# Discussion Bulletin

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## Bulletin Matters

We begin this issue on page 3 with the first head-to-head published debate I know of between socialist industrial unionists and world socialists since 1918. At that time the short-lived (seven issues) quarterly, Radical Review, published a debate between Karl Dannenberg, the SIUist, and J. Harrington of the Socialist Party of Canada which
was continued involving other debaters. A note on page 3 introduces
the debate taken from the electronic journal *Organized Thoughts*.
Next E.C. Edge discusses his differences with recent trends he sees in
the Socialist Party (of Great Britain). Ed Jahn’s article on the
SLP’s constitution continues an argument about the management of that
group that began several issues back. I follow with a short letter
responding to Comrade Jahn.

Jeff Stein’s letter questions the “marxism” of Larry Gambone and those
of us who see Marx’s political and economic views as being essentially
anti-statist. Comrade Stein would like to saddle Marx with the
philosophical blame for the consequences of the Russian Revolution.
Next Lynn Olson reviews the *Flee I Got*, Ernest Mann’s sequel to his *I

(Cont’d on p. 18)

ABOUT THE DISCUSSION BULLETIN

The Discussion Bulletin is affiliated with the Industrial Union Caucus in Education (IUCE). It was
designed to serve as the financially and politically independent forum of a little known sector of political
thought. It places the great divide in the “left,” not between anarchists and Marxists but between
capitalism’s statist left-wing of vanguardists and social democrats and the real revolutionaries of our era:
the non-market, anti-statist, libertarian socialists. It is organized in small groups of syndicalists,
communists, anarchists, libertarian municipalists, world socialists, socialists industrial unionists, rural
communists, and left communists.

The perspective of these groups with their rejection of capitalism’s wage, market, and money system
along with capitalist politics and unionism constitutes the only real alternative to capitalism in both its
market and statist phases.

In the DB the often fiercely antagonistic groups that make up this sector can debate and discuss the
issues that divide them, gain some understanding of their history and future possibilities, and begin a
process, we hope, of at least limited cooperation.

The pages of the DB are open to anyone in this political sector, the only limitations being that
submissions be typewritten, single-spaced, and copier ready. We do no editing here. As to content, we
assume that submissions will be relevant to the purpose of the DB and will avoid personal attacks.

Sample Copies: We circulate people on our extended mailing list with copies not used to fill subscriptions.

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your sub expires, we highlight it to remind you.

Back Issues: All back issues are available. Write for information.

Send all correspondence to: Discussion Bulletin, P.O. Box 1564, Grand Rapids, MI 49501.
[Note. We took the debate below from the "hard copy" version of the most recent issue--Number 5, April 10, 1993--of the electronic publication, ORGANIZED THOUGHTS (OT), permission for the reprinting of which is unlimited. Mike Lepore, the editor and a Deleuzianist, began the debate with subscribers to his publication who are members of the World Socialist Movement represented in the U.S. by the World Socialist Party and in Canada by the Socialist Party of Canada. We hope that DB readers will continue the discussion either electronically or via hard copy and will send copies to both OT and DB.

ORGANIZED THOUGHTS, 16pp., published irregularly and distributed free. For the electronic edition address correspondence to mlepoire@omail.com and for the hard copy to Mike Lepore, RR#1, Box 347L, Standaftsville, NY 12581. --fg]

#5.00 Hello ......................... M. Lepore

The following statement, called the Object --
"The establishment of a system of society based on the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interests of society as a whole."

-- has been adopted by the following organizations, which call themselves the Companion Parties of Socialism:

World Socialist Party (U.S.)
P.O. Box 405
Boston, MA 02272

World Socialist Party of Australia
P.O. Box 1440M
Melbourne, Victoria 3001

Bund Demokratischer Sozialisten
Gussriedgelstrasse 50
A-110 Vienna, Austria

Varldssocialistiska Gruppen
C/o Dag Nilsson,
Bergsbrunna villavag 38
S-752 56 Uppsala, Sweden

World Socialist Party (Ireland)
41 Donegall Street
Belfast

Socialist Party of New Zealand
P.O. Box 1929
Auckland, NI

Socialist Party of Great Britain
52 Clapham High Street
London SW4 7UN

Socialist Party of Canada
P.O. Box 4280
Victoria, BC V8X 3X8

These parties also call themselves World Socialists, and they present very convincing arguments in favor of a worldwide system without national boundaries.

