to every action taken on every occasion.

For how long will the 1.2 billion people of the world who each live on less than a dollar per day (Martin Wolf of the *Financial Times*, September 13, 2000) be given to understand that the 6000+ missing people of the WTC disaster are so eminently more important than the—for example—6000 people who went missing in Srebrenica during three days in 1995?

(The author worked as a humanitarian worker in Bosnia during the time of the Bosnian war; that is why this comparison among many other possible ones comes to mind).

How will they understand that the recommendations of the reports of the World Bank for economic action in the former “Third World,” for example: rapid labor-intensive growth and broad provision of social services, particularly health, education and a social safety net (*Financial Times*, see above) are always translated by the American-dominated International Monetary Fund into cutting exactly these provisions.

Free Trade—this symbol of our free civilization—is not granted to those countries. The trade barriers stay high in spite of the recommendations of the World Bank.

“The US can count itself author, architect and principal beneficiary of globalization. Guided by the US Treasury, the IMF sets the rules of the multilateral game....The ...Washington consensus imposed on developing nations is the liberal economic orthodoxy of the times. These one-size-fits-all adjustment programs ruined more fragile economies than they repaired. But they bailed out the West’s banks. Governments caught up in the financial brush fires of the 1990s were told to slash spending on health and education. Such policies were as economically foolish as they were socially destabilizing. But US banks got their money back. Western politicians may also admit that trade liberalization has been skewed to their advantage. Developing nations have been forced to open their markets. Rich ones have kept their doors slammed shut to their agricultural products and textiles....

Global capitalism...requires civilizing rules. It must be seen to be fairer. Poor countries cannot pay rich nation’s wages—but the weakest must be helped and multinational corporations must observe basic standards of human decency. Advanced economies must

lead by example and open up their markets. And yes, we all benefit from strong international institutions—as long as they represent a mutual not a single interest.” (Philip Stevens in the *Financial Times*, Aug. 17th, 2001.)

I have quoted this article from the *Financial Times* extensively to show clearly, that the demand for fairer conditions for the “non-civilized world” is not a left wing specialty that does not make economic sense.

It is thus not surprising that there was a reaction throughout the peoples of the non-American world to the events in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania. Beside the horror and the feelings of compassion for the people who were hit by the catastrophe, there was a clandestine feeling of satisfaction that this Civil War in the Global Village was felt as well by the Americans at last. Refugee gypsies in my neighborhood, whose houses (yes, they were settled gypsies, quite well educated) in Kosovo were taken by Albanians during the bombing attacks of NATO, were pointing out how “cowardly” the American pilots had been high up there, not being able to see exactly what they were bombing, as opposed to these pilots that knew they would take their own lives in the incredible attacks.



Anyway, a reaction that would really have been a world “as it never was before” would have been *to develop finally a “one-world” approach alongside the battle against terrorism.* Without developing a fair economy between “the worlds”, while still of course looking for the terrorist network that is trying to destroy any such one world approach, more and more young and—as we are now seeing—highly intelligent people will be willing to give their lives in order to carry the civil war of the global village into the centers.

But equality—which was one element of the American Revolution—must finally extend to trade and production. Martin Wolf, again in the *Financial Times*, suggests, “*We do have quite a good idea of what policies and institutions generate pro-poor growth. We know, too, how to help the poor manage and mitigate the risks they face. We even know what sort of assistance the outside world should provide: for getting aid and debt relief [to] countries with good performance; reducing the risk of financial crises.... What we do not know is how to ensure that this knowledge is put to work where it really matters.....*”

Our experiences throughout the world, however, show clearly where to find best performance; namely, *by developing co-operative networks in the regions where people live, produce and trade their products.* Because we find that in co-operative networks and umbrella-organizations, and even more in whole regions, Capital loses one of its main features that works against development: it loses

its mobility to go where it can achieve the highest profits. Co-operative superstructures, but small co-operatives as well, show throughout that “labor hires capital” and not the other way round. Labor binds capital to the region as people who work in co-ops are not interested in exploiting some far away brilliant conditions for profit, but their interest is to re-invest into jobs for their friends and family. We were able to see these developments in Mondragon and in former Yugoslavia. The development potential of co-ops is enormous, even when we find sometimes that as co-ops become wealthy, a different behavior might result. It can clearly be shown that *it is the first priority for cooperative umbrella organizations to create jobs and to reinvest.*

That might be the reason as well why the survival rate of co-ops is much higher than for ordinary start-up-companies, and that after the first—and often very hard—period of “primary accumulation” co-ops pay better wages and have much better working conditions.

