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### BULLETIN MATTERS

We begin this issue with what appears to be the end of the discussion generated by Wildcat/Subversion's *Capitalism and Its Revolutionary Destruction*: a letter by Robin Cox concerning the SPGB. We also include a critique of the statement from *Echanges* which, like
Wildcat/Subversion, has a councilist orientation. Sam Brandon provides us with a comment on a document we would like very much to reprint, the DeLeonist Society Bulletin’s most recent criticism of the “revisionist” Socialist Labor Party. Next is Richard Weideman’s review of a book on William Morris, whose name invokes an earlier period in the history of our political spectrum when Marxists and anarchists could work together in the same revolutionary groups—or perhaps when the differences weren’t very fundamental except to the theoreticians. Jeff Stein’s letter represents the view of those in our political sector who do see the differences as fundamental.

Next is the remainder of Ulli Dieser’s article. It would be interesting to learn more about Dieser himself. Ernest Mann answers Ed Stamm’s DB45 letter, which argues that free access to goods and services in a libertarian socialist society is unrealistic. Stamm holds a position, similar to that of readers who have argued that labor time vouchers must be used in at least the earliest stage of a libertarian socialist (L-S) society. Next comes a letter from me followed by a continuation of our review of periodicals and, if space permits, some short reviews of publications received. The last month has brought a number of leaflets on the Gulf War from LS groups, and we hope to publish a selection at least, if not all, in DB47.

In the meantime we want to emphasize that your letters and articles are the lifeblood of the DB, which exists as a discussion forum for libertarian socialists, the true revolutionaries of our era. Remember that we print from your manuscript. To conserve space, please single space and use narrow (3/4 inch) margins.

**Finances:** Here we have good news to report. Although our $149.97 deficit hasn’t been cleared away entirely, we made a gigantic stride in that direction during January and February thanks to your contributions. The cloud on the horizon is the increase in U.S. postal rates, ten cents for foreign surface postage and $.027 each for our major cost, the bulk rate under which we do most of our mailing.

**Contributions:** Anonymous $10; Ron Somerlott $14; Glen Johnson $2; Anonymous $15; Will Guest $4; Tom Dooley $4; Francis Smith $10; Ben Perry $10; N. Morgan $7.60; John V. Craven $7; Jeff Stein $10; G. P. Mayer $19; Anonymous $100; Bernard Doganiero $7; Margaret Begovich $20. Total $239.60. Thank you, comrades.

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Cont’d on p. 10
Dear Discussion Bulletin,

I read with much interest the debate between Wildcat and the Socialist Party of Great Britain in DB44. While being critical of certain aspects of both viewpoints, I do also appreciate their respective strengths.

For example, Steve Coleman is I believe right to suggest that Wildcat's forthright opposition to revolutionary participation in parliamentary elections is unnecessarily dogmatic. I have never found the anti-parliamentarianism of some revolutionary groups particularly convincing and Coleman ably demonstrates why it is not. It is an approach which confuses the tool with the purpose for which the tool is used. It is not participation in the parliamentary process as such which creates the risk of cooptation; it is reformism, however dressed up in the rhetoric of radicalism, that engenders that risk. It is reformism, not the use of parliamentary elections, that revolutionaries must reject. I do, however, make a sharp distinction between reformism - policies designed to ameliorate the problems of capitalism in order to perpetuate the system itself - and what I choose to call "revolutionary gradualism". More anon.

On the other hand, Coleman's line of argument offers no credible resistance to the telling accusation levelled at the SPGB by Wildcat - that its approach relies on a "gradual working class awareness emerging from a passive reflection on the horrors of capitalism assisted by its own educational efforts". NB of Wildcat is right to point out that that this is simple "idealism" and has "nothing in common with the SPGB's much-vaunted Marxist materialism." Clearly, after 86 years, "abstract propagandism" on its own has manifestly failed. That may sound harsh but it has to be said. No amount of urging the faithful to go out and sell their journal or attend their propaganda meetings is going make any real difference.

If we choose to call ourselves "scientific socialists" (I dislike this expression for reasons which need not detain us here), then we should at least be willing to consider why we have not made progress. No scientist worth his/her salt persists with the same old formula when it stubbornly fails to produce results. S/he experiments, thinks laterally around the problem and tries to discover new connections and combinations among the ideas being worked with.

I am not trying to argue here for the suspension of "educational efforts". That would be absurd. Indeed, a criticism that can be made of the SPGB is not that it attaches too much significance to "socialist consciousness" - in contradistinction to what NB calls "material reality" - but that it denies it the full significance it warrants. It denies, in other words, the constitutive role of consciousness in relation to "material reality" to the extent that it asserts as a dogma that the significant growth of a socialist movement cannot have any effect whatsoever on the structure, scope and operation of
capitalism as an economic system prior to the "enactment of socialism". Certainly, SPGBers will concede that such a movement will have an enormous impact on the social superstructure. But when it comes to the economic base of society then, true to their economic determinism, they (or rather most of them) will assert that this same movement cannot have an effect. It is almost as if the economy were sacrosanct, a kind of platonic "ideal form" behind a corruptible and ever-changing world. In other words, the so called "iron laws of capitalism" are said to stand outside of social life - like the laws of Physics - until at one stroke (or wave of the wand, if you prefer) they are made to disappear. This is truly, to paraphrase Sartre, an idealism that denies the power of ideas; and idealism dressed up as a mecanistic and hence mystifying materialism. Readers may recognize here some of the arguments contained in "The Road of Socialism" circular (1987) which was a critique of the SPGB's traditional theory of revolution, mounted within the Party by its now defunct Guildford Branch - some of whose members are now involved with the journal Spanner.

In my view, the polarisation of "consciousness" and "material reality", coded as "educational efforts" versus the "real movement of mass class struggle" is pointless and sterile. Abstract propagandism is not going to get us anywhere on its own but neither will mere immersion in the "struggle against the effects of capitalism". Wildcat says it seeks to link the one with the other. That is good but I don't think it goes far enough. More than the idea of a dialectic between "consciousness" and "material reality", it is the fruits of that dialectic that revolutionaries must now seriously consider with a view to practical action.

If you do not subscribe to the Big Bang theory of socialist revolution, such as I have described above, then the only serious alternative for revolutionaries to contemplate is revolutionary gradualism - if we are not to succumb to the pitfalls of reformism. By this I mean an emergent pattern of socialistic economic relations, based upon a mutual aid or gift economy, which progressively circumvents the market to the extent that a growing socialist consciousness permits. I really do not think there is any other credible alternative to this and the great advantage of such an orientation is its flexibility. It provides a framework within which a multiplicity of approaches - from anarcho-syndicalism to parliamentarianism - can be accommodated. It therefore offers an opportunity to break through the sectarianism and pointless in-fighting among revolutionaries which has so bedevilled our cause. It was for this reason I was so pleased to read Ernest Mann's letter in DB 44. It injects into the discussion the kind of vital ideas we really ought to be addressing now.

One final point. I have to take issue with MH when he states that the SPGB sees the class struggle as carrying on in the same old way "until 51% of the voters turns this passive awareness into the reality of socialism". Actually, it is not
the SPGB’s position that a simple majority is all that is required to enact socialism. In its pamphlet *From Capitalism to Socialism* (p.43) it states that "Socialism can only be established when a great majority of workers understand and want it". In another pamphlet *Questions of the Day 1978* (p.23) it declares, "As has already been stated, the Socialist Party’s view from its formation has been that there can be no socialism until the great majority of the working class fully understands and accepts the implications of what they are consciously setting out to achieve". By no stretch of the imagination can one equate "the great majority of the working class" with a simple majority of 51%. In case any one doubts that this is the position of the SPGB, I have many more quotes from its literature which I happened to gather in the course of research, all of which point unambiguously to the same conclusion.

This is not quite the nit-picking point it may seem. It is connected with one of the arguments raised in the Road to Socialism circular (see above). This pointed out a problematic aspect of the Big Bang theory: what, in the interval between obtaining a simple majority (51%) and a "great majority" (say 75+ %), will a corresponding majority of socialist delegates be doing in parliament until they are a "large enough" majority to "enact" socialism? Until this enactment, it is assumed that capitalism will remain unaltered and this not-large-enough majority of socialist MPs will thus have to preside — or govern — this basically unaltered capitalism.

When this argument was first raised a certain section of the Party decided to bury its head in the sand and foolishly deny the Party explicitly committed itself to the need for a great majority of workers to become socialists before socialism can be established. I find that disturbing. A refusal to admit that one can make mistakes is the hallmark of dogmatism, and it may be that that was the reason why the editors of the *Socialist Standard* refused to publish Wildcat’s response to Steve Coleman’s review of its pamphlet. It is a fate that has befallen others who have tried to get letters published in that journal. Yet in its very first issue, in an admirably democratic spirit, it invited its harshest critics to take up the cudgels in its pages. Perhaps the SPGB is not quite as traditional as one might imagine, afterall!

But for all the blots on its copy book, the original colour still manages to show through. Hasten the day when a transformed and revitalised SPGB appears on the scene. For the present, we should learn from its weaknesses as well as its strengths.

Fraternally
Robin Cox

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Analysis and Critique by Echanges of Capitalism and Its Revolutionary Destruction, a Statement by Wildcat

(The following article—which we hope doesn’t have a microscopic typo—was produced as a first draft to give a brief introduction to the ideas of the Wildcat group in Manchester. The authors don’t consider it as a definite statement but rather as a tool for dialogue and discussion.)

