I first became critical of capitalism while still at school towards the end of the 1950s. At first I thought that the alternative was what existed in Russia. After all, they called themselves 'socialist', the opposite of capitalism. But then I read Milovan Djilas's book, The New Class, which came out in 1957 and showed that Yugoslavia, Russia and so on were not the classless societies they claimed to be (see Box 7.1). At the same time, I read left-wing Labour Party politician Aneurin Bevan's book, In Place of Fear, which had come out earlier, in 1952, and which convinced me that not only did socialism have to be democratic but also could only be established by democratic (electoral, parliamentary) means.

After reading these two books I was convinced that countries such as Russia were not socialist and that socialism could only be democratic. As the Labour Party – and the Trotskyists who were then 'boring from within' it – never had any attraction for me, I looked around for an organisation that was left of Labour but not the Communist Party. In Britain I approached five parties: the Independent Labour Party, the Socialist Party of Great Britain, the Socialist Labour Party of Great Britain (a UK affiliate of the Socialist Labor Party of America), the Fellowship Party (a pacifist party) and the Fife Socialist League (a breakaway from the Communist Party in Scotland).

The two parties that particularly interested me were the Socialist Party of Great Britain and the Socialist Labour Party because, basically, they advocated only socialism as they understood it and, unlike the others, nothing else. It so happened, though I did not fully realise it at the time, that both of them argued that socialism involved the abolition of money – although the Socialist Labour Party wanted to replace it with 'labour-time vouchers' (discussed later in this chapter). The Socialist Party of Great Britain is a 'companion party' of the World Socialist Movement. (Box 7.2 outlines the distinguishing principles of the World Socialist Movement today.)
A MONEYLESS SOCIETY

Any party that advocates only 'socialism' inevitably must have a lot to say about what socialism would or could be like. As I read through the past and current literature of the Socialist Party of Great Britain, I realised that right from its formation in 1904 it had insisted that socialism had to involve the abolition of money. I was introduced to and read the two classics of a moneyless society, Thomas More’s *Utopia* and William Morris's *News from Nowhere* (see Box 7.3). In the end I was convinced that the alternative to capitalism had to be a moneyless society. Further reading led me to the understanding that this was the position of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, despite the claims of the Russian government and its supporters.

Looking back, I think that what attracted me to the idea of a moneyless society was disgust at the methods used by sellers to obtain money. I always used to say (and still would) that an evening watching the advertisements on commercial television (introduced into Britain in 1955) should be enough to put anyone off capitalism, with its tricks, half-truths and patent lies devised to try to sell you things.

In college I studied, among other things, economics and could see that I was being taught an intellectual defence of buying and selling. Economics was defined as the study of the allocation of scarce resources amongst competing needs, with money as the best way to do this. In fact, because needs were assumed to be infinite, scarcity and money were seen as natural phenomena that could never be abolished. I did not agree but that was what I was taught, and what, as far as I know, economics students still learn.

The fallacy put forward by the writers of these textbooks was to beg the question. By defining scarcity in relation to infinite needs they made it impossible to overcome. But this is not a normal definition of 'scarcity' and its opposite 'abundance', which are more normally defined in relation to some actual needs, which are never infinite. But once it is conceded that needs are not infinite (as they are manifestly not) then the whole intellectual structure of economics collapses. Whether or not scarcity – and money – can be abolished becomes a question, not of definition, but of fact. Could or could not enough of the things actually needed be produced? On the basis of statistics produced by such organisations as the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation and the World Health Organisation, and with the elimination of the waste that capitalism involves, not just in arms but in the whole money system, I was convinced that it could be. Therefore, a moneyless socialist society was possible.

WILD CAPITALISM

In the 1980s there was a change in the intellectual atmosphere, as reflected with the coming into office of Ronald Reagan in the United States and Margaret Thatcher in Great Britain. Keynesianism and the idea of government intervention to help people went out and were replaced by the harsh doctrine of unregulated, wild capitalism. The old ideas of Ludwig von Mises that a moneyless, socialist society was impossible were resuscitated. In 1920, in his article *Economic Calculation in the Socialist Commonwealth*, Mises had argued that, while a moneyless society might be able to decide what it wanted to produce, it would not be able to work out the most efficient way to do this; only a system with market-determined prices could. If attempted, a moneyless society would sooner or later collapse into economic chaos. This became known as the ‘economic calculation’ argument against socialism. Mises had been criticising the ideas circulating at the time (and earlier) inside the German and Austrian Social Democratic parties about how to organise the production and distribution of wealth in a non-capitalist society, in particular the view put forward by Otto Neurath (later a noted philosopher) that money would not be needed, as calculations could be done directly in kind. (See detailed discussion of these debates in Chapter 4.)

