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BULLETIN MATTERS

DB42 was blessed with an excess of material, and as a result we have had to hold over short articles by R.A.S. and Bob Black as well as my unwritten reply to John Zerzan. The "Review of Periodicals" appears in an abbreviated form, and we have several pamphlets that deserve at least the short reviews we publish in our "Publications Received"
department, which is also absent from this issue. While I'm at it, I should add--partly to reassure the authors--that we still have long articles by Kamunist Kranti, Wildcat--now Subversion, and Steve Coleman. Perhaps the solution is to go to a 28-page DD.

But as always we solicit your articles and letters, the life blood of discussion. Keep in mind that the page size in DD is reduced by 20 percent, so please type on 8 1/2 by 11 inch paper with narrow 3/4 inch margins and single space.

Frank Girard
for the Discussion Bulletin Committee

REVIEWS OF PERIODICALS

Here we review what we regard as the periodicals of our political sector in rotation as space permits. Below is what we intend as an exhaustive list of such journals in the English language. If you have ideas for additions--or deletions, for that matter--please let us know. Those titles followed by an asterisk are regarded as being in our political sector but suffering from the Leninist virus of "dictatorship of the partyism":


LIBERTARIAN LABOR REVIEW: Box 2804, Champaign, IL 61825; published twice yearly, 8 1/2 by 11 in. 41 pp. Subs. $5 (US) per year. LLR is an independent anarchosyndicalist journal, the staff of which has ties to the IWW. Number 8, Winter 1989-90, contains the information that IWW members were then voting on a referendum to begin negotiation with the AIT-IWA for the purpose of possible affiliation. Other articles discuss the growth of anarchosyndicalism in the East--"Anarcho-Syndicalist Tendencies in Russian Labor," "Anarcho-Syndicalism Reborn in Soviet Union," and Hungary: Creation of an Anarchist Movement." Also in this issue is an interview with Noam Chomsky, "Building a Free Society," in which Chomsky presents a view of capitalism and the state with which I think no one in our political sector would differ. He also expresses a view of the new anti-authoritarianism which few of us would question. Unfortunately his views on how to reach that goal do raise questions and help to explain his ongoing support of radical, reformist groups and publications. This five-page interview conducted by Jon Bekken, is well worth reading.

LITTLE FREE PRESS: Rt. 1, Box 102, Cushion, IA 50623. Billed as "Food for thought since 1969," the LFP is a series of essays and

Cont'd on p.24
CAN DB READERS TURN THINGS AROUND?

Before publication of DISCUSSION BULLETIN, I never realized there was such a diversity of working class groups, theories and opinions about the state of the world and its inhabitants. I welcomed the DB because it was like a breath of fresh air to be exposed to and challenged by the social concepts expressed by others.

Now DB continues to be a valuable clearing house of ideas though I wonder how the DB committee has time to wade through the staggering variety of groups and volumes of information now published or reviewed.

I must confess that I cannot assimilate nor see the relevency of many ideas expressed in DB. In fact, I confess to suffering from the modern affliction called "information overload". The usual cure is to turn off information sources. This is probably the avenue chosen by many workers who see the need for change but are turned off by the mass of conflicting ideas promoted by advocates of change.

Recognizing that the purpose of DB is to exchange ideas on reconstructing society, my own approach for information overload is to exclude from consideration those ideas which do not directly impinge upon social change.

Events in the Eastern Block show that political change can be handed down from the top. Not so with social change. Social change comes about by a revolutionary class seeking and grasping the next rung in the social ladder. While the working class may not regard itself as revolutionary (it still looks mainly to leaders for solution) it is a historic fact of life that there can be no basic societal change unless that working class makes it.

Some of us in the working class have acquired a consciousness of the impending struggle to build a new society. We see the working class weak and dis-oriented; un-organized and dis-organized. Every day we see our own living standards erode, along with that of our class, as we go from defeat to defeat in resisting the encroachments of ruling class domination.

The vital question is "HOW DO WE TURN THIS THING AROUND"? Let's start with what we know to be true. Workers have much collective experience but that experience of bitter struggles has not given them revolutionary directions. One of the reasons is the confusion and adverse publicity sown
by various advocates of change.

Remember the old propaganda. SOCIALISM WILL DESTROY THE FAMILY; SOCIALISM MEANS FREE LOVE; SOCIALISM WILL DESTROY INDIVIDUALITY; SOCIALISM MEANS VIOLENT SOCIAL CHANGE.

Where did these and many more come from? Mostly furnished by the kooks that are normally attracted to movements of social change; some of it was created by agents of capitalist forces. Whatever the source, it provided ammo for the Capitalists who blew it to such proportions that it obscured thinking about meaningful social change.

How have we reacted to these kooks who furnish ammo for Capitalist propaganda and thought repression? The old Socialist Labor Party approach was to exclude them from any association with the party or its members. This was changed in the late 70's by allowing limited dialogue and exchange with various groups.

So long as we can afford, I like the DB approach better. What do all of our ideas look like in full daylight of exchange. I restate my pivotal concern which may be shared by DB readers—"HOW DO WE TURN THIS THING AROUND FROM WORKING CLASS APATHY TO SOLIDARITY AND CONSTRUCTIVE ACTION FOR SOCIAL CHANGE?"

In future DB issues I hope to address the matter of working class apathy, why it exists, and the vital question of what we (the classconscious ones) can do about it. I hope other DB contributors will address this question, especially those trained in behavioral sciences.

I hope all groups and individuals advocating social change will be prepared for the day when workers are no longer apathetic. Workers' attitudes can change overnight as in the 1930's with sitdowns, 1968 in France, the Solidarity movement in Poland.

In each potential revolutionary moment the workers found shortcomings in their own organizations. Workers had taken possession of factories and had gained some popular support. They searched for practical answers like, WHAT DO WE DO NOW? WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE? Nothing came together for them as a Program that they could immediately apply to their situation.
In a potential revolutionary moment, the workers must go forward and consummate the revolution or reaction will set in. A worker's group which has not developed a clear program to answer workers' questions—WHAT DO WE DO NOW—is not serving workers' interests.

Let's prepare for the next revolutionary moment NOW. Let's assume that each DB reader/group has been given half an hour to address the workers of the nation. In two by four English which any worker can clearly understand, what is the goal (WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE) and what is the path (WHAT DO WE DO NOW?) for workers who want to organize a revolutionary social change. If we cannot answer these questions, what purpose do we serve?

Dear DB:

As an "involuntary" member of the DB Committee I hereby "arise" just like Ben Perry wants me to -- but what he wants me to do exactly he fails to say. He dislikes the "absurdly unbridled free speech" I glory in but he doesn't seem to have anything better to talk about than I do or he would talk about it. I think the zine is more interesting than before I got into it; can Perry claim the same?