However, to enable such development processes one does need security of the legal and trade conditions. The demands for something like a “social economy” that are being expressed by some countries in the European Union should be extended especially to Africa, but to the rest of the third part of the one world as well. This, together with a development of FAIR TRADE, is an approach that would not “cost the world” to the rich countries. But it would be a first step against the sort of hate that does not even want to save one’s own life in order to hurt “the enemy”. There might well be some religious fanaticism involved in the attacks against the symbols of the American World, but at the bottom of the problem is the extreme injustice that its political-economic approach is causing in the one world. To enable the poor to develop something like such a “social economy”, a legal structure has to be secured and guaranteed by the rich for the long term.

The Global Village has got its Army (NATO), its Treasury (IMF), its Health Ministry (WHO), its National Bank, etc. But it misses a vital necessary element: “the third force” to make it anything like a democratic place: its common jurisdiction. The peoples of the “Third World” are not equal before anything like a common law or constitution! The same Rule of Law must be extended to the whole Global Village, to the One World—if it is to be one. No society up until now has survived such extreme differences of living conditions as we have now without revolutions—and always very bloody ones—as a result.

Gabriele Herbert is the founder, and past Director, of the International Institute for Self-Management, and a member of GEO’s Advisory Board. She lives in Germany and the former Yugoslavia; she welcomes comments and responses to this article. Send them c/o GEO, 83 Charles Lane, Storrs, CT 06268, USA. □

Yucatan's "Union of Cooperatives of Mayan Towns"

by Rommel Gonzalez (translation by Betsy Bowman)

Editor's note: In Issue #38, we reported on the Chac Lol "Tortilleria" Cooperatives of the Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico. Here Rommel Gonzalez distills some important lessons from their experience. Rommel is the main financial and technical person for Chac Lol and one of the cooperatives' key organizers.

Mayan peasants from the Chol and Tzeltal tribes on the Yucatan peninsula of Mexico have formed the Union of Cooperatives of Mayan Towns. We spent fourteen years organizing and coordinating it. For us, co-ops are a viable system of production. They have the potential, if spread on an international scale, to be an alternative to voracious capitalism.

Cooperatives are a system of production—and one that fosters the development of both the worker-owners and their machines and technology. Its ownership structure is the essential key to its success, in human and social terms as well as financial. Instead of the products and services made by the co-op being appropriated by absentee owners, they are instead appropriated by the workers. Because in a co-op the workers are the owners, they reap the rewards and benefits of their labor (instead of a wealthy owner). Because the workers are the owners, they can democratically decide on how the co-op is managed and how its products and services are distributed. Production thus aims at the satisfaction of basic needs—providing food for the workers and their families—instead of profit maximization for absentee owners.

Many cooperative forms have been tried in the past, and there is no single unique model that guarantees sustainable development. We have to adapt and develop the advances made before us. Our modest experiment has shown us that it is all the more important to cooperativize production when it is that of basic products such as corn, honey, amaranth, and small animals. Cooperative production is also more efficient at conserving natural resources.

We have organized the productive process of these basic products through a small network of complementary co-ops. Each has its own legal status and its own legal contract with the others. They are united into an efficient network, the *Union of Cooperatives of Mayan Towns*. Our main product is tortillas—the mainstay of the Mexican diet. Our network of co-ops organizes the different stages of production, from planting the corn to selling the tortillas. This network is composed of five co-ops: (1) for technical help/professional services; (2) for storage of the corn; (3) for the basic production of growing corn; (4) for transforming the corn into tortillas; and lastly, (5) a consumer co-op for selling the tortillas.

The way that the work is organized contributes to the way the workers (and their families) think about them-

selves and their work. These principles of work organization come from our experience and that of the Mondragon co-ops.