Though at first sight some statements seem to look like ours, the position of the Wildcat group is far from that if you study it more deeply. No wonder that even if we agree with some paragraphs in the pamphlet, we fundamentally disagree with most of them. Just like ourselves Wildcat seems to the overgrowth of capitalism ‘can only be done by the workers themselves’; but we see this overgrowth as a completely different way from the British group. The most important part of disagreement is: the British group regards the struggle of the working class as the result of its consciousness. We think that just the opposite is the case. ‘Wildcat’, so we are told, ‘stands for the abolition of capitalism by communist revolution’. If one expresses oneself this way, it means or suggests that there is a kind of revolution which aims to create a communist society. We prefer to talk of a proletarian revolution or of a revolution of the workers. It’s true that such a revolution will lead to a communist society, but the workers who bring it about don’t have this in mind. The revolutionary measures they take are not the result of specific imagination, but are the direct and logical result of practical demands which are in close relation with their interests.

Wildcat pamphlet starts with a paragraph on capitalism. We think it to be very primitive and incomplete but we don’t have any serious objections. Then comes a paragraph on Parliament and Rights. ‘The working class’, Wildcat says: [1]

‘has no interest in the continuous existence of this society. However it is continually encouraged to see itself as a member of it ... In the early stages of capitalism, ascendency of the dominating class, class attained state power through various political revolutions, universal suffrage, peoples’ rights, the rights of man, justice, the democratic state; these were its slogans ... The practical need for these freedom of trade; the right to private property and certain political freedoms, which, together with the rights of the isolated individual, were designed to ensure faith in the “people’s state”, i.e. in the power of the new ruling class.

Obviously it still suits the enemy today if we see ourselves as sharing interests with them... Nobody who coherently grasps the fundamental reality that this is a class society could possibly doubt that the “revolutionary destruction of capitalism implies the revolutionary destruction of all parliaments”.

Whatever can be said about these works, one thing is certain, whatever may be the reason for those who want to call themselves “revolutionaries” not to participate in parliamentary work or not to vote one day in an election, workers have other reasons when they don’t go to the poll. If they stay home in an election day, they don’t do so from a certain revolutionary perspective. They abstain because parliament and parliamentary politicians don’t have any more to say to them, because they have understood that none of the political parties are defending their interest and that it doesn’t make much difference if this party or another is in office. On the other hand, those workers who go to the poll and share parliamentary illusions participate in unofficial strikes or factory occupations. Both categories, those who go to the poll and those who don’t, behave in the same way in practice. They do it without a revolutionary theory about parliament and without being conscious that in reality they are attacking the bourgeois order.

Then the pamphlet deals with questions like the end of capitalism and the consequences of the economic crisis. The pamphlet says in a very concise way that the capitalist method of production has changed the world on a very large scale. Under capitalism, it says, the world has progressed from a state of universal scarcity to one of potential abundance, ‘but the drive for profit [...] produces the productive forces from being used in a rational way to benefit the whole of humanity. This will be the task of a new society: communism’.

In these few lines there are we believe two fundamental misunderstandings. The first misunderstanding is of the same order as the widespread misunderstanding that poverty and wealth are situations you can observe independently of each other. The reality is different. Poverty is measured by wealth. The same is true for terms like scarcity and abundance: General scarcity, if you can imagine such a thing at any stage of social development, can’t be observed as such. Scarcity only exists as a contradiction of abundance: scarcity for many, abundance for few. This contradiction doesn’t exist as soon as new relations between producers and the means of production have put an end to the abundance for the few which historically existed. Then there is neither abundance nor scarcity. So the concept that the new society has to allocate abundance in a rational way is a misunderstanding.

When the pamphlet talks about the economic crisis, it given only an inadequate description of the phenomenon. It doesn’t analyze the meaning of the crisis for capitalist production, i.e. the crisis process of accumulation. In the chapter entitled “Class struggle and the myth of national liberation” Wildcat is criticizing what they call “various false nationalist solutions to the crisis”. Wildcat says, “National liberation is not the solution to a crisis”, but it seems to believe that it has been in the past. It is said that the so-called national liberation of some third world countries does not mean the solution for the crisis.

In the 20th century some liberation struggles led to the creation of new nation states which played a dynamic role in the development of world capitalism. This is no longer possible. Today the new rulers may achieve a measure of political independence from the great powers, but they can never free their country from the grip of
the world economic crisis. For the working class in these countries "liberation" simply means exchanging one set of bosses from another — the new bosses are violently opposed to the working class struggle as the old ones. Apart from the fact that in the 19th century most of the imperialist powers were installing these colonies, and national liberation of third world countries could hardly be seen, the most important thing is not mentioned in what is quoted above. Crisis in a country where capitalist development has yet to start has not the same significance as the crisis in a highly developed country which is caused by the decline in the rate of profit. For where a national class of employers has conquered power, capitalist development underlies the same conjunctural movement as is characteristic for capitalism. To this extent, this development is just the same as such development in the 19th century. There and now independence never was a measure against crises, but only a measure by the national bourgeoisie to make profit out of the exploitation of the lower class. What a national employer wants is, for the surplus value not to go into the pockets of the employers of a foreign power.

We agree with the statement that so-called socialist countries are really state capitalist countries and that on the other side of what is generally called the Iron Curtain there exists capitalism, and that therefore the ruling class in these countries is a capitalist class. Wildcat is perfectly right in saying that the East-European ruling class is in conflict with the ruling class in the West but is nevertheless part of the same class and is just as hostile towards the working class as the capitalist class in the West. We have no need to disagree with this.

We agree also when Wildcat says that so-called left governments attack the working class just as much right wing ones, and that "the socialists which the left wing parties claim to stand for is in fact state capitalism and that nationalisation in industry is a state capitalist measure which offers no benefits whatsoever either to the workers employed there or to the working class as a whole". Wildcat elaborates this vision in a paragraph on state capitalism with some parts of which we agree, with others not. We agree with the opinion that state capitalism has nothing to do with socialism, neither is it a step towards it. But we don't agree when Wildcat says that 'in Russia, after the defeat of the revolution and after the defeat of the working class ... state capitalism provided the means by which this underdeveloped country was able to catch up in capitalist development with the world leaders'. What is at stake here is a false judgment about the russian revolution. The russian revolution was a bourgeois revolution which as the result of various historical circumstances had to be performed by the workers and against the will of a weak russian middle class. The content of this bourgeois revolution was the destruction of what remained from feudal relations and the "victory of capitalism which there only could take the form of state capitalism. The introduction of state capitalism did not mean that the revolution was defeated. On the contrary it meant the victory of the revolution in which the workers played a role which was certainly more important than in other bourgeois revolutions but nevertheless has the same meaning. Of course we agree with Wildcat that the differences between the Russian bloc and the West are only superficial and that there as well as here workers have to sell their labour power and that there exists a ruling class which lives off the surplus value. Wildcat distinguishes itself in this respect from most of the left and so-called revolutionary groups. In that it clearly perceives the class struggle in the Eastern bloc. Also in that it perceives revolutionary development in the so-called third world countries as in fact bourgeois development, and it sees also that so-called socialist or communist parties in western countries are acting against the interest of the workers. So that workers sooner or later must come into conflict with these parties or left group organisations.

In the second half of the pamphlet there emerge the biggest differences between Wildcat and ourselves. Before we deal with them we want to make some comments on Wildcat's analysis of trade unionism. Wildcat says that the trade union movement suppresses the existence of capitalism and that the u.u.'s have always been against those actions which seem to threaten the honest as a whole: a concept which usually requires more detailed examination than Wildcat provides. Wildcat neglects that the trade union movement under certain circumstances is forced to support that kind of action by pressure from the rank and file. On the other hand Wildcat sees very clearly that the potential of open contradictions between the union and the membership cannot be attributed to the fact that the union has the wrong leaders. Wildcat says that this contradiction is essential to the trade union movement: "the unions as a whole are now part of the capitalist system". The only comment we have to make is that they have always been.

The chapter entitled 'The struggle for communism' - a title with which we do not agree for the reasons we developed at the beginning of this article - starts with something we do completely agree with: Wildcat says there that the class struggle of today contains the seeds of future struggles. But Wildcat thinks that the future struggle is 'the struggle for communism' and this is precisely the point. Wildcat not only has a completely different view of the struggles of the future but it also has a different view of the struggle of today. We think that a different view of the struggles of today leads to a different view of the struggles of tomorrow.

In Wildcat's description of today's class struggle there is constantly a minority of the workers in this factory or another which has a clear consciousness of the necessity for a break with the trade unions. On the other hand Wildcat describes a majority which fundamentally accepts this necessity. Observations we have made over a long period and certainly in no way superficially, have taught us quite differently. Such a majority or minority 'discovered' by Wildcat, doesn't exist in any clearly observable form. A minority which is clearly conscious of the necessity of a break with the trade unions doesn't exist at all. As Wildcat obviously bases itself on the experience of unofficial strikes, we want to point out that, even very often, strikers who operate autonomously, have not lost their illusions about trade unionism at all. In these cases there is not a majority before the strike breaks out which doesn't expect anything from the union. The break doesn't arise from the fact that a majority accepts such a sceptical view, but a break is caused because the union doesn't support the workers.