However, the latter-day followers of Mises had a problem: there was no longer anybody around defending these ideas since the Social Democratic and Labour parties had long since abandoned any idea of abolishing the market, arguing merely for government intervention to regulate it. The only people prepared to take Mises head-on were the Socialist Party of Great Britain; in the 1980s and early 1990s, I spent some time arguing in the columns of *Free Life* (the journal of the Libertarian Alliance) and *Libertarian Student* (its student publication) that the production and distribution of wealth could be sustainably organised without money. I have to admit, though, that the latter-day followers of Mises forced us to think more about how this could be done and to sharpen our arguments. They accused us of standing for a centralised, command economy that implied that all decisions about the production and distribution of wealth would be taken by some central planning office. This is, I suppose, theoretically possible if
it required a very powerful computer but, in the end, we came to the conclusion that it would not be necessary.

**PRODUCTION FOR USE**

The alternative was a self-regulating system of moneyless production for use, which would be responding to real demand (that is, to what people decided they wanted for their individual consumption) as opposed to only 'effective' demand (that is, what people were prepared to buy with money). If a system worked for effective/paying demand, as Mises and other defenders of the capitalist market system claimed, why would it not work for real demand? Much of the work on this alternative system of self-regulating production for use was done by Pieter Lawrence, who drafted the 1994 Socialist Party of Great Britain pamphlet *Socialism As A Practical Alternative*. Another contributor to elaborating this alternative system was Robin Cox. John Crump and I outlined such a system, in 1986, in the final chapter of our book, *State Capitalism; The Wages System under New Management*:

Since the needs of consumers are always needs for a specific product at a specific time in a specific locality, we will assume that socialist society would leave the initial assessment of likely needs to a delegate body under the control of the local community (although, once again, other arrangements are possible if that were what the members of socialist society wanted). In a stable society such as socialism, needs would change relatively slowly. Hence it is reasonable to surmise that an efficient system of stock control, recording what individuals actually chose to take under conditions of free access from local distribution centres over a given period, would enable the local distribution committee (for want of a name) to estimate what the need for food, drink, clothes and household goods would be over a similar future period. Some needs would be able to be met locally: local transport, restaurants, builders, repairs and some food are examples as well as services such as street-lighting, libraries and refuse collection. The local distribution committee would then communicate needs that could not be met locally to the body (or bodies) charged with coordinating supplies to local communities.

Once such an integrated structure of circuits of production and distribution had been established at local, regional and world levels, the flow of wealth to the final consumer could take place on the basis of each unit in the structure having free access to what is needed to fulfil its role. The individual would have free access to the goods on the shelves of the local distribution centres; the local distribution centres free access to the goods they required to be always adequately stocked with what people needed; their suppliers free access to the goods they required from the factories which supplied them; industries and factories free access to the materials, equipment and energy they needed to produce their products; and so on.

Production and distribution in socialism would thus be a question of organising a coordinated and more or less self-regulating system of linkages between users and suppliers, enabling resources and materials to flow smoothly from one productive unit to another, and ultimately to the final user, in response to information flowing in the opposite direction originating from final users. The productive system would thus be set in motion from the consumer end, as individuals and communities took steps to satisfy their self-defined needs. Socialist production is self-regulating production for use.