On Production:

The work is organized in such a way that:

- the structure of production encourages professionalism, quality and customer satisfaction, thus the people involved are the priority.
- the workers participate in the management of the enterprise, thus their education is considered an investment in human capital.
- the priority is for the enterprise to grow through its own self-development, thus company policies aim at the social good.
- workers have a life-long job at the co-op; this job security creates positive social relationships.
- everyone participates in planning production, so there is a high level of solidarity among themselves and their community.
- it taps each worker's full potential, and thus each worker develops a high sense of responsibility for the enterprise and for the other workers. Their professional ethic is one of service and is not based on exploitation. Individual freedom is reconciled with the collective's goals.

On Distribution:

- Power within the enterprise is divided among its different departments: production, technical help, research, marketing, financial and the social council.
- Losses and gains are shared among all according to their work.

End Results:

- Products are of a high quality and fulfill basic needs.
- Investment promotes culture, art, creative endeavors and the conservation of nature.

The Overall Goal:

The creation of a new model or paradigm which can respond to an economic, political, social, cultural or religious crisis. There is no single model or paradigm that resolves all problems, but we are convinced that cooperativism is an alternative system that contributes to the creation of new solutions, new models, new paradigms.

Our Motto:

Development, Fairness, Honesty, Conservation and Power!

SPRING WILL AGAIN FOLLOW WINTER

As we write this, it is late October, and autumn's colors have begun to disappear. Winter is a sure thing, but these days any sort of spring, in our hearts or elsewhere, can often seem very remote. But in resistance there is always hope, and this time there is (despite the mass media propagandists) plenty of resistance. During a single week in October, for example, over 30 protest and teach-in events took place in every major city in Canada; the waves on this continent and elsewhere are getting stronger and more plentiful. And here's a hopeful quote from Cynthia Peters' excellent article, "It's Simple. It's Not So Simple," the entirety of which is available at *Z Magazine's Z Net* (www.zmag.org):

Now is the time to be talking to people. Communicating, sharing information, listening—they are the core of social change, of changing minds, of exchanging rationalizations and cynicism for vision and empowerment.

It's simple, really. A terrible crime is being committed in our name. Millions of dollars worth of bombs are raining down on an already decimated country. Beyond the military terror and destruction, the terror of starvation almost surely awaits millions of Afghans unless the bombing stops and a full-scale aid program gets food in place for the winter. This is a calculated crime against humanity that differs from September 11th only in scale; that is: it is many times larger.

That the U.S. is taking part in the killing of innocent people is not new. What's new is that people are paying attention. Before September 11th, I tried talking to people about the 500,000 Iraqi children dead thanks to the U.S. economic embargo. And people's eyes

glazed over. But during these last few weeks, as I've staffed an information table on the main street that runs through my town, I've noticed something else during my conversations with people about the war in Afghanistan....what I've noticed is that the glaze is gone.

People's eyes are opened to the world in a way they weren't before. People are bringing questioning minds to the problem of terrorism and the U.S. role in the Middle East and elsewhere. People are filled with grief, awed by the courage of the rescuers, stunned by what it means to turn a commercial jetliner full of innocent people into a living, breathing bomb. People are curious—and I mean that—about exactly how the U.S. has abused its power around the globe, and they are reflecting on the consequences of that abuse...

Below, we provide five other hopeful and constructive responses to the terror unleashed on September 11 and that which followed with nightmare velocity on its heels, without the slightest hesitation for grief, much less for a sane or levelheaded response. (Does anyone feel safer now that Afghani civilians are being bombed and their major food supplies have been cut off?) Though in many ways different, these responses all concur in seeing a "new sort of economy," one that does away with "first world" privilege and power and is democratically controlled by workers and communities, as essential for combating terrorism—both that of the desperate disempowered and that of the powerful desperate to hold on to, or extend, their dominion. For more on this same theme, see Gabi Herbert's article, "Civil War in the Global Village", as well as Mike Howard's editorial introduction, both in this issue. □



Constructive Responses to the Sept. 11 Tragedy

Editor's note: In addition to the article by Gabi Herbert above, *GEO* has received a number of comments and constructive responses to the Sept. 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. A few of these responses are excerpted below.

The Peace-making Potential of Cooperatives

Excerpted from a talk by Ross Christianson on "Cooperatives in Community" at the October 2001 Ontario Region Co-op Council meeting in Waterloo.

