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## BULLETIN MATTERS

During the past two months we have received several implicit and a couple explicit complaints about the readability of the DB since we went from offset printing to copier. The implicit criticisms were in the form of requests for full-size copies of original articles. The explicit criticisms said flatly that the copier didn’t print dark enough and that this together with the reduction in size made it difficult to read.
We have had some adjustments made in the copier to improve the contrast (i.e. making the black blacker), but actually we can't do a great deal more to solve the problem. Our format requires us to reduce the size by 21 percent in order to print what was originally two 8 1/2 by 11 inch pages on one 8 1/2 by 14 inch sheet. When the original text has been typewritten with a dark ribbon, it comes out quite readable, but if the ribbon is old, the typing isn't dark enough for our copier to reproduce it sharply enough, and also if we are copying from a periodical which uses small type to begin with, as in the article by Paresch Chattopadhyay in this issue, the result can be very small. If you have trouble reading an article, let us know, and we'll send you a copy in the original size at no cost.

Now to this issue: We follow our publication in DB 54 of Comrade Chattopadhyay's analysis of the politics of the Bolshevik revolution. (Cont'd on p. 8)

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Economic Content of Socialism in Lenin: Is It the Same as in Marx?

Parshad Chattopadhyay

In the following lines we propose to discuss critically how Lenin conceived of socialism as a new form of society and to what extent his concept of socialism could be considered Marxian. As the title of the paper indicates, we shall be concerned here basically with the economic content of socialism considered purely as a theoretical category. It should be emphasized that we are not concerned here with the (practical) policies Lenin pursued, before or after October 1917, towards the realization of socialism. Our aim is an exercise in pure theory.

In the first section, Section I examines Lenin's main ideas on socialism's economic content, Section II examines these ideas in the light of Marx's writings on the subject, while Section III concludes the paper.

1

The discussion of socialism considered as a specific economic-social formation does not figure much in Lenin's writings as a theoretical category before 1917. Even then it is difficult to accept the statement of a contemporary Hungarian economist that "prior to the 1917 socialist revolution Lenin made only sporadic allusions to the pattern of the socialist economy." This, beginning with the Bolshevik seizure of political power in October 1917, the problem of building a socialist economy in his country increasingly preoccupied Lenin's mind. However, while this preoccupation concerned socialism's implementation in practice, Lenin's most comprehensive discussion of socialism as a purely theoretical category—particularly with respect to its economic content—occurred in his pamphlet The State and Revolution, unfinished though its composition was. On the other hand, in Lenin's post-October writings they appeared as a statement of "the definite tasks of the new socialist state". Here we shall be trying to touch upon what we consider to be Lenin's most significant writings on the socialist economy, before and after October 1917, and we shall be paying particular attention to the relevant discussion in The State and Revolution.

Lenin makes a distinction between socialism and communism as well as identifies socialism with what is already, according to Marx, the "first phase of communism." Thus he holds that "from capitalism mankind can pass directly only to socialism" and that "socialism must be regarded as the great social movement of the future."

Similarly, after posing the question, "what is communism and what distinguishes it from socialism?" he answers that communism is a "higher social form" compared to socialism, the latter being the "first form of the new society." On the other hand, Lenin explicitly identifies 'socialism' with Marx's "first phase of communism." Consistently with the latter argument he speaks of two "phases of socialism", one "from capitalism to socialism" and the other "from socialism to communism." Coming to socialism itself, Lenin conceives it as a system of "social ownership of the means of production and the distribution of products according to the measure of each one's labour." By "social ownership of the means of production" or, alternatively, "the common ownership of the whole of society over the means of production," Lenin means—negatively speaking—the abolition of "private ownership of the means of production," where again, by "private ownership" he means "private ownership of separate persons (of the individual)." In socialism "the means of production have ceased to be the private ownership of separate persons, the means of production belong to the whole society." Positively speaking, "social ownership of the means of production" signifies for Lenin "the means of production belonging to the working class state power," or "the ownership of the means of production being in the hands of the (working class) state", as he says in one of his articles. He calls the enterprises as being of "the socialist type" when these, imbuing the land on which these are situated, "belong to the (working class) state."

Continuing on the transformation of the property form, Lenin observes that under socialism, since "it will be impossible to usurp the means of production and turn them into private property, the exploitation of individual by individual will be impossible." As regards the distribution relations in socialism—understood as Marx's "first phase of communism"—Lenin, paraphrasing Marx's Marginal Notes of 1875, observes that "every member of society, performing a certain part of the socially-necessary labour, receives from society a certificate to the effect that he/she has done a certain amount of labour". Then, "after a deduction is made of the amount of labour going to the public fund" every labourer receives, against the certificate, a corresponding amount of products from the public store of consumer goods and thus "receives from society as much as he/she has given to it". Following Marx textually, Lenin points out that this "equal right" of the labourers, being an application of an equal measure to different people, in fact implies inequality and hence does not cover the "narrow horizon of bourgeois right". Lenin infers that this "bourgeois right" in socialism necessitates the presence of the "bourgeois state to enforce it, of course ("without the bourgeoisie")." Lenin further observes, referring to the "first phase of communism", that since communism cannot yet be entirely free from traditions or vestiges of capitalism, there will be (in its first phase) "equality of all members of society (only) in relation to ownership of the means of production, that is, equality of labour and wages." But somewhat differently, in the first phase of the communist society "all citizens are transformed into hired employees of the state...that is, a single country-wide state syndicate...with equality of labour and pay." Finally, as regards exchange relations, Lenin includes commodity production from socialism. The end of capitalism would signify for him "the elimination of commodity production"; and in the new social order "organized and state-wide distribution of products" is to be the "substitute for commerce". In the same way the Party Programme adopted in 1919 under his direct guidance emphasizes the need for "applying measures for state-owned production without money and for preparing the elimination of money." Now Lenin's position that we have cited here—namely, the incompatibility of socialism with commodity production—refers to his position as expressed in his writings beginning with the New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1921. There is a fairly widespread view that this position changed in his writings beginning with NEP, and that in these writings Lenin emphasized commodity production's compatibility with, if not its necessity under, socialism. This view, we submit, is not quite correct.

What changed in Lenin's perspective in the period after the so-called "War Communism" was not his basic position on commodity production in relation to socialism but rather the way he envisaged such pro-
duction in relation to the transition to socialism. Indeed, as can be seen from Lenin's writings and speeches after the period of "War Communism," his sole preoccupation during the last years of his life is with the "economic—small production at socialism—in the absence of proletarian revolutions in western Europe—in the situation of Russia's backward economy marked strongly by traits of pre-capitalism.

Lenin admits earlier policy mistakes of the Bolshevik leadership in this regard: "We," he writes on the fourth anniversary of October, "reclaimed on establishing—directly commanded by the proletarian state—the state production and distribution of products on communist lines in a small-peasant country. Life has shown our mistake." Now he realizes that in a "small-peasant country" (like Russia) communism has to be reached "by way of state capitalism" and not by the " wholesale merchant;" Lenin asks the party, in the "contemporary transitional economy from capitalism to socialism," to "grasp the link...the transitional forms of [the] socialist contribution...to create the foundation for socialist social-economic relations." When Lenin says that "commodity exchange with the peasant" forms "the economic foundation of socialism," he means to mean that commodity production and exchange are the elements not of socialism itself but they serve as "mediating links" for the "transition from commodity relations and small production to...capitalism," as "firm footholds to...the transition through state capitalism?" On the contrary, Lenin emphasizes, "are not...the economic sense of socialism...in itself.

When, in one of his last compositions, Lenin asserts that "there has been a radical change in our whole concept of socialism," this "change" has little to do with Lenin's basic position on commodity production in the future society. This "change" rather refers to the new emphasis on the "growth of co-operation" and the necessity of "cultural revolution" away from the earlier preoccupation with the "willing of political power"—for an "advance to socialism" (туда) requiring a "whole historical epoch." As regards the socialist society itself—assuming with Lenin that it is the same as Marx's "first phase of communism." Lenin's position on the absence of commodity production in socialism—that we touched on earlier—seems to be in basic agreement with Marx's (four paper not being on Marx at such, we cannot here go far into the question of commodity production in socialism as envisaged by Marx, we simply refer here to two relevant texts of Marx composed at two different periods. "The necessity of transforming the product of the activity of the individuals into exchange value," reads the first and earlier text, "proves that the production of the individual commodity is a spring of association which distributes the (social) labour within itself...Here the individual's labor is utilized as a collectively...which exists outside of them like a fatality. Nothing, therefore, is more absurd than to suppose the control of the associated individuals over their production on the basis of exchange value." The second text written two decades later refers specifically to the "communist society as it has just come out...of the capitalist society"—in other words, the society designated by Lenin as "socialism"—and asserts that here "the producers do not exchange their products but...and...as little does the labour employed on these products appear as value."

However, let us note that Lenin's position on this question is not completely free from ambiguity. Though he maintains that "socialist exchange of products is not commodity"—as we saw above—at least in one place he nevertheless identifies "socialist exchange" with "(certain type of commodity exchange..." and then distinguishes it from "ordinary purchase and sale trade." As regards the social product's distribution to society, Lenin points to Marx's "first phase of communism"—Lenin broadly follows Marx's basic principle of the "distribution of means of production among society's members...after the necessary deduction for the common funds has been made...the quantum of labour contributed by each member to the total social labour.

The point is, unlike Marx, Lenin hardly envisages the new society as a society of "free and associated producers" based on the "distribution of production." Approaching the question basically through the framework of property, Lenin, however, conceives of socialism not in terms of a specific "property relation" in the sense of Marx—that is, "judicial expression" of a specific relation of production—but in terms of a specific property form, that is, state property, bynegregating the "private property of separate persons." Secondly, for Lenin the negation of (individual) private ownership in the means of production leads to an ownership of the means of production.
individuals "through labour"; it is "property overobjectified labour." Thus "what appears as a real process is recognised as a judicial relation." In this sense, property relations are simply a "juridical expression" of production relations, they only "reflect the (real) economic relations which are their content." But within the same property relation—corresponding to a specific relation of production—there can be different property forms, as Marx shows particularly with reference to capitalism. Thus under the capitalist property relation, individual private property over the means of production—"private property of separate persons," as Lenin would call it—is not the only form of property, though, historically, it is the starting point through the appropriation of the immediate producers. In course of its development, capitalist production reaches a stage where the exigencies of accumulation are such that capital has to be "freed" from individual private property and transformed into the property of the "associated capitalists," thereby inaugurating "directly social capital," of course, "with all its contradictions." 10

The first form of "capitalist collective" Marx discerns in share capital—showing the separation between ownership of the means of production and the process of production itself—where "within the capitalist mode of production itself" there occurs the "abolition (nullification) of private property in the means of production." 11 A second form of "capitalist collective"—with capitalists as only the "functionaries of capital" and not its individual owners—may be represented by the "state itself" as a "capitalist producer with [its] product as a commodity" through its "employment of productive wage labour." 12 On the other hand, at a particular stage of capital accumulation, the "centralisation of capital would reach the last limit...where the total national capital would constitute only a single capital in the hands of a single capitalist," as Marx notes in the French version of Capital (vol I). This "single capitalist," we might add, could very well be the state, given the existence of the state as a capitalist. Thereby capital would attain its complete "liberation" from all constraints of individual private property. However, capital as a specific property relation—"reflecting" its production relation—remains invariant under these different (and changing) property forms of capital. In other words, from a Marxian perspective, even in the complete absence of "private property" in the means of production in its Leninist sense, capitalism could continue to exist. (In his discussion of what he calls "monopoly capitalism" in his Imperiation, ch III Lenin does refer to the separation of ownership and capital from its "application" in production, but curiously does not even refer to Marx's revolutionary conclusion reached in this connection on the existence of individual private property in the means of production for the existence of capital.) 13

On the other hand, "capitalist private property" has another and more profound meaning in Marx (and Engels) which does not figure in Lenin's discussion. Here "private property" is the same as class property which could subdivide itself as well as collective capitalist property. As Marx points out, it is the "private property of a part of society" 14 that here the "means of production are monopolised by a distinct part of society." 15 Thus when the Communist Manifesto declares that the communist can sum up their theory in a single expression: "abolition of private property", the latter is expressly linked in the sense of the "disappearance of class property" (Aufheben des Klassegenossenschafts). 16 In the same vein Marx writes almost two and a half decades later: "The Commune, they exclaim, intends to abolish property, the basis of all civilisation...Yes, gentlemen, the Commune intends to abolish class property, which makes the labour of the many the wealth of the few." 17 It is evident that Marx here makes the abolition of capitalism conditional upon the abolition of "capitalist private property" not in the mere sense of individual private property. In this fundamental sense "capitalist private property" is identical with its opposite, that is, laborers' non-property (in the means of production) and, entirely coinciding with capitalist property relations, continues to exist as long as capitalist production exists, even when the latter has eliminated private property in the means of production in the sense of Lenin.