I'm impressed with their consistent avoidance of several pitfalls associated with the political left. Some of these deadly pitfalls of the left have been:

-- lists of "immediate demands" which imply the continuation of capitalism, perpetuating the illusion that socialism is attainable through a sequence of incremental reforms.

-- the idea that the working class ought to follow a "vanguard leadership" composed of an elite few who are intelligent enough to understand history.

-- confusion between common ownership and government ownership, which causes many on the left to suggest nationalization of industry by the state, because it seems to sound so "radical."

You won't find any of these faults in the eight parties listed above.

The major point of disagreement between myself and the World Socialist movement is that it "... advocates the ballot, and no other method, as a means of abolishing capitalism...." (World Socialist Review, winter 1991, p. 13); the principle that "... the working class must organize consciously and politically...." (from their Declaration of Principles). In
other words, they don't propose the use of a large industrial union as the lever for
inaugurating social ownership of industry, a concept which is central to my own viewpoint.
Although there are other points of disagreement, I predict that this is the difference which
we would argue most energetically.

Although I cannot pretend to be an unbiased moderator, I hope to give these parties an
opportunity to present their side of the story. I began by summarizing my opinion in the
article which is copied below, and invited Steve Szalai, the General Secretary of the
Socialist Party of Canada, to debate the matter with me in this forum.

Additional critique was contributed by two members of the World Socialist Party (U.S.), Tom
Ellert, whose letter is attached below, is the editor of the World Socialist Review, the
publication of the WSP (U.S.) [quarterly, $4 per year, from the address provided above].

The next issue of O.T. will include contributions from Harry Morrison, who served for many
years on the WSP's National Administrative Committee. Harry's articles are being postponed
until next time because they deal with, not only the industrial unionism debate, but also
several other aspects of defining a socialist goal and program.

#5.01 M. Lepore, 02 March 1993

From capitalism to socialism:
SHOULD THE WORKERS ORGANIZE POLITICALLY, INDUSTRIALLY, OR BOTH?

Opinion by Mike Lepore

Abstract

How should workers who agree with the recommendation, "Workers of the world, unite!",
actually set out to unite? Should the organization of the entire working class take place
on the political or on the industrial field? This paper defends the thesis of the North
American Marxist Daniel De Leon (1852-1914), who argued that a dual political/industrial
program will be necessary for success.

WHY INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATION?

The change from class-divided to classless society will require a workplace-based
association encompassing all occupations. Since approximately the year 1900, this concept
has been called industrial unionism.

This statement is given in response to the Companion Parties of Socialism [the World
Socialist movement]. These fellow workers, who do not see in the industrial union an
instrumental role in the revolutionary transition, are welcome to explain why I'm wrong.
I view the industrial union theory as a switch-over theory. A new system of industrial
planning has to be assembled, at least in its basic or foundational structure, while
capitalism still exists. Only then can we smoothly switch the task of industrial
management, from the old class-ruled system, to a new democratic system.

This revolution must be enacted without any interruption in the flow of food, medicine,
education, transportation, and the other necessities of life. The flow of these necessities
requires workplace units to be in close and daily communication, such as designers sending
specifications to fabricators, tool operators placing orders for field repair, repair crews
obtaining replacement parts, public services sending requisitions to suppliers, procedures
arranged between hospitals and laboratories, an unbroken connection from agriculture to
trucking to food stores, etc.

Therefore, our preparation for instituting a new economic system needs to be
workplace-based, linking up the departments of workers from manufacturing, mining,
transportation, health, education, and all other necessary functions, into a network which
is intended to provide the substratum for cooperative administration in the future. We need
to erect the skeleton of the new system, as the IWW preamble points out, "within the shell
of the old".
The revolution will mean reidentifying, not some, but all of the workplace connections we have with one another. For example, let's say the working class decides to abolish capitalism next Tuesday at 9:00 A.M. GMT. (This is to be a coherent action, not a fuzzy "transition period"). At that time, we are to discontinue making military weapons, and, in their place, start making useful items such as school books and medicine. This will require new plants and office committees to meet, new communication lines installed, machinery relocated, specifications written, blueprints requested, shipping instructions changed.