To ensure the smooth functioning of the system, a central statistical office would be needed to provide estimates of what would have to be produced to meet people’s likely individual and collective needs. These could be calculated in the light of consumer wants as indicated by returns from local distribution committees and of technical data (productive capacity, production methods, productivity, etc.) incorporated in input–output tables. For, at any given level of technology (reflected in the input–output tables), a given mix of final goods (consumer wants) requires for its production a given mix of intermediate goods and raw materials; it is this latter mix that the central statistical office would be calculating in broad terms. Such calculations would also indicate whether or not productive capacity would need to be expanded and in what branches. The centre (or rather centres for each world-region) would thus be essentially an information clearing house, processing information communicated to it about production and distribution and passing on the results to industries for them to draw up their production plans so as to be in a position to meet the requests for their products coming from other industries and from local communities.7

This is still my position.
only by turning it into something alien, something fantastic, so under the domination of egoistic need he can be active practically, and produce objects in practice, only by putting his products, and his activity, under the domination of an alien being, and bestowing the significance of an alien entity - money - on them.\(^\text{11}\)

In some notes made in 1844 after reading James Mill’s *Elements of Political Economy* - which marked the beginning of what was to become a life-long study and critique of political economy - Marx argued that, in private property society, people produce with a view to exchanging their products for money, so that what they produce becomes a matter of indifference to them as long as they can sell it, which mean that money will dominate their lives:

Within the presupposition of division of labour, the product, the material of private property, acquires for the individual more and more the significance of an equivalent, and as he no longer exchanges only his surplus, and the object of his production can be simply a matter of indifference to him, so too he no longer exchanges his product for something directly needed by him. The equivalent comes into existence as an equivalent in money, which is now the immediate result of labour to gain a living and the medium of exchange.

The complete domination of the estranged thing over man has become evident in money, which is completely indifferent both to the nature of the material, i.e., to the specific nature of the private property, and to the personality of the property owner. What was the domination of person over person is now the general domination of the thing over the person, of the product over the producer. Just as the concept of the equivalent, the value, already implied the *alienation* of private property, so money is the sensuous, even objective existence of this *alienation*.\(^\text{12}\)

In these same notes on Mill, Marx explained in more detail how human beings come to be dominated by the products of their own labour, while at the same time giving us a glimpse of how things would be different in a moneyless society:

The essence of money is not, in the first place, that property is alienated in it, but that the *mediating activity* or movement, the human, social act by which man’s products mutually complement
one another, is estranged from man and becomes the attribute of money, a material thing outside man... Owing to this alien mediator – instead of man himself being the mediator for man – man regards his will, his activity and his relation to other men as a power independent of him and them. His slavery, therefore, reaches its peak.\(^{13}\)

This is still fairly philosophical, but the meaning is clear enough: in a ‘truly human’ society (to speak like Marx at this time) human beings would produce things to satisfy their needs, and their products would ‘mutually complement one another’; this movement of products from the producer to those who needed them would not take place via money but would be directly organised under conscious human control; in addition, the value of a product would be the value humans put on it in terms of usefulness or capacity to give pleasure. With private property and production for money, on the other hand, this cannot happen: not only does the movement of products from producer to consumer come to be ‘mediated’ by money, but the value of a product comes to be judged not in human terms but in terms of a sum of money; finally, the whole process of the production and distribution of wealth escapes from human control and is dominated by an alien force, money.

In his now well-known Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844, and in what could be regarded as a prophetic vision of the sort of commercial advertisers’ world we have to suffer today, Marx expanded on the point about the pursuit of money becoming the main aim of life in private property society:

The need for money is therefore the true need produced by the economic system, and it is the only need which the latter produces. The quantity of money becomes to an ever greater degree its sole effective quality. Just as it reduces everything to its abstract form, so it reduces itself in the course of its own movement to quantitative being. Excess and intemperance come to be its true norm.\(^{14}\)

Nobody reading such passionate denunciations of money can be left with any doubt that Marx stood for a moneyless society. Wages were a direct consequence of estranged labour, and estranged labour was the direct cause of private property. He never abandoned his view that money should be abolished through the establishment of a society based on common ownership and production directly for human need.

**BORDIGA**

In 1975, a pamphlet called *Un Monde Sans Argent: Le Communisme* [A World Without Money: Communism] was published in France. The authors argued for the immediate establishment of a moneyless, communist society:

Communism does not overthrow capital in order to restore commodities to their original state. Commodity exchange is a link and a progress. But it is a link between antagonistic parts. It will disappear without there being a return to barter, that form of primitive exchange. Mankind will no longer be divided into opposed groups or into enterprises. It will organise itself to plan and use its common heritage and to share out duties and enjoyments. The logic of sharing will replace the logic of exchange.