We noted earlier Lenin's contention that the abolition of individual private property in the means of production is equivalent to "the beginning of the ownership by society over the means of production," the latter being, in its turn, equivalent to the "ownership of the means of production" by the "working class state." Here, again, the Marxian position is not the same. True, Marx too speaks of the "common means of production" 18 or "common ownership in the means of production." 19 But unlike Lenin, Marx does not equate it either with the abolition of private property of "separate individuals" in the means of production or the (proletarian) state's ownership in the means of production. Let us take up these two points.

We argued above that according to Marx the elimination of individual private property in the means of production does not have to wait for the socialist revolution. It is already accomplished by capital itself in course of its accumulation. Naturally, the capitalist private property in the fundamental Marxian sense of capitalist class property—irrespective of the specific forms it assumes—cannot, by definition, be abolished by capital and it is eliminated along with capital by the socialist revolution. Marx's "common ownership" in the means of production refers to the abolition of capitalist ownership only in the latter sense. It is in this sense, as the Communist Manifesto asserts, that "the communist revolution [the same as the socialist revolution] is the most radical break with the traditional property relation", where, as we saw above, "property relations" are simply the juridical way of expressing the production relations.

Marx's "social" or "common ownership," secondly, refers to the "real appropriation of the means of production, their subjugation by the associated working class (unter die aussere Verwaltung der Arbeiterklasse)." 20 This ownership has nothing to do with the state (public) ownership. True, the proletarian rule starts by "centralising all instruments of production in the hands of the state," as the Communist Manifesto asserts. But this act of what is usually called "nationalisation" has nothing to do with socialism. This is undertaken rather as a mediating process towards "transforming these means of production into instruments of free and associated labour." 21 This change in the form of property would signify basically that the proletarian first has to complete the task left unfinished, as it were, by capital itself before inaugurating and as a means of inaugurating its own emancipation. (We argued earlier that the proletarian dictatorship, while increasingly modifying the capitalist mode of production, does not completely cross it before its own extinction.) It is only in course of time, with the demise of the proletarian state, when the "whole mode of production is revolutionised" and socialism begins that the real metamorphosis of what Marx calls "capitalist private property" into the appropriation by the whole society (itself) takes place, inasmuch as only then does "the productive forces of the associated individuals (in the hands of the associated individuals)" 22 to it. It follows that from the point of view of Marx the Leninist assumption that the state's ownership of the property is the end of exploitation of persons by persons—simply the absence of individual private property as already earlier—is in fact correct. In the Marxian perspective such exploitation ceases only with the elimination of capitalist private property conceived as class property which includes individual private property only as a sub-class. Indeed, in the very text as it appears in Lenin analysis and uses to come to his own conclusion, Marx does not speak of private property of "separate individuals" over the conditions of production when speaking of capitalist property, but of "material conditions of production being appropriated to the non-workers in the form of property in capital"—that is, precisely, the capitalist class property including all its different forms—and of their transformation into the "co-operative property of the workers themselves." 23

True, Lenin too speaks of "socialism" as equivalent to a "co-operative compounding the entire society" 24—the nearest he comes to treating socialism in terms of (new) relations of production. However, this "socialism," representing the "regime of civilised co-
operators", as he would later call it, is based on "ownership of the means of production" by the "working class political power", which Lenin equates with "ownership by the socialist state" or, alternatively, "social ownership." Thus Lenin seems to obscure the distinction between proletarian dictatorship and socialism even when the latter is equated to Marx's "first phase of communism." 46

D

Earlier we referred to Lenin's view that the state remains in the first phase of communism in so far as it enforces the "bourgeois right" in the distribution of consumer goods among the society's members. This is of course Lenin's own conclusion which he seems to claim to derive from Marx's Marginal Notes of 1875. This Lenin does by connecting two analytically separate sections in Marx's text—one on the distribution of consumer goods and the other on the state. Let us see how far Lenin's inference is warranted by Marx's texts.

First, as regards the distribution of consumer goods among members of the new society, Marx speaks of it in several places in alternative ways, 41 but nowhere brings in the state to enforce the "bourgeois right" underlying it. The "labour certificate"—as opposed to wage—which enables the labourer to draw his/her quota from society's common consumption stock, the "labour certificates" draws in the state (Erhalt von der Gesellschaft 40) and not from the state. Indeed, the first phase of communism, which is ushered in after the proletarian dictatorship, that is, the proletarian state has met its natural death (along with the demise of the proletariat itself), does not require a special state (machinery) to "safeguard" either the "common ownership of the means of production" or "equality of labour", as Lenin would have it. If "society"—and not the state—can "distribute labour power and means of production among different branches of occupation", as Marx asserts, 42 there is no reason why the same society, that is, the "associated producers" themselves, cannot regulate the distribution of consumer goods among society's members.

Secondly, as to the question of the state, in the very first section of chapter V of the State and Revolution Lenin cites the following lines from Marx's Marginal Notes of 1875: "The question is then: what transformation will the state form (staatswesen) undergo in a communist society? In other words, what social functions will be left to those that are analogous to the present-day state functions?" 43 In the third section of the same chapter Lenin discusses the problem of distribution of the consumer goods among society's members, yet unable to transgress the "bourgeois right", and in the chapter's fourth section—devoted to the question of the "higher phase" of the communist society—Lenin asserts that only in that phase will the state completely wither away, and adds: "It follows that under communism not only the bourgeois right remains for a while but even the bourgeois state—without the bourgeoisie." 44 We submit that Lenin's conclusion does not necessarily follow from Marx's text(s). Let us see why.

First of all, as we reasoned above, whatever "bourgeois right" remains under the first phase of communism in the sphere of distribution of consumer goods could be enforced by what Marx calls the "co-operative society" itself without being mediated by a state (Marx himself does not refer to such a mediation). Secondly, in the quotation in question—where, as Lenin points out, Marx says "only touches upon the question of the state in passing (manko mando)"—Marx speaks not of a state, but of "staatswesen" 46 and quite legitimately asks what kind of transformation the "state form" undergoes in the future society, in other words—as he clarifies—what kind of functions would remain that would be "analogous" to the functions of the present-day state.

Now, it so happens that Marx has a similar position regarding commodity production in the first phase of communism. Thus while discussing the principle of distribution of consumer goods among the future society's members Marx, explicitly refers to the principle underlying commodity production "only as a parallel" 47 which obviously has the same sense as an "analogy." However, the society in connection with which this "parallel" or analogy is drawn completely excludes commodity production according to Marx, as we already know. On this basis we would think that raising the question of the existence of functions—in the future society—"analogous" to those of the present-day state does not any more mean the existence of the state itself in that society than drawing a "parallel" with commodity production in connection with distribution in that society or even maintaining the "sameness" of the "principle of commodity exchange" with that of distribution in that society, 48 would mean the existence of commodity production itself in the first phase of communism. (Incidentally, Marx's speculation concerning the future of functions "analogous" to those of the present-day state refers to the "communist society" at such, not specifically to its "first phase".) 49 On the other hand in a number of texts spread over practically his whole life, Marx explicitly excludes the state from the "Association" which replaces the capitalist society. 50

Finally, let us consider Lenin's contention—referred to earlier—that "all citizens", in the first phase of communism, "are transformed into hired employees (arbeitsleuchtehnik po noim) and workers of one state syndicate" for whom there is "equality of labour and wage (sobotoimoi pleroy)". 51 This perspective of socialism in Lenin is, we submit, completely different from—if not opposed to—the Marxian perspective even when the latter refers to the first phase of communism.

For Marx, as he repeats in the very text that it is considered here, wage is simply the "value or price of labour power", and if labour power ceases to be a commodity (along with the disappearance of capitalist) there obviously cannot be wage as labour remuneration either. For Marx the "Association"—at any stage—will be a cooperative of labourers and wage form of remuneration are, by definition, incompatible. On this question Marx is unequivocal, and does not refer to any citation of specific texts. It must be stressed that the "labour certificates" given to the workers by society in the first phase of communism in no way constitute "wage" remuneration even when the society has only it transits Marx's position on the "bourgeois horizon". 52 As to the "hired employees of the state syndicate" they would of course go well with the wage form of payment. But, again, there can be no hired employees in the "co-operative society of producers" according to Marx. In his inauspicious address to the International Workingmen's Association Marx in fact opposes "hired labour" to "associative labour". It could be that Lenin in the discussion on "wage" remuneration and "hired employees" referred to here—is really having in mind proletarian dictatorship and not socialism (in its sense). But the context of his discussion, as is clear from his text, is the first phase of communism and not the "political transition period". Thus the analysis is pretty ambiguous, to say the least.

III

We conclude that the economic content of socialism in Lenin is not exactly the same as that in Marx. In his discussion of socialism Lenin departs from, as well as follows Marx.

In Marx there is no distinction between socialism and communism, either of them referring to the "society of free and associated producers" which passes through (at least) two phases sequentially. Lenin calls Marx's first place of the new society 'socialism' and (often) reserves the term 'communism' for the second phase. Secondly, Lenin's approach to socialism is rather narrow, compared to Marx's and basically juridical. It is in terms of a specific property form in the means of production, whereas socialism is supposed to be based on "social ownership" (in the means of production), equated to (proletarians) state ownership, and is opposed to the private ownership of "separate inviduals" in the means of production, supposed to be the basis of capitalism. The concept of the first phase of communism includes the "social ownership" of the means of production—is very different in Marx. On the other hand, Lenin has no place in his position on the question of distribution of consumer goods in communism (in both the phases) as well as Marx's contention that there is no con-
modernity production even at the first phase of the new society.

The position, again, is clearly different from Marx's in that he believes in the existence of "weage" form of remuneration for the "hired employees" of the state apparatus as well as the necessity of the existence of this form of "state in state" ("without the bourgeoisie", of course) in the first phase of communism. Neither of these elements is a part of the Marxian "Association". It should be stressed that the divergences between Lenin's concept of socialism and that of "bourgeois democracy" are (explained or explained away) by a reference to any particular conjunction that Lenin faced in "bourgeois democracy", simply because most of the elements of the divergences are encountered in Lenin's theoretical writings before the October seizure of power—particularly in the State and Revolution, a work of pure theory, perhaps the last that Lenin wrote with much connection with the exigencies of 'application'. We would rather suggest that while justly fighting to uphold Marxism as a guide to the revolutionary practice of the proletariat against the reformism of the Second International, Lenin ultimately does not seem to have succeeded in wholly transcending the Second International's narrow horizon of concerning socialism as basically (peasant) "state ownership" in the means of production as opposed to Marx's emancipatory vision of a society of free and associated producers created by themselves as an act of their self-liberation.

Notes

[The theme of the present paper was presented first at an Interdisciplinary Conference on Marxist (Intellectual) Tradition at the State University of New York at Buffalo on April 27-29, 1990. Later this was the subject of a talk at the Central University in Hyderabad in July 1990. We are grateful to the participants in these gatherings for their critical comments and particularly to N. Krishnai and Paul Zarnemka for their encouragement.