Apart from this, every action of workers together supposes a unity. But this is not realised because a majority must be obliged to accept the point of view of a minority. Unity is realised because the workers unite over practical questions, questions related to the daily experience in the
factory or in the process of production.
In the Wildcat pamphlet the paragraph on today's struggles ends with the statement that as long as the minority thinks differently from the majority, the minority "has to act against the will of the majority. Here we have clearly to do with a false motion. Nobody can have views that differ from the views of others and then often will be the case. But to act in this class struggle workers can only do as together and therefore they cannot do so on the basis of certain points of view, only on the basis of clear insight in practical problems and tasks.
Wildcat does not see this. For Wildcat class struggle is something that depends on 'the courage and resolution of a small minority of workers' who need 'to organize themselves independently... and need to link up with other similar minorities... and revolutionary political organizations'. Immediately after this Wildcat says that workers 'however are right to have a sceptical attitude towards such groups'. In spite of this very justified remark, Wildcat doesn't by any means understand that collaboration with such groups ends the unity of the workers and therefore means the inevitable end of the struggle. Wildcat very well understands that the class struggle in for instance East-Germany in 1953, Hungary '56, France '68 (Wildcat refers to the occupations in Spain of the late '70s, in Poland etc.) has taught us something about future organization with which workers can take decisions on behalf of their own interest. Wildcat understands also that this organization, setup during the struggle and for practical purposes, cannot be artificially kept alive. If there is such an attempt, Wildcat says, this organization became an empty shell.
But apart from this sort of illusion which we share, Wildcat again develops the point of view that in those organizations which are the expression of autonomous action, a minority should be a driving power which certainly will come into conflict with the majority of such workers' councils or strike committees. If so, the minority must not give way and certainly not compromise because, as Wildcat says, 'if revolution is to succeed the great mass of the working class must become conscious communist'. Our point of view is different: consciousness is not the precondition of the struggle but its result. Its product. It is the hard necessity of praxis which forces the workers to act in this way or another, and that results in social changes which in their turn lead to changes in consciousness.
Wildcat says that in the new society 'people will no longer be objects in the production process'. We think that's O.K. but we want to add something that is lacking in the pamphlet: people cease to be objects in the process of production as soon as they don't any longer need to sell their labour power. And they have no need to sell their labour power the moment that they control the means of production. This means a complete change of the hitherto existent economical system. The proletarian revolution is a social economic revolution. For this reason we disagree with Wildcat's statement that 'the organization of communist society will be based on the collective administration of things'. Such a statement fails to appreciate the essence of worker power.
In October 1969 normal workers lost their jobs because they refused to roll over, and play dead. In October, 1969 workers are no more the passive objects of the economic system. The former pit-strike president, Guyette, was dethroned because the Lutheran pastor from his church came to the mining regions and preached that Guyette was the fool. In the normal board of directors of Grand Coulee, the former pit-strike president was replaced by the Lutheran pastor. Such phenomena can happen because the existence of worker self-management was lost.

A SYSTHEMIC DISEASE?
It is about time we think about the situation which exists in the mining regions. We have here the eyes of the system which is always interested in the least difficult way to destroy the new organization. The system has everything in order to destroy the new organization. The system has the most powerful organ in its pockets. The system has the new organization has everything in order to destroy the new organization. The system has the most powerful organ in its pockets. The system has the most powerful organ in its pockets. The system has the most powerful organ in its pockets. The system has the most powerful organ in its pockets. The system has the most powerful organ in its pockets. The system has the most powerful organ in its pockets.
Discussion Bulletin:

The November 1990 issue of The DeLeonist Society Bulletin was sent to me by one of its subscribers. In the past, I have been acquainted with its lies and distortions of DeLeonism. The I.U.P. has been accused by Aaron Orange, of advocating "a fair day's wage for a fair day's work". When challenged to prove this, he remained silent. On another occasion, he claimed that the original I.U.P. tried to keep the S.L.P. off the ballot in New York City. Again, no proof when challenged! Another time, he claimed that the writer was a disrupter who had been expelled from the S.L.P. in 1927. The fact is, that the writer was never under charges in the S.L.P. His Section was expelled because it refused to find two of its members guilty, as instructed by the National Office (Petersen). The writer, who was State Secretary of New York, the largest State organization in the party, did not rejoin. Because of these lies, I am very wary of what I read in The DeLeonist Society Bulletin.

The November 1990 issue contains a long article entitled, "Socialist Labor Party Centennial", by Alan Sanderson. He claims the S.L.P. was destroyed by the revisionists, who resorted to it, because of the steadily shrinking membership. Sanderson is blind to the facts! When DeLeon died in 1914 the S.L.P. had 5000 members. That would be the equivalent of 15,000 members in 1990. When Petersen left office in 1969, the S.L.P. had less than 500 members. By expulsions of Sections, Federations and members for 55 years, he had destroyed the fighting S.L.P. of DeLeon.

We, of the I.U.P. are aware that the present S.L.P. has compromised some of its principles during the past 15 years. We have issued documents critical of them. However, Sanderson, under the pretext that he is giving a DeLeonist criticism, makes an unforgivable error. He refers to an article in the Centennial edition of the Weekly People in which the following sentence appears. "Accordingly, the S.L.P. holds that the mission of unionism must be to organize all workers, as a class, along industrial lines, to not only defend workers' immediate interest in protecting wage levels and working conditions, but, when sufficiently organized, to assume control of the means of production..." The rest of the sentence Sanderson does not quote which is, "disposses the capitalist class of its ownership of them, and to form the basis for a new socialist government and social system".

"There it is" cries Sanderson! Can workers be expected to organize unions that are both conservative and revolutionary in purpose? It is either one or the other. Either accept capitalism and organize for immediate demands or repudiate capitalism and organize for Socialism. "Long did the bonafide S.L.P. (When the Oranges and Sandersons were in the S.L.P.) warn against the folly of attempting to blend the two different aims into one. "This, because it had learned from bitter experience, notably from the I.W.W. fiasco. But the revisionists covered their ears". Sanderson goes on saying, this is an attempt to reconcile organizing for immediate demands with organization for Socialism.

Sanderson is trying to make us believe that DeLeon was opposed to workers fighting for better working conditions, higher wages, shorter hours, etc, etc. He calls these immediate demands, reforms!! Sanderson should study his DeLeon. Let him refute the following quotes!! From
Demands, "Immediate" and "Constant". (Daily People, August 2, 1913, DeLeon)

"Only the economic organization may and must reach out after crumbs—"improved conditions"—on its way to emancipation. The very nature of the organization preserves it from the danger of "resting satisfied", accepting "improvement" for "goal". The economic organization is forced by economic laws to realize it can preserve no "improvement" unless it marches onward to emancipation.

"Burning Question of Trades Unionism" by DeLeon.

In the second place trades unionism has an immediate mission. The supreme mission of trades unionism is ultimate. That day is not yet.... At any rate, we are not yet there. Steps in the right direction, so-called "immediate demands", are among the most precarious..... But there is a test by which the bait can be distinguished from the sound step, by which the trap can be detected and avoided, and yet the right step forward taken. That test is this: DOES THE CONTEMPLATED STEP SQUARE WITH THE ULTIMATE AIM? If it does, then the step is sound and safe; if it does not, then the step is a trap and disastrous. The "immediate step" that acts like a brake on the decline of wages belongs to the former category....

"What Means This Strike", Daniel DeLeon, Pg. 17.

The attitude of workingmen engaged in a bona fide strike is an inspiring one. It is an earnest that slavery will not prevail. The slave alone who will not rise against his master, who will meekly bend his back to the lash and turn his cheek to him — that slave alone is hopeless. But the slave who....persists, despite failure and poverty, in rebelling, there is always hope for.... I bank my hopes wholly and build entirely upon this sentiment of rebellion within you."

Throughout his life, DeLeon supported bona fide strikes. In fact, in 1908, the S.L.P. nominated Morrie Preston as their candidate for President. Preston (not a member of the S.L.P.) was attacked while picketing during a strike by the I.W.W. in Colorado. In defending himself, he killed his attacker and was charged with murder. The S.L.P. was supporting the strike and the right to picket. Preston declined the nomination. The Daily People is loaded with articles showing S.L.P. support of strikes.

Perhaps, Sanderson and The DeLeonist Society have abandoned the fact that there is a class struggle in capitalist society.

Sam Brandon

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Fraternally submitted, Frank Girard for the DB Committee

Whenever I think of William Morris, I think of the Arts and Crafts Movement. For me Morris is linked with John Ruskin as a theorist for one of the most important movements in modern design. Of the two, Morris has always loomed larger because he did more than theorize; he designed tapestries, wallpapers, and chairs that are still beautiful a hundred years later. To a lesser degree I think of Morris as a book designer much influenced by the Middle Ages, his Kelmscott Canterbury Tales among the finest modern examples of the book as art. I only think of Morris as a socialist when someone reminds me. That’s why I like William Morris & News From Nowhere: A Vision for Our Time (WMNN) edited by Stephen Coleman and Paddy O’Sullivan. It is an important reminder.

Last year was the centenary of the publication of Morris’ utopian novel News from Nowhere (NFN). William Morris & News From Nowhere is a reevaluation of Morris’ ideas on love, work, revolution, architecture, economics, and ecology written by various hands. Essentially it is an anthology of critical essays. As a book about a book, it has one serious shortcoming: it lacks an essay about the first edition of NFN and its subsequent reprints and translations as well as its role as propaganda. The authors build a strong case for Morris’ novel as the most important book of its genre since Thomas More’s Utopia. In addition, it is celebrated not as a mere dream of the future, a pleasant fantasy of Never-Never Land, but as a vision of tomorrow, of the world after capitalism, a glimpse of a contented mankind after the revolution. For example, Stephen Coleman points out in his “Preface” that "The utopian imagination, at its most radical invades the prevailing concept of reality, undermines certainties about what humans must always be like, and casts doubt upon the inevitabilities of the relations of everyday life." Obviously WMNN is important propaganda for the Cause, a significant example of radical literature. During the centenary of its publication one wishes WMNN had included a bibliographical essay on the novel outlining its role in the drama of the class struggle.

