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Wayne Price on Anarchism and Marxist Economics

Wayne Price & The Final Straw Radio

10 May 2020

TFSR: I am speaking with Wayne Price, a longtime anarchist author and currently a member of the Bronx Climate Justice North, and Metropolitan Anarchist Coordinating Council or MACC in New York City. Thank you so much for taking the time to chat.

Wayne Price: Oh, you're welcome, I am delighted for a chance to talk to people.

TFSR: Can you share a bit about the political trajectory, your political development?

WP: I've had to change my mind more often than I to admit. I began in high school as an anarchist pacifist. I was a great admirer of Paul Goodman and Dwight Macdonald at the time. I was persuaded of Trotskyism of a radical democratic variety, a wing that rejected Trotsky's notion that the Soviet Union was somehow socialist or a workers' state because it's still nationalized property. And over time, I went through various upheavals and eventually became a revolutionary anarchist as I am today. Although I think that I still am much influenced by libertarian and humanistic tendencies and Marxism. That's where I am today.

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TFSR: I think it's really interesting how the Revolutionary Socialist League actually transitioned from an unorthodox Trotskyist group into basically an anarchist group before self-abolishing. Is that an okay description of what happened?

WP: Yeah, although we were orthodox in an unorthodox way. That is, we never accepted, as I said, the notion that the Soviet Union had become a workers' state. The various orthodox Trotskyists believed that this workers' state that didn't spread to other countries was not even a workers' revolution. So that says, we were unorthodox and regarded the Soviet Union correctly as a state capitalist, but we also were motivated by a desire for freedom. We always gave Marx and certainly Lenin and Trotsky the benefit of the doubt, anytime there was a question of whether what they said could be interpreted in a more libertarian democratic fashion or in a more authoritarian fashion. Until we stopped doing that. We were very much influenced by the gay liberation movement and women's liberation movements. Not just for the content of that, but the very spirit of libertarian perspective. At a certain point, we started thinking that we were interpreting Trotskyism and Leninism and Marxism in a libertarian democratic and humanistic working class fashion, and just about everybody else who was a Trotskyist, not to mention the Leninists and Marxists, interpreted them in a more authoritarian fashion, and in a way that they were good. So we thought, "Gee, is everybody wrong? Is everybody marching in the wrong way except us? Or is it maybe that we're wrong? Or, perhaps, we're both right. Maybe there are authoritarian sides, aspects, routing in the ideologies and all the Trotskyists and Leninists around us." This let us reevaluate and certainly in my case, go back to my anarchist roots. As society generally swung to the right after the end of the 60s and 70s, most of our people that were in the Revolutionary Socialist League dropped out of politics, but a few of us turned in an anarchists direction.

TFSR: When interacting with anarchists, did you find that they would bring up, any of Paul Avrich's writing, or Maximoff, or Vo-

TFSR: On that happy note. Thank you so much for the chat, I really enjoyed it.

WP: Me too. Thank you for giving me this opportunity.

TFSR: I hope you stay healthy, you and yours.

WP: Stay healthy and happy.

way of living, a different way of human beings relating to each other, a different way of organizing society. That is what gives me hope.

TFSR: If there are people that might think about a UBI [Universal Basic Income] -type idea as being an alternative or as a positive step forward, we've seen little bits of this with the small portions of the population that have actually gotten a stimulus check. But even in the name, it says stimulus, it's meant to be spent in order to get small businesses running. But do you think that a UBI is anything that actually could get passed? It doesn't seem to sit very well with the revolutionary perspective, does it?

WP: Revolutionaries shouldn't be against all reforms. A reformist is not somebody who's for reforms, a reformist is somebody who thinks reforms are sufficient, who thinks that if we just keep on doing reforms that either that's good enough, or that somehow, by gradually doing reforms, they will evolve into a new society without ever having to make a revolutionary transformation. I am for reform, certainly, the idea of a guaranteed income for everybody is a basic communist concept. For that very reason, I don't think it would pass in this society, such as it is. We can't even get universal health passed. Even Biden was not for a universal health plan. But I'm all for it. We certainly call for it, they can barely get past this little inadequate lump sum payment to the population, while they're putting on vast sums of money for the rich and the big corporations.