2 Zadachy proletarians 'another revolution' (1917), Izvrazny Prirodena (hereafter SW) 1 (Moscow, 1922, p. 42), "The Tale of the Proletariat in our Revolution" (1917), Selected Works (hereafter SW) 1 (Moscow, 1971, p. 56).
3 "Doklad o sobotnike na Moskovskoi obshcheradskoi konferentsii RKPP (B) (1919), Politicheskoe sobranie (hereafter RSS) 40 (Moscow, 1963, p. 280).
4 "Gosdannosti i revoliutsii" (hereafter GR) 2 (1922), "JSP" 7 (1922), "The State and Revolution" (hereafter SR) 1 (1917), SW II: pp. 305, 306.
5 ibid., IP II: p. 305; SW II: p. 310.
6 "Proustroevyev nemom naloge" (1921), IP II (Moscow, 1922, p. 330, 341-42); "On The Tax in K.P.," (1921), SW II (Moscow, 1971, p. 389, 600). Later this was to be the standard line upheld by the Soviet rulers and their international followers.
7 'Zadachy' (1917) IP II: p. 42; 'The Tasks' (1917) SW II: p. 60.
9 'Rech na I veresiovem stede', (1919) IP II: p. 660; "Speech at the 1st All-Russia Congress" (1919) SW II: p. 360.
10 ibid, IP II: p. 300, 301; "SR", SW II: p. 305, 306. The word 'separate' does not appear in the standard English version (our emphasis).
11 ibid, IP II: p. 300; ibid, SW II: p. 305, (our emphasis).
12 "O kooperatsii" (1917) SW II: pp. 711, 712, 714; "on cooperation" (1923) SW II: pp. 760, 761, 762.
13 ibid, IP II: p. 715; ibid, p. 764.
15 ibid, pp. 201, 202, 206; ibid, pp. 201, 202, 205.
16 ibid, IP II: p. 306; ibid, pp. 310-311.
17 ibid, IP II: p. 308; ibid, p. 312.
18 "Pervonachalny variant stali 'ocherdy na zatochki Sovetskoi vlasti' (1918) PSS 36 (Moscow, 1962, p. 151).
19 Prorok programmy RKPP (1919) PSS 38 (Moscow, 1963, p. 121).
21 Thus two Soviet economists, N. Shmelev and V. Popov, representing a consensus among the contemporary Soviet scholars, write: "Lenin's views on commodity-money relations under socialism gradually changed over the course of N.E.P. The Turning Point: Revolting the Soviet Economy" (New York, Doubleday, 1959, p. 283).
22 "K Chetyrykhlets' godovshchine ekshib'kii revolyutsii" (1921), IP III: p. 394. (Towards) The Fourth Anniversary of the October Revolution (1921), SW II: 647 (emphasis in the original).
24 "On the Success of the October Revolution" (1921), SW II: 589 (our emphasis).
25 "Plotsy brezhnev" "O prodov'evyev nemom naloge" (1931), PSS 43 (Moscow, 1963, p. 385).
26 "On the Success of the October Revolution" (1921), SW II: p. 530. (emphasis).
27 "O prodov'evyev nemom naloge" (1921), PSS 34 (Moscow, 1961, p. 349).
29 "O Kooperatsii" 713, 714, 717; On Co-operation (1922) PSS 36 (Moscow, 1963, p. 760, 762, 766) (our emphasis).
30 Das Kapital (hereafter DK) II (Berlin, 1964, p. 458); Capital II (Moscow, 1959, p. 66-76).
32 Grundsatz der Kritik der politischen Wirtschaftswissenschaft (hereafter Grundriss) Berlin, Dietz: p. 73.
33 Thus when A. Novik, the Soviet sociologist writes: "It is sometimes alleged that no distinction was made by Marx between socialism and communism... This is surely not so. Marx's Critique of the Gotha Programme speaks of a first or a lower stage..."
34 IP 1 (Moscow, 1982, p. 247); SW I (Moscow, 1970, p. 205).
36 Kontakte von Gkalin, Buch Staatlichkeit und Anarchie (Marx-Engels-Weke (hereafter MEB) XVIII (Berlin, Dietz: p. 650). Thus B. Offen seems to be utterly confused when he says, "Marx divides the communist future into halves, a first stage generally regarded as the dictatorship of the proletariat and a second stage usually called full communism", "Marx's Vision of Communion", Critique 1978, No. 8, p. 9.
37 When Paul Sweezy writes that "for Marx Socialism was a transitional society between capitalism and communism", it seems more appropriate to substitute 'Lenin' for 'Marx'... See his Past Revolutionary Society (New York, New York, 1980, p. 156).
38 Grundriss: p. 15. The Phrase 'Offspring of Association' is in English in the Original.
39 'Kritik des Gotha-Programms', MEAS II: p. 15,116; 'Commentary on the Gotha Programme', MEW 3: 319 (emphasis in the text). Thus Oskar Lange's astounding affirmation that "a careful study of Marx's writings establishes clearly that he held the view that the theory of value applies to a socialist society" (Marxian Economics in the Soviet Union: American Economic Review 1985, March: p. 130), is clearly based on an erroneous reading of Marx's text.
40 "VII Moskovskaya gork conspiratorya" (1921), PSS 64 (Moscow, 1964, p. 207-08) (our emphasis).
41 Zur Kritik der politischen Wirtschaftswissenschaft (hereafter Grundriss) Berlin, Dietz, 1958, p. 113) 'Towards a Critique of Political Economy' (Prose, MEW, p. 18).
42 Grundriss: p. 9, 413.
44 "Letter to Engels (2-4-1858) in Briefly über Das Kapital" (Berlin, 1972, p. 188); DK I: p. 652; Capital II: 450.
45 DK III, ibid; Capital II, ibid. When P. J. O. Waves writes, "No facts are more threatening and heretical for Marxist Economic thought than the divorce of ownership from control limited flexibility under capitalism; one is amazed at his innocence of Marx's text. That the author has not understood anything of Marx is clear when referring to Marx he adds that 'it is the accumulation of capital that brings us from socialism to communism.' See the author's The Political..."
with his examination of Lenin’s ideas about the nature of a socialist/communist society. I think his well-documented findings confirm the thinking of most libertarian socialists. I just hope that the article is legible without recourse to magnifiers. It is reprinted from the June 18, 1961, issue of the Bombay, India, Economic Weekly and Political Weekly.

On a related topic, Jeff Stein, beginning with a criticism of Larry Gamboe’s article in DB54, writes an indictment of Marx as a proponent of state capitalism that many readers aren’t going to like. He bases his charge on a reading of Marx that differentiates Marx’s opposition to capitalist state capitalism from his advocacy of workers’ state capitalism. Next, Internationalism (PO Box 288, New York, NY 10018) continues a discussion of my suggestion that libertarian socialists involve themselves in the Green movement by responding to my “Open Letter” in

(Cont’d from p. 2)
Larry Gambone, in "The Myth of State Ownership" (DB #54), argues that socialism should not be confused with the state ownership of industry, and that the people responsible for this confusion were Lasalle, Kautsky, and Lenin. Gambone is correct, of course, socialism and state ownership are not the same. However, he is mistaken when he tries to exonerate Marx and claim that no socialist, outside of Lasalle, Kautsky, or Lenin ever advocated state control of the economy. Gambone’s thesis, which depends on a number of quotes taken out of context, ignores the fact that when he quotes Marx and his followers making various remarks against state ownership, they are referring to ownership by CAPITALIST STATES. They are not, therefore, ruling out centralized administration of the economy by WORKERS’ STATES. In fact, there is ample evidence that Marx and Engels were opposed to workers’ self-management and federalism as advocated by the anarchists and syndicalists:

"...all labour in which many individuals cooperate necessarily requires a commanding will to co-ordinate and unify the process, and functions which apply not to partial operations but to the total activity of the workshop, much as that of an orchestra conductor." (Marx, Capital, Volume III, p.383)

"How these people propose to run a factory, operate a mill, or steer a ship without a will that decides in the last resort, without single management, they of course do not tell us." (Engels, "Letter to Cuno in Milan", in Anarchism and Anarcho-Syndicalism, p.70

"If Mr Bakunin understood at least the position of manager in a cooperative factory, all his illusions about domination [in a "workers’ state"] would go to the devil. He ought to have asked himself what form the functions of management could assume in such a workers’ state, if he chooses to call it thus.” (Marx,"Conspicuousness of Bakunin’s State and Anarchy" in Anarchism and Anarcho-Syndicalism, p.151)

The problem with taking quotes out of context and trying to interpret these in a literal, face value fashion can be shown by the following quotes:

A beginning can and must be made at once, overnight, to replace the specific “bossing” of state officials by the simple functions of “foreman and accountants”, functions which are already fully within the ability of the average town dweller and can be well performed for “workmen’s wages.” (p.46)

The [Paris] Commune is the first attempt by a proletarian revolution to SMASH the bourgeois state machine; and is the political form “at last discovered”, by which the smashed state machine can and must be REPLACED. (p.52)

...the erroneous bourgeois reformist assertion that monopoly capitalism or state-monopoly capitalism is NO
LONGER capitalism, but can now be called "state socialism" and so on, is very common. (p.62)

Kautsky has not understood at all the difference between bourgeois parliamentarian, which combines democracy (NOT FOR THE PEOPLE) with bureaucracy (AGAINST THE PEOPLE), and proletarian democracy, which will take immediate steps to cut bureaucracy down to the roots, and which will be able to carry these measures through to the end, to the complete abolition of bureaucracy, to the introduction of complete democracy for the people. (p.100)

Kautsky displays a "superstitious reverence" for the "ministries"; but why can they not be replaced, say, by committees of specialists working under sovereign, all-powerful Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies? (p.104)

...it is not Kautsky but Pannekoek who represents Marxism, for it was Marx, who taught that the proletariat cannot simply win state power in the sense that the old state apparatus passes into new hands, but must smash this apparatus, must break it and replace it by a new one.

Kautsky abandons Marxism for the opportunist camp. (p.103)

The source of these quotes is State and Revolution by Lenin, who, if we are to take him at his word, claims as inspiration, not the opportunist statism of Kautsky (as Gambone asserted), but the works of the councilist Pannekoek! Using the rather shaky theoretical methods of Gambone, therefore, one could just as easily credit Pannekoek as a "founder" of the Soviet Union, and claim Lenin as a "libertarian". Of course, the rebuttal to this amusing thesis is Lenin's other writings, where he calls councilism an "infantile disorder", but then that also proves my point. If you want to really understand the marxist position, you cannot do so by stringing together a highly selective group of "word bites".

When dealing with the works of Marx, Engels, or any other marxist, one needs to remember that for them the "state" is a "dialectical" concept, i.e. it needs to be put into the context of Marx's "historical materialism". State ownership and control in the context of a communist "mode of production", to the marxist, does not mean the same thing as in the capitalist mode of production, since in the former the state as an instrument of class repression of the workers will have ceased to exist. So, while to the rest of us unenlightened non-marxists it may look like state ownership and control, it will not really be so, because the state will have ceased to be "the State", it will instead be the "Community", "the dictatorship of the proletariat" (i.e. worker self dictatorship), one big giant cooperative workshop.

"For Communists abolition of the state makes sense only as the necessary result of the abolition of classes, with whose disappearance the need for the organised power of one class for the purpose of holding down the other classes will automatically disappear. The abolition of the state in BOURGEOIS countries means the reduction of state power to the North American level...Abolition of the state in FEUDAL countries means the abolition of feudalism and the establishment of a conventional bourgeois state." (Engels,
questioned in Anarchy and Anarcho-Syndicalism, p.27)

Question: When is a state not a "State"? Answer: When it is the "dictatorship of the proletariat!"

The collapse of "socialism" in the Soviet Union confronts all marxists with a problem. The founders of the Soviet Union were undoubtedly marxists, and the state-run economy they set up failed miserably, even though its emerging capitalist replacement is not much better. It is a matter of fact that there are a number of marxists who were critical of the attempts made by the Bolsheviks to try to build socialism in a technologically backward country, like Russia, and that it was the "insufficiently developed productive forces" and/or its isolation ("Socialism in one country") which forced the Bolsheviks into imposing their totalitarian system. They conveniently ignore that Lenin could justify what he had done on the same grounds as Marx, when the latter embraced the Paris Commune. Was not France, at the time, a much more technologically backward country than England or Germany? That the socialist revolution should begin there was a contradiction of Marx's own theory of historical materialism, but this did not stop Marx from embracing the Paris Commune, so why should it prevent Lenin from embracing the soviets?

Yes, let us forever put behind us the myth that state ownership and control over the economy lead to socialism. But let us not replace it with the myth that there are no deficiencies in the theories of Marx that might lead people to this conclusion. What is missing from Marx is an unequivocal commitment to workers' self-management, and a recognition that without political and economic decentralization (i.e. federalism), self-management cannot prevail against socialist bureaucracy. Without this important element, all the quotations against state ownership remain empty platitudes and lip service.