Co-operation...within and between communities, and indeed amongst all nations of the world, needs to be encour-

aged more than ever. The growing disparity between the rich and poor in this world is well documented, and disturbingly justified by liberal and right-wing trickle-down economists who seem to have a stranglehold on the mainstream media. Our economy continues its boom and bust cycle every ten years or so, mostly because of capitalism's built-in rewards for speculation and greed. Human beings have designed the market system and have created its rules of law. The market is no more a "natural system" than the rules of hockey or baseball. All of these "games" are zero-sum, with a few winners and many losers....

Our challenge as communities of caring and compassionate people is to shift the paradigm from win-lose to win-win. On the one hand, we tell our children how

important it is to share and help others, and on the other hand, we model competitive, win-lose games in sports, school grades, job applications, lotteries, and penalizing single mothers as welfare bums, while corporate and capital gains taxes are continually cut. And now, with the lead of the world's most powerful military machine, we enter the ultimate win-lose conflict—an extended, religious war. An escalating spiral of violence that **will not** resolve the disparity, **will not** build understanding and tolerance, and **will not** create a climate of dialogue that could allow trust and mutual respect to build a lasting peace....

Co-operatives may seem like any other bank, store, housing complex, factory, or day care. And, they do provide their members with the same quality services and products that private businesses do. But, this is where the similarities end. **Co-operatives are democratic organizations.** The members make the important decisions, and no matter their personal level of wealth, each member is entitled to one vote... The western world and media continuously hold up democracy as a sacred political institution—the very apex of modern civilization. And yet, our dominant economic structures, transnational private corporations and their handmaidens—the global financial system and the World Trade Organization—are fundamentally anti-democratic... Business corporations are structured so the rich can maintain their wealth...

On a global level, almost half of the world's population (2.8 out of 6 billion people) live in poverty, with income of less than two dollars a day... This disparity and desperation is the reason that more than 760 million people worldwide have started and joined co-operatives...

While the recent terrible tragedy in New York City has awakened our fear of the potential violence in our world, it also provides an opportunity to understand that the global economic system is not working for most of the world's people. As individuals, we can each contribute to making our personal worlds better, and by working together in our communities, we can join a world wide movement to create an economic system that works for everyone, and diminishes the space for violence...

I would like to finish by reading...from a statement made by the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) at their [December 2000] meeting in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

COOPERATIVE IDENTITY FOR THE NEW MILLENNIUM

The ICA recognizes:

- That millions of human beings live in poverty, due to the concentration of wealth and social exclusion;
- The growing violence due to arms transfers that worsens social conditions;

- The serious degradation of the environment that limits the possibility of life for the present generation and for those not yet born, and that threatens the planet that is our only home; and
- The absence of solidarity that generates public and private corruption, and poses imminent danger to democratic society.

The ICA declares:

- Its willingness and capacity to contribute to a more just and democratic society;
- Its interest in exhorting governments, political parties, organizations of civil society, and all people who love peace to join forces to fight for the reduction of weapons and the elimination of violence, and to struggle for social justice;
- Its willingness to build a society in harmony with nature;
- Its desire that the cooperative organization shall continue to contribute to a more equitable social, political and economic world order, inspired by the co-operative principles and values, thereby giving effective support to democratic society; and
- That [it] assumes the commitment to rally the support of millions of members of co-operatives in the quest for peace, solidarity, equity, justice, equality, environmental protection. □



Globalization from below: The role of global civil society

Excerpts from a declaration of the 4th Assembly of the United Nations of the Peoples (an international gathering of representatives of non-governmental organizations) in Perugia, Italy in October, 2001. For more information, see www.tavoladellapace.it—eds.

For the fourth time we, representatives of hundreds of organizations of civil society from all over the world, meet at [this] Assembly... Our voice demands a change of road, responding to the need for peace and justice for all. We ask all to give up the logic of war and military power, to guarantee security, eliminate terrorism, defend human rights, respond to basic needs—food, water and jobs for all—promote justice, a fair and sustainable development,

equality, democracy, the respect for diversity, solidarity and sharing.