This omission aside, some readers might think that as an anthology of criticism it is too diverse, that it lacks focus in covering so many topics. If these readers remember the protean nature of William Morris, they will see the editors’ approach to their subject as part of the metaphor. In addition, these readers will be pleased by the book physically. Printed on recycled paper by the Greens, the typography and design are simple and elegant. The title on the front cover is superimposed on a background of Morris’ 1897 Honeysuckle wallpaper, an aesthetically pleasing presentation of a book about one of the founders of the Arts and Crafts Movement. But its real value is that it reminds us that William Morris was a revolutionary, that he possessed a radical imagination that challenged the certainties of the present by envisioning how we might live.
Dear Discussion Bulletin,

I don't know what point there was to reprinting Ulli Diemer's anti-anarchist diatribes, "The Red and the Black" (DB#45). If it was intended to promote a dialogue between anarchist and marxists, then it leaves no room for discussion. Diemer insists that their scepticism towards Marx, because he claims: A) "Marxism is not a monolith", ie. there are good marxists (libertarian/councilists) and there are bad marxists (leninists); B) Anarchists need marxism, because anarchism has no "rigorous analysis of capitalism, the state, bureaucracy, or authoritarianism" ---making it "a movement that disdains theory and uncritically worships action"; and C) Marx was the greatest socialist thinker that ever lived, HE started it, defined it, and every socialist movement exists in HIS shadow ---therefore "the Marxian project must be at the heart of any libertarian politics..." What this boils down to is that Diemer and his comrades will condescend to enlighten our poor untutored anarchist minds, as long as we admit our intellectual poverty and accept marxism as the basis of our future. Like all missionaries, Diemer is generous to savages. But let us examine the basis of his arguments.

A) "Marxism is not a monolith" ---This is true as far as it goes. It would require an encyclopedia to mention all the marxist schools, sects, parties, and splinter groups, as well as individual theorists, but what of it? The same can be said of bourgeois theories. Must we do a separate analysis of each of these, before we can critique the whole? After all the modern capitalist system does not operate entirely according to the free market theories of Adam Smith, but there is close enough of a family resemblance to allow socialists to use contemporary examples to denounce the failings of capitalism. Likewise there is a strong family resemblance to the theories of Marx and the marxism as practiced by the leninists.

Granted, not every marxist has working class blood on their hands. Many have been appalled at the misdeeds of Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin, Castro, etc. Many marxists were even more opposed to Leninism than Rosa Luxemburg, whose main criticism of Lenin was not over one-party state rule, but in the lack of democracy inside the Communist party for the party faithful. (Nor were Luxemburg's nor Gramsci's differences with Lenin enough to stop them from founding leninist-like Communist parties of their own.) But this does not mean we have to give every single marxist a shot at power, before we can conclude that the centralized power called for by Marx is going to be abused, regardless of class origins or ideology of the individuals at the top.

I remain unconvincd that there is such a thing as "libertarian marxism". Instead there are a small handful of marxist revisionists, who have taken a minute portion of Marx's writings and tried to argue these are somehow more significant than all his other writings saying exactly the opposite. On the one hand is Marx embracing the Paris Commune, but elsewhere in
THE CIVIL WAR IN FRANCE, Marx downplays its federalist tendencies and praises it for concentrating legislative and executive functions in the same hands. Then there is his ADDRESS TO THE COMMUNIST LEAGUE where he seems to be promoting workers councils, but the "libertarian Marxists" ignore the part where he casts scorn on civil liberties. None of the sacred texts of the libertarian-Marxists is ever put into historical context, that Marx was trying to win over the libertarian-minded workers to his cause, by telling them what they wanted to hear (in the style of Lenin’s STATE AND REVOLUTION.) Yet even if we accept Marx's "councilism" at face value, how do you reconcile it with THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO, with its call for state control of the economy and the creation of "industrial armies", or Marx insisting that all sections of the First International form worker's parties?

B) Anarchism disdains theory and is "anti-intellectual" --- Diemer says we anarchists should set aside our prejudices and stereotypes of Marxists, but then repeats verbatim marxist stereotypes about anarchists. For every neanderthal "anarchist" newspaper Diemer may want to cite to substantiate his case, we could find an equally dogmatic, jargon-spouting "marxist" journal praising some Third world dictator and saying how nirvana is only a vanguard/labor party away. It is a double standard to hold all anarchists responsible for the former, while disassociating Marxists from the latter.

To pretend to be fair, Diemer mentions a few names, like Kropotkin, Bookchin, and Rocker, as "exceptions". But at what point do the "exceptions" become so numerous as to invalidate the rule? In my own judgement, for instance, I think the works of Proudhon are the equal of those of Marx (although I am not strictly speaking a Proudhonist). Besides Proudhon, other major theorists who Diemer failed to mention are Landauer, Maximoff, Santillan, Petruts, Leval, Souchy, Goldman, Berkman, Malatesta, Berneri, Ferrer, Voline, Dolgoff, and Chomsky. Compared to the handful of "libertarian Marxists", this "thin thread", as Diemer calls them, are a veritable steel cable.

Then there is the bete noir of the Marxists, Bakunin. By taking a remark out of context, Diemer gives us the usual marxist caricature of Bakunin as being "anti-intellectual". But any thorough reading of such works as GOD AND THE STATE shows Bakunin recognized that knowledge is a tremendous benefit to workers. What Bakunin objected to was the division of the workers movement into a stratum of socialist intellectuals who led the movement as an incipient state bureaucracy, and another stratum of brainwashed followers afraid to think for themselves. Thus Bakunin anticipated the theories of a political "New Class" who would substitute themselves for the old bourgeoisie. Certainly his theory bears a prophetic ring, given later developments in many "marxist" states.

Anarchism has always had a better grasp of the problems of centralized political power and bureaucracy. Marxist analysis of these problems generally is one-dimensional and simplistic, in that economics is assumed to determine everything. Social
psychology tends to get ignored. Later interpretations like those of Reich or the Frankfurters only get around to what anarchists had grappled with a century before. Bakunin, for example, was denouncing the conservatism of patriarchy long before Reich. Emma Goldman made the connection between sexual repression and social control at the turn of the century. It may be that in Diemer's eyes, the anarchist analysis of these problems was not "rigorous." On the other hand to some anarchists the marxist treatment may be less "rigor" than rigor mortis.

C) Marx and marxism are indispensable --- The role of Marx as an original socialist thinker has been greatly exaggerated. Class analysis, the influence of economic factors on society, the instability of free market capitalism, the labor theory of value, etc., were not discoveries of Marx, but earlier socialist thinkers, as well as bourgeois economists. Marx and his followers probably borrowed more from the anarchists than vice versa. The fact that Marx is given credit for many of these things, ideas that even he laid no claim to having originated, owes itself more to the political dominance his followers were able to win after the Russian revolution. As is always the case, it is the victors who write history, even left-wing history.

Nevertheless Marx is owed credit for the development of "dialectical materialism", the notion that politics and culture develop according to the inevitable progression of economic "modes of production". This dogma, however, has been proven wrong. A case in point is the Soviet Union, where a state was created by a political-military bureaucracy, whose origins were more political than economic. The Bolsheviks proclaimed what, according to Marxist theory, couldn't be done, thus ironically disproving their ideological mentor. Granted, what they created was not socialism, but anarchists had said all along that socialism couldn't be created that way. (Diemer didn't mention that the main marxist critics of Lenin, were the social democrats, who felt the task of Russian marxists should have been to help the bourgeoisie attain power, according to strict marxist historical law. According to Marx, all countries must undergo capitalist development before they can become socialist.)

Far from being indispensable, marxism is useless as a guide to revolutionary action. Since marxists see all power as economic class-based, they ignore the dangers of centralizing power in working class institutions, even democratic ones. Even the councilists have yet to recognize the need for the institutional "checks and balances" inherent in a federalist system. A monopoly of power once established, does not wither away due to economic laws, but becomes self-perpetuating. Rather than being "at the heart of any libertarian politics", it is best to keep "the Marxian project", the "dictatorship of the proletariat" (Marx), at arm's length.

Conclusion: If a dialogue is to take place between libertarian marxists and anarchists, it must be as equals. Anarchists must retain the right not to become marxists, and the freedom to criticize the authoritarianism we see in much of marxist
doctrine. We have no interest in "...the revitalization of a Marxist current which is militantly anti-Leninist..."(Diemer). It is not up to us, who have no faith in marxism, to salvage marxism. We leave that to Ulli Diemer.

For self-management, not dictatorship, Jeff Stein

"SOCIALIST UNDERSTANDING* IS NOT ENOUGH

In Discussion Bulletin No. 44 Steve Coleman argues that we shall not get socialism until there is a majority (it would have to be world-wide) who accept the case put forward by the SPGB. He makes no attempt to show that we can reasonably expect such a majority.

His party have been at work since 1904 and now have about six hundred members. When they started, the world population was about two thousand million, so they needed something over one thousand million for their majority. The population now stands at over five thousand million, so they needed something over two-and-a-half. After 96 years they are over one-and-a-half thousand million farther from their majority than when they began. They have been advancing rapidly backwards.

Society keeps changing, but the SPGB give us no good reason to expect a change in their favour. Most people have not yet heard their case, but of those who have, the overwhelming majority have not accepted it. They offer no good reason for expecting the others to respond differently.

The SPGB claim to understand the capitalist system and to put forward a clear and logical case. But when we ask them what part the workers play they give contradictory answers:

1. "we, the workers, who ... run the planet from top to bottom" (Socialist Standard, April 1989, p.61).

2. "wars are not commenced or directed by the workers in uniform but by the capitalist-controlled state." (Discussion Bulletin 44, p.26)

(Both statements made by Steve Coleman, representing his party).

If the workers neither commence nor direct the wars that take place they do not run the planet from top to bottom. Until the SPGB can get their thinking straightened out they will do well to be more modest in their claims, and less dismissive of people who disagree with them.

George Walford, Ideological Commentary, 15 Calabria Rd. London N5 1JB.

Direct Democracy Network: This will be an international project which aims to produce some practical analysis of direct democracy (its strengths and weaknesses) with a special interest in mass organisations which use rotation of delegates.