Jeff Stein, July 1992

(Cont'd from p. 8)

DB54. I answer their article, "The Meaning of Proletarian Terrain," in this issue, an advantage in such polemics that falls to the publisher of the magazine. The next article, taken from the British journal Subversion, discusses and strongly criticizes Murray Bookchin's ideas on libertarian municipalism.

Next, an article reprinted from Internationalist Perspectives provides a theory on changes in the make-up of the working class, a topic raised by Internationalism in its article. The next four letters—from Ben Perry, Ed Jahn, Ken Kelly and me—discuss authoritarian behavior in revolutionary groups, the SLF in particular.

In "Revolutionary Defeatism in Iraq" the journal Communism propounds a theory for the U.S. and allied decision after the Gulf War to leave rebellious southern Iraq to the tender mercies of Hussein quite different from that being peddled by the media now: that the U.S. didn't want a fundamentalist Shiite regime to take power there. We end with a set of short reviews.

FINANCES: In the past two months our financial situation has improved to the point where we have almost wiped out the deficit. We always have an unusually large number of expirations with the issue mailed (Cont'd on p.20)
INTERNATIONALISM REPLIES TO FRANK GIRARD:

THE MEANING OF PROLETARIAN TERRAIN

We wish to acknowledge the seriousness with which comrade Girard has responded to our criticisms of the Discussion Bulletin. His letter raises some important questions that deserve clarification. These include the class make-up of society, what it means to fight on the working class terrain, and how revolutionaries intervene in the class struggle.

However, before replying to these primary issues, we would like to make some brief comments regarding some secondary points. Cde. Girard insists that DB is not a group, and the views expressed in his article are just "personal opinions." He has taken a similar tack in previous correspondence with us as well, in an apparent attempt to minimize the political positions he defends. However, we must insist that DB is in fact a political tendency in the proletarian milieu in the U.S. The publication is not called "Frank Girard's Personal Opinions." Indeed, on the front page of each issue is written "Published by the Discussion Bulletin Committee," and every time DB publishes a financial statement, it is signed "Frank Girard for the DB Committee." Whether this committee has one member or a hundred, it has a political existence in the milieu. It defends an orientation (libertarian socialist—tinged with a DeLeonist influence), uses political criteria for determining which articles, correspondence, and issues to focus debate on, has a considerable readership, which is influenced by what positions it defends.

Regarding the decision not to publish the leaflets of milieu groups on the Gulf War, Cde. Girard says defensively, "they all presented essentially the same analysis...with differences visible only to practiced hairsplitters." The cde forgets to mention that he made a political decision not to publish an ICC critique of the DB's leaflet on the war, which raised important theoretical questions about the motives of American imperialism in the Gulf in relation to the new period of capitalist decomposition. Anti-theoretical biases which dismiss the work of trying to understand the forces at work in society today as "hairsplitting" have no place in marxism. In addition, the fact that DB never published any articles assessing the collapse of stalinism demonstrates a failure to understand the need to address the central questions of the current period.

Now, let us turn to the more serious issues.

Cde Girard writes "To me the essential message is that capitalism is the root cause of social problems and that the solution is the revolutionary act of abolishing capitalism and the state and establishing socialism. Is this Marxist, is it socialist, is it DeLeonist?" We essentially agree with these sentiments. However, it is not Marxism (though it may be DeLeonism) to imply that the abolition of capitalism and the state can be achieved in a single revolutionary act. The workers must destroy the capitalist state and seize power over society as a precondition for the transition to communism to begin. This transition will not be achieved overnight. It will take years of conscious effort by the proletariat to stamp out the vestiges of bourgeois ideology, the continued impact of the law of value, and to assure the disappearance of the transitional state. (Readers are referred to the ICC pamphlet on the Period of Transition to Communism, price $2).

The real disagreement we have with DB is on how revolutionaries work to help bring about this revolutionary act. Girard thinks he can accomplish this by working within the Greens, which he acknowledges is not a revolutionary group. He challenges Internationalism's charge that the Greens are a capitalist movement and that entering the Greens is "a move away from the terrain of the proletariat." Girard writes, "I have always accepted the Marxist view that in a capitalist society there were two classes: the owners of capital who lived on the labor of others and the proletariat, who own no capital and must rent themselves out as wage or salaried workers to the capitalist class of owners." He then goes on to argue that he has met no capitalists in the Greens, though he acknowledges that "most of them identify their interests with those of their exploiters,"

Here Girard reveals a rather simplistic understanding of the classes in capitalist society, one that many people coming from DeLeonism tend to share. It is a gross simplification to think that there only two classes in capitalist society. While it is true
that Marx tended to formulate his models of the operation of capitalist laws by focusing only on the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, he and Engels were not blind to the existence of the petty bourgeoisie or middle class, i.e., small producers, artisans, independent professionals, supervisory personal, government bureaucrats, etc.). Indeed, in the Theories of Surplus Value Marx cited the increased size of the petty bourgeoisie as a significant aspect of capitalist development. Luxemburg's analysis of the accumulation of capital stressed the importance of the petty bourgeoisie and peasantry as markets for the realization of surplus value in the period of ascendant capitalist development. The petty bourgeoisie continues to exist today — and so does the peasantry. Indeed one of the central disputes between the U.S. and Europe in the GATT negotiations hinges on the continued insistence of the European bourgeoisie to subsidize the existence of the peasantry in Europe. On a global level, the proletariat is in fact a minority, its size dwarfed by non-proletarian strata in the under-developed countries. The simplistic view expressed by Girard leads DeLeonists to often conclude that bank presidents and CEOs of major corporations are actually working class since they are paid a salary. It's a view that leads nowhere.

The social base of political movements like the Greens is not the working class, but the petty bourgeoisie, drawing its membership primarily from professionals, academics, artists, students etc. In any case the real issue is not sociology, but politics. What determines the class nature of a political organization -- whether it is proletarian or bourgeois -- is not the sociological origin of its members but the political positions it defends. If sociology were determinant we would have to conclude that the Democratic Party was proletarian since most of the members are workers. Cde Girard grants that the Greens are not revolutionary, but reformist. They take the position that capitalism does not have to be destroyed and replaced by socialism, but that it can be reformed, made better, especially in regard to the environment. This is capitalist politics, bourgeois ideology. This is why we say it is not the terrain of the proletariat.

Obviously, the very dangerous degradation of the environment by capitalism is a serious problem for the working class and endangers the future of humanity. Revolutionaries have an important intervention to make to the working class on this question. Girard wants to know what political intervention the ICC thinks can "be carried on in the environmental movement...How does advocating revolutionary socialism among workers who are concerned about the environment constitute 'abandoning Marxism and the working class'"

The ICC contends that revolutionaries must point out that the problem cannot be solved within capitalist society, and that those who tell workers that it is possible to reform capitalism so that it no longer raping the environment are counter-revolutionaries who function to derail workers from the only path that offers hope to humanity. Revolutionaries must insist that a proletarian revolution, reorganizing production based on the fulfillment of social need, and not the drive for profits, is the precondition for addressing the problem of the environment -- as well as myriad other social ills -- in a definitive way. Revolutionaries must make these points in their press, in their public meetings, in their leaflets. They can distribute their leaflets and make oral interventions at the meetings of bourgeois environmental groups -- to criticize and denounce their attempts to mislead workers. But if they enter those organizations, become members of them, they let themselves be used by the bourgeoisie to legitimize these counter-revolutionary organizations. Instead of urging workers to break free of these capitalist organizations, they help bring workers under their influence. This is why we so strongly warned DB against the path they had chosen.

Girard asks, "Just what does Internationalism mean by 'the terrain of the proletariat'? "Is the 'terrain' ... limited to matters involving work and the workplace?" When the ICC speaks of the working class terrain, we mean that the working class must fight and organize itself independently of other classes. In decadent capitalism it is fruitless to see a dichotomy between economic and political issues facing the working class. The nature of state capitalism, which is a universal tendency in all nations, means that all struggles of the working class today inevitably pose the question of a
confrontation with the state, which means what begins as an economic struggle quickly becomes a political struggle. Likewise, the so-called “political” issues the proletariat faces, whether its housing, the environment, or abortion, cannot be considered apart from the class struggle to destroy the capitalist economic and political system. The bourgeoisie often uses the legitimate anger that working people, and other strata, feel on these questions as a means to organize partial struggles — classless, social protest movements. These movements are used to drag the working class away from its own autonomous organization, and drown it in the “people,” to spread the delusion that social problems can be resolved within capitalism. This is precisely what the the environmental movement is being used for today.

We believe that DB is making a serious political error by entering the Greens, a mistake that will lead it into the arms of capitalism.

— Internationalism

GREENING THE PROLETARIAN TERRAIN

I would like to begin this reply to Internationalism’s article above by commenting on a few side issues raised in its three opening paragraphs. Once again, and for the record, the Discussion Bulletin (DB) is not the publication of a political organization. The “Discussion Bulletin Committee” described as its publisher is an involuntary group consisting of the sum total of all persons who contribute money and/or time in the form of articles to the DB. The writers of the Internationalism’s letter in DB52 and the article in this issue are de facto members of the “committee,” and so am I. It exists because, since I take money for producing the DB, I feel obligated to account for it to some entity and to render a report, which I do—although not always very numerately—in “Bulletin Matters.” The DB Committee obviously has no political positions.

As I have said before, the DB is an independent forum open to all strands of what can broadly be considered libertarian socialism. Decisions about what to publish are my responsibility of course. I decided not to publish Gulf War leaflets including that of the local Grand Rapids group to which I belong. But I sent a copy of the leaflet to several correspondents, including Internationalism which chose to write a critique of it for publication in the DB. Publishing it would have entailed publishing the Grand Rapids leaflet and put me under obligation to publish the others, including Internationalism’s. Incidentally, Internationalism’s leaflet on the L.A. riots was published in the last issue.

As to why the DB hasn’t published “articles assessing the collapse of Stalinism,” the answer is simply that none of our readers have submitted such articles. We could have published some of the articles from various journals in our sector— and perhaps we should have. But I have a hunch that the lack of submissions on the topic indicates that our assessments agree.

Now to “the more serious issues,” as Internationalism puts it: first their assertion that “...it is not Marxism (though it may be Deleuzism) to imply that the abolition of capitalism and the state can be achieved in a single revolutionary act.” The expression “a single revolutionary act” strikes me as misleading. At least it points to the difference between their and my views on socialism and revolution. For me and for many libertarian socialists consists of our class’s walking into their workplaces, kicking out the bosses, and
democratically carrying on production for use. We won't be seizing power so much as we will be abolishing it, at least private ownership of the means of production, which confer power on the capitalist class.

Internationalism's view on the subject can be gathered from the three sentences that follow the quote above, the gist of which is that after the workers seize power "it will take years of conscious effort by the proletariat to stamp out the vestiges of bourgeois ideology..." Clearly Internationalism desperately needs "articles assessing the collapse of Stalinism" if it still defends this scenario for revolution: i.e., the Leninist/Bolshevik view that a successful insurrection—the seizure of power—by workers led by the vanguard party constitutes a revolution. The successors of Lenin in the USSR spent decades stamping out the "vestiges of bourgeois ideology", and in the process stamped on quite a few workers. Is there doubt in any reader's mind as to who will be in charge of proletarian stamping in the "transitional state" after the workers—guided by the revolutionary party—seize power? It will be the revolutionary party or perhaps its central committee, and they may have to stamp on a few proletarians—or perhaps a few million—who retain these unfortunate vestiges of capitalist thinking.

The Greens

The origin of this discussion is Internationalism's view—repeated in the preceding article—that "the Greens are a capitalist organization." They support this contention by arguing with no evidence at all that the Greens are not proletarians. At the same time they seem to reject Marx's class analysis of capitalist society and to substitute a view in which academics, students, artists, professionals, managers, etc. constitute a class distinct from the working class. My own experience with Greens is that even individually they are overwhelmingly proletarian, i.e. non-owners of capital. But like most proletarians the great majority of them, believe that environmental problems can be solved within the framework of capitalism. They are indeed reformist.