If Perry means to manifest some annoyance with my attention to the anarchists I could sympathize with that if I didn't recognise his "Bob Black, Esquire" tag as a borrowing from WSA anarcho-hysteric Chaz Bufe's smear pamphlet Listen, Anarchist! He's not averse to anarcho-trivia, he just wants to suppress the stuff that embarrasses his side. Pathetic as it is, North American anarchism is probably a bigger deal than all other brands of "non-market socialism" combined.

Perry groans under the burden of financing my malicious drivel but had no objection to Kohoff's malicious drivel to which I responded. Comrade Girard, who actually carries said burden, says he wants more not less letters. It's not as if I'm crowding anybody out. Perry is welcome to take a walk. Instead of controverting what I say, he tries to work up financial pressure to silence me. Is he a capitalist pig or what? He admits he's "sheep-like" and this, perhaps, is the only true and certainly the only important thing he has to say.

Anybody curious about the identity of the SubGenius artist who mailed me that bomb can reach me at POB 2159, Albany, NY 12220.

I find myself dissatisfied with both sides of the Zerzan/Gerard exchange. Girard has to say, as a not quite post-Marxist, that industrialism has to be curbed yet it is the source of the wealth "that would make socialism possible." But if it isn't this very wealth that has made socialism impossible, what has? Ed Stamm is a moralistic simpleton but his letter made a point: workers want what capital wants them to want, something they will never get but pursue until they die. They do this, not because they're dumbshits but because they are, as workers, constructs of capital, integral to it, impossible apart from it. For the worker
the only choice as a worker is between more and less. Naturally he
wants more, and no socialist humanism will ever persuade him otherwise.
For the worker (and the zero-worker) who wants something else, more
of the same is just not enough. Self-managed industrialism is more
of the same. Even Girard admits -- and this demolishes Marx -- that
the generalization of First World levels of industrialism is environ-
mentally impossible. But how can it justly be refused to Third World
workers if First World workers produce it and are produced by it?

Zerzan and the Fifth Estate on the other hand are fairly challenged by
Girard for not seeing even in a general way how the world would be if it
were de-industrialized anytime soon on a large scale. For Zerzan espe-
cially this is a palpable hit since he went on from industrialism to
denounce agriculture as alienating. It is difficult to believe the world
especially in its present poisoned state can sustain hunter-gatherers, and even if it could most of us are transformed by the social
division of labor we could never relearn the old ways in time.
Zerzan, FE and Live Wild or Die denounce the conclusions of those elements
in Earth First! which long for the "die-off" of all but a handful of
humans but these self-hating apocalyptics based their conclusions on
premises the anti-civilization anarchists seem to share with them.
My opinion: I don't know, but I'm no optimist. It's fabulous to suppose
the solution to the problems of technology is always more technology . . .
a mistake that only needs to be made once. On the other hand, those who
might be able to create "appropriate" technology are those who by reason
of education, inclination and interest (including class interest) lack
the will and the imagination even to try. Cf. Drexler's Engines of
Creation, arguing for nanotechnology as both panacea and cornucopia
without even noticing what that might imply for institutions the author
takes for granted such as government and work. If his argument is sound
the factory, for instance, would become a relic, but what are the implica-
tions if, as I and others have argued, the factory is less important as
a producer of goods than as a mechanism of social control? The nano-
tech Drexler hypothesizes -- mechanical control of matter at the molecular
level -- would be the matter transformer of science fiction, we (but who
are we? Drexler has no politics) could send forth hordes of self-
replicating (and self-improving) robots the size of viruses to turn
toxic waste into mulch or mutton or medicine (except we wouldn't need
medicine any more). Could we use the ultimate in tech to wipe the slate
clean . . . and start afresh? Would the last nano-robot to leave please
turn out the light, or rather turn it into a coconut tree?

News Notes: 1. I will, with Ted Kepley, probably be editing an anti-
work anthology for Semiotext(e) featuring classical and modern texts
from e.g. Fourier, Lazargue, Morris, Zerzan, Goodman, Baudrillard, Sahlin.
I invite everybody's prompt nomination of pertinent texts as we want
to move fast on this. We're familiar with the Freedom Press collection
Why Work? and will draw from it but not much because frankly we think
it's dreadful. We are not interested in the mere reorganization of work
more democratically than as performed now. We will consider original
contributions to the subject but we have an ample literature to draw from
already so we can't assure you a slot. Concise academic treatments with
clearly radical conclusions are eligible, whether historical, sociological,
etc. Human interest tales a la Studs Terkel we probably don't want.
Original translations we will look on with special favor (we have a
translator for the surrealist Thirion's long forgotten "Down with Work!").
2. The much talked-about anarchist newsmonthly Love & Rage has published
(as I write) two issues. The first, which I have, is the turgid, leftist laundry-list or "franchise issue" tabloid everybody predicted it
would be, full of cheerleading of recent events in places like South Africa
the anarchists had nothing to do with, recounts of the plights of allegedly
activist prisoners, Berkeley "wimmin" smashing bathroom scales to protest
the oppression of fat slobs by the diet industry, etc. Most of those behind
this scam were Trots from the Revolutionary Socialist League who converted
en bloc to the sexier ideology of anarchism recently (deep
entrism anybody? bend over). I am lending a hand to a parody cum critique
of this project which is already very nearly a self-parody of frenetic
militantism, at best mindless, at worst manipulative. The Minneapolis
R.A.B.L. group, whose leader has moved to New York as the paid official of
this unnamed organization -- which has Michael Kolhoff's enthusiastic
endorsement -- is best known for provoking the violence at the annual
anarchist gatherings, so even the possibility of police infiltration and
provocation should by no means be ruled out.

-- Bob Black

Dear Discussion Bulletin Committee:

An anonymous letter, appearing in the March 1990 DB sets
allegations against Michael Hinnenkamp, for not having "dialogue
with" the Industrial Union Party (IUP). Although in forming this
indictment, the anonymous author chose not to refer to relevant
material which exists between the IUP and the Committee for
Socialist Union (CSU). We find this quite strange -- especially
for someone who is so concerned about meaningful dialogue.

Yet, perhaps this is part of the fun of being anonymous (and
vague and irresponsible). Unfortunately, this fun creates needless
confusion and demonstrates that the author is the victim of his own
Petersen's ghost. The author, by alluding to an ability to
"exorcise" Petersen's, Karps' or even Hinnenkamps', underscores a
major problem with the prevailing elements of the anarchico/De
Leonist priesthood which are still unable to comprehend the micro-
centralism of their own history. Petersen was a product of flaws
in the SWP which historically developed from the premature
conditions of De Leon's own time. Without a Petersen, there would
always be someone else to represent this increasingly small trend
-- so let the Petersenites have their Petersen. There are much
broader organizational and agitational matters to be involved with
which far outweigh the minute political value of these sectarian
feuds. The main question of our anonymous pursuer -- why has
Michael Hinnenkamp "refused to... dialogue with..." -- amounts to
little more than a beggars cry. Who really cares?

