

A Brief What, Why and How of the Popular Action Movement

What:

Look upon the “**Popular Action Movement**” (**PAM**) as being the New State. Unlike the current State this new state would be us, the people ourselves, organised. There should be no State that stands above the people (us) and governs them: for “they” in fact are “us”. There should be no departments and ministries¹. Yes, there have to be folks who are designated to do various jobs and to get things done but there should be no administration, no management personnel. In other words, we are not describing a protest movement here. Nor are we describing a political party. Thus the programme becomes: How do we provide goods and services for ourselves? How do we want to control the ownership of private and capital property? Do we want to outlaw interpersonal exploitation? We have to get used to thinking as a free people rather than as petitioners who beg them to do things for us. We are interested neither in begging them to look after us nor in voting for which people will look after us. We have to get used to being free and having to figure these things out for ourselves. We will figure these things out in the process of doing them.

Why:

For some time now, in fact for longer than we really want to know, but especially for the last ten years and intensifying over the past four or five years, there has been a marked concentration of wealth in the hands of very few people. Entities referred to as Corporations are drawing the wealth of society into themselves. This concentration of wealth has been accompanied by very little actual wealth creation with the result that most people have been getting poorer while a few people have been getting much richer.

Where is this wealth coming from and where is it pooling? In general wealth is flowing away from wage and salary earners and towards people who are deemed to own capital. The situation is more nuanced than this of course. Corporate financial entities are gaining control over most of the wealth and the people who control these financial corporations are directing the use of this wealth. In other words there is a group or class of people who work for wages and salaries and a group or class of people who control and direct the wealth of the nation. (There are also people who partake of both aspects and also those who fall beneath the entire process.) The two sets or classes of people mentioned first thus have an

¹ This introduces the question of “line command”.

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antagonistic relationship with each other and have different interests. The folks controlling the wealth understand these things. Most of the folks being stripped of their wealth don't understand these things. Most of them (us) don't want to understand these things. In fact, many working people don't even want to be considered working people, and in spite of every sign of a shrinking personal and social wage deny that this drift of wealth away from themselves (ourselves) is happening. Many folks who acknowledge that it is happening claim that this drift of wealth into the hands of trans-national bankster cartels is a good thing. Or folks claim that nothing can be done about it: we can work to overcome the worst of the consequences but the process itself is untouchable and unstoppable (the NDP line).

Although most people know and understand, very few will acknowledge that the concentration of wealth in the hands of the very rich is a political decision, agreed to and supported by all of the major parties in Canada, and in fact does not have to be happening. Let me repeat: the impoverishment of working people is actively (actively) sought by all of the major parties (Libs, Cons, NDP, Bloc) in Canada. The mass media support the impoverishment of working people. Most of the supporters of the impoverishment of working people don't claim to be supporters of this policy. The supporters of the concentration of wealth in the hands of fewer and fewer and fewer people mainly pretend that it is not happening, or that it has to happen, or even that it is a good thing.

Furthermore: Capital has to return 5% on investment; if the economy is not growing at 5% or better the money can't come from the pie getting bigger but rather has to come from some sector of society other than the bankster sector. It comes from a variety of places: the public sector through cut backs and profitisations; it comes from working people through the destruction of decent jobs and their replacement with low paying jobs and through the slow robbery of inflation; and it also comes from the industrial and commercial capitalists who are now the servants of the banksters. Social programmes are robbed. State owned businesses, for example water, electrical, gas and medical delivery have to be profitised. The Third World has to be increasingly impoverished and their resources stolen. Countries with a large social sector: the National Socialist Ba'athist regimes, Eastern European countries, Iran, North Korea, China and so on have to be destroyed and their state enterprises, mineral resources etc. have to be internationalised and profitised. Their social programmes have to be wiped out. These activities are on the agenda of all major political parties in North America and most in Europe. The European governments are pursuing these policies even though they were elected not to.

When folks say that these policies have to be followed and that the best we can do is to minimise the damage they are partially correct. They are correct unless one is willing to strike at the cause of all of this destruction and suffering: the rule of Capital over Labour (called the Dictatorship of the Bourgeoisie).

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Let's return our gaze to Capital Stripping the State. This process is quite far advanced in the United States of America. The National Debt continues to rise. The interest on the National Debt for the month of June 2006 was US\$ 98,255,216,240.82 . There will come a time when they can't even afford the interest on the debt.

It is our contention that the system in the U.S. of A. will be destroyed by the forces of Capitalism itself. Capitalism is beset by periodic crises of overproduction which lead to crises of unemployment. These crises are chronicled. We know when they happened, the events leading up to them, the severity and the duration etc. Everyone (and their dog) is predicting that a very serious recession (maybe even a depression) will begin very soon. This one will damage the system beyond repair but will not destroy it. It will take two more downturns in the economy, each one more severe than the previous, to destroy this system. In other words we are three downturns away from the end of the system. One will happen almost immediately and two more will occur with eight to twelve years between them. As State services terminate chaos will develop.

This is where **PAM: The New State** comes in. There has never been a situation where poor people have made a Revolution to overthrow rich people. That is a romantic fantasy. A Revolution occurs when the Rich and Powerful do not control the State: for example, the English Revolution 1642 – 1649, the French Revolution 1789 – 1793, the U.S. Revolution 1776 – 1783.

The other time a Revolution can occur is when the State ceases to function owing to general collapse of State Institutions: for example Russia 1917 – 1919, China 1924 – 1949. (At present there are several Revolutions going on in remote areas of the world where there is no effective State presence.)

We are building the **Popular Action Movement** now, so that it can be an organised force when the Institutions of State Power dissolve sometime between 2020 and 2050.