We are already travelling this road, with our work for reducing injustices, for nonviolent conflict resolution, for building an international order able to avoid war, for defending human and social rights, for building solidarity, equality and democracy everywhere. We travel this road by working more and more together, with networks of organizations and common campaigns across national boundaries, addressing everywhere the injustices and the responsibilities of national and supranational powers. We build in this way a global civil society increasingly visible and active, a key player for a globalization from below which can diffuse rights, democracy and justice, opposed to the neo-liberal globalization imposed in these years by the economic power of the richest countries.

Since [our] last Assembly ...in September 1999, this road has become larger and stronger. Millions of people all over the world, a movement of movements, have put in question global powers in the meetings of Seattle, Prague, Quebec City and Genoa; new meetings, such as the World Social Forum of Porto Alegre, have emerged in order to give global civil society the opportunity to develop common strategies, build alternatives, propose different policies. To show that "a different world is possible"...

The role of global civil society

An alternative does exist, is possible and is being built by the work of millions of people who react to indifference, of thousands of organizations and groups of civil society who work for change all over the world. As representatives of global civil society, we commit ourselves to:

- act more and more together, on a common agenda for change, which can unite our campaigns and initiatives, maintaining our differences but overcoming our divisions;
- break the silence and isolation hitting millions of people in the world who suffer the consequences of conflicts, terrorism, poverty, injustices;
- promote a society which is an authentic alternative to the neo-liberal model and the priority given to the market, starting from the practices carried out everywhere by civil society for respecting rights, protecting the environment, developing an economy of solidarity...

The main directions for building such an alternative:

1. *Repudiate war, eradicate terrorism and build peace.* Organised violence today is less and less the monopoly of states; besides inter-state wars, the conflicts sustained by military and criminal interests, by ethnic and religious fundamentalisms. Therefore, we need to eliminate the causes which are in the violations of human rights and the rights of peoples, we need a system of common security centered on the United Nations, provided with a force for international policing, a non-armed force of civil society, and the establishment of the International Criminal Court.

2. *Reduce economic and social inequalities.* Neo-liberal globalization has deepened inequalities, poverty, the unsustainability of the global economy, with worsening food, health, environmental and social emergencies. A reorientation of the

economy is needed in order to satisfy the fundamental needs of people, democratize the world economy, give back space to politics and society.

3. *Promote the globalization of democracy.* The concentration of power in the hands of the most powerful states and of [undemocratic] supranational organizations...has deepened global disorder, injustice, the violation of human, political and social rights all over the world. We need to democratize and strengthen the United Nations and the supranational institutions with the responsibility of "global common goods," recognizing a direct role of global civil society.

As the Assembly of the United Nations of the Peoples was meeting in Perugia, the United Nations has been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize; this is a recognition of the essential role it can and must perform on these themes, obtaining from states the necessary instruments; this is the role we have always demanded. □



Food, water, jobs for all: Peace March Perugia-Assisi



New York City Labor Against War

The following is an excerpt from a statement signed by leaders and members of a number of NYC union locals—eds.

September 11 has brought indescribable suffering to New York City's working people. We have lost friends, family members and coworkers of all colors, nationalities and religions—a thousand of them union members. An estimated one hundred thousand New Yorkers will lose their jobs.

We condemn this crime against humanity and mourn those who perished. We are proud of the rescuers and the outpouring of labor support for victims' families. We want justice for the dead and safety for the living.

George Bush's war is not the answer. No one should suffer what we experienced on September 11. Yet war will inevitably harm countless innocent civilians, strengthen American alliances with brutal dictatorships and deepen global poverty—just as the United States and its allies have already inflicted widespread suffering on innocent people in such places as Iraq, Sudan, Israel and the Occupied Territories, the former Yugoslavia and Latin America.

War will also take a heavy toll on us. For Americans in uniform—the overwhelming number of whom are workers and people of color—it will be another Vietnam. It will generate further terror in this country against Arabs, Muslims, South Asians, people of color and immigrants, and erode our civil liberties. It will redirect billions to the military and corporate executives, while draining such essential domestic programs as education, health care and the social security trust. In New York City and elsewhere, it will be a pretext for imposing “austerity” on labor and poor people under the guise of “national unity...”