The pamphlet was published by a group called Les Amis de 4 Millions de Jeunes Travailleurs [The Friends of the 4 Million Young Workers], who were influenced by Situationists and, above all, the later writings of Amadeo Bordiga (1889-1970).\(^{15}\)

Bordiga had been, before the First World War, an active and prominent member of the ‘intransigent’ wing of the Socialist Party of Italy. Intransigents opposed reformist trends within the socialist party. Bordiga pointed out that, for Marx and Engels, socialist society involved the disappearance of money, buying and selling, wages, the market and all other exchange categories.

Marx distinguished three stages after the capture of political power by the working class: a transition stage, a lower stage of communism and a higher stage of communism, the last two of which were both to be non-commercial and non-monetary. For Bordiga, both stages of socialist and communist society (sometimes distinguished as ‘socialism’ and ‘communism’) were characterised by the absence of money, the market and so on, the difference being that in the first stage labour-time vouchers would be used to allocate goods to people, while in full socialism this could be abandoned in favour of full free access.

Bordiga was adamant that socialism did not mean handing over control of the use – and thus effective ownership – of individual factories and other places of work either to the people working in
them or to the people living in the area where those factories or places of work were situated: 'the land will not go to peasant associations, nor to the class of peasants, but to the whole of society'.

Schemes for 'workers control' were not socialist demands. Socialism, Bordiga always insisted, meant the end of all sectional control over separate parts. Social classes and the political state would eventually, in the course of a more or less long transition period, give way to the rational administration of human activities, nonetheless 'a stateless economy'.

Bordiga took the view that administrative posts were best filled by those most capable of doing the job, not by the most popular; similarly, what was the best solution to a particular problem was something to be determined scientifically by experts in the field and not a matter of majority opinion to be settled by vote.

Bordiga was a vigorous critic of all forms of so-called 'market socialism', whether this took the form of the state's replacing private capitalists but retaining the enterprise form (as in Russia) or of various schemes for 'workers control' of enterprises.

A system of commercial exchange between free and autonomous enterprises... is even a step backward compared with numerous sectors already organised on a general scale in the bourgeois epoch, as required by technology and the complexity of social life. Socialism, or communism, means that the whole of society is a single association of producers and consumers.

Instead, Bordiga saw production in socialist society as being organised through a plan established by the central administration and drawn up and executed exclusively in physical quantities of useful things without having recourse to any general equivalent, neither money nor labour-time. Bordiga expected that in socialism the level of production would eventually become relatively stable, which would make planning routine. Production would probably even decrease, as compared with capitalism.

Only goods that could be consumed more or less rapidly would be made available (obviously without charge) for individual consumption; all other goods would remain social, to be used in accordance with the arrangements society would make for their use. In socialism, houses would not be owned, but simply occupied by those who lived in them. Bordiga preferred to speak of consumption being social in socialism rather than individual. Although individuals would be free to choose which particular goods to take, not even in full socialism would individuals be able to consume whatever they might feel they wanted to; they would only be able to consume whatever society had decided should be available for individual consumption.

The description of future society given here evidently earns Bordiga a place amongst those advocating a non-market society to replace capitalism but, in view of the 'non-democratic' character of the administrative structure which he envisaged future society as having, the question of the extent to which it can be regarded as socialist must be seriously faced. Bordiga does not seem to have realised the extent to which restricting decision-making to a minority within society, even to an elite of well-meaning social and scientific experts, conflicted with his definition of socialism as the abolition of private property.

The technocratic aspects of Bordiga's 'description of communism' were ignored by most of those influenced by him. Thanks in part to the writings of Bordiga, the realisation that socialism is neither state ownership nor workers' control of enterprises engaged in profit-and-loss accounting (whether in money or labour-time) has been encouraged, particularly in France, Italy and Spain.