One should also take into account that the nature of the State is changing. Under pressure from Capital to profitise the services provided by the State, it is returning to its pre-1860's nature, that is a bare skeleton. Before the mid-nineteenth century the State owned very little and did very little. What there was of Social Services were mainly run by the Church. There was no Post Office. Many roads were private. Much of the army was private. We can look forward to a pre-Victorian State. That is, a small group of people who award contracts to each other. Areas of the country which prove to be unprofitable: roads up North for example, or certain services: pensions and affordable housing for example, will just cease to exist.

These services will only exist if the people (we) do it. In a failed State situation Capitalists will take the cream. For example there will only be a postal service

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where it makes money. Hospitals and procedures will only be found where they make money and only rich people will be able to use them. Services will be a business like any other and will only be found where there is a return on investment. Also we will have to be organised enough to compete with global Capital in those areas in which they are profiting, that is where they will still be found.

Further, Working People will also have to contend with Local Capital moving in to replace Global Capital. Local Capital merely replicates the system and renews interpersonal exploitation only with a lower living standard and less efficiently.

Coping Mechanisms and our self-willed decay:

Two mechanisms employed by folks in the face of shrinking real wages, generally disguised as rising prices, are to do without and/or to go further into debt. People under thirty-five or so often find themselves going without. They often don't know that they are going without because they aren't fully aware of the sorts of options that were available to people in their situation twenty years ago. Houses, holidays, travel, home furnishings, wardrobes, cars and other toys for adults were more readily available. Higher education was open to a wider strata of society and upon completion the graduate was left with a smaller debt, more options and generally greater buying power.

Folks in their twenties find themselves tasting fewer of these pleasures and/or building a greater debt for themselves in order to have them. Their debt is accumulated mainly in the quest for a higher education. Other aspects of experience/acquisition are indulged in to a lesser extent than they were by people a generation ago. This is often true in the case of purchasing a house and of family life in general. For their part, older people often are drawing down the equity on their houses in order to maintain their "middle-class" life styles.²

² The rich getting much richer and the poor getting much poorer are even stronger trends in the U.S. than they are in Canada. It should be noted that all three major political parties in English Canada (as well as the Bloc in Quebec) want Canada to integrate to a greater extent with the U.S. economy and to become more like the U.S. socially, politically and economically. With no force opposing and every force encouraging greater similarity and integration we have to assume that this is the way of the future. We can expect, at least over the next ten years, that we will become more warlike, have greater differences between rich and poor, have less access to health and education, higher unemployment, more people in jail, more crime, more racism, more interpersonal brutality, more pollution and more carcinogens among the many other benefits that being like Yanks will bring: including being hated by the rest of the world. The Conservatives are all over this. The Liberals are into "deep integration" and the NDP is convinced that becoming like Yanks will solve the problems in Auto, Steel, Lumber, Beef, Base Metals and advanced technology. And you know that this note is true.

Thus we can assume that the road we are on, that of the ruin of the working and middle classes, will continue and even accelerate. We are all agreed that the only option for Canada and Canadians is to copy the U.S. social and economic model. We should tie ourselves to the U.S. so that Parliament is no longer sovereign. We should be governed by treaties between the two

The Result of these Coping Mechanisms:

Doing without, cutting back and going further into debt are non-sustainable mechanisms for the maintenance of a thriving economy.³ These non-sustainable coping mechanisms are the only reactions available to us as the objects of history.⁴ But in fact these reactions, these coping mechanisms, serve merely to undercut still further the already faltering economy. The economy is driven by what is referred to as effective demand. In other words, the housing industry is not driven by peoples' need for houses but by people with ready cash who want to buy houses. That is, for the demand to be effective it has to be able to be put into effect. Without cash (or credit) there is no effective demand.

Throughout the first half of 2006 we saw the debt levels of the consuming public approach credit maximums. This emerging trend became more distinct in July of 2006. The financial statistics released in July 2006 suggested that the demand for autos and houses is weakening. It is the opinion of many economic analysts that we will see a deepening of this trend as 2006 proceeds. It is highly likely that the trend will accelerate. In fact it is very likely that we are slipping into a major recession.

The problem of the concentration of wealth by the very rich and the impoverishing of most of society is continuing and is supported by the two major parties in the U.S. and by the four major parties in Canada. There is no reason for this trend to turn around. Over 99% of the voters in Canada and the U.S. support it. It will continue. It will destroy our society. In twenty or thirty years the social fabric will tear.⁵ The roads will fall apart. The school systems will cease to exist. The hospitals will close. In fact health care will cease to exist. The

countries rather than by the laws of our land. In other words Congress trumps Parliament. Thus we can posit a future in Canada controlled by the destiny of the U.S.

The problems faced by Canadians with respect to health care, education, falling wages, increasing unemployment, jailing of people because they aren't white, increased interpersonal brutality etc., etc. are more acute in the U.S. Over 99% of English Canadians support Political parties that work towards greater integration of Canadian Society into the social and political norms of the U.S. It will happen. There is absolutely no doubt about it. Ask Martin. Ask Layton. They are totally in favour of the "Americanisation" of Canada. It will happen. It is happening. It will continue to happen.

³ One should note how anti-popular that sentence was. That is the type of wording one finds in essays on political economy. That's because most essays concerning political economy are written by hirelings of the ruling class who don't concern themselves with the plight of the masses. A popular essay such as this one written for and by working people has different concerns. We don't look at the economy as some sort of computer model in which we juggle parameters. No, we look at how we can control the levers of production, and in harmony with nature, provide for our needs: physical, emotional, social, intellectual and spiritual.