The undersigned New York City metro-area trade unionists believe a just and effective response to September 11 demands:

- **NO WAR..** It is wrong to punish any nation or people for the crimes of individuals—peace requires global social and economic justice.
- **JUSTICE, NOT VENGEANCE.** An independent international tribunal to impartially investigate, apprehend and try those responsible for the September 11 attack.
- **OPPOSITION TO RACISM—DEFENSE OF CIVIL LIBERTIES.** Stop terror, racial profiling, and legal restrictions against people of color and immigrants, and defend democratic rights.

Constructive Responses

- **AID FOR THE NEEDY, NOT THE GREEDY.** Government aid for the victims' families and displaced workers—not for the wealthy. Rebuild New York City with union labor, union pay, and with special concern for new threats to worker health and safety.
- **NO LABOR “AUSTERITY.”** The cost of September 11 must not be borne by working and poor New Yorkers. No surrender of workers' living standards, programs or other rights.

Help Feed the Afghan Population

Friends,

There is a humanitarian crisis... brewing in Afghanistan. Over 1.5 million refugees have become victim to the US air strikes, and they are starving and freezing. We at Ohio Wesleyan are launching a campaign to help feed them through the United Nations World Food Program (www.wfp.org). If anyone knows of an organization more appropriate, please get in touch with me. Our campaign is being run by a coalition of muslim and activist groups on campus...

We encourage all of you to organize at your schools and in your communities...we're going to...launch the campaign [in October]. We don't have much time. Please get in touch with me. ryansarni@yahoo.com phone 740-368-2472.

Peace, Ryan Sarni

Eds: The American Friends Service Committee's program No More Victims has, since Sept. 11: • Sent one 20-foot container filled with blankets to distribute to Afghan refugees in Iran. • Released \$70,000 to support Afghan refugees in Iran, Tajikistan, and Pakistan. • Appointed three representatives who will travel to Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Iran to conduct a needs assessment, identifying how we can aid the neediest refugee camps/communities, in both the short- and long-term. Deadline to receive blankets and donations for the next shipment is December 31, 2001. To give by phone using your Visa or MasterCard, call 1-888-588-2372 To give by Mail, send your contribution to: AFSC Development, 1501 Cherry St., Philadelphia, PA 19102.



Thoughts in the Presence of Fear

by Wendell Berry

*Editors' note: The following are excerpts from Berry's Post-Sept. 11 Manifesto for Environmentalists; for the complete text, see our website www.geonewsletter.org. Wendell Berry's many books of poetry and prose include *The Unsettling of America*, *What Are People For?*, and *Another Turn of the Crank*.*

I. The time will soon come when we will not be able to remember the horrors of Sept. 11 without remembering also the unquestioning technological and economic optimism that ended on that day.

II. This optimism rested on the proposition that we were living in a "new world order" and a "new economy" that would "grow" on and on, bringing a prosperity of which every new increment would be "unprecedented".

III. The dominant politicians, corporate officers, and investors who believed this proposition did not acknowledge that the prosperity was limited to a tiny percent of the world's people, and to an ever smaller number of people even in the United States; that it was founded upon the oppressive labor of poor people all over the world; and that its ecological costs increasingly threatened all life, including the lives of the supposedly prosperous ...

XI. We now have a clear, inescapable choice that we must make. We can continue to promote a global economic system of unlimited "free trade" among corporations, held together by long and highly vulnerable lines of communication and supply, but now recognizing that such a system will have to be protected by a hugely expensive police force that will be worldwide, whether maintained by one nation or several or all, and that such a police force will be effective precisely to the extent that it overweighs the freedom and privacy of the citizens of every nation.

XII. Or we can promote a decentralized world economy which would have the aim of assuring to every nation and region a local self-sufficiency in life-supporting goods. This would not eliminate international trade, but it would tend toward a trade in surpluses after local needs had been met...

XXVI. The complexity of our present trouble suggests as never before that we need to change our present concept of education. Education is not properly an industry, and its proper use is not to serve industries, neither by job-training nor by industry-subsidized research. Its proper use is to enable citizens to live lives that are economically, politically, socially, and culturally responsible...

Continued at right...

Canadian Employee Ownership Fund

The Canadian Worker Co-operative Federation (CWCF) reports that the Worker Co-op Fund has completed a successful first year, with investments of \$470,000 in six projects. The \$1.5 million Fund is "the only loan fund in Canada with the express purpose of encouraging employee ownership through the creation and development of worker co-ops," said Fund Manager Peter Hough. It provides financing as well as assistance with business planning and training.