(eg The Spanish Dockers Co-ordinador or the CGT-CNT branch at Michelin in the Basque Country.)

We would like to hear from anyone with practical experience, or who is interested in giving their criticisms of draft texts, doing translations (where possible we will work in Spanish as well as English), or in any way getting involved.

Various already existing texts on this subject will be sent to anyone interested.

Contact: Mick Farkin, 39 Vesta Road, Brockley, London, SE4 2NJ
BAKUNIN VERSUS MARX:
the continuing debate

I propose in this article to examine some of the most common anarchist objections to "Marxism". The issues I shall single out were raised for the first time by Bakunin at the time when anarchism was emerging as a self-conscious movement defining itself in opposition to all other currents on the left. Therefore I will concentrate primarily on Bakunin in the following discussion, and on some of his differences with Marx. While I realise that Bakunin is not the only interpreter of anarchism, I think this is a valid approach for a number of reasons: a) it is impossible to cover everyone and everything in a short essay, b) the Bakunin/Marx split was the formative event in the history of anarchism, c) Bakunin is still the most widely read, quoted and admired anarchist in the anarchist movement itself and d) many of the key anarchist objections, which continue to be used today, originate with Bakunin. To the extent that it is possible to call these objections into question, it is possible to call into question current anarchist pre-conceptions about Marxism and inaugurate a genuine debate.

How do anarchists see the Marxist/anarchist split? What are their claims?
The following beliefs seem to be generally accepted by anarchists:

1. Marxists believe in the creation of a 'people's state' or a 'worker's state'; anarchists believe in the abolition of the state.

2. Anarchists look to a society in which real decision-making involves everyone who lives in it; Marxism instead would lead to a society in which a few disciplinarians were pulling the strings in a so-called 'proletarian' dictatorship.

3. Marx was an 'economic determinist' - Bakunin emphasised the psychological (subjective) factors in revolution. Marxism is very much of the intellectuals who try to fit everything into their 'theory' of 'dialectical materialism' - of doubtful use at best and which mainly serves to make it possible for Marxist leaders to establish control over the movement.

4. Anarchists believe that revolutionary movements should be open, egalitarian and completely democratic; Marxists on the other hand advocate firmly hierarchical leadership, as exemplified by the vanguard party and 'democratic' centralism.

5. The original split in the First International between Bakunin, Marx and their respective factions came over the issue of authoritarianism; Marx had Bakunin expelled from the International on trumped-up charges because Bakunin opposed Marx's centralized regime over the International.

6. Marxism is 'authoritarian'; anarchism is 'libertarian'.

What of these objections?

1. The peoples' State
Perhaps it is not surprising that it is widely believed that Marx originated this concept, given the number of 'Peoples' Republics', 'Workers' States', etc. in the world today that call themselves 'Marxist'. Yet such a concept is nowhere to be found in Marx's writings. Marx, on the contrary, specifically rejected it. (See for example the Critique of the Gotha Programme).

It is indicative of Bakunin's methods that he repeatedly accused Marx of advocating a 'Peoples' State' (see for example Dolgoff ed. 'Bakunin on Anarchism', Vintage 1972.), an accusation that in view of his failure to cite any evidence to support it (check the sources and see if Bakunin ever offers a single quote to back up his claim), and in view of Marx's and Engels repeated repudiation of the concept, can only be interpreted as a deliberate fabrication on Bakunin's part. And it is hardly to the credit of several generations of anarchists that they have continued to swallow Bakunin's fictions on this matter without ever bothering to look for evidence to back them up.

Marx and Engels's position on the state, while not free of ambiguities and not above criticism, was quite different from what Bakunin claimed. It is spilled out most extensively in Marx's 'The Civil War in France', but is developed in numerous other works as well. What Marx foresaw was that during the revolutionary period of struggle against the bourgeoisie, the proletariat would use the state apparatus to crush the bourgeoisie: "to achieve its liberation it employs means which will be discarded after the liberation" (Marx, 'Conспектus of Bakunin's State and Anarchy' 1874-75). After the bourgeoisie are vanquished the state has outlived its usefulness. Marx pointed to the Paris Commune as being very close to what he had in mind. Bakunin too was enthusiastic
about the commune, yet he continued to accuse Marx of secretly holding very different views. This Bakuninist nonsense has been endorsed by other anarchists as well. For example, the anarchist Arthur Mueller Lehning writes that "it is an irony of history that at the very moment when the battle between the authoritarians and the anti-authoritarians in the International reached its apogee, Marx should in effect endorse the programme of the anti-authoritarian tendency. ... The Commune of Paris had nothing in common with the state socialism of Marx and was more in accord with the ideas of Proudhon and the federalist theories of Bakunin. 'Civil War in France' is in full contradiction with all Marx's writings on the state." (Quoted in 'Bakunin on Anarchy' ed. Sam Dolgoff p. 260). This is a remarkable piece of doublethink. Marx's major work on the state is said to be "in full contradiction" with "all his writings on the state. What writings is Lehning referring to then? We don't know because he doesn't say. As always, in anarchist polemics we have to take him on faith. Certainly he can't be referring to 'The Poverty of Philosophy' (1847), or to 'The Communist Manifesto' (1848), or 'The Critique of the Gotha Programme' (1875), or to the private letters Marx was writing at the same time as the publication of the 'Civil War in France' in 1871. All these consistently maintain that the state is incompatible with socialism. Together they comprise most, if not all, of Marx's writings on the state. But Lehning (and Bakunin, and Dolgoff, and Avrich, and...) know better. Somewhere, in some mythical world known only to the anarchists are to be found Marx's real views on the state, the "People's State of Marx" ('Bakunin on Anarchy', p. 318), which is "completely identical" with "the aristocratic-monarchic state of Bismark" ('Bakunin on Anarchy' p. 319).

How does one refute an 'argument' which, without a single shred of evidence, except racial predisposition ("as a German and a Jew, he (Marx) is from head to toe an authoritarian" - Bakunin in 1872) or a single quotation, attributes ideas and concepts to Marx that Marx had repeatedly attacked? There are two alternatives: either one swallows everything Bakunin, Dolgoff and co. say, on faith, because they are anarchists, or one takes the path of intellectual integrity, and tries to discover Marx and Engels' views on the state by reading Marx and Engels. If one takes the latter course, one might start by reading Engels' March 1875 letter to Bebel, in which he says "...it is pure nonsense to talk of a free people's state: so long as the proletariat still uses the state, it does not use it in the interests of freedom but in order to hold down its adversaries, and as soon as it becomes possible to speak of freedom the state ceases to exist. We would therefore propose to replace state everywhere by Gemeinwesen, a good old German word which can very well convey the meaning of the French word 'commune'."

It is still possible, of course, to argue that the use of the state by the proletariat in the brief transitional period is dangerous, and could lead to the establishment of a permanent state. (It must be admitted, however, that Bakunin himself envisioned a form of post-revolutionary state, complete with elections, delegates, a parliament, an executive committee, and an army. ('Bakunin on Anarchy' p. 153). Anarchists are curiously quiet about this, however).

Nevertheless it remains a fact that in balance, the concern that Bakunin expressed about the possible degeneration of the revolution was a valid one, and that Marx for his part failed to give sufficient weight to the dangers posed by this threat to a future revolution. This criticism, however, must itself be qualified in a number of ways. It is a far cry from the claims of the Bakunists and the anarchists that Marxism was a theory that aimed at the subjection of society to the state.

2. Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

A closely related question is that of the dictatorship of the proletariat, one of the most abused and misunderstood terms of all of Marxism. The question of the transition from capitalism to socialism, and Marx's view of it, is an extremely complicated one that cannot be covered in a few paragraphs. But the point here is simply to dispose of the grossest misunderstandings of the term, fostered by its appropriation by the Bolsheviks, and by the related fact that dictatorship has come to have a quite different meaning today than it had in Marx's time. As Dolgoff puts it, there was then a "loose sense in which the term 'dictatorship' was used by nineteenth century socialists - to mean simply the preponderant influence of a class, as in Marx's 'dictatorship of the proletariat'" ('Bakunin on Anarchy' p. 12). To be more precise, the dictatorship of the proletariat means the rule by the proletariat as a class, and the suppression of the bourgeoisie as a class. It is perfectly compatible with, and indeed presupposes, the most thoroughgoing democracy within the working class. The best
brief exposition of the Marxian concept, and how it differs from the Leninist concept of dictatorship, comes from Rosa Luxembourg’s 1918 polemic against the Bolsheviks:

“We have always distinguished the social kernel from the political form of bourgeois democracy; we have always revealed the hard kernel of social inequality and lack of freedom hidden under the sweet shell of formal equality and freedom - not in order to reject the latter but to spur the working class into not being satisfied with the shell, but rather, by conquering political power, to create a socialist democracy to replace bourgeois democracy - not to eliminate democracy altogether.

“But socialist democracy is not something which begins in the promised land after the foundations of socialist economy are created; it does not come as some sort of Christmas present for the worthy people, who, in the interim, have loyally supported a handful of socialist dictators. Socialist democracy begins simultaneously with the beginnings of the destruction of class rule and the construction of socialism. It begins at the very moment of the seizure of power by the revolutionary party. It is the same thing as the dictatorship of the proletariat.

“Yes, dictatorship! But this dictatorship consists in the manner of applying democracy, not in its elimination, in energetic, resolute attacks upon the well-entrenched rights and economic relationships of bourgeois society, without which a socialist transformation cannot be accomplished. But this dictatorship must be the work of a class and not of a little leading minority in the name of the class - that is, it must proceed step by step out of the active participation of the masses …” (Rosa Luxembourg. ‘The Russian Revolution’).