To continue with this trivia would not respect the basic
argument as the question here should be not with the weaknesses (or
strengths) of individuals. Instead, if the question still
prevails, it should be concerned with the broader affairs of the
groups and principles involved as they relate to the development of
an authentic socialist movement. In this manner, in order to
investigate the relations between the IUP and the CSU, we should directly review the formal dialogue which extends back roughly two years.

This dialogue developed with the IUP's request (via Cmd Brandon) that the CSU circulate copies of its 20 page document, Demystifying the SLP, in which the CSU 1.) criticized sectarian politics (specifically those of the SLP) and 2.) offered an alternative policy which requires a critical association with reform groups. The document noted that:

"None minimizes, let alone denies the value of reform where reform brings relief...Applying these general principles to factory legislation, militant Socialism countenances, favors, encourages and supports reforms -- but is cautious in its posture of favoring, encouraging and supporting." (D. De Leon, Wkly Plp. 3/1/13, 'An Open Letter to Mrs. Walsten Hill Brown, Pres. Child Welfare League, NY., emph. added)...One might further wonder to what extent does there exist a means for replacing the SLP. How can other groups avoid the same historical trap...we must start...by locally organizing workers into a meaningful agitational force. We must prove our political theories with material substance -- without being side tracked by reforms or disillusioned by the egocentric charades of an authoritarian priesthood ... The real vehicle for our work lies not solely within our own meager resources, but to a much greater extent, it lies within our ability to form critical relations with the much broader resources of the working-class itself."

This full document was mailed to Cmd Brandon and to other IUP members by the CSU (Cmd Brandon provided a list) with the prime intention of developing dialogue on issues of non-sectarianism, new tactics, strategy etc. The cover letter of 10/18/88 clearly stated that:

"This material was written in order to present an accurate account of the SLP's further departure from a practical involvement with the class struggle and to initiate a means whereby this involvement can become a tool for nonreformist socialists... hopefully this will lead to more discussion such that a realistic understanding of our mutual goals and resources can be gained".

Depending on the returning comments, further discussion on joint programs and agitational projects were anticipated.¹ A follow-up letter was sent to Cmd Brandon on 12/21/88, hoping to "prioritize" a meeting on the topic of this CSU document.

¹For instance, during this same period, several prominent sympathizers independently produced agitational material on the environmental issue. Upon our critical review, this otherwise unrelated material became available as a possible joint activity project. However, any other equally worthwhile project material, if available, would have been considered for a joint venture. We
continue to encourage our supporters to be actively involved in reform issues and we will maintain critical review and assistance towards their efforts.

Cmd Brandon replied with a letter of 1/7/89, stating that this topic, "in my opinion...is not a priority", and although he mentioned that "there are numerous other matters that are as important", no examples or suggestions were given. In fact, no subsequent letters of comments, ideas or criticisms were ever received from any of the IUP members on this or any other topic which might promote mutual activity. Months later, another letter dated 3/11/88, was received from Cmd Brandon's winter residence in Florida indicating that he did not "want to undertake doing it [an indepth review of the CSU document] at this time".

In assessing this situation, we could easily realize that there was not a strong interest in mutual project development. Although, the excuse cannot be attributed to the topic of sectarianism, tactics, etc. As it is presented in the CSU document, this topic is quite common and can be easily understood by scanning the first and last pages. This does not require an indepth review -- especially by those who are slightly familiar with the SLP -- and it does not set rigid limits to dialogue. However, in putting our offer aside, we continued with other important projects.

The CSU in its short history has never strongly pursued mergers because the whole tendency which associates itself with De Leonism is extremely small and there is no guarantee that all mergers will be productive. Many inhibiting distinctions still exist between groups. Furthermore, the very essential ingredient of politically organized labor support continues to be absent from contemporary De Leonism. Nothing today even comes close to the early Socialist Trade & Labor Alliance. To put the matter in simple terms: a horse without a wagon tends to stray and the working class wagon is still too undeveloped to carry a working class party. By adding or connecting more horses, our main tactical efforts at building this labor base is not necessarily enhanced.

Of course, as evidenced from our more recent telephone conversations with at least one IUP member, we remain willing to consider a joint meeting despite our own limitations in size and resources. However, a pre-planned agenda will still be required.

In Solidarity,
Committee for Socialist Union
Readers,

A recent issue of Modern Maturity, America's largest selling magazine, had a mini-course on philosophy by Steven Ross, a college professor in New York City. As long as I can recall, philosophy has been the subject of study for most people, but modern philosophy has come down to earth. There are two examples in the mini-course that explain what it is about. No longer does a person have to be familiar with Plato, Spinoza, Hegel, Nietzsche, Marx, etc., to consider himself wise in the affairs of man. In fact, I detect Marx's materialist conception of history in modern philosophy without it being acknowledged.

In the example number one a young lady, Jane, is referred to as having studied French as a second language. From this knowledge we are supposed to know something about Jane, but do we really know Jane? Philosophy today regards people with similar backgrounds who aren't interested in French and haven't studied it as having more in common with Jane in six significant respects than the influence of French can make in her life. In the past and even today we have judged people on the basis of their religion, color, national origin, interests, etc. But living today gives us all an infinite number of things that we have in common.

Another example is a statue of Abraham Lincoln in Disneyland, Florida, that repeats the Gettysburg Address. From just hearing those inspiring words can we understand the real Lincoln? His original intention was not to free the slaves, but to stop the spread of slavery, he wanted to preserve the union. As the Civil War progressed he was for freeing all chattel slaves to better fight the war. He was not concerned with what would happen to the newly freed slaves so as to let it influence his decision to free them. What I am trying to say is that we must study Lincoln and his times to understand him and not just listen to quotations from him.

Extending these two examples of philosophical wisdom to today's socialists can give us a treasure of knowledge. For example, does the ability to quote Marx, Lenin, or any other socialist qualify one to be a revolutionary teacher today? Like in any organization, it is not the ability to function within parliamentary rules more important for a member than for him to have exclusive knowledge and or to agree on current issues? Since the bolsheviks seized power in Russia, many of the most learned Marxists were taken in by that sham of human liberation and their error should not be wasted.
BEWARE OF RAPISTS AT EARTH DAY

Gang rapists may be seeking out victims at this year’s Earth Day. Please be extremely careful because these rapists are not only vicious but incredibly bizarre. They have attacked men as well as women, children as often as adults. They have used complicated tortures which cause the slow death of their victims.