We're talking about a class revolution. In nearly every workplace, the recently-deposed capitalist managers will be shouting and insisting that we must obey their "Plan A", yet we must be ready to laugh at them, ignore them, and if necessary lock them outside, so that we can perform our new "Plan B". Our preparedness for that will require that the workers in each facility must have had at least one prior meeting, and that this meeting must have also resulted in some communication among different types of work facilities. This minimum requirement, at least one prior meeting with department level or workplace workers, would fulfill the basic requirement of the industrial organization of workers needed to bring the industries under social ownership. More likely, however, there would be many prior meetings, since the working class is expected to attain class consciousness over some period of time. The revolution itself can be enacted in five minutes, but learning to Advocate a revolution can take years (decades, centuries).

But elements of instantaneous change are not all. Even in cases where some aspect of the work does not change, for example, if the same driver intends to drive the same truck, or the same operator intends to use the same machine, we would still need a completely new procedure for scheduling everything. We will suddenly have a non-profit economy, with a week's less than half as long as what we work today. The coordination of everything must be rearranged from scratch.

The magnitude of this restructuring is such that it must begin well before the industries are converted to social ownership, otherwise we will have a vacuum, and not a new system, to switch over to. This vacuum would have worse implications than our lights going out, and our food pantries being empty. It would mean that another force would fill the vacuum, such as an unpredicted retention of the political state.

Worse yet: If our food pantries and coal bins are empty for a month, some workers may start to welcome a fascist dictator to enter — especially since a political mandate for socialism could occur with a fragile majority of 51 percent.

I ask the World Socialists to respond to this, my objection:

I don't see how a conquest of the political field by the working class could logically and quickly handle the redesign of the industrial interconnections. The geographical lines of the political state (city, town, county, province) are irrelevant to the linkage of all the departments within the industries and services. Also, irrelevant to production is the state's basis of regulating human behavior, such that its major organs are legislatures, courts, police and armies. The rational plans for moving materials, parts, information, etc. from one economic department to another are nowhere found in the anatomy of the state.

If the working class unites politically but not industrially, we would then have to start remaking the industrial links, from the very first steps. After announcing that the old management system is ejected. Only then would we begin the identification of the naturally occurring economic functions, subdivision according to minor functions, committee formation, proposals, feasibility study, and debug by trial-and-error. Meanwhile we would very soon get cold and hungry while waiting for production to resume.

* * * * *

Another reason for workplace-based organization is because there are at least two advantages to permanently retaining a degree of sectional workers' self-management, e.g., council of nurses selecting the best procedures for nursing, committees of electricians deciding on the electrical codes, educators voting on the best mathematics syllabus, etc.

(1) The people in the respective fields possess greater technical understanding of the details than a democratic assembly of the general public would have.

(2) Our basic right to control our own bodies would seem to imply that some facets of management should be decentralized (admitting local preferences for certain tools, methods, shifts, holidays, etc.).
However, the general public (either the direct democracy of referenda, or the indirect democracy of a public congress) should always have the ability to overrule the plans of the workplace sub-departments, if ever the more localized choices are seen to be in conflict with principles which have been adopted by society as a whole. Therefore, I conclude that we need both forms of industrial administration - some general population control of industry (which the World Socialists usually recommend), and also some localized and occupational forms of control as well (which the syndicalists usually recommend). The balance between the two, of course, would need to be written into the Constitution which the people eventually decide to adopt.

**WHY POLITICAL ORGANIZATION?**

The preceding section doesn't tell the whole story. I also believe that the working class must unite POLITICALLY.

Many reasons have been cited by De Leonists for the political organization of labor, e.g., because an election campaign can be used as a soapbox by the industrial organization, and because election results can be used as a gauge of the solidarity or otherwise. I would personally like to see those arguments set aside. I don't consider any of that to be fundamental. Those purposes may or may not be possible, depending on fluidic circumstances, and they appear not to be efficient means for achieving their ends.

In my view, organization on the political field is needed mainly because the police and military agencies of the state take their orders only from one place - political offices. These violent agencies of the state will not hesitate to massacre millions of workers if the political offices give them the order to do so. If the capitalist political parties still control the state on the day that revolutionaries start taking collective control of the means of production, the state will certainly order a massacre to take place.