TFSR: And all the while the numbers of death in the United States are outpacing everywhere else in the world. We really are the greatest.

WP: We have got the most incompetent government that we've had in decades. It's not inherent to capitalism that such an incompetent government but on the other hand, it is consistent with the history of this country, especially recent history. We've gone from Reagan to Bush, who was not the sharpest pencil in the block to this idiot. So that's been really compounding this disaster.

line, or any of these anarchists that either had been present during the repression of anarchists and the libertarian tendencies in Russia during the revolution or other countries where state socialism or state capitalism had been imposed?

WP: Sure, of course, and we also read some of that stuff. Avrich, who, by coincidence, had been a professor of mine in college. We read his stuff about Russia and started learning more about the Russian Revolution. Going back to reading Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman's accounts, as well as Voline's account of the Russian Revolution and the Ukrainian Revolution and Makhno and so forth. And we got to see that we haven't given Lenin the benefit of the doubt, but in fact that Lenin had created – Lenin wasn't Stalin, he hadn't intended to create a totalitarian state – what he created was a one-party police state, he and Trotsky. Nor did they say, "Well, this is something we have to do because of objective conditions, objective circumstances, civil war and so forth," but rather they came to see it as a principle, the one-party dictatorship. We thought, "This is not what we want. This is not our conception." And so we started reanalyzing what was it about Lenin and Trotsky that had led to this? If you don't give them the benefit of the doubt on everything, you start to see also the authoritarian aspects.

TFSR: So you've gone through this long trajectory in your personal development over the years and you still believe that there's a lot to be learned from at least their progenitors, at least from Marx and Engels and their teachings on economic concepts. For instance, the book that you wrote, *The Value of Radical Theory*, I thought was quite enjoyable and really accessible.

WP: How nice! Flattery will get you anywhere.

TFSR: Can you talk a bit about Marxist economic theory in brief, and what you think a better grasp and engagement among anarchists could bring to our movements and our organizing?

WP: From the beginning, anarchists thought there was something valuable in Marx's economic analysis. More precisely, his critique of political economy. Starting with Bakunin. Somebody has

referred to Bakunin as the first anarcho-Marxist, particularly the historical materialism as a broad analysis of how society functions, and specifically the economic analysis of how capitalism functions, and how capitalism works. And it lays the basis for a working-class orientation, for an understanding of the weaknesses of capitalism and the potentialities of the working class for creating a new society and making revolution. And it shows the positives and negatives of capitalism, what causes prosperity and productivity, and on the other hand, the crises that it's gonna go through, and crises which we are now living through. We analyzed capitalism as having gone through a period of big prosperity following World War II for various reasons, including the destructiveness of the war, the reorganization of world imperialism, the arms economy, the looting of the environment, trading oil, and so forth as the basis for the economy, but treating it as something cheap and not having to pay for the full costs. We could see that this would come to an end, as it did in the late 70s and a general downturn of the world economy began, with ups and downs. And we're now living through one example of the crash of the economy, although it doesn't show itself simply as the economic fracture. The economy is interrelated with other factors, particularly ecological and health, as we see. So I think it's very valuable to understand how the system works. And there really isn't an alternative to Marxist economics, except bourgeois economics. So we regard that as very useful as long as we don't get lost in various aspects of it that turned into an authoritarian direction.

TFSR: I think that the term late-stage capitalism has always rankled me a little bit as a wishful phrase. But I guess if you think about capitalism as cancer, and if we find ourselves in the world that we live in suffering from its latest stage, then that could mean that it's terminal for all of us, or maybe as real existing Marxists claim we're ready for the next dialectical shift of the inevitable end of history. But what can you say about what is coming? In your

left, you have the growth of people calling themselves socialists. Polls are showing that up to about 30 to 40% of the population identifies themselves as being socialist, or pro-socialist. And we saw with Sanders is running a large number of people who were either socialist or at least were willing to vote for somebody who calls themselves socialist. They're pretty vague about what that means. To the extent that there's an actually developed program, it's reformist state socialism, which I think is totally inadequate for the crisis, and at its worst, could lead to state capitalism and oppression. But it shows us a change. There's an opening for a far-left, for revolutionary anarchist socialists, revolutionary libertarian socialists, and libertarian communists to make a point, to argue for their position and organize. If we put ourselves together, if we have an organization, if we build movements to build a really revolutionary perspective that can make a difference. So there's hope. There's great danger, and I have no idea whether this will happen in the time before some terrible collapse or calamity, but there's certainly hope and there are certain things that open things up in the direction of change. So we should look at that positive side as far as that goes.