The projects in which the Fund has invested create or maintain a total of over 40 jobs. In British Columbia, the Fund has invested in the Cultivated Forest Co-op of Denman Island, which grows organic shiitake mushrooms, and the Wild Island Foods Co-op, a community-based project encompassing a federally registered food processing facility including an R & D component, and a bakery/café. In Ontario, the Fund has invested in the Atikokan Fish Co-op; this is an expansion of a worker co-op that grows trout. And in Atlantic Canada, an investment was made in the Moncton Restaurant Equipment Co-op to facilitate the conversion from an existing business which was threatened with closure.

Worker co-operatives are employee-owned, operate on democratic principles such as one member-one vote and concern for sustainable community. In worker co-ops, employment and capital are rooted in the local community, and employee-members' skills are developed. Such co-ops have a higher business survival rate than other business forms.

The Fund, which received its capital from Human Resources Development Canada, invests in new co-ops, expansions of existing co-ops and conversions of existing, job-threatened businesses to the co-op model. Except in the case of conversions, some of the jobs created must be for current or recent recipients of Employment Insurance. The goal of the Fund is to help create worker co-ops, not maximize returns.

The Canadian Worker Co-op Federation (CWCF) is a non-profit organization whose goal is the support and development of healthy, sustainable local economies through the growth of worker-owned co-operatives. Contact CWCF at info@workercoop.ca, call (403) 287-2069, or see www.workercoop.ca. CWCF, 1627-49 Ave. S.W., Calgary, Alberta, T2T 2T8.



XXVII. The first thing we must begin to teach our children (and learn ourselves) is that we cannot spend and consume endlessly. We have got to learn to save and conserve. We do need a "new economy", but one that is founded on thrift and care, on saving and conserving, not on excess and waste. An economy based on waste is inherently and hopelessly violent, and war is its inevitable by-product. We need a peaceable economy.



Citizens' Ownership

The following letter has been abridged; we will post a more extensive discussion of Citizens' Ownership by A.D. Rowland on the GEO website: www.geonewsletter.org —eds.

Editors,

The Mondragon and Valencia Co-ops [in Spain], by employing non-member employees, are in danger of turning into a conventional business. If my memory serves, the original limit was 10%. I may add, the Italian Co-ops employ non-members quite extensively, the result being the co-op ideal is, for the most part lost.

This gives rise to the question, "Are we fully cognizant of the implications of Worker Ownership and it's extension into Citizens' Ownership?" Ownership brings responsibility for the commodities produced both for the consumer and the environment, which includes the health of the people, for example, a ban on tobacco, polluting, vehicle exhaust systems and products of industry, the list is almost endless.

An economy which is Citizen Owned, is responsible for education, for health provision, employment, housing, again, the list is endless, and in return, a fair day's productive work is required of citizens...

Why not a Citizens' Ownership bank? We have a precedent in [Mondragon's] Caja Laboral Popular... 'the bank of people's labor.' It is vastly different from the conventional bank inasmuch as it is ...there to be a benefit the community rather the bank's shareholders. Loans are carefully monitored and here we can learn from Islamic teaching, in this; the bank assumes some of the responsibility for the use of the loan...

The ideas behind the Lucas Plan should be revisited...During the height of the 'cold war' a group of the technical staff who worked at Lucas Aerospace engineering company in the UK got together and worked out alternatives to the arms production in which they were employed. They were opposed by their trade union, the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers, the government, and the company. This initiative arose out of the prospect of redundancies. Given the support of the company and a little vision from government, the industrial history of the UK would have been changed.

With workers having the ownership, and hence control, huge swathes of unemployment would have been avoided. All this must end in the diminution of the arms industry. By not paying out dividends for the armament industry and the burden of maintaining a standing army; the control of the wealth of the country would be channeled into areas where help is most needed ...