⁴ We seek to be the subjects, the actors. We have to make history and fashion our lives. We will no longer merely re-act to our circumstances. We will create our circumstances.

⁵ An explanation of how this estimate was arrived at appears later in this document.

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lights will go out. Food will not come through from the South. Fuel will be unattainable. This does not have to happen. It is merely a political decision. Or political programme. One that is promoted by all four major political parties in Canada. One which almost every voter supports. It is a political decision that over 99% of Canadians and Yanks are in favour of. It will happen. We are witnessing the Fall of Rome. It is self willed and self caused. Everyone seems to support it and everyone supports political parties that are promoting it. It is very bazaar.

Self Organisation:

Thus our survival depends on our ability to organise ourselves to provide for ourselves. In other words to take our future into our own hands and to become actors rather than objects. As the current supply and command lines fall apart new ones will take their place. Thus we have an opportunity to replace a failed system of alienation and exploitation with a democratic collective response. One in which Labour rules. One in which millions of people can organise themselves without a new clique taking over.⁶

Our organisational norm must be Democracy. We are attempting, as individuals to work out our individual salvation. We are coming together not to acquire new supervisors and new bosses but to enhance our personal liberation through a pooling of resources. Further, and just as important, to live a full life in this climate people have to live in a community. Yes, for periods of time one can exist alone, but heavy jobs require many hands.

We do not seek security, comfort and a social wage through collective action in order to be brought under someone else's control. In fact one's struggle against alienation is just as important as one's struggle against economic scarcity. Many of us will gladly give up some worldly comfort in order to live a freer less alienated life.⁷

These reasons and many others spur us on to build Democracy into any collective response to social or economic problems. Let's unite our desire for a

⁶ A headline concerning the Zionist war-crimes in Lebanon read "Vigil in Liverpool Fails to Stop Bombing". And yes the article was even better. We are not alone in understanding that actual functioning structure on the ground, for example a Bicycle Co-op, is more valuable than peace Marches. If I were a police agent I would organise peace Marches. They keep radicals from doing something useful. As someone said to me "But we have to do something! Well Marches are next to nothing. Oh yes. Have a Peace March. They are lots of fun. Even in bad weather. But don't confuse them with getting organised. Only through the Democratic Organisation of our Class will we get anywhere.

⁷ Alienation comes in many sizes and models. One form that bedevils Canadians is alienation from community: we are often isolated individuals lacking the reality of Social Solidarity.

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self-actualising existence with Democratic practice, that is, let's achieve Democratic Praxis.

A Democratic Starting Point:

We have to start somewhere. Over time, with trial, error and reformulation, we will (hopefully) come to a Democratic framework for our new community. Or maybe we won't. If we fail there is a good chance that others will be able to build on our attempt. You can look on this as progress.

Democracy is both impossible and unnecessary when dealing with few people. Democracy really comes into itself when the number of people involved in a project is larger than the number of people one can interact with on a personal level. At that point it is inevitable that some people are going to be more equal than others unless Democracy is enforced through each person's internal discipline augmented with a structure which encourages Democracy. If you see that as being idealistic, well consider the fact that folks can talk with one another, and, if Democratic processes are considered to be the operational norm, then if people with special responsibilities repeatedly disregard the wishes of the masses, the masses themselves have to disregard the actions and policies of that/those non-Democratic folks. Which is to say folks must follow an intentionality of Democratic behaviour.

Let us then start by considering the organisational structure of an organisation with around a hundred members. I pick 100 because that is obviously more people than one can relate to on an interpersonal basis⁸. If one wishes to be able to maintain media, energy, food and educational facilities it is easy to see that more than a dozen folks are going to have to co-operate without taking advantage of each other. There are 4,000 buses in the Montreal Transit Authority. If it is to be run Democratically some sort of structure will be required.

There are break over points. For example a person can maintain relationships that are close and egalitarian with, at the most between 8 and 13 people. Some of us through circumstance, personality etc. can stretch upwards towards 13 people. Most of us however, fall somewhat shy of that number. How then can 100 people co-operate without hierarchies developing? Furthermore if there are between 21 and 33 people in a room it is just barely possible to run a meeting Democratically without some folks losing out. Some people speak better in public. Some people are shy or feel that what they have to say is not as important as what some other people have to say. How then can we possibly have a meeting attended by 100 people without the loud mouths taking over?

These are real problems which to date almost no movement or group has been able to solve.

⁸ Also because an organisation is impotent until it reaches a membership of around a hundred.

So let's break the situation down to the smallest number of people who if they really really tried could possibly get along without an inner and outer circle forming: without two classes forming. We are back to the limit of an organisation of between 8 and 13 folks. We can't provide for ourselves with that small an organisation. We couldn't even operate the London Transit Commission. We would still be buying necessities from trans-national corporations, private capital or the State. Any of these "solutions" would lead once more to alienation and to wealth being transferred out of our community. Alienation, exploitation and oppression would follow⁹. God Almighty, how many times in the 20th C. did we see that scenario play itself out. So a political programme that can not build Democratic consensus among more than a dozen people is useless. A social-economic-political programme that, whether by default or on purpose allows the continued existence of the current socio-economic-political model is useless.