TFSR: Yeah, the idea of trying to restart the economy, whatever the hell that means. I don't think it's ever really been done from a full stop before, but it seems to open up a lot of possibilities.

WP: That's right. Yes, I think so. People are reconsidering what they mean and what kind of life they want, how society should be organized. And because most people will try to get back to "normal," except it's never going to be another normal. That's what it means, what Biden says like he's gonna get rid of Trump and we go back to normal. Of course, it was that very normal that caused many people to be dissatisfied and to be channeled into support for Trump in the first place. But it isn't going to go back to normal, crises will continue. And that people are looking for alternatives, and it's very important for revolutionary anarchists to be raising their alternatives, to be talking about the possibility of a different

worst of all. This is not a viable long-term strategy. I agree that elections in the short-term could make a difference, but in the long term, this country is not run by elections. It is not elections that make the final difference. It's whether or not there's gonna be a mass movement to fight against the reactionary aspects of society. The Republicans are the cutting edge of the knife of the attack on the working class and oppressed people and black people and women and so forth. But the Democrats are up there on the ballot, they're up there on the knife also, just behind the Republicans. Did I make myself clear?

TFSR: No, I think that's perfectly clear. If you have anything else that you want to talk about, I've kept talking for a while. I really enjoyed the conversation, but I was gonna ask where people can find your work. Is there a platform that you specifically publish on or where people can follow you?

WP: A lot of my articles have been published on www.anarkismo.net. Some articles are published in the Anarchist Library under Wayne Price. I also write for the Utopian journal, and also for the Anarcho-Syndicalist Review. And I have three books that have been published: one book on the political economy and two other books that can be looked up.

TFSR: Thank you very much. Is there anything that I didn't ask you about that you'd mention for the audience or discuss?

WP: I can't think of off-hand. There are so many topics to talk about. Right now we see the system collapsing, for the moment. We're in very bad days. If I thought that the system was going to restore itself, and get back into balance, I'd say that the chances of making a revolutionary change are pretty small. But I don't believe that. I think things may improve, but they'll collapse even further. It'll go up and down. But the long-running trend is one catastrophe after another. And the politics of this country have been showing, reflecting the basic crisis, the middle is falling away. So on the one hand, you have fascists marching in the streets, and a president who can't even bring himself to directly criticize them. And on the

crystal ball, what do you see coming next, or what do you think we should be digging for?

WP: Well, I don't have a crystal ball, of course. What's the phrase... "Marxist economic analysis helps predict nine of the last four recessions." Tools are no better than the workmen using them. I also don't like the phrase late-stage, in the sense that it's often used by the Marxists to say that this is the end of capitalism. And we know that it's the end of capitalism, and we're right around the— And partly that was because they were so inspired by the spread of Stalinism, of state capitalism throughout the world and felt that's gonna keep on spreading until this is over, we don't know. It's ridiculous, we can no longer say that socialism is inevitable, that the capitalist system will turn to socialism, before there's a nuclear war or before climate change disaster hits the world, or before the total collapse of the economy. Nobody can really make that claim now, that would sound absurd. I do think capitalism has a tendency towards its destruction, I think it has reached its limits, in a basic sense, but that doesn't mean that you can predict it. It's like saying that we can predict there's going to be a humongous earthquake in California due to plate tectonics. But do we know when? We don't even know what century it will happen in? Unfortunately, the greatest immediate threat is climate change. And that's bearing down upon us like a railroad train coming down on us in the tunnel. But we can't know exactly what's gonna happen. The system is very flexible, it has been very able to revive itself before every crash. Lenin once said that there's no crisis that the capitalist can't find a way out of. In theory, we don't know. I expect it to get really much worse. I expect that we're facing crashes and collapses due to the climate, health, as well as economic collapse, which we're now seeing. If there's a revolutionary change, I don't know how drawn out it is going to be. That's really impossible to say.