3. “Economic Determinism”

The question of Marx’s materialism is an extremely difficult one which cannot be dealt with in such a short article. At this point it is possible only to say that it raises difficult problems which have to be seriously analyzed. However, while a re-examination of Marx’s theory and the admitted contradictions in it are on the agenda, it must be said that the typical anarchist portrayals of it and objections to it are ill-informed misconceptions that contribute nothing to the discussion. For example, Marx was not an ‘economic determinist’; he rejected such determinism and what he called ‘crude materialism’ out of hand. He did not attempt to reduce all phenomena to economic ones; and it is necessary only to read any of his political works to be convinced of this. As Engels said, “According to the materialist conception of history, the ultimately determined element in history is the production and reproduction of material life. More than this neither Marx nor I has ever asserted. Hence if somebody twists this into saying that the economic element is the only determining one he transforms the proposition into a meaningless, abstract, senseless phrase.” (Letter to Joseph Block, September 21 - 22, 1889).

Anarchists like Paul Avrich, however, have their own view of ‘what Marx really meant’. See how Avrich crudely contrasts Marx’s and Bakunin’s views: “(Bakunin) rejected the view that social change depends upon the gradual unfolding of ‘objective’ historical conditions. He believed, on the contrary, that men shape their own destinies…”

It is unfortunate that Avrich has never read Marx’s third thesis on Feuerbach: “The materialist doctrine (of Feuerbach) that men are products of their circumstances and upbringing, and that, therefore, changed men are the products of other circumstances and changed upbringing, forgets that it is men that change circumstances and that the educator himself needs educating.” Or ‘The Holy Family’: “History does nothing. It ‘does not possess immense riches’, it ‘does not fight battles’. It is men, real, living men, who do all this, who possess things and fight battles. It is not ‘history’ which uses men as a means of achieving - as if it were an individual person - its own ends. History is nothing but the activity of men in pursuit of their ends.”

4, 5, 6. The nature of the revolutionary organisation; authoritarianism and libertarianism.

Again it is impossible to do justice to either Marx’s or Bakunin’s views in a short article such as this. It is necessary to understand, first of all, that the ideas of both, as expressed in their writings, are in certain respects contradictory; neither Marx, nor certainly Bakunin, was entirely consistent throughout his life. Secondly, the practice of both men was sometimes at variance with what they advocated. Neither was able to live up to the standards set down. Both displayed considerable streaks of arrogance and authoritarianism in their own personalities.

Nevertheless, there remains a body of writing
and practice that makes it possible for us to evaluate what they stood for. I shall argue that a serious examination of the question yields the following points:

1. Bakunin deliberately distorted and falsified Marx's views on the issues under dispute.
2. The accusation that led to Bakunin's expulsion from the International, that of heading a secret society which aimed to infiltrate and take over the International, was true. (Since this seems to be accepted by most historians, this point will not be pursued. See for example Woodcock's 'Anarchism' p. 168, or Aileen Kelly's article in the New York Review of Books, January 22nd, 1976). The only point worth noting here is that the 'authoritarian' federal structures of the International that Bakunin protested so vehemently against in 1871 and 1872 were introduced to the International shortly before, not on the initiative of the General Council of which Marx was a member, but on the motion of Bakunin's supporters, with Bakunin's active participation and support. It was only after he failed to gain control over the structures of the International that Bakunin suddenly discovered their 'authoritarianism'.

3. The charge of authoritarianism and dictatorial views can be directed against Bakunin with a great deal more justification than they can against Marx.

Bakunin's deliberate misrepresentations of Marx's views on the state were noted earlier. Bakunin was obsessed with the idea that all Germans held identically authoritarian views, and consistently attributed the views of some of Marx's bitterest enemies, such as Bismarck or Lasalle, to Marx. Marx's fury at this tactic is a matter of record. Bakunin, in many of his polemics against Marx, argues from the premise that Marx must obviously be authoritarian because he was both German and Jew, who are by definition authoritarian and statist. (Because of selective editing this is not evident in Dolgoff's anthology). Bakunin went even further, claiming that Marx was part of an international conspiracy with Bismarck and Rothschild. Such accusations are not worthy of reply, but surely they make it clear that it is necessary to treat the 'facts' and arguments of the man making them with the greatest of caution.

A similar disregard for the most elementary rules of evidence, not to mention decency, permeated most of Bakunin's polemics against Marx. He charged again and again, that Marx advocated a universal dictatorship, that he believed in a socialism "decreed from the top down". He ignored Marx's lifelong insistence that "the emancipation of the working classes can only be the work of the working classes themselves", and Marx's intransigent opposition to the state. Nor did he attempt to support his accusations with the facts or quotations. In reading Bakunin's caricature of Marx's views - the only 'version' of Marxism most anarchists have ever bothered to familiarise themselves with! - readers will search in vain for one single quotation amidst the hysterical confusion of wild, unsubstantiated charges. There are simply none.

Almost as bad are those anarchists who lambast Marx for his 'advocacy' of 'democratic centralism' and the 'vanguard party': it is really necessary to point out that these concepts came into being long after Marx's death; that Marx never belonged to an organisation practising either; that he consistently opposed the tiny conspiratorial sects of his day; that he made it a condition of his joining the Communist League that they scrap their closed, undemocratic organisational forms; that he always, and angrily, refused attempts by socialists of his day to single him out for special honours or titles in the movement.

And has it been forgotten completely that one of Marx's chief themes in his criticism of Bakunin was the latter's eternal fascination with conspiratorial, manipulative, sectarian politics?

For there is, unfortunately for those who believe in anarchist fairy tales, a substantial body of evidence for the contention that Bakunin held precisely those 'authoritarian' views which he brazenly attributed to Marx. Those who seek evidence of a penchant for dictatorial, Machiavellian politics will find a good deal of material in the writings not of Marx, but of Bakunin. (This is not to say that Bakunin consistently held such views; within Bakunin's work the contradictions amount to a basic polarity).

Bakunin's advocacy of a post-revolutionary state, which contained most of the forms of the pre-revolutionary state, such as Parliament, army, elections etc. was noted earlier and can be found in 'Bakunin on Anarchy' (p. 153). Similarly, despite his much vaunted opposition to any form of independent political action by the working class, one can find him advocating, in his letters not simply political action, but working class support and action on behalf of bourgeois political parties. (See 'Bakunin on Anarchy' p. 219). And elsewhere, one finds him
advocating nothing less than that anarchists run for Parliament. (‘Bakunin on Anarchy’ p. 218).
Nor are these merely the products of his naive, youthful days. No, these pronouncements, and many others like them, were issued privately at precisely the time that Bakunin is publicly proclaiming his opposition to Marxism because it advocates political action by the working class, and a transitional dictatorship of the proletariat in the immediate post-revolutionary period.
It is also worth contrasting Bakunin’s proclamation of the principle, for the future anarchist society, of “from each according to his ability, to each according to his work” with Marx’s much more radical principle, “from each according to his ability to each according to his needs”.

Or consider Bakunin’s rules for the International Alliance, not a passing whim, but the organisation to which he gave his primary allegiance whilst participating in the First International. Here is a sample written in 1869: “It is necessary that in the midst of popular anarchy, which will make up the very life of and all the energy of the revolution, the unity of revolutionary thought and action should be embodied in a certain organ. That organ must be the secret and world-wide association of the international brothers...”

"...the only thing a well-organised secret society can do is first to assist the birth of revolution by spreading among the masses ideas that accord with instincts of the masses, and to organise, not the army of the revolution - that army will be composed of the people, but a revolutionary general staff composed of devoted, energetic and intelligent individuals who are above all sincere - not vain or ambitious - friends of the people, capable of serving as intermediaries between the revolutionary ideas and the popular instincts.”

"The number of these individuals should not, therefore, be too large. For the International organisation throughout Europe one hundred serious and firmly united revolutionaries would be sufficient. Two or three hundred revolutionaries would be enough for the organisation of the largest country.”

As the ‘authoritarian’ Marx said of this libertarian idea: “To say that a hundred international brothers must ‘serve as intermediaries between the revolutionary idea and popular instincts’ is to create an unbridgeable gulf between the Alliance’s revolutionary idea and the proletarian masses; it means proclaiming that these hundred guardsmen cannot be recruited anywhere but from among the privileged classes.”

When one sees the views of Marx and Bakunin side by side, it is difficult to remember that it is Marx, not Bakunin, who is supposed to be the father of ‘Marxism-Leninism’ and Bakunin, not Marx, who is supposed to be the father of anarchism.
Bakunin’s authoritarian tendencies were at their most extreme at precisely the time he was splitting the International. This was the time of his association with Nechaev. Most anarchist sources treat this as a passing aberration on Bakunin’s part, and indeed he did repudiate Nechaev when he realised the true nature of his activities.