So here is the problem in a nutshell. The upper limit for a functional egalitarian group seems to be around 8 to 13 people. On the other hand a political unit that small can't functionally accomplish anything. The **Popular Action Movement** is posited as being a new State. Thus our hypothetical size is roughly the same as the population of Canada. There are, in fact, very few actual capitalists who matter. Most successful changes of State isolated about 7% of the population. That is the norm established by the French and Russian Revolutions. I don't know this for sure but the English Revolution most likely isolated less than 1 % of the population and merely removed political influence from the governing strata. The NDP has 100,000 members but is unable to affect our quality of life. It can help a little bit, say in quantity: higher pensions, lower university fees, somewhat better health care. But it's a game of inches. Our basic alienation and exploitation remain. The problems outlined at the beginning of the paper remain. I'm referring back to the ongoing fall in our standard of living and the very real possibility, perhaps even inevitability of a general collapse of society. On top of that there is the alienation and exploitation inherent in the system.¹⁰ In other words eight people acting alone can't save themselves, let alone the world. This unit of eight or so people has to find a way of federating with other similar units so that the Democratic federation gains the strength of unity without giving up the immediacy of Direct Democracy.

We have to develop both a form and an intentionality in order to achieve and maintain Democratic norms of behaviour. The group of let's say 12 people has to delegate two servants or messengers who will carry the messages of that dozen people to a convenor. That convenor will consult with messengers from three or four of these dozens and of course the agendas which emerge from these consultations will be returned to the dozens. To-ing and fro-ing might have to go on before everyone is satisfied but the numbers are small enough so that

⁹ Partial definitions of these words will follow in due course.

¹⁰ Yes , that's right, those violins in the cistern

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no one would be left out so long as the dozens themselves are vigilant, that is, in the final analysis each and every member should make sure that the representation is functioning.

Necessary conditions for the functioning of this fundamental grass roots Democracy include, but might not be limited to the two messengers being loyal to the people who send them. Further, they can't operate for outside forces but must maintain internal loyalty and solidarity. They must be chosen by and be responsible to their little core group. These messenger/servants have to speak personally to each person they represent on a regular basis. E-Mail doesn't cut it. Phone calls are out. There has to be person to person in person communication so that there can be no mistake about the message or the messenger. Two people between them can service and represent 12. That 12 includes themselves. At this stage of the game this is a difficult task and therefore the number of people that each messenger is responsible for will be somewhat less. This is caused by the fact that we aren't, at this stage, consolidated. The messengers don't come into contact with the folks they are responsible for in the ordinary course of events. Thus the task weights more heavily upon them than it will when most of the folks one meets in the course of a day are in **PAM** and these tasks will be carried out without any extra effort by the messengers.

Three or four (at the most) of these groups can co-operate and pool resources for projects. A Unit with a maximum of around 36 people can be built. The leading figures in this group would be the six (or eight) messengers carrying the thoughts, wishes and desires of the membership at large, a convenor who directs and co-ordinates the group meetings making sure that every person has equal access to be heard and that the agenda is not captured by a clique. The convenor is also a servant of the membership but obviously not a messenger and therefore does not put items on the agenda any more than any other member. There should also be a secretary-treasurer. Everything the sec'y-tres does must be monitored by the messengers.

However, even 30 to 40 people can't run a power generation system, a public transit system, a food chain or an educational system. Industry would be impossible. A telephone system would be out of the question. Pharmaceuticals and health care would not exist. Every one with heart or kidney problems would die. Even setting a broken leg would be a dicey job. Eye care and dentistry would not exist. We would have to take at least a 50% death rate. Setting up decentralised small collectives might improve the lives of the people in them but they do nothing for society at large. They do not, in any way, question the system. In many ways, like reformist politics, they actually reinforce our subservience to the Trans-national Corps and the Banksters. They are nice but they aren't a political response that counts (matters).

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In order for the forces of Democracy to actually run the system there will have to be active co-operation amongst and between these units of 30 or 40 people. Core Democracy can be maintain so long as the messengers remain loyal to their groups of 12.

Inter Unit Co-operation:

We can await the Fall of Rome due sometime between 2020 and 2050. If everyone does nothing to prepare for such an event perhaps some 20,000,000 Canadians will die.¹¹

On the other hand we can figure out a way for these proposed Units of 30 to 40 people to co-operate in some sort of federation without exploitation or oppression. This way we will be able to keep the lights on and our houses heated. We will be able to maintain a functioning food chain; maintain and develop the Arts and Sciences; keep the buses running; maintain garbage and recycling programmes; etc.

Let us return to the model that we were developing: 100 people working together in harmony without interpersonal systematic oppression. Let us posit that the organisation be divided into three Units so that each Unit would have two messengers for each dozen or so members plus a convenor and sec'y-tres. Each Unit would also have two delegates to a committee that would maintain lines of communications amongst and between the Units. It is this "committee of delegates" that allows the organisation with 100 members to function in a co-ordinated manner.

Larger Groups of People and the Transformation of Money into Capital:

Most socio-political groups seem to spend a large proportion of their money on self-promotion. (The exceptions to this are to be found among the ethnically based groups). We, however, are building a new society and are capitalising

¹¹ I have written in other places, and will do again and again until you are sick of it, about business cycles and the problem of family, city, state, corporate and federal debt in the U. S. of A. This is not the place for a digression based upon the crises of overproduction given the current social arrangements in the U.S. The U.S. is currently entering a severe downturn in the economy from which they will never truly recover. Two more will follow each one worse than the preceding. The timing of these events can not possibly be known ahead of the events. This time around hundreds of thousands of folks will lose their jobs, standard of living, pensions, etc. The government will be on the ropes financially and many services will be dramatically cut back. Cities in the U.S. will burn in the summer of 2008. Things can only get worse after that. The U.S. is, don't forget, "post-industrial".

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ourselves. Indeed we really require the propaganda of the deed¹². In our case that would be working models of worker and consumer co-ops. Very little can be done with money an organisation (say, for example the **Popular Action Movement [PAM]**) collects whilst it has fewer than a hundred members. Any income in those circumstances would be used as the delegates to the Centre agreed. They would have to clear their spending policies with the Units which delegated them of course.