However, there is a pattern to what they do. They approach their targets and begin a friendly conversation. Reports from survivors of attacks indicate that there is a series of phrases they like to use. Learning to recognize the phrases below could save your life. Do not be tricked by widespread beliefs that rapists are poorly dressed or that gang rapists all ride motorcycles. These criminals are known to be extremely well-groomed. They often move about together, wearing high quality business suits and carrying briefcases.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRECAUTIONS AGAINST EARTH DAY GANG RAPE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Please travel with at least one other person you know well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Be wary of well-dressed persons who are unusually smooth-talking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Watch out for people using these phrases:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. &quot;I use a non-exclusive approach toward everyone I work with.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. &quot;You &amp; me are both people; so, don't have an 'us vs. them' attitude.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. &quot;Trust me, because we are all citizens of the same planet.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. &quot;The earth is going to be destroyed unless you &amp; me have faith in each other.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. &quot;I may have raped hundreds of times before; but, I've changed &amp; I'm going to be environmentally friendly from now on.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. &quot;I'm beginning to respond to people's concerns &amp; I'll be a lot better if you won't close the door on my involvement.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. &quot;Since we're both part of the human species, you are as much to blame for everything I've done as I am.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After saying things like this, the rapists try to make you feel guilty. If you start to believe that the victims rather than the criminals are at fault, they will have you where they want you. If they do make you feel guilty, it is very important to remember this: They intend to kill you.

Unless they can be stopped, they will kill again. They have raped the earth over and over. They have caused the extinction of untold thousands of species. During the few minutes it takes you to read this, their corporate institutions will have destroyed hundreds of acres of irreplaceable tropical rain forests. And they will continue to destroy the land we walk on, the air we breathe, and millions of animals with which we share this planet. They will continue until they have made it totally uninhabitable for any of us.

Yet these corporate directors give a sneaky smile as they tell us that we ALL share responsibility for what THEY have done. Or worse, they imply that WE are to blame. And they tell us to do things that have no possibility of undoing the crimes they have committed; they suggest that planting a tree can somehow make up for the rain forests they have destroyed; they want us to believe that recycling soda cans can somehow reverse the damage of their nuclear power plants, their oil spills, and the toxins they spew endlessly into the air, land & water.

(over)
One thing they know with confidence: You cannot win a battle if you do not know the enemy. Their most important goal is to get people to believe that everyone is responsible so we will not focus on them. Therefore, the multinationals have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars to finance Earth Day and turn it into a monumental public relations fraud. They have packed Earth Day Planning Committees with slick-talking representatives who have ensured that none of the essential issues are covered. They endlessly mouth the nonsense that multinationals have "changed" and are now "environmentally friendly."

But have they changed? Can a corporation, which is based on a grow-or-die principle, magically become "responsible?" The best way to predict what an organization will do in the future is to look at what it has done in the past. The first Earth Day was organized in 1970, largely as a governmental publicity stunt to divert attention from their campaign of slaughter in Vietnam. Did corporations become less destructive from any "insights" they gathered at Earth Day, 1970? Or, did they use it as a dress rehearsal for an even grander scam at Earth Day, 1990?

If someone murders your neighbor two houses down and says he has changed, do you believe his claims that you have nothing to worry about? If the same person gets out of jail and murders your next door neighbor, do you trust his smiles at you? The worst psychopathic killers are not the "serial murderers" who have a few dozen victims. And they are not the killers who cut up children for satanic cults. The worst mass murderers are not even racists who try to exterminate entire ethnic groups. The most psychopathic mass killers the world has ever seen are the "respectable" heads of the military-industrial complex who are now destroying all life on this planet. Earth Day, 1990 is their gimmick to get you to look away from what they are doing. BEWARE!

The Planning Committee of Earth Day, 1990 does not want you to read these ideas. When they realized that people were objecting to the way Earth Day was being taken over by corporations, they announced that no flyers would be distributed "In order to protect the environment from throwaways." Are you prepared to lose your free speech also? If the Earth Day Planning Committee tries to take this flyer from you, you might want to tell them that taking away a planet to live on is enough for the corporations to do to us and that we will keep our right to exchange ideas.

This informational bulletin was put together by members of Big River Earth First!, Green & Black Anarchist League, Workers Democracy, and Industrial Workers of the World in the St. Louis area. If you would like to receive information on MEANINGFUL action against corporate destruction of our planet, write: WD Press, P.O. Box 24115, St. Louis MO 63130.
Yesterday, May 19, 1990, thousands of Northwest logging workers and bosses converged on the Washington town of Kelso. Angry workers from counties like Skamania, with its double-digit official unemployment. Angry Chamber of Commerce leaders from towns like Centralia, where the last maker of real logging boots is about to go under.

Drove into town, most of them. Some guys honked and honked on the horns of their log-hauling semis. Whole families packed into run-down cars; even toddlers clutched picket signs precariously with both arms and legs as they rode.

The whole "public realm" in this region, which spans two states, believed in this fight. Whenever they faced the future of their communities, they saw just what a canoesist sees when facing an inescapable waterfall, twenty yards ahead. Ten quick yards. Two.

And who were the enemies of both logging company owners and fellow workers whose grandparents had befriended the Wobblies? Old growth forests. The spotted owl, which faces extinction thanks to the destruction of ancient timber. The "greenies," whose protests have forced the Feds to limit the exploitation of old growth stands.

Seems to me that demanding the unlimited expansion of commodity relations into trackless evergreen woodlands was the program that could best unite the non-class "public realm" of the Northwest logging region. Seems to me, too, that there will have to be economic and political strikes, street (unpaved logging road?) confrontations between revolutionary labor and fascist bosses, and workers' insurrections before spotted owls can replenish their numbers to a safe level.

Seemed to me, reading "Radical Politics in an Era of Advanced Capitalism" in DB #41 as the loggers marched arm-in-arm with their exploiters and oppressors, that Murray Bookchin's viewpoint makes him unable to see the, er, well, the obvious cliché.

Only the working class has any material interest in creating a new world of absolute freedom. No bloc of classes has any such interest, either (least of all the four named by Mao *ptui!*"Zedong, if the historical experience of the People's Republic of China shows us anything).

Look at how Bookchin sets up his argument, at the bottom of the second page of his article, with a series of counterfactuals: "If...growth...creates problems...a "public sphere"...may become...reality....The...movement...could...If...would...would." These aren't the liberating counterfactuals of classical utopians. No. For, having spun out his pretty, albeit nutrition-free, bobble of counterfactual cotton candy, Bookchin asserts that selling the confection "is a major responsibility of authentic radicals."

Excuse me while I stand aghast at this example of...what to call it--Leaderism? "What I discover in my consciousness," writes Hegel, who knew bad thinking when he thought it, "is thus exaggerated into a fact of consciousness of all, and even passed off for the very nature of mind."

That's bad, but that's not all. Bookchin sets up (in "Society, Politics, and the State") a false dichotomy of Male, conscious, competent, managing State versus Female, familial, reproductive, domestic Society. And in
"The Rise of the Public Sphere" and "The Importance of the Municipality and the Confederation," there ensues a tour de force of fuzzy-mindedness. He actually asserts here that, instead of the Bronze Age representing a certain hardening of the State and the final triumph of patriarchy, the creation of cities in the Bronze Age undercut the Neolithic State and patriarchy.

On the level of thought, this post-dated feminization of a major feature of patriarchal class society reproduces that odd Neolithic custom, couvade, in which husbands mimic their wives' pregnancies in order to establish a right to control the children.