WHERE LETS FAILS

If you listen to the enthusiasts they can recreate communities, cure unemployment, undermine the multinationals and even provide an alternative to the global capitalist economy. What can? LETS or Local Exchange and Trading Systems can. This is what the enthusiasts said when they became popular. First, from Haverfordwest in Wales, Harry Wears:

I'm really enthusiastic about LETS. I think it's the most exciting mechanism for social change I have ever come across. In LETS, debts don't accrue interest and there is no pressure to pay. A LETS cheque can't bounce, nor a LETS business go bust. LETS sees money as a symbol but, unlike sterling, it can't be manoeuvred to the detriment of the people using it.

Then, from Southwark in London, Donnachadh McCarthy:

It is a system to recreate a community economy which we were losing because of multinational companies and big supermarkets. Money which comes into Southwark is used once and then leaves via the banks which use it to finance projects elsewhere.
And Ed May of the New Economics Foundation:

With mass unemployment in Britain many people have the time but not the cash. LETS gives them access to things they would not otherwise have.22

Finally, commentator John Vidéal:

The implications, say the theorists, are enormous. In a cash-starved economy (one in five British households is severely in debt), despite the existence of wealth in the form of skills and resources, traditional exchange is hijacked by a lack of cash. With local currencies, as long as people make their goods and skills available, their exchange can go round and round. ‘The community therefore becomes richer,’ says Paul Ekins, a green economist.23

It is, of course, absurd that people who need things should go without even though the skills and resources to provide for them exist. I can go along with the LETS enthusiasts in denouncing this scandal of unmet needs alongside unused resources. The difference is that, while both of us criticise money, LETS enthusiasts answer ‘yes’ to the question, ‘So, you want to go back to barter?’ while I would answer ‘no’. They want to retain exchange and trading with some new kind of money; I want a society based on common ownership geared to producing things directly for people to take and use in which exchange and trading, and money as the means of exchange, would be redundant. (Box 7.4 outlines ways that labour vouchers function, and the World Socialist Movement’s position on labour vouchers.)

Return to Barter

LETS are essentially local barter clubs. A group of people with varying skills get together and agree to exchange services that they can provide with any other member without using money. Records, however, have to be kept. Each member has an account and when one member’s services are used their account is credited with the exchange value of that service while that of the user is debited by the same amount. What normally happens is that each member is given a sort of chequebook, which they can use to pay for other members’ services either at a published price or as agreed between the two. Clearly, for all this, a unit of account is needed. Some schemes define this unit in terms of labour time. Others tie it to the pound. The accounts could in fact be done in pounds but generally the unit is given a special name. In Britain, in Bath, it is an ‘oliver’, in Brixton it is a ‘brick’, in Reading a ‘ready’, and so on.

Do LETS really allow people, as is claimed, to bypass money and so have ‘access to things they would not otherwise have? Two unemployed people with different skills can always barter their services. Thus an unemployed plumber can repair an unemployed electrician’s central heating in exchange for some rewiring by the electrician. A LETS is merely an extension of this: the plumber or electrician joins a barter club and gains access to a wider range of potential clients as well as access to a wider range of reciprocal services. Too often, though, services include things like aromatherapy, holistic massage, tarot reading and other such New Age fads not normally needed by the unemployed. So, it’s an alternative to placing cards in newsagent’s windows or relying on the grapevine to learn about work opportunities. As such, like the black economy, it’s a way of surviving in the capitalist jungle but that’s all. But, do not LETS help create a ‘local community spirit’? Maybe, but no more than any other local club.

Small is Small

The trouble is that the idea has been hijacked by all sorts of currency cranks and funny money theorists who see it as the basis for an ‘alternative money’ and an ‘alternative economy’. They overlook two important facts.

First, the activities covered by LETS, such as repairs and personal services, can all be carried out by a single individual and in the normal money economy could be done by self-employed people working on their own. In fact, from an economic point of view, LETS club members are acting as self-employed; a LETS is a club in which self-employed individuals barter their services. It could never extend beyond this to productive activities that require expensive equipment and plant and a large workforce – such as, precisely, the manufacture of the things that LETS members and the self-employed repair.

Second, there are definite limits to the size a LETS can attain. The biggest in Britain has only 300 members. If it got much bigger than this the administrative work of recording all the transactions would grow and could no longer be done by voluntary or part-time labour; people would have to be employed to do it, which would add to the running costs of the scheme and have to be shouldered by
the members. The membership fees and transaction charges already levied by the scheme would rise. At a certain point this would cancel the advantages of being in the scheme and members would find it more convenient to re-enter the money economy and resort to newsagents' windows and contacts.