Let us now take a leap into fantasy. The fantasy we are about to explore (or one similar to it) will have to come into existence or else we will be in dire straits after the current regime falls apart. This fantasy deals with the concept that a self-defence organisation capable of focusing considerable energy and “capital” might actually develop. This organisation would be able to supply life-support services for a very significant sector of the population, that is for its own members. People would be taking care of themselves/each other. In other words as the present system bankrupts itself we will be able to restructure without millions of people having to die.

Let’s assume that 100,000 people, in other words an organisation about the size of the NDP, were to group themselves into Democratic self-protection Units. In this hypothesis all numbers are approximate. When I say 100,000, I mean a number in that region. Apply this concept of “approximate number” to all subsequent numbers. I am trying to demonstrate relative sizes in an approximate manner.

In our outline above we put forward the organisational norm of 12 (or so) people in Democratically structured “dozens”. We then went on to develop how 30 to 35 people (or so) could form Units made up of the “dozens”. Each Unit of 30 (or so) people would choose two delegates to a co-ordinating committee. If we were to divide 100,000 by 30 we would come up with approximately 3,400 Units. Since we have called for two delegates from each Unit and since one can’t have a Democratic meeting of more than 35 people no matter how hard you try, the number we come up with is too large to be manageable. Thus we would have to form approximately 225 co-ordinating committees. Each of these would be structured exactly like the original Unit. With each of these sending two delegates each to Regional Committees we would end up with approximately fifteen Regional Committees and thus one Inner Committee of 30 people. Or to rewrite:

Dozen
Unit
Co-ordinating Committee
Regional Committee
Inner Committee

¹² It is unfortunate (but necessary) that, at present, our meetings are so dominated by structural and programmatic details. This is meant to be a **Popular Action Movement**. We are quite wanting in action at the moment.

Look upon these as being circles within each other.

Who Spends the Money?

Here we go. Into the dreadful details. The Dozen and the Unit, may if they want, hold fund raisers for their own events and activities. Dues and general revenue of the organisation will, however, be split between the Co-ordinating Committees and the Regional Committees. The Inner Committee may hold bake sales etc. if they want. The key is that entry level organisations should not have disposable income. Income should be pooled so that larger projects can be undertaken. It is very easy for a special interest faction to use a Unit's income for their own purpose and to bleed the organisation so that the main purpose of the dues is thwarted. Likewise the Inner Committee should not have access to the organisation's funds. Money at the Centre is a corrupting influence and under mines the ability of the organisation to actually, in real terms not just rhetorically, act as a federation of self-governing sections.

The Organisation will divide its money into Three Purses:

1] Group Capital:

One third of the Group's Income, after membership is more than around 100 people will go on Group Capital. This means buying capital goods to be owned by and used by the group (*i.e.* to be owned by the organisation as such and used by members of the organisation): buildings, large colour printer, equipment for trades-folk, etc. Or they could be things owned by the group and rented to members: ladders, canoes, sound and light equipment, etc. The point is this stuff should make a return on the investment for the organisation and further job or recreational activities of the members or provide goods or services for members of the organisation. These moneys might (see below) be investments in other capital holdings, that is buying into existing capital formations or going in on something with members or group of members. Group Capital in alliance with Private Capital is dodgy. Much care would have to be exercised. For example the capital involved should be material not a financial instrument¹³. It should be local and easily controlled and monitored by the organisation and members thereof. Examples of this might be a building, bar/club, studio/exhibition space, video production facilities, camp grounds, etc. See below for a discussion of the organisation's attitude towards interpersonal exploitation.

¹³ This brings up the issue of financial instruments, debt, interest and the empires built upon these constructs. In due course solutions to these questions will have to be found. For the time being we should avoid finance capital. We may find that all financing will have to be done by the State, that is by **PAM** and a policy of deflation followed. Interest will have to be forbidden.

Group capital essentially builds the socialised sector of the economy. It should be noted that one might think of this as the “nationalised sector”. However the nationalised or crown corporation is not socialised unless the state is run by the working class. This has been pointed out for a hundred and fifty years. When the Tories nationalised Hydro they did not become socialists. No, they were just providing an infrastructure to benefit capital. Group capital builds the resources of the Group (the new state). However the group is founded in Democracy and has an anti-exploitation, that is pro-working class, orientation.

2] Member Capital:

One third of the organisation’s money, with the same provisos as above, would be Member Capital. As with the Group Capital above this does not include operating capital. Operating capital is best filed under “expenses”. Groups of members grouped into co-ops would get preference and workers’ co-ops would get preference over consumer co-ops. See a discussion of this below. Worker Co-ops/Group partnerships would rank the highest. These capital grants to members would be in the form of forgivable loans. In other words the organisation would fund member owned businesses with preference given to co-operatively owned businesses. See below for a discussion of the corporate model.

3] Expenses:

One third, and only one third of the revenue collected and generated by the organisation after it achieves a membership of around one hundred people will go to expenses. THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT. Most political movements and parties, social and support organisations, protest groups etc. spend almost all of their money on expenses. Most of it seems to be for publicity. **PAM** strives for the propaganda of the deed. Actually fund workers’ co-ops. Actually build an alternate infrastructure. Also we must make sure that most of our expenses are not self-promotion. It is very important that the organisation actually provides services. Health, education and other social services: pensions, affordable housing etc. come to mind. We have to become the State.

A Quick Look at Three Words: Exploitation, Oppression and Alienation:

Exploitation:

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One exploits to gain an advantage from. For example, one would exploit the natural resources, or a loop-hole in a tax law but one would not oppress them. Like wise one speaks of capital exploiting working people. In other words, money is made through the labour of others.