Let me break this reasoning into three parts: (1) present-day law says the capitalists are the owners of the industries; (2) the law-enforcers would be the very last segment of the working class to become revolutionary; and (3) the law-enforcers possess such an enormous inventory of deadly weapons and other supplies, that even a general strike could not deprive them of the materials they would need to conduct a slaughter.

How can we prevent this ruling-class reaction? -- here's how: When someone is about to hit you with a stick, you're fortunate if you have the option of grabbing the stick away from them and breaking it into several pieces. We must have workers' delegates elected to political offices -- not to "run" these offices, but, rather, to distract and disassemble the oppressive state machinery, which is merely the ruling class's instrument for maintaining its privileged status.

There is also a possibility that the recently-deposed capitalists will contact bands of thugs (Mafia? Klan? CIA?) and promise them riches on the condition that they can restore the old ruling class to power through acts of violence and terrorism. If the working class has acquired control of the state, then this state force can be used for riot control. This riot control should take no more than days or weeks, certainly not the many years imagined by those who advocate a "dictatorship of the proletariat."

**THE SYNTHESIS**

I conclude that a synthesis of the industrial and the political programs shall be required. The optimum point between those who propose political organization (like the World Socialists) and those who propose industrial organization (like the Industrial Workers of the World) would be to combine the strengths of both fields.

---

#5.02 S. Szalai, 10 March 1993

Steve Szalai < 72607.2404@compuserve.com >

First, and I think foremost, among your errors is the concept that socialism could be established "with a fragile majority of 51%." I believe that this is central to our
disagreement on the "need" for industrial unionism.

Second, and also very important, your belief that "at 9:00 A.M. G.M.T. everything will suddenly change dramatically in the workplace, is mistaken.

The Companion Parties of Socialism hold that a fragile majority cannot establish socialism. The establishment of socialism will be the work of the vast majority of the population. By allowing for the establishment of socialism with a fragile majority, you necessarily put yourself in league with the Leninists that you elsewhere argue so eloquently against. With a bare majority, you would have to try to lead the remaining 49% to socialism against their will. You would have to force them to follow some grand plan, with which they disagree. It seems to me that industrial unions could supply much of the required coercive force in league with the state, which could not be dissolved. The state would need to remain to provide the "dictatorship of the proletariat" so cherished by the Leninists.

All of the links between productive organizations that would be needed on day one, will automatically fall in place in the household that orders supplies. We would continue to order them from the same person in the same company that they ordered them from the day before. The world will not fall apart by removing the profit motive.

I agree that the state, by and large, does not, and will not, have the procedures and expertise to run the productive mechanisms of society. I don't expect it to.

Why do you believe that the coordination of everything must be rearranged from scratch, immediately? Why must this restructuring begin well before the industries are converted to social ownership? Why would there be a vacuum if it did not? How could this restructuring begin before the industries were converted to social ownership while the capitalist class retained ownership? Why would the managers be insisting we obey their "Plan A"?

Let us consider an entirely different approach to a socialist revolution. An approach that recognizes the impossibility of imposing socialism upon a huge minority and does not try to do so.

As socialist consciousness grows in the world populace and when socialists become a majority of the population, the ideas of socialism, the ideas of how to organize a socialist world will become topics of everyday conversation. At work we will discuss what changes should be made, we will discuss them with our friends, we will have mass meetings, we will discuss these issues within our "professional groups". There will be no dearth of discussion, we will not have to have our union specially schedule last minute workplace meetings to determine the action to take place at the "moment" of the revolution.

You make the very important point that "the revolution itself can be enacted in five minutes, but learning to advocate a revolution can take years (decades, centuries)." You seem to ignore it in the rest of your paper.

In the years during which the revolution of consciousness is taking place, all of the issues will be discussed and planned for, without the need for "socialist" unions. I have used the phrase "socialist unions" as opposed to "industrial unions" very explicitly. An industrial union that is not socialist is of no more use to revolutionaries than is nuclear weaponry. I am a member of an industrial union that is, like most, anti-socialist. I have a strong preference for industrial over crafts unions, for much the same reasons as outlined by the IWW, but industrial unionism does not mean socialism. I digress.