TFSR: Many anarchists avoid painting a clear picture of their visions of alternative economic systems. In fact, many of the most inspirational pictures of anti-authoritarian post-capitalist alterna-

tives that I've come across come from science-fiction stories like *The Fifth Sacred Thing* or *Woman on the Edge of Time*. Drawing back to reality a bit though, can you paint a picture of what you think an alternative post-capitalist economy that you imagine happening and functioning might look like? What some of the moving parts in it might be? Or how it might relate geographically?

WP: We have some ideas. I expect people to in some way form a federation or association of self-managed industries, workplaces, communities, and coordinate with each other and build democratic planning from below, through voluntary associations. Exactly how, I don't know because the key part of the vision is that it's going to be experimental, pluralistic, and decentralized. So people will try out different things, different places, and some places might try to go immediately to full communism. Others might try to use market mechanisms, some areas or regions will be more centralized, others more decentralized. It'll be an experimental kind of society where people are using intelligence and seeing how it works out. The key thing is that it will be self-governing, self-managed, cooperative, organized by the people from the bottom up, flexible, and spread throughout the whole world. At first, of course, the working people will have to take over. I am not against the notion of saying that workers will take power, I am against the notion of the workers taking state power, that is what will replace the existing state will be the self-organization of the people, of the working class, and all oppressed as they move to build a society which has no division between classes, no specialization of who's a manager and who's managed, rulers and the ruled. So, we can think in terms of federations, networks of consumer/producer cooperatives and self-governing communes economically and coordination through councils and assemblies from neighborhood assemblies and workplace councils, replacement of the police and military by a popular militia and armed people coordinating through their councils for so long as is necessary. Something like that. That's very vague. I

money and human effort into campaigning and phone-calling and phone-banking and contacting people. Much of the effort, in fact, is pretty much the basis of the Democratic Party. I would say they are the Democratic Party, except for the fact that Democratic Party does have a membership. But in fact, it's run by politicians and big donors. I advocate for them that what they do as organizations should be to stop supporting the Democratic party or any electoral party and put their efforts into direct action, mass action, union organizing, community organizing, mass strikes, demonstrations, and civil disobedience.

Most of the progress that this country has made has been done through outside of the electoral system, through non-electoral activities. When you think of the 30s' labor struggles, mass strikes that brought us the progressive aspects of the New Deal and the unionization, or the civil rights movement with mass civil disobedience, which is a nice way of saying law-breaking and the so-called riots, or the anti-war movement, which was mostly mass demonstrations and college strikes and civil disobedience and virtual mutiny inside the army, and so on throughout history. These are the direction that I think was more useful than elections or Democratic Party in particular which is the place where mass movements go to die. That's what happens to most mass movements when they get sucked into the Democratic Party to be efficient, and then they're killed off. It's one reason why it's been so hard to build anything right now. I certainly don't deny that the problem with the strategy of voting and supporting the lesser of two evils is that things just keep on getting more evil. The history of politicians in this country, of presidents has been viewed as one reactionary Republican, who then is defeated by a Democrat who is more or less moderate or liberal or whatnot, who is then followed by another even more reactionary Republican, who's then defeated by another Democrat then followed by another reactionary Republican. And we've now gotten ourselves into this whole system, this whole approach is produced now, the very

TFSR: That's awesome. I was gonna bring up your recent piece about the US presidential elections for the Anarcho-Syndicalist Review entitled "An Election in Hell." It took a pretty traditionally anarchist stance on electoral participation, which is promoting abstention and, alternatively, direct action. So while many anarchists say that the parties are the same and that participation doesn't matter, it seems clear that elections deeply affect the people who are most marginalized in our society, whether because of the effects of racialization, gendering, ableism, and neurodivergence, the nation of birth, ethnicity, etcetera and the ways that those lines intersect with class. We also see that the more conservative and reactionary wing of politics in the US, namely the Republicans, is constantly pushing to divest the vote from those groups that I named above in favor of white Christian property-owning straight and cis-men. So it's not really fair to say that elections don't have an impact, right? So I'm wondering if you could bring out a little more about your perspective around the impacts of elections, what participation means, and if it really is unwise to just vote for the least threatening possible, potential enemies as in if we got Sanders and or if we got Biden in, they might be easier to push against or organize against than, say, a Trump?