A.D. Rowland albert@citown.freemove.co.uk



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YOUTH & CED IN CANADA

—*Making Waves* plans special issue

The Canadian community economic development publication, *Making Waves*, is planning a special issue that will explore the engagement of Canada's young people in CED. A number of editorial partners are working on the issue, including Tradeworks Training Society (Vancouver), the Centre for Community Enterprise (Port Alberni). Planned for publication in June 2002, the special issue will report the range and impact of initiatives that people aged 15-29 are undertaking in this field. The writers, editors, and designers (half of them young practitioners) will show how youth are linking their aspirations for more prosperous, just, and healthy communities to marketable skills and to local economic development.

This issue may help young people already active in creating economic alternatives to be able to locate themselves in a wider movement, and perceive new opportunities, partners, challenges, and resources. Youth keen to work in ways that contribute to social, economic, and environmental vitality will discover examples of real alternatives. And existing development groups and practitio-



Centre for Community Enterprise

ners will be inspired and challenged to work more vigorously with the people who will be their future managers, directors, colleagues, and staff. For more information, see www.cedworks.com ("Youth & CED") or email mcnair@junction.net

HOLIDAY GIFT SUBS ONLY \$10

We are again offering holiday gift subs for only \$10, now through the end of January. Please send the names and addresses of those you want to receive gift subs together with any brief message. Each gift sub will extend through the next 6 issues.

An Economy of Hope...

What is needed for these times

Renew your GEO sub for 2 years—12 issues—for \$28 and get a FREE copy of *An Economy of Hope*:

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Compiled and Edited by the
GEO Newsletter Staff

"An Economy of Hope sounds GREAT! It is just what we need when trends seem so bleak—a guide to help us find and build the myriad of democratic, constructive initiatives that otherwise remain so invisible. Thanks for your undying commitment to living democracy."
— Frances Moore Lappe

GEO'S 2001-2 FUND RAISING CAMPAIGN

Please support our work by sending a donation!

As we mentioned in the previous issue, GEO is transforming itself from a publication *reporting* on co-op news into a *proactive* membership organization. Our mission: to help build a nation- and world-wide movement for a cooperative social economy based on democratic and responsible production, transformative consumption, and use of capital to advance social and economic justice. Some of the projects planned are listed below. Preliminary planning for several of these projects is already under way.

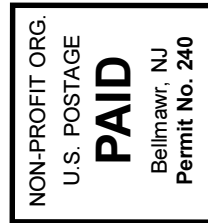
- Updating *An Economy of Hope* and transforming it into a comprehensive, searchable guide to worker cooperatives, democratic ESOPs, and support organizations—available as a CD or on line.
- Linking conscientious consumers with worker co-ops and other democratic and socially responsible producers of goods and services, through a new, extensive, searchable on-line e-commerce catalog.
- Promoting youth involvement in co-ops through internships and membership in student cooperatives.
- Sponsoring worker co-op conferences in collaboration with co-ops and support organizations such as the National Cooperative Business Association.
- Linking the cooperative movement with the anti-corporate globalization movement.

To enable us to carry out these projects and others, we will need to hire staff and this requires raising money. We are submitting grant proposals to several foundations, but we still depend on your donations. We are most grateful for the contributions sent in by our readers in response to the appeal in issue # 48; as of the beginning of November, we received over \$2,000 from our readers and supporters.

For our long run survival as an independent voice in the cooperative community, we will need to develop a membership base of at least several thousand supporters. Individual members will continue to receive the *GEO Newsletter*, and will be entitled to discounts on purchases made through our proposed e-commerce co-op website. Cooperative businesses will have access to more customers, and to such benefits as reduced cost health insurance.

In the meantime, your donations will help to sustain us and enable us to implement some of the projects described above. Your contribution of any amount over the subscription price is tax deductible. We especially welcome monthly pledges of \$10-\$25! We are counting on your support! Please mark "donation" on your check and send it to GEO, 177 Kiles Rd, Stillwater PA 17878.

The GEO collective: Beth, Betsy, Bill, Bob, Dave, Frank, Jessica, Ken, and Len.



Ecological Democracy Institute of North America

GEO Newsletter
177 Kiles Road
Stillwater, PA 17878

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



Next Issue



- More reports from IIS conference in Dubrovnik:
- Self Management in Sweden
 - Employee Ownership in Eastern Europe
 - A critical look at Mondragon today
- Plus Mike Howard's reply to David Ellerman