Before we continue discussing socialist involvement with the Greens, I would like to make it clear that I have been writing about the Greens and the Left Green Network, not about other environmental groups. The Sierra Club, the Audubon Society, and even Greenpeace with their slick magazines, paid activists, million dollar budgets and corporate/philanthropic financing differ from the grassroots movement that the Greens is the U.S. have been up to now.

Moreover, the Greens themselves are in the process of becoming factionalized. One division, the reformist Green Party, includes a large contingent of ambitious and potentially opportunistic would-be politicians. The other, the Green movement consists of people who tend to reject political action in favor of local organizing against polluters. In addition there is the Left Green Network consisting of a hodge-podge of anti-capitalist individuals from various radical backgrounds, mainly anti-authoritarian.

I wouldn't recommend that revolutionaries work within the Green Party, not because I don't think its members are proletarians, but because I
suspect that--aside from the politically ambitious--they consist mostly of environmentalists who see the answer to social ills as action by the state after the right people are elected. Also, they tend to regard socialists as a liability in today's political climate.

Most people in the Green movement and the LGN will listen, at least, to revolutionary, libertarian socialist ideas about the environment. Those of us who have joined the Greens and the LGN and take part in their work have the opportunity to "point out that the problem cannot be solved within capitalist society, etc...." which is what Internationalism recommends as appropriate activity for revolutionaries.

Proletarian Terrain

The problem then from the Internationalism/ICC perspective seems to be not what we are doing but where we are doing it: i.e., not on the proletarian terrain. I assumed from reading their DBS2 letter that the terrain they didn't approve of was the Green movement or perhaps environmentalism and that they wanted us to work in some unspecified "terrain of the working class," hence my question, "just what does Internationalism mean by 'the terrain of the proletariat'?"

But their answer, given in the last main paragraph of the article strikes me as irrelevant; it goes off at a tangent or else its written in a political dialect I can't understand. Here it is: "When the ICC speaks of the working class terrain, we mean that the working class must fight and organize itself independently of other classes." What does this have to do with where or on what subjects revolutionaries should agitate?

I can't consider Internationalism's article an answer to my question about the "proletarian terrain. I also would like to point out that Internationalism has chosen to ignore the three questions that ended my open letter:

"1) How does Internationalism "actively intervene" in working class struggles in ways that libertarian socialists including DeLeonists do not? 2) What does Internationalism regard as "political struggle" that can't be carried on in the environmental movement? 3) How does advocating revolutionary socialism among workers concerned about the environment constitute 'abandoning Marxism and the working class'?

I invite them to try again.

Frank Girard
Bookchin and Green Anarchism

Veteran American anarchist, Murray Bookchin, visited England in May on a brief four-date lecture tour. His talk on "Social Ecology" in Leeds was attended by a packed audience of 3-400 - testimony both to Bacon lasting popularity among those who first came across him through books such as Post-Scarcity Anarchism (1971) and The Limits of the City (1974), as well as to the enduring resonance of his ideas for a younger generation who he has reached in the very different climate (in more ways than one) of the 1990s.

A concern with the environmental consequences of capitalism's insatiable lust for profit has always been a central theme of Bacon involvement as a writer and activist in the anarchist movement since he joined it in the 1930s. If he appears now as a pioneer of currently fashionable Green politics, it is because capitalism itself has already fulfilled and surpassed even the most distant warnings sounded by Bookchin in articles and books, such as Out Synthetic Environment (1962), written thirty or more years ago.

Bookchin terms the brand of green anarchism he has developed over the years "social ecology". His point of departure is not "nature" or "the planet" but human society. Destructive exploitation of the environment is the outcome of a similar relationship between people. So, "The only way to resolve the ecological crisis is to end the domination of human by human. A precondition for living in harmony with each other" (from an interview in Leeds Nighttimes Star, 14.6.85.)

Bookchin likens the capitalist system to a vehicle accelerating towards ecological catastrophe. This vehicle is powered by a "grow or die" imperative, in which the profit motive takes precedence over all other considerations. It is no use appealing to bosses or politicians to change direction; they are not driving the vehicle, it is driving them. By all means engage in single-issue campaigns, Bookchin says, but be under no illusions that these can do anything more than apply slight pressure on the brake; what is really needed is to remove the engine.

Where we part company with Bookchin is not over his basically revolutionary analysis of the problem but with regard to the gradualist strategy he proposes as its solution. Bookchin advocates "libertarian municipalism", the steady building up of political and economic power by communities at a local level within capitalism.

This approach appears to stem from a rejection of the conflict between Capital and Labour as the crucial relationship which determines the nature of present-day society, and from a dismissal of the working class's potential as the only force capable of bringing about a fundamental transformation of society.

In America the strategy of "libertarian municipalism" is prompted by the "Left Green Network", a grouping strongly influenced by Bacon theories. But from what we have seen of the Left Green Network's ideas, it is far from being a revolutionary organisation. Alongside its "long-term goals", the Left Green Network's programme also contains a large number of "immediate demands", which consist of a mixture of worn-out policies peddled by traditional left-wing parties and measures which could quite comfortably be adopted by capitalism without bringing about any real change in the system.

By seeking to attract support on the basis of such a programme the Left Green Network is less likely to achieve its aim of creating "a force which can challenge the destruction of our humanity" than it is to end up channelling discontent with capitalism towards the cause of a slightly more "eco-friendly" version of the old system.

* A more detailed "Introduction To The US Green Anarchists" can be found in the April-June issue of Organisal, magazine of the Anarchist Communist Federation, c/o 94b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX

Several basic texts of the Left Green Network have been published and debated in recent issues of the Discussion Bulletin. PO Box 1564, Grand Rapids, MI 49501, USA.

NEW PAMPHLETS COMING SOON FROM SUBVERSION.

Nationalism and Imperialism in Ireland - the myths exploded

Labouring in Vain - why Labour has never been a working class party.
HOW THE CHANGES IN CAPITALISM HAVE TRANSFORMED THE MAKE-UP OF THE WORKING CLASS

World capitalism is today in the throes of the final stage of a long and complex process of transformation: the transition from the formal to the real domination of capital. This process, the bases of which were already clear to Karl Marx more than a hundred and thirty years ago, and which has still to be theoretically grasped by revolutionary Marxists today, is only being completed in our own time. The indisputable sign of just how recent is the transition from the formal to the real domination of capital can be seen in the agrarian question. As long as the vital sphere of food production remains outside the framework of capitalist production relations, as long as the production of food remains largely in the hands of a petty commodity producing peasantry, not subject to capitalist wage labor, there is not yet the real domination of capital (let alone the completion of that process). In this regard, the case of France may be instructive, as a representative of advanced capitalism in the industrial heartland of Western Europe. Fernand Braudel, in his *The Identity of France*, volume two, points out that it was only in 1931 (!) that the peasantry ceased to be a majority of France's population. Throughout the advanced capitalist societies of Western Europe and North America, peasants or farmers engaged in petty commodity production still constituted anywhere from 3% (in the USA) to 6% (in Italy) of the population until the 1940's. England alone had a peasant population of under 20% before 1950.

The real domination of capital, which entails the spread of the capitalist wage labor relation to every sector of production, is organically linked to the statification of capital, to the swallowing of civil society by the state. This aspect of the real domination of capital may historically proceed through Keynesian, Fascist or Stalinist forms, though its model has been the kind of fusion of state and capital provided by the USA (a model now replicated in Germany and Japan, where as in the USA, state capitalism can assume a "democratic" facade).

The real domination of capital also involves a recomposition of both the capitalist and the working classes. The former involves the elimination (gradual or brutal, depending on historic-economic conditions) of the bourgeoisie as the functionaries of capital, and their replacement by a stratum of bureaucrats (state, corporate and intellectual) who now act as capitationaries of labor in the epoch of state capitalism. The latter involves the replacement of the blue collar, industrial working class (the "blue-dey" bank to traditional Marxist theory) by what Marx termed a *Gesamtarbeiter* or collective worker, who constitutes the veritable source of surplus-value in the epoch of the real domination of capital.

Marx's *Gesamtarbeiter* is an expression of the stage of capitalism when technology -- in the form of the collective worker who develops it and wields it -- has itself become a source of surplus value. Where the *Gesamtarbeiter* has been created by capital, surplus-value ceases to be extracted from individual workers or even determinate groups of workers. Instead, it is the product of a collective worker, in which the earlier distinctions between blue and white collar, manual and intellectual, productive and unproductive, labor have been shattered and recomposed.

The emergence of the *Gesamtarbeiter* involves three inter-related phenomena.

First, a transformation of industrial production itself, in which the boundaries of skilled and unskilled, blue and white collar, labor are increasingly blurred. This phenomenon entails the obsolescence of Taylorism as the most advanced stage in the organization of the industrial labor process. Those industries organized on Taylorist lines since the 1920's, such as automobile, are witnessing a reorganization of the labor process based on robotics and new work techniques. In the most advanced industries today, such as computers and electronics, where Taylorism never prevailed, the role of scientists, engineers and other specialists has become the basis of the activity of the collective laborer, from whom surplus value is extracted.

Second, the accumulation process of modern capitalism depends on the assumption of vast numbers of workers engaged in financial, clerical and service activities. Whether these workers are employed by banks and insurance companies, work in the
financial and service departments of industrial corporations, or are employed by mammoth state agencies, they have become an integral part of the Gesamtarbeiter of capitalism in its phase of real domination. Many of these workers are engaged in unproductive labor, while the labor of others is indisputably productive; in many cases, the line between productive and unproductive labor has been redrawn. However, none of this (important though it may be to an understanding of the crisis mechanism of capital in its present phase) changes the fact that this mass of laborers are all part of the working class, a vital component of the collective worker. While such strata have always existed, even in earlier phases of capitalism, what is different today is the sheer growth in the number of non-cerebral, clerical and service workers over recent decades, their proportion within the working class, which has risen at a fantastic rate.

Third, the transformation of what categories of employees, who in the past would have constituted strata of the petty bourgeoisie, into an integral part of the working class, a part of the Gesamtarbeiter. I am referring to those workers engaged in sectors such as education, health care, research and development, the applied sciences, etc., which are today a crucial component of the capitalist accumulation process, and whose labor power produces the user-values of the products of productive property cannot continue. The education and training of the next generation of the working class, the health care of the worker, the development of new techniques and technologies, have all become as vital to the extraction of surplus-value as the operation of the machine at the point of production itself. Indeed, the very site of "the point of production" has been displaced by the transition to the real domination of capital, and is now to be found as much in the laboratory, the programming of the computer, the education of the worker, the care of his health, as it is in the operation of the machine that produces the product. As a result, the vast numbers of workers whose labor is necessary to prepare for and assure the extraction of surplus-value in the accumulation process of production take their place as an integral part of the collective worker.

The formation of this Gesamtarbeiter, however, does not immediately eliminate the previous differentiations within the working class. Rather, as a result of the historical development of world capitalism to its phase of real domination, there now exist -- side by side -- both synchronous and non-synchronous strata of the working class. By synchronous strata, I mean those strata of the working class who are the expression of what is contemporary, modern, the product of the most advanced stage of capitalist production. Thus, the the synchronous strata are those created by the completion of the transition to the real domination of capital, those generated by the most up-to-date and technologically advanced organization of the production and accumulation processes. By non-synchronous strata, I mean those parts of the working class who are an expression of earlier, more primitive, stages of capitalist production, such as piece work, the Taylor system, etc. The non-synchronous strata of the working class are that part of it created, shaped and perpetuated by modes of organizing the labor process that have been historically and technologically superseded.