Whether or not the unions will ever divorce themselves from the capitalist parties they now support openly, I do not know. I do believe that if workers don't give up totally on the unions that they may indeed become socialist, but workers may accelerate past the anti-socialist unions and leave them in the dust of history, while organizing politically for the conquest of power.

A socialist union today would have a very, very small membership and could not be overly successful in the day to day struggle against the employer. It is better for us as workers to cultivate un-socialist, un-NPD / un-Democratic / un-Republican / un-Liberal / un-Progressive / Conservative / un-Reform / un-whatever Party unions that can succeed for us today, in the limited fashion of unions.

In any case the union is not necessary to the establishment of socialism, or to the planning for a new industrial organization. Because unions are inherently tied to the current economic system, it is possible that the most successful unions could not even approach the
creation of a new industrial organization progressively. This is a bit tentative because
none of us know what the future holds in store for unions.

As the revolution progresses, management, the police and the military will also be composed
of socialists. At the moment of changeover, with a political state in the hands of a huge
socialist majority, the police and the military will be working for socialism. It is
important to remember the lesson of Tiananmen Square in 1989. When the police were ordered
to suppress the protest, they did not, when the local military was ordered to crush the
protest, they did not. Military units from the boonies were required, units unaware of what
was going on. That the military, did of course finally crush the protest, demonstrates the
need for both a huge majority of socialists and political power.

As socialist, conscious cooperation increases, it is inconceivable that planning on a
global, local, and industrial unit basis would not occur. This is not a function of the
industrial union or the "socialist" union, it is a function of socialist consciousness.

It is my understanding that today there are groups "of nurses selecting the best procedures
for nursing, committees of electricians deciding on the electrical codes, educators voting
on the best mathematics syllabus, etc." What will change with socialism is that these groups
will not have to consider the profit factor as a part of their deliberations about "best".

I do not propose that production be controlled by some distant body of administrators with
no knowledge of the industry. Of course the people in the respective fields possess greater
technical understanding of the field than a group of "lay" people. Unfortunately that
technical knowledge often involves training that ignores human need and leaves technicians
very proficient at very damaging technological approaches. That is already starting to
change, and the changes will accelerate as the socialist revolution of thought progresses.

I oppose the idea of a community vs the industrial workers. The syndicalist workplace-based
approach would engender this sort of antagonism. It seems that rather than some need for a
community override, what is necessary is more open communication with others outside the
immediate organization, an approach inherently fostered by socialism. If mistakes were made
by the technicians, they would be quickly noted by others, inside or outside the
organization, and would be corrected, not by override, but by the technicians recognizing
the problem. The working class is the community. Workers are not distinct from that
community.

I suppose that if you are going to have some formalized general population vs industrial
worker setup, as you propose, there would be a need for a constitution to balance the two.
In a truly cooperative world, based upon production for need, I do not see any need for a
constitution. The fire sounding constitutions of the Soviet Union, the United States, and
Canada and other countries existed) within a society that made (makes) them worth very
little to the working class.

Your point about decentralization does not argue for industrial unions, as far as I can
tell. Industrial unions need not be decentralized or democratic. The Teamsters Union is a
good example.

To summarize.

I don't see that you have shown the need for industrial organization either to overthrow
capitalism or to establish socialism (if one can separate the overthrow of capitalism from
socialism).

By allowing that socialism could be declared (by whom?) with a slim majority, you fall into
the Leninist, vanguard approach of leading the workers to socialism, against their will.

Socialism is not the rebuilding of society from scratch, it is the rebuilding of society
from wherever it happens to be when the time to rebuild is upon us.

Constitutions are requirements of capitalist societies and some pre-capitalist societies.
They protect only the welfare of the ruling class. They are not desirable in socialist
society.

#5.03 M. Lepore, 11 March 1993
Replying to S. Szalai's March 10th letter:

> Why do you believe that the coordination of everything must be rearranged from scratch?

> Why would there be a vacuum if it did not?