When Bookchin's narrative breaks out of the past and into the future, his utopian expression boils down to the bourgeois family writ large; he hopes like a naive newlywed that the marriage will last indefinitely ("the abiding institutional basis"). Municipal confederation is described in the language of some liberal husband, who does the dishes and takes out the garbage ("a network of mutual obligations" "shared responsibilities"), is willing to talk out family problems ("full accountability"), and can tolerate entering an abiding institution that sometimes ends in divorce ("the right to recall").

As I believe that the bourgeois family is merely the other side of the coin we call the State, its mirror image, I see Bookchin's views as de facto defenses of the State. "Militant action" may "flare up and pass away," but it's an odd kind of revolutionary who disdains it in favor of a ring—excuse me, "the institutional underpinnings that are so necessary to create" a lasting marriage—excuse me, "lasting movements," till death do us part, amen.

The Committee for Socialist Union joins the fray with a document that only shows fire in the last phrase ("that we can begin to build the kind of world most of us long for in our hearts"). Before that, the only thing they have to offer is intellect utterly unsullied by emotion.

Despite this tactic, the CSU's document doesn't escape assuming a stereotypically patriarchal persona. But where Bookchin's rhetoric of the husband evokes the marriage bed, the CSU evokes detention bench at some high school. This world looks a lot like a lecture from the principal, and, like such a lecture, warns us to be correct and careful, to determine the essence of what we analyze.

To its great detriment, the "Open Letter" informs us, right off the bat, that it's not frivolous. When I hold this article up next to, say, DeLeon's What Means This Strike?, I can't help thinking of how old Daniel brought the house down with his witty re-telling of the biography of former New York Governor Levi Parsons Morton. I'll remember the punchline of the Morton story as long as I take breath, even as I recall DeLeon's hilarious account of a Bebel outburst in Flashlights of the Amsterdam Congress, or, on the Wobbly side of the fence, the Mr Block comic strip and T-Bone Slim's wordplay. But all I'm likely to recall about the CSU's document in six months is that I mentioned it in this contribution.

You may recall (it not being six months later) that I just claimed that the "Open Letter" seeks to determine the essence of how the working class is structured. It constantly states timeless, essential, truths: "There is no validity to the argument that salaried workers' perception...determines their class." Full stop. This way of making a point seems to me to privilege ontology at the expense of dialectics. No point in thinking the history of class consciousness through; don't squirm in your seat and don't talk back in class. Political uncertainty ended with DeLeon,
as religious uncertainty, according to Christians, ended with Jesus. Perhaps the voice that the "Open Letter" unconsciously mimics is principal at a Christian high school of some kind.

Let's lay aside my agreement with the CSU document's facts, as far as they go. These facts are presented with none of the frivolity of DeLeon or Breton, none of the anger of Jean Meslier or Louis Lingg, none of the mind-expanding vision of Pannekoek or Fourier. This renders them barren and sterile, which leaves me doubting that a statement like the "Open Letter" could ever help encourage or inspire the revolutionary working class.

"Barren and sterile," I've written above. Perhaps the voice of the document is that of a principal of a Catholic high school. I just hope that Father O'Riley won't tell me to stay after school for what happened today in study hall.

The Oregon youth document has two different messages. Ostensibly, there's an argument you can follow logically: A) Capitalism is bad, B) therefore Greens must oppose capitalism, C) even though that may be insufficient in and of itself; D) at least things may be coming to a head. I agree with all this, but the contradictions in viewpoint underneath the ostensible argument boggle my mind.

Start with their second paragraph, and notice the kind of things capitalism does in the eyes of the Oregon group: Capitalism dominates, drives, and demands--activities assigned to men in our society. Like the stereotypical hero of popular culture, Indiana Jones perhaps, capitalism makes decisions and forces others to submit. It's wanton and imperative, not unlike the new 01 vigilante of the silver screen, Batman.

Central to capitalism, say these young Greens, is growth. A little reading of Freud on the Oedipus (What does a boy have that grows?) and Electra (If you don't have one, who swallowed it?) complexes will elucidate the psychodynamic of grow-or-be-swallowed far better than I could do here. As I read their document, though, this psychodynamic is at least as relevant to their thinking as any economically factual analysis of growth they may offer.

After all, what kinds of things do anti-capitalists do, according to this document? Do the Oregon Greens portray us as taking appropriate actions? No. They say instead that we believe, are aware, recognize, must not allow, realize, are not opposed to, come to see, do not believe in nor support, search for a vision, etc. Mental acts. Passive mental acts, of the type stereotypically assigned to women in our society. (In the Freudian terms alluded to above, women become passive when they see that their growing power has been swallowed.)

I favor what the Youth Green Clearinghouse says at the end, "Resisting, subverting and combating capitalism must be an integral part of our new vision and strategy," but this stance runs counter to the passivist spirit of the preceding five paragraphs. In this document our exploiters certainly appear more active and even, I would have to say, more heroic in a perverse, Rambo-like way than our own ranks, which seem already vanquished.

These contradictions--hidden beneath and undercutting the ostensible argument--may reflect class tensions within the group or something similarly serious. Five'1l get you ten that not one of them is a logger, if the group still exists at all. I wouldn't be surprised if its contradictions have already shattered it.

"OK, sure," you may be saying, "how then can we overcome the kind of problems you see with hidden patriarchal assumptions?"

And I say, you can't. "Overcoming," as one body of armed men do to an-
other, is a Statist, patriarchal action, anyway. Sky pilots babble about overcoming sin, then coerce church sistren into hotel bedrooms. Mullahs shout about overcoming the Great Satan, then execute women who reject the chador. Stalin droned on about overcoming fascism, then pushed anti-abortion laws through the Supreme Soviet.

I think that, instead of "overcoming" patriarchy, the working class will transform the world, creating something neither patriarchy nor matriarchy (which in this context would be patriarchy-in-drag). This new creation will be a realm of true freedom.

"Realm?" Did I say "realm?" That's a form of State that a king rules, for shit's sake!

Well, sorry folks, but my language reflects the hidden assumptions of our unfree society too. As does yours, and everyone else's, till there's no more patriarchy and no more State. The best we can hope to do is to be aware of this aspect of class rule. Then, instead of being caught in the traps our exploiters have placed in our thinking, we can work around them more and more.

"Tain't easy, but I believe in the future. For now, while loggers and their bosses honk semi horns against the spotted owls in the streets of Kelso, we who practice working class politics face a long road ahead.

Dear Comrades,

I haven't previously contributed anything to the Discussion Bulletin, but I thought the following comments might be of interest.