The development of capitalism creates new, synchronous strata of the working class, indeed a new collective worker appropriate to the phase of the real domination of capital. In doing, however, it does not immediately (or even at all) totally eliminate those strata created by an earlier stage of capitalist production -- though it certainly reduces the socio-economic weight of such non-synchronous strata within the working class as a whole. In fact, capitalism is like a living museum in which more primitive strata of the working class, non-synchronous strata, are preserved alive, still producing surplus-value, though the phase of capitalism that first brought them into existence is long gone. For example, in Brazil today, one can still see gold mining carried on with the same basic production techniques and organization of labor as existed 200 years ago. In parts of Amazonas, thousands of "miners" drag buckets full of earth up wooden ladders dozens of feet in a single day, paid on a piece work basis by the Patron, as in the eighteenth century had never dawned. In New York today, tens of thousands of mainly immigrant (and illegal) workers labor in "sweat shops" no different from those that existed at the turn of the last century (except that today the workers speak Chinese or Spanish, while in it was Italian or Yiddish). In Thailand and Taiwan today, thousands of workers are now factories being introduced to the Taylor system, in conditions little different from those that prevailed in Detroit or at Fiat in Ra’s thirty years ago. In short, today virtually every stage of capitalist production is represented to one degree or another in the global production process, and the non-synchronous strata of the working class along with them. What has changed is that those earlier modes of organizing the production process, and the strata the working class specific to them, are no longer central to the capitalist production process, nor longer the embodiment of its most advanced forms. In it is the synchronous strata of the working class, the expression of its most advanced production processes, on whom the prospects for a world revolution and the advent of communism, of the human Gesamtnasse to use Marx’s term, must today be based.

However, the paradox of the present situation is that it is often the non-synchronous strata of the working class who are the most combative and militant (one thinks of the Russian coal miners over the past few years, for example). Nor should this surprise us. It is precisely these non-synchronous strata who are faced with extinction today by the closure of plants and mines, by the loss of any chance of earning a living. It is these same strata
who are the living repositories of the tradition of class struggle, of hatred of capitalism -- traditions of rebellion and revolution that it is vital to salvage and transmit to the collective laborer, even as the strata who directly embody these traditions disappear. In that sense, these non-synchronous strata have a tremendous political role to play in the development of the class struggle. Their traditions are essential to the constitution of the collective worker as a class-for-itself.

If we turn to the synchronous strata of the working class, the situation is extremely complicated. On the one hand, the strata that have taken their place as components of the *Arbeiter* in the phase of the real domination of capital lack the traditions of class struggle typical of the older strata of blue collar workers. An integral part of the working class, essential to the production process of modern capital, these strata often lack even a rudimentary sense of being a part of the working class. In fact, certain of these strata continue to manifest the consciousness appropriate to their distant social origins within the petty bourgeoisie, sometimes complete with a contempt for the "working class" and a fear of "proletarianization". On the other hand, however, these strata are often free of the corporatism and trade union mentality that frequently plagues even the most militant blue collar workers, and constitutes such a deadly obstacle to the class struggle. It is this question of the development of class consciousness that must become our preoccupation in the period ahead; but such a preoccupation is only fruitful if we first grasp the enormity of the recomposition of the working class and its implications.

As long as Marxists refuse to face reality, to theoretically grasp the new situation created by the very development of capitalism; as long as Marxists continue to search for salvation in a blue collar proletariat that is fast becoming a vestige of an earlier stage of capitalist production, they will be theoretically -- and hence practically -- disarmed by the system whose continued existence is more than ever now brings with it the prospect of an extinction of humanity or its total barbarization through global war and/or ecological devastation.

MAC INTOSH

from Internationalist Perspective #21
(Suite 131, 551 Valley Rd., Montclair, NJ 07043)

(Cont'd from p.11)

July 1, and as usual many subscribers have routinely accompanied their renewals with donations. No need to raise the subscription price this year.

CONTRIBUTIONS: Irving Weinstein $4; Bob Rossi $2; Tom Dooley $16.05; Frank Girard $22; Bill Friesser $2; Ralph Preston $7; Harry Wade $20; Ray Beat $5; Paul Burkett $24; Curtis Price $10; Mark Manning $20; Jeff Stein $5; Phillip Colligan $7; Lynn Olson $2. Total $146.05. Thank you, comrades.

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Fraternally submitted,
Frank Girard
for the DB
Dear DB:

I must reply to Ed Jahn’s attack on me in DB 35. His reference to my letter that “defends the constitution on the Socialist Labor Party...” is, to be kind, misleading. Firstly, I didn’t regard the SLF constitution as in any way an adequate instrument for a revolutionary organization for reasons too numerous to set down here. My letter, reprinted in DB 31, was a response to a review by the Socialist Standard of Frank Girard’s and my history of the SLP. Since the SS had made an incorrect assertion based on a misreading of our book, I felt it worthwhile to set the record straight: The SLF constitution does not permit the national secretary or NEC to expel individual members of local sections.

I did not say in my earlier letter, but I sure do hold that it is more democratic to permit only local organizations to expel members. If the national organization cannot stomach a section’s summary of its members, it is reasonable to assume that the section and national organization may have some principled difference that cannot be overlooked. I did not say and do not agree that a local organization (in a truly democratic organization) should automatically be expelled because it harbors a member unacceptable to higher-ups; I was only explaining how it is done in the SLF. If Jahn can justify the act of an NEC or national secretary expelling a member against the wishes of a local section, I would like to hear his reasoning. To me, a truly democratic organization can exist only on the basis of local autonomous organizations having complete control over their affairs in local assemblies. The federation of these autonomous local groups is undertaken on the basis of agreement on certain principles for certain goals, and the meddling of the overall group, especially by delegated executives, in local organizational matters is not (to me) justified.

The reader may ask why the SLF still maintains this vestige of democratic autonomy, and we can only speculate. It dates back (along with the term “section”) to the First International, one of the ancestors of the SLF, and has probably continued by the weight of tradition.

I had to look up “bill of attainder” to be sure, but it is what I remember from high school Civics—the conviction of an individual by enactment rather than judicial trial, an irrelevant concept when discussing the SLF which, with very rare exceptions always carries out expulsions in a trial-like manner. Jahn is also confused by the SLF use of the term “lampoon.” The SLF designates any anti-incumbent dissident publication as such even though they only occasionally involve ridicule or satire. Tyrants fear exposure more than laughter.

Since Jahn and I were both members of the Philadelphia Socialist Committee of Correspondence in 1969, he is well aware that I left the SLF because of its lack of internal democracy. I am curious about the reason for his attempt to saddle me with the SLF’s democratic centralist shortcomings, but considering the recent hysterical attacks by an upper echelon of the SLP against Frank and me it does balance things out a bit.

Ben Perry 21 June 1982
Dear DB,

Ken Kelly’s letter in Discussion Bulletin # 54 defends the undemocratic provisions of the Socialist Labor Party Constitution on the grounds that “the S.L.P. has been under attack... These provisions are conditioned reflexes to the attacks...”.

That’s a mighty lame excuse.

Anybody who challenges the existing system will be attacked. The S.L.P. has not been attacked nearly as much as other groups. The F.B.I., the Un-American Committees, etc., have largely ignored it. In the unlikely event that the S.L.P. were to start winning elections and setting up Socialist Industrial Unions, it would be attacked much, much more seriously than ever in the past.

The way a group responds to these inevitable attacks shows how it will act if it gains power. The S.L.P. responds to rather mild attacks by destroying its members’ democratic rights. What it does to its members is what it would do to you and me. In the unlikely event that 70 million voters were dumb enough to elect the S.L.P. ticket.

Ken says that the S.L.P. is democratic because he was allowed to vote against the majority. BUT, he hastens to add, “I would always go along with the majority viewpoint.” Every S.L.P. member who has not gone along has either been expelled, or put under such pressure as to eventually resign. As Ken’s wording shows, the S.L.P. is “democratic” only towards those who never really disagree.

Ken says that the S.L.P. can be trusted with power because it will “abolish the political state”. But would it replace the political state with something better -- or something worse?

To abolish the political state called the USA, they have to abolish the US Constitution. That includes abolishing the Bill of Rights -- up until now our basic guarantee of free speech, trial by jury, and other democratic rights. That might be OK if they will guarantee those rights in other ways -- but the S.L.P. will not.

The S.L.P. during the last 100 years has operated like a little dictatorship. Let it gain power, and it will operate like a big dictatorship.

Don’t take my word on this. Write to the S.L.P. Get their Constitution. Read it! Compare it to the US Constitution. Picture the US Constitution replaced by the S.L.P. Constitution! Imagine what it would be like to live under a government -- excuse me, under a Socialist Industrial Union -- set up by people who make it a crime to circulate a lampoon. Draw your own conclusions!

Ed Jahn / 4409 Oak Creek Court #501 / Fairfax VA 22033
Dear Comrades,

I recently obtained an updated copy of the SLP constitution, so I have new information to add to my letter of May 30, regarding Ed Jahn's letter in DE # 53. I have analyzed the SLP constitution thoroughly, and have come to the following conclusions:

I could not find any undemocratic provisions. On the contrary, I find the SLP constitution to be a model of democracy. Example 1: Article IV, Section 10 says, "All officers and committees of a Section shall be subject to removal at the will of their constituents." I know of no other organization which has such a provision.

Example 2: Article VII, Section 11 says,

The following acts of the National Convention shall be submitted to the membership for a general vote and shall not be effective until thus approved:
1. All constitutional changes.
2. All resolutions and statements setting forth Party policy, position or analysis of political and/or theoretical questions.
4. Election of NEC (National Executive Committee) Members.

I know of no other organization which submits acts of its National Convention to a referendum of its members. Thus the membership of the SLP really controls all actions of the party, and this means that there are no "party bosses". Thus the SLP is really the most democratic organization I have ever run across.

There is no provision stating that "Communicating with an expelled member is grounds for expulsion" as stated in Ed Jahn's letter. In fact, there are no restrictions on communicating with anybody, and I don't remember that there ever was any such restriction. I think that Ed Jahn just made this one up. His statement that "wives have been expelled for communicating with expelled husbands" is pure hearsay. There are no restrictions on speech in the SLP constitution or anywhere else in their literature, and I have never been told that I could not speak with anybody, expelled or not.

Ed Jahn's statement that "Circulating a lampoon is grounds for expulsion" is simply not true. The word "lampoon" does not even occur in the SLP constitution. In fairness, however, I do remember a provision over twenty years ago which said that if a member was receiving lampoons through the mail, they should be returned to the sender unopened. This provision has since been deleted.

Regarding expelling of members, I wish to quote from a letter I recently received from the SLP:

Just as the individual retains the right to reject and leave the Party upon disagreement with it, the organization retains the right to protect itself and its revolutionary integrity from those who might enter its ranks and subsequently prove undesirable or worse. Accordingly, the SLP constitution provides for a democratic grievance procedure that reflects the organization's right to cleanse itself by expel-
ling those demonstrated to be undesirable or proven to be an enemy.

Thus the SLP has the right to expel police spies, agents provocateurs, and anyone else who joins just to disrupt it. I remember years ago that the Communist Party was so infiltrated with FBI spies that the FBI actually became a substantial part of its membership. The SLP does not want anything like that to happen to it, so it is very careful whom it admits as a member, and it expels people who turn out to be enemies of the party. The party may be small, but it keeps its revolutionary integrity by expelling undesirable people and police spies.

Kenneth Kelly

Dear Comrades,

I, too, have the urge to comment on the level of democracy in the SLP. First, as Ken Kelly makes clear, Ed Jahn obviously hadn't read the SLP's constitution before he wrote the article in DB53. Taken at face value it is a thoroughly democratic document with all the democratic safeguards Kelly enumerates.

Also obviously, Jahn drew his conclusions about the SLP constitution—that it calls for the expulsion of people and sections for circulating lampoons, etc.—from what he had heard or read about SLP practice. By the same reasoning one might infer from U.S. government practice that the U.S. constitution gives the executive branch power to declare war, create a secret police force, imprison people for making political statements, etc.

In my estimation, the democratic SLP constitution has fallen victim to an organizational problem that afflicts any political group with limited financial resources that reaches a such a size that correspondence and editorial can't be done by part-time volunteers. To function efficiently, it must have a minimum number of full-time employees: a secretary, an editor for its journal, and others. Their wages are low—witness De Leon's—and once they accept such jobs, the difficulty of finding replacements tends to keep them in place.

Members defer to them in part because by becoming employees they have made financial sacrifices far beyond those of rank and file members. Moreover, in addition to the talents that led to their being chosen, their tenure in their jobs makes them the most knowledgeable about the organization and about its political positions. This together with their control of communication within the party and its journal enables an arrogant, self-righteous, manipulative person to stifle dissent and to centralize power in the national office. The tragedy of the SLP is that it has been in the hands of such people for nearly eighty years.