Funny Money

What most of the currency cranks who have latched on to the LETS idea envisage is converting the units of account the schemes use (such as olivers, bricks and readies) into a real money that would circulate. In fact most commentators, such as the journalist John Vidal, refer to the LETS units of account as 'currencies', but this is misleading. They are not money; they do not circulate. They only exist on paper or computer disk as a record of transactions. In fact LETS are more cumbersome than using money. After all, with a real money that circulates, an individual account of a person's exchange transactions does not have to be kept.

Some of the advantages claimed for LETS units also apply to cash. So when Harry Wears says (in the quote above) 'a LETS cheque can't bounce', this is true, but neither can cash. Similarly, when it is argued that people have an incentive to use LETS credits – and that when they accumulate them this does not give them any power to manipulate other people – as they do not pay interest, the same applies to cash. A large LETS credit balance is no more useful than a hoard of cash.

What is being advocated as the ideal is a money that cannot be accumulated and cannot be lent at interest, with LETS units being seen as the formula to achieve this. But such an 'alternative money' is never going to come into being because it would be worse than existing money. If you have an exchange economy (which LETS enthusiasts accept, as in the full name Local Exchange and Trading System) then conventional money is the best means of exchange. Not only does it allow many more exchanges to take place than barter or a modified form of barter like LETS, but also the payment and receipt of interest facilitates more exchange.

Banks are not, as some LETS theorists (along with the traditional currency cranks) suggest, villains who interrupt the normal circulation of money and goods by not making money available to match needs and resources unless they are paid a tribute in the form of interest. Banks are financial intermediaries, who borrow money from people who do not want to spend it immediately and lend it those who have something to spend money on but no money of their own. Naturally banks take precautions to ensure that they are going to get back any money they lend, but the overall result is that they help keep money circulating and exchange going. To want to keep exchange but do away with banks and the taking of interest is unrealistic in the extreme.

The way to end the scandal of unmet needs alongside unused skills and resources is not to retain the exchange economy while trying to get rid of some of its effects by reforming the money system. It is to get rid of the exchange economy altogether by establishing a society based on the common ownership of productive resources where goods and services would be produced directly for people to take and use and not be exchanged, or bought and sold, at all.

The Environment

A monetary economy gives rise to the illusion that the 'cost' of producing something is merely financial; indeed the word 'cost' is so associated with financial and monetary calculation that we are obliged to put it in inverted commas when we want to talk about it in a non-monetary sense. But the real cost of the pencil I'm using to write this is not 50 pence, but the amount of wood, graphite, labour, energy, and wear and tear of machines used in producing it. This will continue under socialism. Goods will not grow on trees, but will still require expenditure of effort and materials to produce them.

The point is that under socialism this expenditure of effort and materials will be estimated and calculated exclusively in kind, directly in terms of wood, graphite, machinery wear and tear, electricity, and so on (including working time). Socialism is concerned with conserving resources and will select productive methods that, other things being equal, use fewer materials and less energy. However, this will be only one factor taken into account in deciding which technical method of production to adopt.

The argument between monetary calculation and calculation in kind is not merely a technical argument about how to calculate and what units to use for this, but is an argument about the real meaning of words like 'value' and 'worth'. In socialism it is not the case that the choice of productive method will become a technical choice that can be left to engineers but that this choice too will be made in terms of the real advantages and disadvantages of alternative methods and in terms of, on the one hand, the utility of some good or some project in a particular circumstance at a particular time and, on the other hand, of the real 'costs' in the same circumstances and at the same time of the required materials, energy and productive effort.
To advocate monetary calculation is to advocate taking only one consideration into account when producing goods and making decisions about which productive methods to employ. This is patently absurd but it is what is imposed by capitalism. Naturally, it leads to all sorts of aberrations from the view of human interests, in particular ruling out a rational, long-term attitude towards conserving resources, and it imposes on the actual producers intolerable conditions—such as speed-ups, pain, stress, boredom, long hours, night work, shift work and accidents.