WP: First of all, I need to be clear, I do not tell people not to vote. That's up to them. What isolated individuals do, whether they vote or not, I really don't give a damn. The likelihood of your individual vote making an impact isn't all that much. And I certainly don't argue with my friends and family and co-workers, when I was working, saying "Don't vote." I certainly wouldn't deny that the Democrats are the lesser of two evils. My argument is really about what should mass groups do, large progressive groupings of the population, let alone mass organizations, what should the unions do? What should the black community as a community do? Other communities of color, Latinx, and organized LGBTQ people? What should the organized environmental movement or the organized women's movement do? These groups put a lot of

know what I'm saying is very brief, but that is basically the vision of a stateless, classless, revolutionary, new society.

TFSR: It seems there's a pragmatism for materialists of various sorts to be pointing to working people as one of the main groups of people that have agency because of their ability to either put down their tools or immediately block production from occurring. But in an economy currently, where so much of the employment that people engage with is not economic. It's not producing food, a lot of that's automated on large farms. It's not manufacturing, where a lot of that is automated or is so globalized that the production doesn't occur locally. Do you think that there needs to be a shift in people's understanding; what's the working definition of the working class or proletariat that you would use?

WP: 80% of the population lives paycheck to paycheck, takes orders from somebody, and doesn't give orders to anybody else. True, the industrialized sector in terms of employment has decreased, though it's hardly gone. Nevertheless, they still produce as much as we ever produced in this country, as you say, partly because of automation. The main point here is that people who don't work in factories work in service industries. The people who work in Amazon, you won't call it a factory, but their work is concentrated in large industrial sites, where they're pushing goods around. That's not counting such things as— A major thing in the news now is the coronavirus spreading to the meatpacking plants, which are big factories and which are central to the diet of the American people. So yeah, a lot of people work or did work in restaurants in small places. But still, most people work for a living, and they work for a paycheck that either is called a salary or wage. And that's still true for most people. Even for those who don't work, the blue-collar or white-collar, or pink-collar for women's categorized work, that's still true and hasn't changed. So we don't have robots running everything just yet. Meanwhile, on a world scale, as you say, one of the reasons for the decrease in certain industrialized jobs is that jobs are going elsewhere. This is not the end

of the working classes. The working class has been restructured. Whereas it used to be that most of the world was peasants, today, most of the world is urban, including the vast expansion of the international working class. That doesn't counter the working class analysis to say that the growth of the working class throughout the world in China, Vietnam, Mexico, Bangladesh, and Africa and so forth. There is now an international proletariat in a way there hasn't been before.

That's not to say that this is the only issue – the exploitation and oppression of the workers – because all issues of oppression are relevant. Just as in the past, in Marx's or Lenin's day, they not only preached or mobilized the workers but also said “the peasants” or “oppressed nations.” So today, every issue of oppression and suffering is relevant, that has to be brought into a revolutionary movement, oppression of women, gay, lesbians, bisexual and so forth people, youth and, of course, the issues of ecology – all these issues. Everything is relevant. But part of this is, it's not a moral thing, that workers are more oppressed than, say, deaf people. If there is a strategic point, who has the power to change things, who has their hands on the means of production and transportation? The state has most of the military power, obviously, although the rank-and-files of the military are sons and daughters of the working class, the workers also can shut things down and start things up again in a different way. So this particular strategic aspect that ties in together with and overlap with every other oppression, it's not like an African-American woman worker, a postal worker is oppressed a certain number of hours as a worker, a certain number of hours as a Black, and a certain number of hours as a woman. It's altogether to one ball of wax. Even when she's not working, she's depending on the income she gets from her job. So these aren't separate issues. They're all interconnected and essential. But the central thing that holds it all together is capitalism and its exploitation because, without the surplus that it squeezes out of the working population, there would be no capitalism, there would be no state,

in having an impact on the scene. So I'm rather proud of that. And the movement continued on after that.