The "failure of communism" has come to be peddled as the latest version of the usual ideological hamburger on the mass media's instant menu. What has happened, however, is not that communism has failed but only that Leninism has collapsed. Right from the very beginning, in What is to be Done? Lenin had expressed the view that the working class was "exclusively by its own effort...able to develop only trade-union consciousness, i.e., the conviction that it is necessary to combine in unions, fight the employers and strive to compel the government to pass necessary labor legislation, etc." This was the view adopted by the Bolshevik majority within the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party ("the theoretical doctrine of Social Democracy"). But contrasting that, Lenin's thesis on the origins of the theory of socialism was accepted as a good replacement for the Gospel: it "grew out of the philosophic, historical and economic theories elaborated by educated representatives of the propertied classes, by intellectuals."

For a very long time, this belief that revolutionary theory could arise "altogether independently of the spontaneous growth of the working-class movement" jammed the only channel by which workers could in fact formulate their protests against the ravages of capitalism. It made Bolshevikism, as a chrysalis stage of Social Democracy, reinforced by the authority of the Soviet state, the dominant vehicle of working-class aspirations around the world. Any attempts at directly conceptualizing an alternative to capitalism out of the experience of the class struggle were thereby sentenced to exile. A smothering blanket of pseudo-communist legitimacy helped to choke off a burgeoning trend toward "raising hell" in the workplace.

With the opening movement of a Solidarity government in Poland, followed by a chain reaction of similar upsets throughout the Leninist countries, the Bolshevik chrysalis has at long last given way to a dazzling (capitalist) butterfly. The market system has made an ideological comeback in the state-capitalist countries in a big way—although, as socialists have been pointing out assiduously ever since the November Revolution, there never ceased to be a market system operating in those countries; it had simply transformed itself into a "central plan". Thanks to the nomenklatura system
(a system of patronage which assured the respective "Communist" parties a vise grip on the strategic economic and political positions), the well-protected capitalists who spent decades consolidating their vulnerable position behind the "iron curtain" now feel confident enough to "rise to full stature in all their giant strength," to use Lenin's phrase.2

And now that the spectre of communism has finally melted away, some space has again opened up for the real thing to resume its interrupted trajectory. But it can always be interrupted again if we let our thoughts remain centered on the main institutions of class division—profits and wages—rather than on its replacement. For purely business reasons alone, a capitalist will always tend to be incapable of understanding socialism as a concept (as a system of society based on common ownership and democratic control of the means of wealth production); doing so would require stepping outside the market frame of reference and looking at the world from the vantage point of a human being. This is not impossible; but it can obviously happen only rarely. Then there are, of course, the numerous supporting ideological arguments generated by the world of business as a secondary form of self-defense.

Less obvious is the case of the worker/professional who fails to grasp even the basics of socialism. What we fill our minds with forms a pattern of energy use which precludes the development of other patterns of thought, and filling our minds with thoughts of struggling to get by in the market leaves little room for choosing alternatives to the market system. Without being steeped in any direct form of pro-capitalist ideology—even being against capitalism in general but not specifically against the market system—millions of people can go on, year in and year out, remaining indifferent to the real possibilities life could hold for them in a system of wealth production which didn't require them to be poor so it could function.

The "spark" of consciousness is always present, because the poverty enforced by capital is endlessly generating new discontents (and leaving old ones to fester). Capitalists have a built-in incentive to deny the very possibility of eliminating capital; wage-earners (including salaried professional workers), on the other hand, have a devil by the tail and are constantly compelled to find new ways to rationalize their exploitation. The mass media are there to help them in this—but even these are only a band-aid solution, and other machineries of repression either have already been deployed or are being researched. (The idea that wealth is something to be enjoyed simply as the outcome of human labor and that a whole system of society could operate worldwide without the use of money is in any case airy dismissed by the information commandos.)

Capitalists see no need for any system beyond capitalism because their utopia is already an historical fact. The abundance promised (eventually) by capitalism is everywhere; its delivery is nowhere in sight. Life in this utopia is so beautiful and so perfect that the happy workers could not rationally entertain thoughts of doing wealth production differently than on a profit basis—and now, even that paragon of communism, the international group of Leninist parties, has "failed" in its historic mission to take over the world and impoverish everyone. Yet people are starving on a scale as never before in world history while food surpluses are stockpiled or destroyed because their existence threatens profits; poverty is the lot of more human beings now than in any previous period; and even the environmental basis for conducting exploitation is in the process of

Now that it has been shown the Leninist fortress really could be stormed, one might think this was a good time to re-open the debate, on a scale equivalent to that of the mass media, on what constitutes an appropriate alternative to the capitalist system. To the extent that discussion about this is conducted on a free and open basis, the resulting forum might provide a rallying point for a reawakening of authentic radicalism

1 What is to be Done? "The Beginning of the Spontaneous Uprising"
2 What is to be Done?, "Primitiveness and Economism"
among the workers. The alternative is pretty much limited to letting the mass media go on with their Big Lie production schedule. Of course, since they are going to devise new heresies to crusade against anyhow, the best heresy to give them is one that would seem to them to embody the capitalist notion of mass insanity: encouraging people to withdraw their support for marketplace economics in general.

What the capitalist class would like is a pack of heretics who have decided to lay hands on someone’s capital to finance their reforms—troublemakers who insist on keeping the sheep stirred up, but without going to the extreme of stirring up opposition to the basis of capitalism. This would defy all varieties of “common sense” based on the market system. All of these—taking their cue from the dominant profit-making ideology—regard a world without profits and wages as strictly a figment of the imagination. A significant movement of opinion away from support for buying and selling would therefore not be regarded as the menacing approach of yet another (marketable) enemy but only as large numbers of people simply taking leave of their senses. Eliminating capitalism as a system of production will not happen automatically or in accidental bits and pieces; only a majority seeking this as an immediate goal can make it happen definitively.

Ron Elbert
World Socialist Party (US)

In Defense of the Salaried Serf

In DB #41, the Committee for Socialist Union presented its rebuttal to Murray Bookchin’s stance that salaried and hourly wage workers should be forever segregated. This “Open Letter To Murray Bookchin” has much in it worthy of praise. And the article is entirely correct. In pointing out that Bookchin’s claim that salaried persons, because of their privileged socio-economic position, should not be included in the proletariat mirrors the most insidious of contemporary ruling class propaganda. Indeed, as the Committee’s article indicates, “what better way to keep working people divided, than to create a mythical middle class.” Right, too, is the Socialist Union’s position that including salaried workers in a definition of the working class is simply a bastardization of Marxist theory—not a bastardization.

Despite the validity of the Socialist Union’s points of contention, however, there are some disturbing implications within their rebuttal that are as potentially alienating as Bookchin’s position. And, regrettably, these erroneous implications could prevent, or at least delay, a philosophical consolidation of salaried and hourly wage workers, thereby defeating the very goal that the article sets out to realize.