But the fact remains that Bakunin did enter into partnership with Nechaev, and under his influence wrote a number of tracts that displayed a despotic, Machiavellian approach to revolution that far surpassed anything he ever accused Marx of. The authorship of some of the pieces in question is under dispute, but the relevant point is surely that Bakunin allowed his name to be put to even those pamphlets he did not write, and that he actively worked to have them distributed knowing they bore his name.
In these pamphlets, Nechaev and Bakunin advocate a new social order, to be erected “by concentrating all the means of social existence in the hands of our Committee, and the proclamation of compulsory physical work for everyone,” compulsory residence in communal dormitories, rules for hours of work, feeding of children, and other minutaes. As the ‘authoritarian’ Marx put it: “What a beautiful model of barracks-room communism! Here you have it all: communal eating, communal sleeping, assessors and offices regulating education, production, consumption, in a word, all social activity, and to crown it all our Committee, anonymous and unknown to anybody, as the supreme dictator. This indeed is the purest anti-authoritarianism...”
When one looks at Bakunin’s views on authority and revolution in detail, it is hard to disagree with Marx and Engels’ claim that Bakunin and his followers simply used the word ‘authoritarian’ to mean something they didn’t like. The word ‘authoritarian’ was then, and remains today for many libertarians, a way of avoiding serious political questions. For the fact is that not all authority is bad; that in certain
situations it is both necessary and unavoidable. As Engels said: "A revolution is certainly the most authoritarian thing there is; it is the act whereby one part of the population enforces its will upon the other part by means of rifles, bayonets and cannon - authoritarian means if such there be at all!" And some form of authority is decision making structure, is necessary in any form of interaction, cooperation or organisation that is social, rather than individual. In a socialist society, it will still be necessary to make decisions about things; these decisions will necessarily reflect the will of the authority, of the majority. This is not a violation of collectivity, but an absolutely indispensable component of it. To say, as many anarchists do, that they reject all forms of authority, even that which is willingly accepted or which is the result of democratic decision making, is simply to advocate either minority rule or a return to the purest form of free-market capitalism, as is advocated by the 'libertarian' right. No amount of talk about consensus or local autonomy or individual initiative will alter this fact. Consensus is not always attainable, because sometimes people do not agree. Then a decision making process is necessary, and if it is democratic, the minority will have to concede to the majority. Autonomy and individual initiative can still have the fullest possible play, but this does not alter the fact that the authority of the majority has prevailed in the question at hand.

There is another aspect of Bakunin that must be confronted. Because, like his ill-defined views on authority, it has remained a part of the anarchist movement. Running through all of Bakunin's thought and subsequent anarchist thought and practice is a dark thread; an infatuation with violence; with destruction for the sake of destruction; action for the sake of action; distrust of logic, intellect and knowledge; a love for conspiratorial and tightly controlled organisation. For the most part,

these things remained subsidiary to his - and his successors' - genuinely libertarian and humanistic instincts.

During the period of Bakunin's association with Nechaev, who was attracted solely by Bakunin's dark side, this aspect took over. Then, confronted with the realisation of this dark thread in practice, in the person of Nechaev, Bakunin shrank back in genuine horror. However, as Aileen Kelly has noted, "...even then he managed to integrate Nechaev's villainy into his own fantasies, writing to his astonished friends that Nechaev's methods were those of a 'pure' and 'saintly' nature who, faced with the apathy of the masses and intellectuals in Russia, saw no other way but coercion to mold the latter into a force determined enough to move the masses to revolution. Such reasoning, Bakunin concluded, 'contains, alas! much truth'".

Kelly continues: "This grotesque assessment of Nechaev is very revealing. At a time when the gap between man's empirical and ideal natures seemed enormous, Bakunin, albeit, reluctantly, concluded that if men do not wish to liberate themselves, it might be necessary for those with their highest interests at heart to liberate them against their will."

To Bakunin's credit, he continually struggled against the implications of this aspect of his thought. Always fascinated by all the 'revolutionary' shortcuts, he nevertheless remained loyal to his libertarian instincts, and it is this aspect of his remarkably polarised vision that he left as his lasting heritage. The anarchist movement that came after him has also been plagued by the same polarity, by the tension between the real libertarianism on the one side, and the sometimes irresistible attraction of anti-intellectualism, terrorism and conspiracy on the other. The anarchist movement needs to come to grips with Bakunin's ambiguous heritage. And to do so, it also needs to come to terms with Marx.

Footnotes.

1. On the other hand I do not see all Marxist-Leninists as counter-revolutionaries, as many anarchists seem to do. Many (particularly Trotskyists) are sincere revolutionaries who do not understand the implications of the ideology they adhere to. Even if the ideology is counter-revolutionary it does not make every Marxist-Leninist so. Nor are the differences on the left always absolute, there are always grey areas where Marxism and Anarchism, and even Leninism and Anarchism converge. Life doesn't always lend itself to analysis by the 'them' 'us' categories, if for no other reason than that all of us have internalised at least some of the repressive baggage of the dominant society. All of us have something 'counter-revolutionary' in us (Diemer).

Note: this is the second of two articles by Ulli Diemer reprinted from the British libertarian-socialist magazine FLUX, Box A, the Rainbow Centre, Mansfield Rd., Nottingham, England. Send a dollar for a sample.
Dear Discussion Bulletin readers,

Many people, including Ed Stamm, have a hard time believing a totally free system would work. Ed said in DB 45, ",... you would have to rely on the good will of individuals to put in the necessary volunteer labor." If this were true, I would have to agree with Ed. But if people were allowed to choose the kind of work they enjoyed doing and had control of their own life and job -- I see people then working because they found satisfaction and joy in pursuing it. Ed named a long list of things he would rather do, but I doubt that he has yet had the chance to find a work that he really enjoys. It is fortunate that we are all a bit different. There may be enough difference to fill all of the necessary jobs, once people have freedom at work. I can see no reason why we can't automate the jobs no one cares to do.

Somehow I am repelled at the thought of "being expected" to put in 32 hours of work for the unit. That sounds like force to me. That sounds just like what we have now. Ed said, ",... some will overwork and some will underwork...." I have worked as a volunteer (I have to pay to do it.) for over 21 years. It is not a job that I enjoy tremendously. I do it because I think it needs to be done. I do the best I can. I put a whale of an amount of time (far more than his 32 hours) at it. I do feel bad sometimes because I don't see many people helping yet, but I keep on. I see my (our) boat sinking. It is self preservation, I guess. After the change-over, I'll look for a kind of work I am better at and will enjoy more.

In a free system with people doing jobs they enjoy, they will not give a damn if others are working or not. The ones who aren't working, won't be having as much fun. Vacationing gets boring after a while.

We are living at a time now where the world is a very small place. I mean we can get from here to there very quickly and can communicate instantaneously to the other side of the Earth. We have the capabilities now to transform the whole world to a free system. Buckminster Fuller has shown us that there is an abundance of resources, but that they are kept scarce to keep prices high. So with everything free there will be no reason to steal. We will have much more interesting things to do and all space to explore with no budget limits, nor government interference.

I am afraid I wouldn't like to work in Ed's society that he has to use force to form. I have already started living the free society. I have given my newsletter away free of charge for many years. People now pay the post office for its delivery, but I take no pay for it. This gives me much more freedom in the how, when, where, why, what and who of my work. I like it. As more people see the value in volunteerism, I will start to get things for free too. The Priceless Economic System (PES) is already started. There are a few more people practicing it now too.

The objections that Ed brings out are very intelligent and many many people tell me the same thing. But after one thinks a little deeper one can see that the PES would and is beginning to work.

It may be possible that people will also begin to use their POWER to boycott the big corporations and bring them down on their knees. If we show them we won't buy hardly anything from them until they bring the boys home from the war, they will obey or soon go broke. The People have the Power, but they have forgotten.

Sincerely,

Ernest Mann
Dear Comrades,

As a worker in the DB assembly department, I am in the enviable position of being able to respond to letters and articles in the same issue that they appear. This letter has two parts:

1. Re Jeff Stein’s Letter and Ulli Diemer’s Articles.

Jeff may be right in saying that reprinting Diemer’s articles was no way to promote a dialogue between anarchists and Marxists. But the fact is that when I swiped them from Flux I wasn’t thinking of promoting a dialogue. The idea was to make available to DB readers another example of the less combative and prejudiced literature of the controversy. After reading Diemer’s articles again carefully, I can see how one can argue, as Jeff Stein does, that nothing is gained by going over these old arguments. On the other hand, perhaps articles like Diemer’s that set forth the facts of the dispute are needed to jolt us out of our Marxist or Bakuninist mindsets. (In this connection the DB would welcome articles with an anarchist set of facts.)

Incidentally, like Stein I have serious questions about Diemer’s articles. For one thing, his term “libertarian Marxism” strikes me as inappropriate because Marx’s contributions to socialist thought and practice—his ideas on economics and history—don’t yield to “libertarian” or “non-libertarian” interpretation. They are more like natural laws. The first, that like slaves and serfs, workers under capitalism are robbed at the point of production and automatically resist; the latter that history is not static and that, like past economic systems, capitalism is mortal. These ideas, it seems to me, provide a rationale for socialist activity: the conviction that time is on our side and that eventually our class will get our masters off our backs.

Diemer and the rest of us libertarian socialists may use Marx’s economic and historical theories to bolster our cause, but we aren’t using a “libertarian” Marxism any more than the typewriters we use are libertarian. Also, no Marxist would deny that, as both Marx and Jeff Stein pointed out, Marx borrowed from other thinkers and built his theories on their ideas.

Certainly one can’t use Marx’s writings and actions between 1840 and 1883 as a guide to organizing for socialism and agitating among workers. Everything I have read would suggest that, regardless of how one might judge Marx’s honesty and fairness with his opponents, the organizational course he supported in the First International—that of working within the existing union movement—cannot succeed now. Nor can we be impressed by his powers of prophecy. But, then, none of us who have spent a good share of our own lives convinced that “the kingdom of God is at hand” should bear him any malice for that.

Perhaps those of us who would like to see cooperation within what the ICC refers to as the “revolutionary milieu” should stop thinking of, and labeling ourselves as, Marxists, Bakuninists, DeLeonists, etc.
For one thing, such labels have religious sectarian overtones--Christian, Mohammedan, Buddhist—that Marx, Bakunin, etc. would have rejected out of hand were they to see and hear them. And they suggest the sort of mindless acceptance of holy writ that we associate with religion.

Another thing is that, as one can see from both Diemer’s and Stein’s articles, the true Marxist or Bakuninist believer feels obliged to defend not only all the words of his hero but the actions as well. For instance, in preparation for this letter I decided to reread De Leon’s *Socialism and Anarchism* [$.50 + $1.00 postage from New York Labor News, 914 Industrial Ave., Palo Alto, CA 94303]. It wasn’t an uplifting experience. The pamphlet is a speech given by De Leon a month after the assassination of McKinley by Leon Czolgosz, whose claim to be an anarchist was shaky at best. De Leon accomplishes his purpose—to distance the Socialist Labor Party from anarchism—by a tenuous and specious argument that plays fast and loose with the meaning of the term anarchism and ends by accusing such SLP enemies as the Catholic Church, the social democrats, capitalist politicians, and the capitalist class with being the true anarchists.