TFSR: I'm sorry for the mischaracterization of cadre, that's how it had been explained to me by someone that I knew who was affiliated with it at one point, that's the term that they had used, but maybe they went towards the Maoist direction themselves.

WP: I think that's somebody's conclusion looking back on it. I don't think at the time we used the term.

TFSR: So you said that you're retired. Was I incorrect in saying that you affiliate with MACC?

WP: Yes. Although MACC is so loose an organization that doesn't have official membership. So I support it and go to participate in it. Study groups and various discussions and activities.

TFSR: Would you call it a synthesist organization?

WP: I don't know, the term implies integrating different perspectives, or even trying to. There is no clear MACC ideology or program. If you regard yourself as an anarchist, you should join MACC. I think we would draw the line and say no anarcho-capitalist. Otherwise, it is pretty open. It's not that there's a deliberate attempt to synthesize different perspectives. It's just a de facto, who joins. It's too grand to call it a synthesis.

TFSR: You mentioned reading groups. What other projects does MACC affiliate with?

WP: They're involved in this support for immigrants, support for prisoners, support and involvement in at least one labor struggle in the city. That's off the top of my head right now, trying to help the formation of mutual aid groups to help people in this time of crisis, spreading the ideas and concepts of a rent strike, there are individuals involved in podcast production Rebel Steps. And a bunch of other things. People try to put together a collection of writings on anarchism, it is a propaganda grouping. A wide range of activities.

their system? While anarchists were influential in various ways during the revolution. One of the reasons, if not the only one, was because they had organized themselves and it was important we should be organizing ourselves.” This is a key idea, they wrote something that they call a draft platform for anarchists. So those who agreed with that were known as platformists, other groups have done various arguments about this proposal. But the basic idea of anarchists organizing themselves, those who agree with each other, the revolutionary anarchists who fight for a program is, I think, an essential point of view. It’s, in this country, particularly raised by the Black Rose Federation. Right now I’m retired, so to speak. I’m not a member of any organization, but I generally support their activities. And I think they’re going in the right direction as far as that goes.

TFSR: Love and Rage, which you were a part of, another federation, did it consider itself a cadre organization? And how does the idea of the cadre relate to shared points of unity around a platform?

WP: We never use the word cadre. Partly, if what you mean by cadre is militants, people committed to revolutionary anarchism, then yes. On the other hand, if you mean people who are highly disciplined and top-down organized, then certainly not. We were a loose Federation, somebody wanted to make it even looser and wanted to make a network, we said we wanted to make a federation based on a program. We put out a newspaper regularly, continent-wide, that went from Mexico throughout the United States to Canada. But there were various political disagreements, and it was a very loose grouping. And the problem with anarchists, of course, is theoretical unity. There were disagreements on that, and also the movement started going downhill for a while. And it fell apart. Some people in Love and Rage decided to look in direction of a more centralized and authoritarian perspective, abandoning anarchism for Maoism. We had a faction fighting side about that those of us who objected to that. So it fell apart. But that was after nine years. For nine years, it was successful, at least

there would be no male oppression, there would be no nothing. So this is, for strategic reasons, a central issue, the class issue.

TFSR: You mentioned ecological destruction as a product of capitalist industrial production. And definitely, a critique of so-called socialist economies was that they were similarly widely polluting, damaging, extractive – or continue to be in the case of China, which still causes half that – and poisoning of human and non-human life. Why would anarchist models of the economy be any different being sprouted from the same soil, even in rejection of liberal capitalism, and same concepts of extraction and looking at the world around us as resources? Are there any more modern anarchist thinkers or tendencies or groups that you feel influenced your thoughts on this?