It seems that Bookchin as well as the Socialist Union has confused reality with the stereotypical Hollywood presentation of the “average,” well-to-do salaried worker: a “power” executive who sports European fitted, blue pinstriped suits, drives a Turbo Saab and eats sushi. But outside of the silver screen’s mass media fiction, most salaried workers make little or no more annually—-and often less—-than do their hourly counterparts. Yes, there are some salaried workers who pull in hundreds of thousands of dollars each year, but this by know means indicates that most other salaried workers make much more than a subsistence buck. Of course, high paid executives would like for their salaried underlings to believe that, with diligence and hard work, they too can lasso the elusive American Dream, travel up the executive hierarchy and someday land a monstrous salary. But it just isn’t true. Instead, like hourly wage workers, most salaried workers can look
forward to working their lives away with no more to show for it than a meager pension and perhaps a commemorative watch or fountain pen complete with company logo. What is worse, it has become standard policy for older salaried workers to be perfunctorily "let go" or encouraged to "retire" prematurely so that younger salaried workers, who are willing to be exploited for much smaller salaries, can take their place.

Oddly, while the Socialist Union article goes on to state that they believe that salaried workers should be included in the proletariat, they, simultaneously, see fit to make clear that they do not "deny that salaried workers scab on the hourly workers during strikes." This may well be true, but it hardly seems appropriate in an article designed to show the value in bringing salaried and hourly wage workers together. While they stop sort of accusing salaried workers of taking the food from the mouths of hourly workers' children, the implication is clear: salaried workers, by their complicity with employers, are less exploited than hourly workers. This is precisely the sort of fallacy which capitalists like to nurture, because it generates rifts that forever keep the two groups of workers at odds. Fearful for their own jobs, most salaried workers "scab" because they are victims of the same savage system which exploits hourly wage workers. They, too, must be good and do as they are told, or they will be out on the street.

The Socialist Union's article goes on to point out that salaried workers "operate in the interest of the owners and against their fellow workers," (as if any worker in our current system could do otherwise). Again, however, this sort of postulation alienates rather than bonds workers. It encourages a bitter breed of one-upmanship between hourly wage workers and salaried workers whereby the two factions quibble over who is the most exploited. In this light, the article is reminiscent of George Orwell's Animal Farm. In the novel, the Pigs change the Animal's slogan to read: All Animals Are Equal, Only Some Animals Are More Equal Than Others. And in the Socialist Union's rebuttal the underlying message seems to be: All Workers Are Exploited, Only Some Workers Are More Exploited Than Others.

Salaried workers in reading the Socialist Union's article might justifiably react defensively to accusations of their complicity with capitalist business owners. Indeed, they could retort, "Sure, I'm a salaried worker pulling in $30,000.00 annually, but I'm expected to work until the job is done, taking it home when necessary, with no such thing as time and a half for overtime. And if I'm fired, I've got no Union to help me out. Short of what legal action I might take on my own, if I could afford it, I'm out of luck!"

Without question, the Socialist Union's rebuttal to Murray Bookchin was well-intentioned. One need only read a passage such as, "It is vitally necessary for working people to understand the class divisions of capitalist society . . . and above all the potential power they have to bring about change," to appreciate that one of their primary goals was to show not only the validity but the tremendous value in including all exploited workers in the proletariat. But the stereotypical and misleading distinctions that are drawn between hourly wage and salaried workers merely serve to feed old antagonisms and betray the spirit of worker comradeship which is at the root of the Socialist Union's thesis.

Jeff Duncan
Dear DB:

I was surprised to see that the DB had chosen to publish another (lengthy) letter from Bob Black. I was initially surprised to see that you had published anything at all by Bob Black, given his long history of malicious disruption and fascistic behavior, but, as I did initially, I feel compelled to respond.

Black went to great lengths to quote various anarchist writers in what he hoped was a defense of his definition of "individualism". Indeed, anarchism by its nature and purpose offers the greatest hope for, and defense of, the individual. As defenders of the rights of the individual, anarchists, past and present, cannot be matched. However, no real anarchist, past or present, would defend or condone the type of self-centered, egotistical form of "individualism" espoused by the likes of Bob Black, attorney at law. What he advocates, and has always advocated, is chaos. I quote from the latest Bulletin of Anarchist Research: "Anarchy legalizes drugs; anarchy take (sic) them. Anarchy is chaos, and chaos is anarchy." This in defense of a booklet by "ontological anarchist" and self-proclaimed pedophile Hakim Bey, who apparently would call down chaos on all our heads just so he can diddle young boys.

In the twisted lexicon of Bob Black, the individual must become the "egoist" in order to achieve "true liberation". As an anarchist, I believe the individual can best achieve true liberation only in solidarity with his or her comrades, free from political manipulation and control, and guided by the good instincts we were born with. No one can be truly free until everyone is truly free. What Black offers is a particularly malignant form of egomania, wherein the "liberated" individual realizes their liberation only in comparison to the enslavement of the rest of humanity.

He accuses me of being anti-intellectual. Given that I devote a fair portion of my time to the intellectual activity of writing, this seems more than slightly ridiculous. What I am against is the domination of the educational system by the middle and ruling classes, which allows a person such as Black, coming from a family of academicians and military professionals, easier access than a person from my own background.

Black seems self-impressed that his sermons are delivered to thousands while my writings have been read by only some few hundreds. So what? If Bob Black preaches to three thousand people, all of whom accept his idiotic and pointless way of thinking, and in turn become as generally worthless as he is, what has he accomplished? If, in turn, I reach five hundred people, only 30 or 40 of whom actually become activists, organizing in their workplaces and communities, actually doing something worthwhile, I still think I have
had a more profound effect. What do you think?

What of Bob Black's sermons? The most noted "The Abolition of Work", is at best a pastiche of other (and better) writer's material, with just enough cynicism for Bob Black to call it his own. Apart from that we have a handful of sordid "reviews" wherein Black subjects any and all to the merciless razor of his twisted w_it. On what is his reputation based?

Bleep

When I share my ideas of anarchism and my hopes for the anarchist movement, I do not and will not claim to speak as the authoritative voice of and for that movement. I hope I have made that clear in my writings. Anarchism, in my opinion, is a process of individual liberation through social action. At it's root are the concepts of self-management and solidarity. For Bob Black, self-management is replaced by the ego unbound. Solidarity is replaced by every man for himself and god against all. By his every action he has proven himself to be an enemy of any true vision of a free society. It is because of people such as Bob Black that the vast majority of the population believes the state, police and prisons are necessary.

For Anarchism and working class revolution,

Mike Kolhoff
PO BOX 210095
San Francisco, CA 94121-0095
Conrade Bulletees:

In DB 41, Jon Bekken says "Those who suggest that we can survive without working have surely forfeited any right to be taken seriously." As with the rest of his polemic, this was apparently directed solely at Bob Black, with no consideration of the increasing popularity of the anti-work position on the margins of society. An increasing number of people do suggest that we can live without work, including, I am not ashamed to say, myself. I guess this means that I must expect any further reviews of FACTSHEET FIVE in the pages of LIBERTARIAN LABOR REVIEW. Oh well.