Many workers under capitalism are trained according to job descriptions which put the boss's intervention in the middle of each transaction. For instance, to get a part on the assembly line from sector 1 to sector 2, the following sequence may be written: When the part finishes at sector 1, then the manager of sector 1 signs a certain form... When the manager of sector 2 receives the signature of the manager of sector 1, additional paperwork is generated, bearing the number of a storage bin... When the workers at sector 2 receive that paper, they go to the indicated bin and pick up the part. The whole system is set up so that nothing can move without the capitalist's hard-picked supervisor in the loop, placing phone calls to have doors unlocked at certain moments, distributing computer passwords, and processing financial documents such as contracts and bills of sale.

Establishing common ownership of industry will require the prearranged adoption of alternative rules, otherwise, it seems to me, production would halt, and have a difficult time resuming in a democratically coordinated fashion.

> How could this restructuring begin before the industries were converted to social ownership while the capitalist class retained ownership?

At some point prior to a socialist revolution, the people in a workplace are likely to gather around a table and say things of the sort, "After the revolution, we will no longer have a supervisor chosen for us by Corporate Headquarters, but I do believe we're going to need one. I'd like to nominate Matilda to be our supervisor. And we should get rid of those blue log books. And we should slow down the inspection line a little bit. What do the rest of you think? Hey, let's hold this meeting every week. Let's ask the other departments to meet regularly too, and to exchange the meeting minutes with us."

The association of workers which occurs before the revolution will begin to foreshadow some pattern-formation in the management process which will persist immediately after the revolution.

> At work we will discuss what changes should be made, we will discuss these issues with our friends, we will have mass meetings, we will discuss these issues within our "professional groups" all of the issues will be discussed and planned for, without the need for "socialist" unions.

I wonder if that discussion and planning, which you do allow for, might take on a certain departmental shape, like the way the IWW is composed of six definite departments (agriculture and fisheries; mining and minerals; general construction; manufacture and general production; transportation and communication; public service). If so, then that's exactly what I mean by unionism as part of the revolution. And if such a comprehensive plan is not used, I don't see where we are to have a "nervous system" to interconnect all of these complex functions into a harmonious whole.

> I oppose the idea of a community vs the industrial workers.
> The syndicalist workplace-based approach would engender this sort of antagonism.

If there is no antagonism between a small group and the human race, that's fine. I don't think that having a protocol which we can follow in the event of such an antagonism could itself engender that antagonism.

If the workers in my office want to run UNIX instead of DOS on our desktop computers, the general public should not interfere and make this decision for us, since such interference would be unnecessary. However, if we set out to do something which has been found to be harmful to the public safety, a wider constituency of the public should be able to veto it.
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> In a truly cooperative world, based upon production for need, I do not see any need for a constitution.

We can't even run a very small organization, let alone a whole society, without some sort of edifice — an agreed-upon listing of what tasks are being delegated to what departments, and how the various committees are related to each other. I don't care if the composition is amended daily, but we must at least know what composition we're talking about at any given time.

> that socialism could be declared (by whom?)

I don't understand the part about "by whom". It seems that your own program, no less than mine, calls for the votes to be counted, the final results to be announced, and then acted upon. Otherwise there is no working class conquest of the powers of the state.

> the concept that socialism could be established "with a fragile majority of 51%." I believe that this is central to our disagreement.

Many of the Wobblies and De Leonists disagree with me on this point also. They too give me the immense majority argument that you're giving me. So I'm not sure that this is central; in fact, I fear that I might have gone off on a tangent. But the tangent illuminates a possible problem that may lie ahead.

Suppose that socialist consciousness grows at a rate of one population percent per year. Then there will be a significantly long period of time in which a majority, but not a vast one, advocates socialism. Are we then to continue the operation of capitalism, a system which kills and mutilates hundreds of thousands of people per year? With even a slim majority, socialists may win the control of the parliament. If so, do we then say that the mandate is not sufficient, and that the horrors of class rule should continue until the majority becomes more vast? I can think of no other course but to say that the majority has won.

> the impossibility of imposing socialism upon a huge minority

I'm not sure that any "imposing" would be taking place. In this hypothetical case, many of the people who failed to vote for socialism would be of the opinion that socialism is a beautiful dream, but it will never happen; "I'd support socialism if other people would, but I don't think other people would, so I won't either." In fact, in my experience, that's the most common objection to socialism. The next largest group is likely to be those who say, "I was outvoted on this proposal, but willing to give the new form of administration a chance to prove itself."