The impression Ken Kelly gets of democracy and democratic safeguards from a literal reading of the SLP constitution must yield to a critical examination of the historical record, by which I mean the actual practice of the party in regard to dissent as recorded in NEC minutes and national convention proceedings. But he can find direct evidence of limitations on SLP members' freedom of speech in "Part V. Intra-Party Communication" of "Organizational Norms and Procedures," which were published in the November 1977 SLP Newsletter and which, in
effect, forbid members and sections to correspond about party matters directly with other members and sections, but require instead that such communication be submitted to the SLP Newsletter, access to which is controlled by the national secretary.

In fact, the letter from the SLP he quotes should have alerted him. Consider this: "...the organization retains the right to protect itself from those who might enter its ranks and subsequently prove undesirable or worse." Now who is to judge who and what falls into the category of undesirable or worse? Historically it has been the national secretary, who regards opposition to him and his actions as "undesirable or worse" and who feels called upon to "cleanse" the party by removing such dissenters. For recent cases in point, I suggest that Kelly ask the his correspondent in the SLP about Section Monmouth County, New Jersey in 1976 and Section St. Louis, Missouri in 1980-1, and Section Camden, New Jersey in 1986-7.

Ben Perry's and my "Short History" puts the spotlight on the SLP, but I suspect that members of any revolutionary organization, if they examine the historical record of their own groups objectively, will find tendencies in the direction of domination or authoritarian behavior at the top. And to those readers who might blame this situation on the SLP's centralized organizational structure with its failure to allow local autonomy, I would suggest that the same tendency exists in independent local groups. Those who have made the greatest investment in time in the group or have the greatest talent as speakers and writers tend to dominate.

One more thing: Some readers might conclude that the difficulty that revolutionaries, presumably the most idealistic and most committed members of our class, have in creating democratic organizations presages the kind of trouble society will have in creating a democratic and free world after the revolution. In fact, for some groups—the former Workers' Democracy comes to mind—an effort to replicate in their group the qualities they hoped they would see in the new society became a major element in their practice.

I think, though, that we must resign ourselves to the reality in this matter. Many of us who make up the membership of revolutionary groups are by nature more contentious than others of our class. By consciously rejecting capitalism and its state we demonstrate our rejection of what we perceive to be unjust authority. This attitude often carries over to our interaction within the organization. Although we want to be fierce as lions in combating capitalism, we somehow expect that we can be like gentle Jesus, meek and mild, in our relations with our comrades in the movement. How do we respond when we see them making bad decisions that in our opinions, will affect the future of the movement? We can find the answer in the rancorous splits and doctrinal squabbles that have torn the groups within this broad movement from the beginning.

In my opinion, many factors have contributed: the fact that our class is not answering our call, that our groups are alien outposts in a hostile environment, that individually we cannot cast off our egos when we become members of a group, that we belong to groups whose existence is precarious at best. All this creates the tensions that can affect adversely the internal workings of revolutionary groups.

Frank Girard
In the last chapter, we wrote that as long as comrades in Iraq can manage to get information to us, we intend to continue to centralize information from the region. Since then, we received new information directly from comrades and proletarians, some of them writing from the front line of action. They want to make it understood, as soon as possible, what situation they have been faced with. The new details confirm and reinforce our previous conclusions: proletarian revolutionary defeatism and autonomous struggle against all capitalist factions, including nationalist and Islamic factions, was extremely significant.

We have attempted to put the main points down in this chapter. We apologize for the relatively disorganized and somewhat hasty presentation; bear in mind that some of this information was obtained by very indirect means, by communication with comrades and proletarians, some of them in the midst of armed confrontation with the State.

We have already mentioned that significant proletarian struggles against the State had already broken out before the star of the war: food riots, anti-war demos, etc... we have not got further information on the situation and the state of mind of soldiers and proletarians in general, before the allied bombing began.

As a result of the Iran/Iraq war, it is difficult for the State to control the area, particularly the cities. Ten years of war have literally armed the majority of proletarians. The marshlands, for example, have become an area of convergence for deserters and other proletarians. Soldiers who have been fighting for ten years will no longer put up with a system now demanding taxes or a boss or foreman giving orders. Moreover, in glorifying soldiers returning from the battle front (indispensable war propaganda), the State indirectly encouraged insubordination and resistance to its control over daily life. It responded in a confused manner to try to maintain social peace, but was unable to halt disobedience and generalized disorganization.

In Baghdad itself, before the bombings, everyone was preparing to flee the city and there was a flourishing trade in forged laissez-passer documents, organisation of hide-outs, etc. Everyone had organized their desertion well in advance of the first bomb dropping on the city: privates, but also some officers who had ripped off their stripes and were sometimes the first to leave. The biggest barracks in Baghdad began to empty as the first shells fell and not a single shot was heard in defiance of the barracks. There were desertions and officers were executed. Soldiers and other proletarians made up a corps of shock troopers fighting the Baathist forces. During the war, they managed to gain control of two areas of the city: Al Sourah and Al Sho'ta. Within Baghdad, these areas became magnets for further deserters. Hundreds of soldiers from all over the country escaped from the main barracks in Baghdad and went to such supportive districts, whose inhabitants enabled them to return to their homes, by providing them with rest, food and civilian clothes.

As the threat of a new war became more and more real, resistance to it took on various forms - from passive reaction to violent and armed action against army recruiters. A decisive role was again played by the core of armed proletarians, who responded so significantly to the Iran/Iraq war. Before and during the war, they directed resistance against the military at various levels and were now able to transform initial passive resistance (refusal to sign up, to accept superiors' orders, to go to the front - often supported by the family and friends) into conscious military confrontation with recruiters and others supporting the army. As always, executions of a few officers carried out by the most resolute minority were initially not openly supported by proletarian conscripts. Although they sympathized with this kind of action, state campaigns against defeatism were still maintaining state terrorism. However, they gradually overcame their fear and executions of officers reached massive scales. Soldiers carried out mass lynching of "their own officers" and it got to a stage where the hierarchy required for cohesion of the army no longer existed. Officers were terrified and lost the balance of power. Soldiers did whatever they wanted and the officers were reduced to apologizing and asking forgiveness. They tried to pretend that they were also against the war and had nothing to do with re-mobilization.

The situation within the army became so chaotic that when the Allied military offensive began, officers ripped the stripes off their uniforms for fear of being recognized and executed on the spot by the masses of deserters. To be seen wearing stripes meant suicide.
At various strategic points in the South defeatist units went even further - attacking official party headquarters, occupying food warehouses and distributing the food to starving proletarians. They destroyed the secret police headquarters, killing hundreds of policemen. Uprising developed in Basra, Nasiriyah and Diwaniyah. Historically, deserters and other proletarians in hiding from the State are concentrated in this area. In previous issues we wrote about military offensive carried out by the Iraqi State on the marshlands a year after the Iran/Iraq war, which resulted in the death of thousands. At that time government figures estimated 10,000 deserters hiding in the area. Now they talk of 1 million, 55,000 of which are armed deserters.

In this part of Iraq, uprisings started as the Allies' land offensive began. The proletarians' situation became increasingly unbearable due to massive bombings of Basra, Amara, Nasiriyah, Najaf and Karbala. Organised minorities centralised their activities and struggles took place around all these cities. Contrary to everything that has been said about the religious nature of the movement, religion played no part in the proletarians' struggle. Najaf and Karbala are sacred cities for shiites but the uprising had nothing to do with Islam, despite what the bourgeois press try to make us believe. Proletarians used sacred sites to hang Baathists. Mausoleums were riddled with bullets and angry proletarians pissed in the mosques. Difficult, therefore, to talk of "religious fanaticism"!

The Allies had reached the gates of Najaf and Karbala at the time of the uprisings there. It is clear that they halted the land offensive to permit the Iraqi Army to carry out an attack on the insurgents.

As the Iraqi Army descended on the cities, chaos ensued and deserters fled in all directions. Some asked for asylum and aid from the Allied troops but were told "we'll give you something to drink if you're thirsty, but only in exchange for your weapons." They were then sent back, unarmed, to the city to be massacred - one example of collaboration between Saddam and the Allies against the uprising.

We have already described how Saddam recalled his troops posted in the North when large units of armed proletarians from the South began to advance towards Baghdad, thus increasing the disorganisation of the State in Kurdistan.

Thousands of militants from various regions converged in the North - Turks from Kirkuk, Iranians who had fled the war and repression at the time in Iran, etc... As cities such as Halabja and Qal'at Dizah had been decimated by Saddam a few years before, they took refuge around Suleimaniya (there were more than 70,000 proletarians organizing themselves into radical groups for self-defense, struggle against state control, against Kurdish or other nationalists). This mixture of proletarians, with varying horizons and experiences, produced a situation in which Kurdish nationalist held very little sway, their usual slogans "Freedom for the Kurdish people" and "Rights for the Kurds" having little effect on the march uprising in Suleimaniya.

In order to counter the large scale uprisings in cities such as Arbil, Kirkuk, Mosul and Suleimaniya... that started with the launching of the land offensive, Saddam signed an agreement for peaceful coexistence with the nationalists. Yalal Talabani, leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and Massoud Barsani, leader of the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), announced publicly in April and May 1991 that they had reached an agreement with Saddam Hussein. Even more recently, Talabani confirmed that during the war his organisation deliberately avoided taking any action liable to destabilize the State "out of national respect", guaranteeing a mutual respect for territory under the violent monopoly of whichever force. We now know that the "People's Mujahedin" of Iran also took part in these agreements and that their shock troops were used against the proletarian uprising.

In the North, proletarian struggle was outside of and opposed to the official nationalist opposition parties, such as KDP and PUK, from the outset. The internationalist and defeatist proletarian vanguard denounced them as participating in the war.

We now have further information on the context and conditions in which confrontations with the State took place, particularly during the March uprising in Suleimaniya. Before coming on to this, we would like to mention further news we have about a women's demo in Suleimaniya during which 300 women were arrested and later killed. The demo turned violent when a militant woman from Iran tried to take a soldier's gun off him and was shot dead by another soldier on a watchtower. This militant has now become a symbol of proletarian struggle against war and State, a recognized martyr reflecting the image of struggle in Suleimaniya. It is of no consequence to proletarians from Iraq that she was from Iran - what counts is what she did. We have not told this story as an anecdote, but because it expresses the anti-nationalist content of the movement, rising out of a struggle in which proletarians no longer walk in the gutter bourgeois ideology digs to make proletarians confront each other as Iraqis, Iranians, Kurds, shiites...
Despite the media's insistence on the entirely spontaneous nature of the uprising in Suleimaniya, it is now clear that it was the result of intense organisation undertaken by vanguard minorities. Their militant activity was intense in the six months before the uprising. A group called Communist Perspective was formed and their publication, 'The Proletarian,' was distributed mainly amongst militants. Links between militants had been severely limited over the years due to repression and the memory of recent massacres. Militants organised themselves in secret. When riots broke out during the occupation of Kuwait, comrades from Communist Perspective organized debates with other militant minorities. In the course of analyzing the situation and "what should be done," the Shura ("Shura" means "workers' council" in Persian and Kurdish) movement was born. Initially there were about 300 militants (from both Iran and Iraq) who decided to organize themselves, homogenize their positions, deal with technical and medical problems, commandeer weapons...

In Suleimaniya, they decided to attack on the 8th of March at 13:00. Groups were formed and given specific targets - barracks, police stations, secret police and information headquarters, the "United Nations Hotel" (a hotel used by the United Nations, but which turned out to be a secret police base), main entrances to the city and surrounding areas to prevent nationalists and journalists from entering... All proletarians were delighted with this course of action - tensions had been running for a while and everyone was expecting something to happen. The army could sense the growing hatred and tension and was forecasting that something would blow. Nevertheless, the offensive on Suleimaniya took them by surprise - the city was attacked from all sides simultaneously.

Our comrades have given us specific examples of how the groups of internationalist insurgents were themselves overtaken by proletarian mass action, driven by their class interests and hatred. This occurs in any insurrectional process and is illustrated by events as a few hundred armed revolutionaries advanced into Suleimaniya and were greeted by the masses of proletarians, all carrying weapons. The proletarians' sole objective was to violently impose their own interests on their oppressors and, in order to do so, much to the surprise of the revolutionary insurgents, they had managed to arm themselves not only with light hand guns, but also heavy artillery, and were preparing to use them against the State.