Of course, a lot of what's going on here is sheer misrepresentation of positions. The workerists would have us believe that the anti-workerists want us to survive without productive activity. Such is not the case. What we suggest is that the present conception of "work" is too narrow, too stifling, too conservative and too repressive to be supported any longer. If I have to run a turret lathe, I don't want to be in your revolution.

The reforms inherent in the traditional syndicalist view of worker control of industry are not insignificant. The elimination of bosses and the rationalization of production and distribution can help people. But we have ample evidence in current society that coops, collectives and employee-owned companies can be just as hard on the environment and their workers as more traditional capitalist enterprises. If, as revolutionaries, we are serious about saving human beings from destruction, we have to do better than replace the Boss with the Collective. We have to re-think the very foundations of industrial society, starting in many places. One of the starting places is with our notion that "work" is somehow an essential human activity.

Cheers,

Mike Gunderloy, 6 Arizona Ave., Rensselaer, NY 12144-4502.

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REVIEW


This volume differs from the two earlier De Leon biographies (Reeve 1972 and Seretan 1978) in that its author does not regard De Leon's antireformist anti-statist socialism as an aberration. Stephen Coleman's political thinking derives from the same turn-of-the-century opposition to social democratic reformism from which De Leon and the post-1900 Socialist Labor Party sprang, and he can understand the political situation and the choices that faced the SLP and De Leon.

Coleman has divided his book into eight chapters, which we can assume reflect his interests and concerns: The Enigma of Daniel De Leon, The Socialist Labor Party, Trade Unionism and the Abolition of the Wages System, the Battle against Reformism, De Leon and the Wobbly, The De Leon-Connelly Conflict, De Leon's Conception of Socialism, and the Last Years and Legacy of De Leon.

Part of the "enigma" Coleman sees is the irony that the man he characterizes as "...the most outstanding American thinker, writer, orator, and political organizer of the years from 1880 until the eve of the First World War" should be so hated by his contemporaries on the left and in the labor movement. In addition to a list of these historians of the Hilquitian school of labor history, he points out what he calls "...the legacy of contemporary vilification by the likes of Dubofsky et al., who have accepted without thought the prejudices of the Hilquitians.

In "The Socialist Labor Party" Coleman traces De Leon's influence on the SLP and the dynamics that brought about the 1898 split between the reformists and revolutionaries. As the European socialist parties
of the Second International grew during the 1880s and 90s, the possibility of gaining political office and presumably bringing about socialism piecemeal through capitalism's political machinery became very real. The success of "socialist" politicians in transforming the "immediate demands" of the socialist parties into their dominant programs caused splits in nearly all the parties of the Second International. In the U.S. the anti-DeLeonists left to help form the Socialist Party identified with Hilquit, Debs, and Haywood. In Britain both the Socialist Party of Great Britain (to which Coleman belongs) and the British SLP left Hyndman's Social Democratic Federation. In Russia the situation produced the Menshevik-Bolshevik split and in France, Germany, the Netherlands, and elsewhere splits and factional disputes that were often resolved by events precipitated by the Russian Revolution.

In Coleman's judgment "The 1890 split was not essentially about specific SLP policies, but was a final effort by approximately half of its members to assert the compatibility between a socialist party and a possibilist [reformist] strategy or, conversely, to remove what they saw as the theoretical shackles of De Leon's uncompromising impossibilism." While recognizing that De Leon's confidence in his own wisdom and eagerness to combat error might easily give rise to accusations of authoritarianism, he disposes of the charges of bossism by citing the record: "...De Leon enjoyed no power within the SLP to which he was not elected, and made no decisions alone but as a result of winning a majority."

The evolution of the SLP's position on unionism, which culminated in the organization of the Socialist Trades and Labor Alliance in 1895 was not, in Coleman's view, a sectarian plot by De Leon but had already been initiated in 1889 before De Leon joined the SLP by socialist trades unionists in New York City, who had called for "New Trades Unionism" and split from the Central Labor Union to form the Central Labor Federation. Coleman sees the lack of success of the ST&LA as well as the isolation impossibilism entailed for the SLP as the reason behind De Leon's eager embrace of the INW in 1895.

As one might expect, Coleman's SPGBist differences with De Leonism become clear in the chapter, "De Leon's Conception of Socialism." While giving De Leon credit for attempting to answer the hard questions workers ask about the nature of the new society, he expresses serious doubts about De Leon's answers, finding the source of much of what he considers the less desirable elements in De Leon's and the SLP's vision of the future society in Edward Bellamy's Looking Backward. He sees not only the idea of labor vouchers and of the socialism-in-one-country concept as arising from De Leon's association with Nationalism in the 1880s but the roots of the whole concept of socialist industrial unionism, which he relates to Bellamy's work-oriented, militaristic view of the social organization of the future. Coleman's conclusions here will offend not only the most orthodox of DeLeonists but revisionists of various degrees as well. Space doesn't allow this reviewer to combat Coleman's findings. But we will find space for readers of the book to refute him.

Also offensive to some readers will be the final chapter in which, among other things, he examines what he regards as De Leon's efforts to break out of the isolation that anti-reformism (impossibilism) imposed on the SLP. These included the embrace of the INW and its reformist SP
contingent and the 1905-8 unity effort, which culminated in his Unity
address. Interestingly Coleman presents Reinstein as De Leon’s ally in
1908, not his enemy as official history suggests. He rather decently
finds De Leon not guilty of the official SLP’s claim (charge?) that his
writings influenced Lenin. The final chapter also contains an
interesting section on the differences between the British and American
SLPs. Part of De Leon’s legacy is the SLP. Here is Coleman’s verdict:
“De Leon stamped his authority upon the SLP because he was the party’s
most able and active thinker. That De Leon’s comrades offered him such
deferential respect respect created a tradition that was abused
terribly by the less intellectually vivacious, sterile dogmatists who
succeed the De Leon role.”

Although there are a couple of flaws—De Leon was referring in
*Reform or Revolution* to the future socialist society, not the party of
socialism, with his illustration of the orchestra director—, Coleman
has done his reading and his research. Indeed this is a “political”
biography in the finest sense of the term. Coleman in not a “De
Leonist” and his critical stance and political differences are
apparent, as indeed they should be. But I think that De Leon would not
have wished for a fairer, wittier, more sympathetic treatment from a
political opponent. We can only assume that had Coleman been afforded
more time and more pages, he would have modified his views on Socialist
Industrial Unionism.

Like all books worth reading, the price is steep even for a
clothbound book. U.S. readers can obtain the book directly from St.
Martin’s Press for $29.95 or send a 25-cent stamp to DB for a flier
that offers a 20 percent discount making the price $23.95.

Cont’d from p.2

*articles by Earnest Man. They are free for the asking and are well
within the boundaries of our political sector. Number 71 (six 8 1/2 by
11 pages) entitled “An Individual’s Freedom” presents Mann’s social
views based on his own experience. Number 73 “P.E.S. Solving Our
Problems” (6 pages) is also about contemporary social phenomena.*