Oppression:

Oppression is a consequence of unequal social relations between people. If one set of people have a superior social position backed up by force or social convention (etc) they can oppress the other folks, e.g. treat them poorly in some way. There are of course varying degrees.

Alienation:

Books have been written about this. The concept in this idea is that something is turned away from its proper functioning in a relationship. For example, one can be alienated from one's work (or labour, or creativity) if the manner of doing the work and the product of the work are beyond the control of the worker / labourer. One can feel / be alienated from a situation, for example aspects of a social situation or society.

Other Words:

Certain words are showing up in our agendas these days.

Group Work:

These are tasks having to do with the functioning of the group itself. There are three kinds of Group Work.

1] The administration of the **PAM** itself. In other words the tasks assigned to the messengers, convenor, sec'y-tres and when the time comes the delegates.

2] Running a **PAM** owned and operated "company".

3] Engaging in Movement (Political) activities originating inside of PAM and directed for PAM members, e.g. film or lecture series, or a camping trip (etc.), or an action directed to the outside, a social or political campaign of some sort.

Mass Work:

Same as point [3] above only on the basis of individuals dealing with individuals some (or one) inside of **PAM** and some (or one) outside of **PAM**.

United Front Work:

This is **PAM** as a group working together with other groups or group as groups.

Popular Front Work:

Same as Mass Work only on a grander and more organised, “official” basis with perhaps agreed upon guide lines.

Strictly speaking, United Front and Popular Front work are variants of Mass Work, only larger, more formal and more programmatic. Also, what with the **PAM** being a proto-state rather than a movement or party all of these terms should apply to work inside of the **PAM** and work outside of **PAM** would be External Affairs. If and or when reality reflects proposed reality the terms will have to be adjusted to take this point into account.

Quasi-Structural Questions:

First the Question of Wage-Slavery:

This is a key issue. Chattel Slavery has been abolished. It was never a big deal in Canada anyway with no more than 20 slaves at any given time in Canada’s remote colonial past. These were all household servants of rich French aristocrats and were not part of the economy as were the chattel slaves of the U.S. South who were in fact farm hands (as well as those who were servants). (field niggers and house niggers)

Today Wage Slavery is the dominant mode of production under the Capitalist system. Capital exercises a Dictatorship over Labour. Many people support this arrangement and get very upset at the very idea of overturning it. One does not even have to mention overturning the Dictatorship of the Bourgeoisie. The fact that someone, somewhere at some time actually suggested that Labour could turn the tables on Capital, that the expropriators could themselves be expropriated is enough to drive some defenders of capitalism crazy.

However, what we are attempting to do here is to build an alternate society. A self-defence organisation. There are all sorts and conditions of people who

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would combine together for mutual aid: some who would support the Liberation of Labour and some who would not.

Thus we will have to have an incredibility wide range of responses to present economic perils. Why, over there, there are folks who would ban wage slavery. And, way over there, there are folks who would have **PAM** give grants to members who would like to set up businesses using current business models. Wow. I circulated a first draft of this document in which I defended the latter view. I heard about it. That's for sure. So I circulated a second draft in which I sided with the folks who would ban wage slavery. And then I meditated.

In fact, although I would like all slaves to be free can we put that forward as a funding requirement in **PAM**?

We are saved by the federative nature of **PAM**. Since funding lies with federative parts and since the Centre does not control funding and since decisions have to be authorised by outer rather than inner circles then delegates are beholden to those who choose them, rather than by those they choose. So a variety of responses are possible.

I expect that there will be a Regional Committee or at least a Co-ordinating Committee that forbids inter-personal exploitation. There might be another that does not forbid it but will not fund it. And of course we can expect that many, if not most, sections of the organisation will not only permit petty bourgeois involvement but will also give start up and expansion capital grants to them. We can imagine this especially with regard to the Trades: plumbers, machine shops, print shops etc. In fact we can see refinements of these policies. For example, funding a privately owned print shop only if it is Unionised. Funding a Trade so long as the employees are also getting apprenticeship training, etc.

Lines of Command vs. Peer Supervision:

In the previous section I tried to outline some of the various responses available in coming to terms with wage slavery whilst maintaining a working class perspective. Here I am trying to come to grips with the problem of line command. We have even less experience in dealing with the problem of line command. In fact the main enemy of an egalitarian society is not Capitalism. Capitalism is in the process of collapsing and if it requires a push to help it topple I'm sure there are many people who would be glad to be of assistance. Here we are dealing with line command. This is one of the chief support mechanisms for Bureaucratic Collectivism.

No matter how Democratic the State might be. No matter how carefully we preserve Democracy within the political organisation, all will come to nought if the other aspects of our society remain anti-Democratic. (That's right Anti-

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Democratic. The struggle against Wage Slavery is only one aspect of the struggle of the Democracy against the Anti-Democratic forces, as seen from a working class point of view.) It really is a struggle. Above all, we don't want to suggest that certain things, say interpersonal exploitation and line command, are O.K. now but will be phased out. That in itself creates two class of members: those who are O.K. and those who are sort of O.K. But we must take some sort of working class stand. The working class does require its own organisation. I would like to be part of a working class organisation. We will just have to tackle the problem of funding the petty bourgeois when the time comes. After all it may happen a few times and then just not be approved of after awhile. All grants, after all, will have to receive Democratic out in the open approval, and the willing support of the masses.

Like wise the problem of line command. Please meditate on this problem. As stated earlier, it is, in many ways, much more threatening than Capitalism. We will be undone if we work for companies with lines of authority designed to suit this current authoritarian society.