> By allowing for the establishment of socialism with a fragile majority, you necessarily put yourself in league with the Leninists.

Leninists strive for votes by a failure to concentrate of the education of the working class regarding a clearly enunciated goal. Leninist parties seek votes by filling their platforms with lurias, such as demands for a higher minimum wage, local control of ethnic communities, etc., instead of presenting a direct systemic approach. I differ in that I consider the unwavering statement of the goal to be everything.

> Why would the managers be insisting we obey their "Plan A"?

The capitalists personally choose the management chain, and are likely to choose only individuals known to be loyal to them.

> As the revolution progresses, management, the police and the military will also be composed of socialists.

We don't have any evidence that class consciousness occurs uniformly among working class
people of all backgrounds. The opposite seems to be indicated. The least class conscious individuals are more likely to have self-images based on joining management or the police. (Soldiers are more likely to be "regular" people, because, if they're not conscripted, they might have volunteered just to get the guaranteed work with room and board.)

Any segment of the population which has been consistently known to fire (or fire upon) the workers, shrugging it off with the Nuremberg war crime defense, "I'm not the one who gave the order, but it's my duty to carry it out", cannot be counted upon for a last-minute display of proletarian solidarity.

#5.04  S. Szalai, 05 April 1993

Re: Job descriptions with the supervisor in the middle.
Re: Managers loyalty.
Re: Small majority.
Re: Production stoppages.

Your argument seems to stand upon two legs:
1) the belief that current supervisory personnel will be loyal to a deposed, tiny minority,
2) the establishment of "socialism" by a small majority.

It is not necessary that socialist consciousness develop evenly throughout the populace, although I think that it will probably be a lot more even than you suggest. If, as proposed by the World Socialist Movement (WSM), there is a huge majority of socialists in the worldwide and local populations, the supervisors will most likely be as socialist as other workers. In my workplace I find that management is no more and no less progressive than the rest of the staff. Managers are workers too.

My manager, for example, is reasonably receptive to socialist ideas. I haven't convinced him, but that is not the point. The point is that managers are workers too and face the same problems as the rest of us. In the dying days of capitalism the managers may be forced to "follow orders" to keep their jobs (just like the rest of us), but when the time comes, I see no reason to believe that managers and supervisors will not be supportive of socialism.

I am a member of an industrial union, and when it comes to negotiation time, there are always managers who wish us well. They know that as a union we have more power to push our demands for better wages and working conditions, and that management will be able to tag on to our improvements. These people understand their position in society as well as the rest of the workers.

I note that more than one manager has told me that one of the reasons they became managers was to try to organize their department more rationally, and to try to get a better deal for their staff. These are not the motivations of anti-worker, crush the revolution recidivists.

If a specific supervisor, or other worker for that matter, was getting in the way they would simply be ignored or ejected. This does not require a massive rewrite of the rules and procedures of production. It is a simple, obvious outgrowth of the change to socialist production.

While workers may be trained to put the supervisor or manager in the middle of every work sequence, I think most of us, including those who think capitalism is great, chafe at this kind of approach, recognize how unnecessary it is and easily see how to eliminate the useless steps. It is not a big deal. Most workers do not open a book when they go to work to find out how to do their jobs. Workers know how to get the job done and often get the job done despite the rules and procedures that are in place.

When the supervisors are socialists, no matter how chosen, they will have no incentive to insert themselves unnecessarily into the production process. If rule changes are required they will be made. It is not a big issue. If production methods need to be changed, while it may be a big issue materially, it will not likely be so intellectually.

The capitalist, at least in large organizations, plays no part in the day to day running of the organization, and therefore does not hand-pick the supervisors and managers, they are
picked by other managers. The criteria, in a successful organization is not that the manager/supervisor be a slavish devotee of capitalism. The criteria for choosing a manager (in a successful organization, and most others) is the belief that the person can get the job done, economically. The two are very different.

I do not see any reason that socially useful production should stop just because there are no pre-arranged alternative rules to govern the process. I do maintain that these alternative "rules" would have developed anyway, without the requirement for union intervention (which is what superficially distinguishes us).

Re: Restructuring within capitalism.