Socialism, because it will calculate directly in kind, will be able to take into account these other, more important, factors than production time. Naturally, this will lead to adopting different, often quite different, productive methods than under capitalism. Certain methods will be ruled out altogether. The fast-moving production lines associated with the manufacture of cars would be stopped forever (except perhaps in a museum of the horrors of capitalism); night work would be reduced to the strict minimum; particularly dangerous or unhealthy jobs would be automated or completely abandoned. Work can, and in fact must, become enjoyable and safe.

Since materials and energy, and work to the extent that it is not interesting and creative but only routine, are real ‘costs’, the aim will be to minimise them. Methods of production too will only change slowly. This will make decision-making about production much simpler. The alternative to monetary calculation in terms of exchange value is calculation in kind in terms of use values, of the real advantages and real costs of particular real alternatives in particular real circumstances.

The death of the commodity will be the beginning of a truly human society existing in harmony with the rest of nature.

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Box 7.2: On the World Socialist Movement

The World Socialist Movement:

- claims that socialism will, and must, be a wageless, moneyless, world-wide society of common (not state) ownership and democratic control of the means of wealth production and distribution;
- claims that socialism will be a sharp break with capitalism, with no ‘transition period’ or gradual implementation of socialism (although socialism will be a dynamic, changing society once it is established);
- claims that there can be no state in a socialist society;
- claims that the vast majority, acting consciously in its own interests, for itself, by itself, can create socialism;
- opposes any vanguardist approach, minority-led movements, and leadership as inherently undemocratic (among other negative things).
Box 7.1: Conversation from William Mead's London News: News From Norway.

It is clear from all that we have said about the progress of civilization that the sustained rate of increase in the production of goods, which has produced a world-scale system of relations, has been called the World Market, and that this market has forced us, for convenience, to go on making more and more goods, whether we need them or not. So that some of them will not be used, but will be turned into currency, which becomes and becomes the capital of the world. Of course, the workers have equal importance in this world, and we are right to tell these workers that they work for the sake of themselves, and not for others.

Yet, and there, and...
b. The number of labour vouchers paid per hour depends upon the difficulty or desirability of the work performed.

2. Temporary or Permanent?

Labour vouchers are a temporary means. The assumption here seems to be that people do not work for nothing, and that without some sort of economic reward for work, it will not be done.

Labour vouchers will be particularly useful in non-market socialist societies which need some method of remuneration for work. Without people being paid for what they do, there can be no assurance that the goods and services of society will be produced in the quantities and qualities required.

3. What about those who do not or cannot work?

a. Basic necessities should be free to all.

b. Enough labour vouchers should be given to those who do not work (or don't work enough) to ensure that everyone (at least those who can work) is able to earn a living.

c. Enough labour vouchers should be given to those who cannot work (by reason of old age, illness, or other incapacity) to ensure that they can afford sufficient food, clothing, and perhaps more.

4. What about non-traditional work, or work not paid with labour vouchers (housework, art, etc.)?

a. Pay for housework, art, etc. as extensively as possible, with an 'income' work (possibly including difficulty factors, etc.)

b. Pay for art based upon desirability, how many people want to use or value the artist's work.

c. Straight exchange, art is purchased with labour vouchers for whatever the buyer and seller agree upon.

Can labour vouchers circulate?

a. No. Once a purchase is made, the labour vouchers are destroyed, or must be returned through labour.

b. Yes, they appear to have two who believe that labour vouchers should circulate like money, but there are those who believe that they can be 'invested' (although not for profit, proponent argue), or that when something is purchased, the seller could use them for their own purchase.

Why the World Socialist Movement Opposes Labour Vouchers

- Labour vouchers were designed to maintain the idea that our human needs are determined, by how much or how many goods we can own or use. Vouchers require administration. Labour vouchers imply that someone must police who takes the goods produced by society, a waste of human labour in socialism.


NOTES

All italics in quotes are preserved from the originals.

8. This section draws on Adam Buck's 'Marx: money must go', Socialist Standard, September 1983.
10. Ibid., p. 170.
11. Ibid., pp. 172, 174.
13. Ibid., p. 212.
15. This section draws on Adam Buck 'Bordigism' in Maximilien Rubel and John Crump (eds), Non-Market Socialism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, Houndmills: Macmillan, 1987.