Line command in the armed Ministries, for example the Armed Forces and the Forces of Law and Order, also undermine Democracy. These processes are incompatible with Democracy. Neither cannot exist in the same State for more than a couple of generations.

Although line command in any corporate structure is dangerous, one can readily see that this is the case in Health and Education. Indeed, although this is a different topic, the corporate model itself is also incompatible with Democracy. There will most likely be sections of **PAM** that will outlaw Corporate Structure.¹⁴

I'm not sure where this is leading or what the structures will be like that we discover along the way. I don't know how to go this far. Believe me, I spend more time than anyone I know working on these problems and I have discovered no sources to fall back on. Yes, there have been many writers/philosophers who have argued for social arrangements similar to those promoted in these pages but no one seems to have penetrated beyond vague revolutionary rhetoric. We are breaking new ground. No words have actually been developed to communicate our ideas. This political direction is without an adequate label at present. Many folks are fairly sure how to achieve Democracy around one hearth. Some very good paradigms exist for establishing Democracy around a collection of hearths. The outline above for the structure of **PAM** is the only workable solution I've seen for a collection of a collection of hearths. When you unpack other models they turn out to be Vague Revolutionary Rhetoric and Liberal Idealism. But we are more comfortable with that aren't we?

¹⁴ For the record: A Co-op works on the premise of one person one vote. Corporate organisation works on the premise that the more capital a person has the more votes they get. Co-ops are designed to protect and represent the needs of people. Corporations are designed to protect and represent the needs of Capital.

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People should not be enthralled to authority structures, lines of command, bosses, etc. Since capital will be required for some time to come we have to discover ways and means of controlling Capital outside of Capitalist norms. There are a few years between now and then. Let's figure this one out together. Otherwise our work will fail after a couple of generations.

The Collapsed State:

PAM is the New State. But it is a **Collapsed State**. By that I mean that there is no superstructure outside of the masses. There can be no Ministries standing outside of PAM. No bureaucracy standing outside of PAM. Decisions of State will be made in the Units, Co-ordinating Committees, Regional Committees and the Inner Committee. There should be no line command. **PAM** is the State. The State is **Pam**. The State is the Organisation outlined above. The Civil Service, then is limited to the people who actually get things done. The health care workers, the teachers, the road crews, the garbage men and so on. And these people are members of their Dozens and Units, which is where the decision making will actually be done. Where the Power will actually reside. These are difficult concepts. That is these concepts are difficult to conceive of. Consider a single person. They would be in their dozen and themselves or a buddy would be the messenger bringing their views to the convenor and the group's thought to them. This political kinship might be based upon "casual" friendship, work associations, professional associations, hobbies or sports, place of residence etc. In other words a person could associate with the organisation in one of several ways. However on top of the primary association that person might work in a workers' co-op in which others associated as their primary association. You see, no one has tried to work this structure through in practice. The practice will define itself.

At present we all serve the person through which the money follows: straight capitalism. In some situations we work in more than one place and therefore partake in more than one command chain. If we go to school there is a command chain there as well. When we confront Civil Authority we confront another Command Chain. When we talk to a politician they are supposed to obey us but they don't. They are beholden to a power chain that they won't tell us about. Therefore they give us the run around because they can't / won't admit to the public, their supposed boss, who the real boss actually is.

Most likely it will take us a couple of tries at least before we can successfully confront and overthrow the Command Chain system.

Finance Capital vs. Industrial and Commercial Capital:

Imperialism has been defined as the situation obtaining when Finance Capital trumps Industrial Capital. We have dealt with the political complexities surrounding the question of inter-personal exploitation especially at the point of production. Although we have been relatively silent about it, that also introduces the question of alienation from our creativity. Going beyond that there is the bankster community. It is the banksters who control the Globalisation agenda. Most of the so called trade in the world is in financial securities and debt instruments¹⁵. In this era of decadent capitalism the folks who make, wholesale and retail stuff are small potatoes compared with the gangs of loan sharks. Let's go beyond retailing debt. Let's talk about wholesaling and creating the credit itself that is fronted to the banks and that they loan to us. What are the mechanisms through and by which credit is created? Think in terms of bond issues in hundreds of thousands of billions of dollars. Derivatives are pre-packaged debt.¹⁶ This is what "free trade" is about. Six months and out.

¹⁵ In fact the biggest trade item BY FAR these days is pre-packaged debt.

¹⁶ The chart on the next page is of unregulated over-the-counter trades in derivatives.

TABLE 19
AMOUNTS OUTSTANDING OF OVER-THE-COUNTER (OTC) DERIVATIVES
BY RISK CATEGORY AND INSTRUMENT
(In billions of US dollars)