In the course of the attack of the city, more and more proletarians joined the fighting. When the barracks were taken over, arms were distributed to proletarians prepared to fight. They were given orders to attack milk stores (milk had been rationed), prisons and to release prisoners. Anyone in military uniform was massacred on the spot.

The uprising was particularly violent, proletarians taking revenge for the years of massacre and organized state terrorism. They attacked Saddam's secret police force.

After two days of fighting the hide-out of political police fell into the hands of the insurgents. Fighting was very violent as the highly trained soldiers defended the building. Victory was won as increasing numbers of proletarians joined the battle and hundreds of Baathist police hiding in the building were killed.

The occupation of Suleimaniya got underway starting with the reappropriation of machines, secret documents and weapons and this explains the comments of some nationalist leaders reported in western newspapers:

"Disorder benefits none, there are undoubtedly agitators amongst those sowing the seeds of disorder... they are destroying everything, not only attacking and killing members of Saddam's secret police which is understandable but they are also burning all police files and registers of property and civil status... It is clear to us that agitators, Baathists are responsible, because, as you imagine, we will need all this later - every state organisation needs these documents!"

What these bourgeois fail to understand or better put, refuse not to admit, is that the aim of the revolt was not to reorganize the state and capital's administration, or to liberate the nation, but like every significant proletarian insurrection, the struggle is against the State itself and aims to attack all of its manifestations - military, police, public buildings, parties and security and property documents.

On hearing that the Baathists had hidden in a park outside the town, proletarians descended on it shouting:

"Long live Shura, abolish the State!"
"We want soviets!"

Slogans supporting "Kurdish autonomy" are practically non-existent. Proletarians organised into militia to prevent Peshmergas (fighters of nationalist organisations) from entering Suleimaniya. It is clear to all the insurgents that the nationalists are working hand in hand with Saddam.
The nationalists went on to Kirkuk to take control of the city. They arrived first, but were closely followed by militants from the Shura, armed to the teeth. In Kirkuk the PUK and KDP agreed the majority and with the balance of power in their favour, they fought against the government and the Shura.

The agreement between Saddam and the nationalists to quell the rebellion, includes a proviso that "Arabs" (deserters from the South who took part in the uprisings in the North) be returned to "their own" area.

After the uprisings "Free Kurdish Radio" made daily broadcasts threatening those in possession of arms or Shura leaflets with execution.

A rift developed between Communist Perspective and the Shura, due to disagreements on positions. However, we do not have any details of this. The split demobilized and distanced many proletarian sympathizers, although solidarity was maintained between the groups in the face of nationalist repression.

Briefly, the Shura can be described as an internationalist proletarian organization, opposed to Kurdish or other nationalists. It fights to strengthen the revolutionary movement, not only in Iraq, but throughout the world. It defines capital as a worldwide social relationship which can therefore only be abolished worldwide by a world revolution. (9)

After the uprising the movement died down a bit and the Shura went underground again to escape massacre.

The army and the nationalists retook Suleimaniya in mid-April. The alliance between the government and the nationalists was perfect - the nationalists denounced the militants of the Shura and gave the State all information they have: names, addresses, activities, etc.

The Shura called for denunciation of nationalists throughout the world. The Kurdish nationalists organized a radio campaign, claiming that they had liberated Kurdistan, that the cities were free thanks to the PUK and KDP and that their example should be followed to clear the city of anarchists, troublemakers, etc.

On the 30th and 31st of May there were more riots in Suleimaniya. Lootin was organized and many soldiers gave up their arms out of fear of being massacred. Government and nationalist forces called for reinforcements. Despite their hatred of nationalists, the proletarians did not kill them and the PUK imposed a curfew by shooting at anyone out on the streets after 7pm. In this way, the PUK remained in control of the situation.

Significant proletarian uprisings also took place in Raniyah, Kirkuk and Arbil. Deserters and armed minority groups played an important part. These minorities described their position as being against all bourgeois factions (governmental and nationalist) and were concentrated and trained in the area of Karadakh. Confrontation between nationalists and Internationalists was open. Internationalist comrades know that defeat is synonymous with massacre and that nationalist militiam act without mercy.

* * *

It is an absolute lie that the Allies only bombed military targets and "collateral" civilian targets during the Gulf war. There are two possibilities: either their lies about the Allies' force and technological strength were even greater than we had thought and wrote about in the previous chapter of this text, or military installations were not the targets of the bombings in the first place. We now know, thanks to internationalist comrades in Iraq, that 80% of the bombings were carried out on civilian targets. We also know that Iraqi military installations are practically intact and that chemical weapons and nuclear research centres were left untouched. Baghdad still has the same capacity for producing chemical weapons and building nuclear warheads as before the war.

As for the bloody battles in which Allied 'heroes' and soldiers of the Republican Guard were engaged, only 5% of the Republican Guard were killed in the war. Proletarian struggle took a far greater toll on the state cracktroops than the whole of the Allied offensive.

As it was to be expected, the maintenance of bourgeois order was much more of a preoccupation and determining factor to the Allies than their conflicts with 'damned Saddam'. Today (July 1991), the Republican Guards still play essential role in the region. There is no doubt that, over and above their desire to liquidate Saddam, the Pentagon and the most powerful forces of

(9) This is a description of what Al Shura was initially. However, a widespread "Shura movement" developed with about 54 shuras (workers' councils) in Suleimaniya, some pro-C.P., some maoist-leninist and some along the lines of the original Al Shura and Communist perspective.
international capitalism in general, consider the Baith party to be a good guarantor for order in the region (this not excluding alliances with nationalist and religious factions - on the contrary). It is clear that the decision not to attack critical sectors of the Republican Guard and to stop the war were motivated by the absolute necessity for a local force capable of guaranteeing social peace. This was illustrated by pictures broadcast by the media, which they themselves considered surreal, showing North American marines protecting soldiers and the Republican Guard from proletarian anger and subversion.

In the same way, fundamentally, humanitarian missions are concentrated efforts to disarm the proletariat. In the camps the U.N. works with the nationalists and nothing is done without their agreement. Food is only given to those who surrender their guns! Nationalists make constant radio appeals in a sometimes threatening, sometimes reassuring tone of voice, calling for wanted militants to give themselves up. They read out their names, say they know where they are hiding and promise them an amnesty and food in exchange for their weapons. “Humanitarian” aid is thus sold to those ready to accept State discipline and submission to order... The Allied forces repay them with a bit of bread and medical attention.

Out of ignorance - or as a deliberate policy of disinformation - the proletarian rebellion in the North has become identified with Kurdish nationalism and that in the South with Iranian State Islam.

Without underestimating the repressive ideological strength of nationalists and religious forces, we must stress that all struggles described in this article were organised apart from and against them. They never call for struggle against the State and actually constitute some of the state’s most reliable defenders.

--from Communism (2), B.P. 54, 1060 Brussels 31, Belgium

REVIEWED BRIEFLY

The short articles under this heading review both periodicals and other publications that come from, or would seem likely to interest readers of, our political persuasion. It replaces the earlier “Reviews of Periodicals,” in which we briefly discussed periodicals in alphabetical rotation. Also replacing that department is the current list of English language periodicals which we last published in DB 53. It will be updated in the next issue. We welcome suggestions for publications to review as well as review copies and will gladly accept already-written reviews: either short ones for this department or longer ones for publication as separate articles.

The Revolutionary Project, by Cornelius Castoriadis. In this brief (8-page) pamphlet Castoriadis, the guru of London Solidarity in the sixties and seventies, explains why he devoted his life to the revolutionary movement and his hopes for the future. It is a very personal statement, the sort we rarely see: “...I wish, and feel the need to live in a society other than the one around me.” “Firstly, I want and ask that my work have some meaning.” “I (and all of us) want to know what is going on in society.” “I know for certain that my wish can’t be granted tomorrow.” The introduction by Ben Perry ends with this: “To us, the statement remains a compelling cri du coeur of the revolutionary who acts not because history demands it but because he or she personally cannot do otherwise.” This English translation was first printed in Solidarity’s Journal in 1977. Recently
Philadelphia Solidarity published it as a pamphlet. It is available from them at Box 25224, Philadelphia, PA 19118 for $2.50 postpaid. Ask for their list of other publications.

Questions of the Day, No. 1 Inflation: Its Cause and Effect and No. 2 Unemployment and Recessions. Published by a splinter group of the Socialist Party of Great Britain that claims to be the true SPGB, the first of these two eight-page pamphlets answers what it calls the mystical school’s theory of inflation: the idea shared by Milton Friedman and J.M. Keynes that banks cause inflation. The SPGB’s answer citing Marx and J.S. Mill is that inflation is a policy of government caused by deliberately increasing the amount of currency in circulation. The second is an examination of theories about the cause of recessions and unemployment. Most interesting to me was the writers’ contempt for the what I had always understood to be the Marxist/socialist explanation: that depressions occur because our class is not paid enough in wages to buy back what it produces. The resulting glut of unsold goods convinces the capitalist to cut back on production, hence unemployment and worsening depression. Not only do they show historically that this isn’t true, but they quote Marx to that effect. A very interesting pamphlet. 25 pence ($0.50) each from SPGB, 71 Ashbourne Court, Woodside Park Rd., London N12 8SB, England.

Communism, April 1992, No. 7 (International Review in English of the Internationalist Communist Group) Communism with its emphasis on the dictatorship of the proletariat, falls into the category of “left Leninist, i.e. bolshevik-style groupings like the International Communist Current, which—despite their good intentions—can’t seem to throw off their theoretical enslavement to the Russian experience in 1917. The journal, we are told, is published by non-English speakers under great difficulties. We have chosen to review this issue because of its international coverage, especially of post-Gulf War Iraq, one article of which we are including in this issue. Other articles, apparently written by participants and eye witnesses, describe events not only in Iraq but in Burma and Iran. 70 pages, available for L1 or $2 from B.P. 54, 1000 Brussels 31, Belgium.

Socialist Labor Party and DeLeonist Bibliography: 1 Eric Hass by Ben Perry. This is the first portion of what Ben promises will be a complete bibliography of DeLeonist publications. Eric Hass, editor of the SLF’s journal, the Weekly People from 1938 to 1968, was the author of more SLF pamphlets than anyone except De Leon. The bibliography does not include his journalistic writing for the WP nor the many leaflets he wrote for mass distribution. “[It]...includes...books and pamphlets intended for sale to the general public.” Under the title heading the author has listed the date of each printing and the number published as well as information on the size and cover. Foreign language translations are also included in this bibliography. It also contains a biographical sketch of Hass. Illustrated, twenty pages plus wraps; $2.50 from Livra Books, 422 W. Upsal St., Philadelphia, PA 19118.

Organized Thoughts. With the subhead “Industrial Democracy through Industrial Unionism,” this becomes the most recent journal in our political sector and, one might add, the most advanced technologically. Although readers can obtain an eleven-page printed
version, it is actually an electronic journal:  
(Internet: Lepore@seavor.uu.edu [and] GENie: M.LEPORE)  
It is distributed internationally by E-Mail and recipients are  
encouraged to "upload [it] to the file libraries of your local BBSs!"  
Issue number 2, August 7, 1982, contains a three-person exchange on  
alternatives to capitalist corporations. Available from Mike Lepore,  
RR #1 Box 3471, Stanfordville, NY 12581.

Angles on Anarchism, by George Walford. This seventy-page pamphlet  
consists mainly of articles taken from Ideological Commentary, a  
quarterly journal written and published by the author, whose  
ostensible purpose is to spread his philosophy of "systematic  
ideology." In practice, though, he uses a lot of ink to comment on  
the thinking of libertarians from both the Marxian and Bakuninist  
traditions. His discovery of a commonplace to DB readers: the fact  
that the programs of both anarchist and Marxian socialist groups in  
our political sector all call for social ownership of the means of  
production, the abolition of the state, and the abolition of the wages  
system--strikes him as an amazing insight. This isn't to say that the  
pamphlet isn't worth reading, for it is. Walford provides some  
original and controversial insights. The article "In the Beginning"  
one alone is worth the price. Published in 1981; L2 (USA $4 American  
checks welcome) postpaid from Calabria Press, 18 Calabria Rd. London  
N5 1JB, England.