WP: The point is not the industry as such, the point is capitalism. Capitalism has a drive to accumulate, to quantitative growth, accumulation of value, and surplus value, to reduce everything to the same metric, devalued money, and commodities. And a drive to accumulate, Marx says, “Accumulate, accumulate! That is Moses and the prophets of capitalism.” And that, on one hand, gave it progressive sides, especially in its early days, producing machinery and the possibility of a life of plenty for all. But on the other hand, by definition, it does not fit in, it contradicts the need for an ecologically balanced society, with human beings living in harmony with nature. Under a society of socialist democracy, of anarchy, where the working people run society, they may make mistakes, and they may have areas of conflict with the environment. But there’s nothing inherent in the system that drives it to conflict with the environment. There’s no drive to accumulation, greater quantitative growth, and so forth. So it certainly becomes possible to reorganize the technology and the economy in ways that fit in with the environment. There will be things that have to be produced. Certainly, we will want to bring parts of the so-called third world – Africa and parts of Asia and Latin America – out of the dire poverty, at the same time, the overproduction of commodities, the production

that exists in the imperialist countries, the military production – all that will be unnecessary and can be reorganized. We'll have to reorganize the technology. We start with what we have on the day of the revolution, but then the working people will have to decide how they reorganize. One thing, we want to reorganize it so it's no longer run from the top down by a minority of capitalists or bureaucrats, how to create a democratic self-managed economy. On the other hand, we want to rebuild the poverty-stricken parts of the world, but we also want to create a technology that fits in with the ecology, that makes a cycle where what we use is recreated. The last thing I'd say is that I don't regard the so-called socialist countries as socialist, I regard them as state capitalist because the basic drive to accumulation of capital existed even though there were no stocks and bonds, but there was a collective bureaucracy that served as a center for capital accumulation, and using the state for capital accumulation, which exploited the workers in essentially the same way as the workers have been exploited in the West.

TFSR: And it's interesting to see what the dissolution of those nation-states and economies proper under those terms of being socialist into the post-Soviet era, how much it's a lot of the same people that run the factories.

WP: They just changed one variety of capitalism to another. That's right. And we can see also it fell apart in the so-called Soviet bloc, and the same thing in China, although there it was done more deliberately under the control of the so-called Communist Party. They have a Communist Party, they have a People's Liberation Army, and they have a great deal of government ownership that still exists. Nevertheless, it's so obvious that it's now run through the market and through a capitalist system. It was all done without an explicit revolution. If this had really been a socialist society, and it was counterrevolution occurred to capitalism, then we'd have had some great upheavals and revolutions and it didn't happen in either of these countries.

TFSR: Switching gears a little bit, I'd like to talk a bit about platformism and how it developed, and what it looks like today, particularly in the US. I bring this up because you've written for a while for a website called Anarkismo which is a part of a network. And I'm not sure if you affiliate with Black Rose Federation or any other platformist or especificist organization. But I'd like to learn a little bit about what ways forward to that alternative economy do you see coming from this tendency?

WP: From the beginning of anarchism, there's always been an internal conflict between those who just see themselves as loose individuals and those who see the need for organizing anarchists into a specific grouping, an organization that would raise and fight for a particular program. This goes back to at least Bakunin, who formed the Alliance for Socialist Democracy when he was in the First International. And in fact, that was a major complaint of Marx against Bakunin – the formation of an anarchist grouping inside the organization. And ever since then, there have been those who aim to form an anarchist organization. The question is just how to do it and how decentralized it would be and how federalized it would be. I believe in the need for those revolutionary anarchists who have a general agreement should form themselves into some democratic federation in order to develop their ideas better, in order to coordinate their activities, in order to fight for that particular program. As against, after all, the fact that all the bad guys are organized, the various Stalinists, the Marxist-Leninists, the liberals, the fascists, the reformists – everybody is organized and fighting for their program. And I think anarchists should do that too. Sometimes it's called pro-organization anarchists or dual organization anarchism. Dual because anarchists should organize themselves, as well as participate in broader organizations and groups like unions and community groups, and anti-war movements. So this was the idea raised by Makhno and Arshinov sometime after the Russian Revolution when some of the anarchists got together and said, "Why were the Bolsheviks able to beat us out and create