

## Ch.2 Associationism: the new social democracy from below

### Brief outline

This chapter describes and critiques associationism in the High Income Countries. It highlights the differences of associationism from traditional social democracy, and analysed how this change was underpinned by the wave of economic stagnation from the 1970s and capital's neoliberal offensive. It describes the diverse initiatives and forms which have been developed 'from below' as a response to the material and psychological depredations of neoliberalism, and examines some of the academic underpinnings of the new social democracy and associationism. It explores some tensions, contradictions and failures in the practice and theory of associationism, explains why the associationist economy cannot expand to replace capitalism. Associationism fails as a strategy for emancipation because it ignores, and seeks to sidestep, the dynamics of capital accumulation and the conflict between capital and labour.