If one is willing to accept the claims of both anarchists and socialists/communists that they have in common the goal of abolishing capitalism and creating an egalitarian stateless and moneyless society, then there should be no reason why we can’t cooperate. Consider the similarities:

Both agree that capitalism must be abolished
Both agree that the new society will be stateless
Both agree that private ownership of the means of production will be abolished.
Both agree that labor will be voluntary
Both agree that exchange—buying and selling—will be abolished and hence, money

The fact is that from the rather different intellectual backgrounds of Marxism and Bakuninism, we anarchists and socialists have come to rather similar conclusions about the nature of the new society we hope to see. As an example, Jeff might consider just how close to the syndicalism, which he espouses, is the socialist industrial unionism of the DeLeonists both in and outside the SLP. In fact, back eighty years ago, when the IWW split and the term “syndicalism” was rarely used in the U.S., writers on the subject spoke of the “political” industrial unionists and the “anti-political” industrial unionists. Today we might well ask whether our organizational forefathers did our class a favor by carrying on these feuds. What is even worse is that when one examines these conflicts dispassionately, he finds that the source of the trouble is more likely to be the egos of “leaders” than the merits of the conflict.

All the above isn’t to depreciate the importance of the differences between anarchists and socialists—and here I mean libertarian socialists, not social democrats and Leninists. But I believe that discussion and greater familiarity with each other’s literature can
scotch the suspicion with which they often view each other.

* * *

2. Re Mann versus Stamm:

Ed Stamm and Ernest Mann have begun another inning on the question of whether libertarian socialism is--in the words of the title of a SPGB pamphlet--"a practical alternative." Certainly the matter is important. When we socialists succeed in convincing our fellow workers (or humans if you reject the use of workers in this context) that capitalism is the major source of social problems, we must convince them that libertarian socialism is the solution. And that requires them to conclude that it is practical--that people will indeed cooperate in a way and to an extent that will insure fairness and won't require force to accomplish.

As Ed Stamm's letter in DB45 indicates, the first step in this process is probably to convince ourselves or--to put it a bit more carefully--for those of us who advocate such a society to convince the Ed Stamms and Don Fitzes in our political sector that such a society is possible now, without a generation of socialist training by the cadre of the workers' party or whatever it is that is supposed to create 'socialist man and woman.' To this end, I'd like to recommend the pamphlet alluded to above, _Socialism as a Practical Alternative_. $1.00 from the SPGB, 52 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7UN, England.

Frank Girard

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REVIWES OF PERIODICALS

Here we review what we regard as the periodicals of our political sector (libertarian socialist) in rotation as space permits. The reviews are preceded by what is intended to be an exhaustive list of such journals in the English language. If you have ideas for additions to the list--or deletions, for that matter, please let us know. Those titles followed by an asterisk are regarded as being in our sector but unconsciously carrying the leninist virus of "dictatorship of the party.

SOCIALIST STANDARD; 52 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7UN, England; Monthly; 16 A4 pages. Subs: Twelve issues -- L8.00 England, L10 [$18] U.S. Socialist Standard is published by the Socialist Party of Great Britain (SPGB). Its perspective represents the anti-reformist, no-compromise positions American readers will associate with the SLP. To some extent this resemblance stems from their similar roots: Both came from that element in turn-of-the-century socialism which resisted the reformism that had come to characterize most parties of the Second International. Typically articles in the SS run to a page or less and each issue is centered around a theme. Recent issues have concentrated on the economy—"Boom Goes Bust"—with articles including "Debt Is a Four-Letter Word," "Capitalism Moves into Recession," and "Architects on the Dole." The November, 1990, issue was headed "Blood and Oil" and October's was the William Morris issue.

SOCIALIST VIEW; 41 Donegall St., Belfast, Northern Ireland; Bimonthly; 16 A4 pages. Subscription price is unclear, 30p per copy. U.S. readers should send a dollar for two issues. SV is the journal of the World Socialist Party of Ireland, a companion party of the SPGB, and reflects the same revolutionary anti-statism and anti-capitalism. The last issue we have, that of April/May 1980 contained a two-page article, "An Independent State of Ulster: Facts, Figures, and Fallacies," contesting the IRA's proposal for such a state. Another article discusses the role of money under capitalism: "Money: We'd Be Better off Without It." This issue also contains the review of Steve Coleman's Daniel De Leon, which DB45 borrowed.

SOLIDARITY; c/o 123 Lathom Road, London E6 2EA, England; quarterly; 16 A4 pages; subs: L6 ($10). Solidarity, which has existed in various forms since the Sixties, bills itself as "A Journal of Libertarian Socialism." In the its earlier manifestation it was the journalistic voice of the post-Marxism of Cornelius Castoriadis (Paul Cardan). Articles in the Autumn 1990 issue include "Truth the First Casualty of Government," which describes British reporting of the U.S. Navy's destruction of an Iranian airliner in 1988; "Hungary: From People's Republic to Republic in the Name of the People;" and an article on libertarian education, "No Uniform School." Along with the above come an interesting array of reviews and letters.

SPANNER; BM Spanner, London WC1N 3XX, England. Frequency unstated; 45 A4 pages; Subs: L1 per issue [U.S. $2]. Spanner is produced by a
group that includes former SPGB members who reject or at least question the view of that party—as well as many others in our political sector—that a socialist revolution will come about over a short period of time as class consciousness created by the problems of capitalism and education by the SPGB bring about the mind-set necessary. **Spanner #2** continues its critique of this kind of Marxism with such articles as "The Tyranny of Economics" in which the author, Robin Cox questions the "tendency among Marxists to separate out economic factors...and invest [then] with primary importance," and a debate, "Will the Workers Ever Knowingly Oppose Capital?" featuring a capitalist libertarian versus a spanner. Also in this issue are Laurens Otter's "Law and Hypocrisy," reviewed in DB and "On Crisis Ideology" from the French journal **Interrogations**.

SUBVERSION; P.O. Box 145, Oldham OL4 4WW, England; Frequency unstated; 10 A4 pages; Sub: Free (donations appreciated). The group that published Subversion is the larger part of the split in Wildcat, a councilist group that published the first nine issues of Wildcat. Like Wildcat and unlike most journals in our political sector, it uses a violent-sounding, smash-the-state rhetoric that would seem to limit its appeal. On the other hand, this characterization may be influenced by one's reaction to headlines like "Gulf War-No; Class War-Yes" and to how one interprets the word struggle. There is little in its "What We Stand For" that most people in our political spectrum would not agree with. Articles in #5 include "The Left and the Poll Tax," "Baltic Blues," and an excellent four-page article "The War in Ireland," which examines and rejects IRA nationalism and phony socialism.

SYNDICALIST BULLETIN; P.O. Box 102, Hull, England. Frequency unstated (September 1990 is the first issue of a new series.); 4 A4 pages; Sub: no price given; Published by Hull Syndicalists, an independent group, SB "is meant to spread lively debate about all kinds of current issues, from a libertarian standpoint." This issue has articles on libertarian prisoners in Cuba, an impending SAC (a 17000-member Swedish syndicalist union) international conference held in Stockholm in November 1990, and the impending oil war.

WILDCAT; BM Cat, London WC1N 3XX, England; frequency unstated; 16 A4 pages; sub: four-issues L3 [U.S. $6]. More recent issues of Wildcat have been published by the minority of an earlier Wildcat group. Besides retaining and continuing publication of this journal, they have published Herman Gorter’s *Open Letter to Comrade Lenin*, reviewed in DB33. The most recent issue, Wildcat 14, is devoted in large part to a critic of the Poll Tax resistance. Other articles include "Death to Perestroika," a three-page article on the reasons the Soviet ruling class opted for Perestroika and the probable effects, and articles on the changes in other Eastern European countries. Readers familiar with the Spanish union Coordinadora will be interested in "Spanish Dockers: Workers Democracy Against the Workers," which claims that Coordinadora, while posing as a radical democratic organization, acts like a regular capitalist union "...leading them into dead ends, and burning down their combative, covering these manoeuvres with the most radical verbiage."
WORKERS' DEMOCRACY; P.O. Box 24115, St Louis, MO 63130; quarterly; 24 8 1/2 by 11 pages; sub: four issues $8. WD is the publication of the group Workers' Democracy, many of whose members came from the Socialist Labor Party during one of its periodic "cleansings" around 1981, when Section St. Louis was expelled. WD36 contains articles based on talks given at the Second Conference on Workers' Self-Organization and one on a radical Philippine union, EMU. WD35 contained what was billed as "A Forum on Bureaucratic Exploitation" consisting of responses to Don Fitz's negative review in WD31 of Adam Buick's and John Crump's book on state capitalism in Eastern Europe. WD frequently carries positive articles on Coordinadora, the Spanish dockers' union. 

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Re that De Leon Biography

We have good news for DB readers who have tried unsuccessfully to buy Daniel De Leon, the new biography by Steve Coleman. A communication in mid-February from St. Martin's Press, the U.S. distributor, informed us that they had twenty-one copies on hand. Readers who wish to take advantage of a 20 per cent reduction in price to $23.95 for this clothbound book should write to DB for the discount order form.

"A" Distribution's Winter 1991 Catalog

Readers interested in a new catalog of anarchist titles should write to A Distribution, 339 Lafayette St., R. 202, New York, NY 10012. "A Distribution remains a non-profit collective dedicated to distributing a wide range of anarchist and other marginal literature."