Risk Category/Instrument	Notional amounts					Gross market values				
	2003 December	2004 June	2004 December	2005 June	2005 December	2003 December	2004 June	2004 December	2005 June	2005 December
TOTAL CONTRACTS	197,167	220,058	251,499	271,282	284,819	6,987	6,395	9,244	10,417	9,139
Foreign exchange contracts	24,475	26,997	29,289	31,081	31,609	1,301	867	1,546	1,141	998
Outright forwards and forex swaps	12,387	13,926	14,951	15,801	15,915	607	308	643	464	407
Currency swaps	6,371	7,033	8,223	8,236	8,501	557	442	745	549	452
Options	5,717	6,038	6,115	7,045	7,193	136	116	158	129	139
Interest rate contracts	141,991	164,626	190,502	204,795	215,237	4,328	3,951	5,417	6,699	5,463
Forward rate agreements	10,769	13,144	12,789	13,973	14,483	19	29	22	31	29
Interest rate swaps	111,209	127,570	150,631	163,749	172,869	3,918	3,562	4,903	6,077	4,864
Options	20,012	23,912	27,082	27,072	27,885	391	360	492	592	570
Equity-linked contracts	3,787	4,521	4,385	4,551	5,057	274	294	498	382	560
Forwards and swaps	601	691	756	1,086	1,111	57	63	76	88	105
Options	3,186	3,829	3,629	3,464	3,946	217	231	422	294	455
Commodity contracts	1,406	1,270	1,443	2,940	3,608	128	166	169	376	523
Gold	344	318	369	288	334	39	45	32	24	51
Other commodities	1,062	952	1,074	2,652	3,273	88	121	137	351	472
Forwards and swaps	420	503	558	1,748	2,319	-	-	-	-	-
Options	642	449	516	904	955	-	-	-	-	-
Other	25,508	22,644	25,879	27,915	29,308	957	1,116	1,613	1,818	1,595
Memorandum item:										
GROSS CREDIT EXPOSURE	-	-	-	-	-	1,969	1,478	2,075	1,897	2,003

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Although this is a discussion of a peaceful process: a federation of self help and mutual aid communities it is, in its own way, a guerrilla war. The first stage is a hit and run situation. In our case this is the situation of the isolated mutual aid group. The second stage is that of defending a liberated zone. This is the stage of owning land and productive abilities. The third stage in a traditional guerrilla war is going over to the offensive. For us that would be defining our own means of exchange. In the meantime we will continue to have bank accounts, deal in CDN\$, use credit cards, write cheques, have student loans and mortgages.

But the time will come when we will have to deal with the question: in what does value reside? The time will come when we will have to confront questions such as: is interest permissible? How do we prevent our earnings and savings from being rendered valueless through inflation?

We have just begun to figure out these things out. The time is past when we could indulge in Vague Revolutionary Rhetoric and Liberal Idealism. **Pam** is a serious political movement. As a state coming into being, it must address all of the questions a state must address plus more: we are also engaged with the questions of Exploitation, Oppression and Alienation. See above.

Driven Insane by Activists:

In many small militant groups people are driven. There are always more causes crying for attention than there are hours in the day. And the militants are forever phoning you up and urging you to come to one more demo, to sign one more petition, to go to one more meeting, to see one more movie, play, art opening, hear one more speaker and to give one more donation. As Capitalism collapses, as it sinks into barbarism these calls become more frequent and more urgent. And fewer and fewer will be able to respond. We are working longer and longer hours. The buses are less frequent or the car breaks down because it's older. The stresses on us individual working people trying to get through the week and find some time for ourselves mount. And the chattering classes chatter. And devise ways in which they can become the new bosses. I'm including in this not merely the N.D.P. as most people do, but also the so-called Communist and Trotskyite groupiscules. You can't get to Anarchy from here. North American anarchists are mainly petty-bourgeois driven into a frenzy by capitalism. This is important. Listen to them talk, from Social-Democrats to Marxist-Leninists – they are going to free us. They are going to run society to benefit us.

But as stated many times above, **PAM** is the New State. As such it is inclusionalist. Not exclusionalist. Most people will have something better to do. Thus the messengers will carry the wishes of the silent and absent to the meetings.

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Mobilisations of the masses at critical historical moments have a duration of three years maximum. Thus if a mobilisation is called too soon the masses will have burnt out before the issue comes to a head. People will want to get back to their children, careers, rose gardens, stamp collections and sweethearts.

Thus we should establish a rule of thumb that only one member in four¹⁷ is an activist, one activist in four is a militant and one militant in four is a cadre. The messengers carry news and opinions to and from the members at large and the meetings. Thus if all of the members of the State have to be consulted on an issue everyone can have personal input within two or three days without a meeting of more than 35 people having to be called. Peoples' Democracy. The Organisation must not weight heavily on the shoulders of the members. It has to be an agent of Freedom. We are attempting to make government Democratic and inexpensive without it becoming a burden on our time.¹⁸ Indeed the messengers, ideally, should meet the folks they are representing during the course of a month without gong five minutes out of their way. A messenger should be representing a work-mate, class-mate, fellow in a bowling league, the guy in the next apartment, etc.

O.B.U:

Yes, of course the **Popular Action Movement** is the **One Big Union**. Although is has not been decided to limit membership to working people, the general line is that systematic Exploitation, Alienation and Oppression will not be overcome until the cause of these woes, Wage Slavery, has been abolished. Thus the organisation advances the demands of working people as working people. As the organisation grows it will be able to bring the support of the class to working people locked in crisis situations vis-à-vis Capital. Although the political philosophy behind **PAM** has, as yet, no name, **PAM** as **OBU**, like other Unions of this nature, would not seek certification. Our goal is not to seek strength through a decree from the present state but rather to seek strength through the solidarity of its membership. This would play itself out in scenarios such as nothing in, nothing out of a Struck location: the hot cargo rule. This would be supplemented by consumer boycott, easier in a wholesale situation than a retail one obviously. If workers' grievances in a certain employment situation have become intolerable then the masses of our class should have nothing to do with that employer as a matter of course.

The Brief Outline:

¹⁷ Or should that be five? We don't know at present. Time will tell.

¹⁸ Please note, however, that a Capitalist State is very expensive and as such we spend many many hours per year working for the government not for ourselves. Don't know for sure, but the average worker mostly likely spends over 50% of his work time working for the State. The proposed State would cost perhaps one tenth as much as our current Capitalist State.

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The preceding was a brief outline of the concept. Obviously more was left out than was included. Much work, indeed years of work and (social) experiment are now required in order to fill in the blanks and to work out a functioning system. Let's begin the voyage.