The restructuring you speak of does not take place in the capitalist system. We seem agreed on that now. What you are talking about is PLANNING for restructuring. The WSM has no disagreement with that, and I did state that it would occur. I do not care how supervisors are chosen, the point is to get the best one.

Re: Union Departments.

We are not in agreement. The union department is still a WORKER-oriented as opposed to a WORKING CLASS-oriented approach. More on this later.

The "nervous system" already exists. It does not have to be invented. It might need modification or even wholesale change, but it does exist and can be used.

Re: Community vs Industrial Workers.

The decision of what operating system to run on your computer is, of course, going to be decided in the workplace. But that does not require the antagonistic approach that your dual decision making stream puts in place. Every worker is also a member of the community. There is no stone wall of isolation (except that I believe your idea of workplace based organization focuses one) between the "community" and the "industrial workers". I repeat that without this wall, there is no need for overrides of one group by the other, because there is only one group.

Re: A Constitution.

The reason that society today needs a constitution, and "we can't even run a very small organization ... without some sort of rules and constitutions is because we live in a competitive society where, as workers, we have to between, others threats to survive. In a cooperative society this problem goes away. It seems to me that a constitution could not change every day because the structures you build around it would then REQUIRE daily modification to follow this constitution - as opposed to perhaps needing daily modification to adjust to changing needs of society.

Leave it loose. If something needs changing in a production-for-use society, it will change. Give the working class some credit for its ability to be creative and cooperative.

If there is a constitution, changing it is not going to be a daily thing. In Canada, the capitalist political parties just spent months arguing about and convincing the working class to worry about every cross on every "t" and every dot on every "i" for a constitutional change that amounts to nothing except a public relations ploy and diversion. By having a written document that everyone is tied to, it is of utmost importance to ensure that it says what everybody wants. This is a monumental task that makes the program of the WSM look like child's play.

Re: Fragile Majority.

My comment "declared (by whom)" is based on my disagreement with your idea of the ability to establish socialism with a slim majority. I think the "immense majority" is in fact central to our disagreement on a whole range of issues.

You ask "are we then to continue the operation of capitalism, a system which kills and mutilates hundreds of thousands of people per year?" The WSM answers no. We are not going to continue capitalism, it is going to continue itself because a slim majority CANNOT end it.

Even your rather modest proposals will require a significant majority to implement. If it is just that 51% have voted for it (some of whom may be a bit snaky) and the rest just think it might not be too bad an idea so they'll give it a try, it will fail. There will be
problems. If the first serious problem has everybody saying that they should have stuck with capitalism, then come the next election, they'll vote out the socialists.

I point to the current situation in the former USSR where workers disillusioned with their "new" capitalist bosses are even electing the old "communists" and questioning whether they did the right thing in supporting Yeltsin and his bunch.

What socialism requires is a huge majority that UNDERSTANDS WHY CAPITALISM MUST BE REPLACED, without that all we will see is a temporary disruption (and it will be the sort of disruption that you worry about) followed by a, probably violent, return to the normal violence of capitalism. I see the violent return because ownership would have to be reasserted, and there would be no structures in place to accommodate that.

Re: Leninism.

My reference to Leninism was not related to its slurry vote-getting tactics. It was a reference to imposing "socialism" on the working class (or a large part thereof). This results from the slurry vote-getting tactics of the Leninists - the vanguard leading the masses to socialism.

The initial imposition might not be that great, but when there are problems, the imposition would necessarily increase unless we fell back to capitalism (see above).

It seems to me that by the time 51% of the population are ready to vote for socialism, that people are not going to be saying "I don't think other people would support socialism. It is more likely that those in disagreement would be saying that they don't think socialism can work. If that is the case, they are likely not to be easily convinced to stay on a bandwagon when a wheel falls off.

Only if they have recognized the reasons for capitalism's failure to satisfy our needs, and that there will be problems that are WORTH overcoming to establish and maintain socialism are they likely to hang around the wagon and help put the wheel back on.

Re: Uniformity of class consciousness.

I disagree with your thesis that the least class conscious gravitate to management and the police. Your thesis seems to be called into question by the existence of police and management "unions".

I have personally been on picket lines where there was a police presence. It was generally cordial until a SPECIFIC order came down, or senior officers showed up to get the job done. In fact the police often showed a sympathetic approach to the picketers. I am not claiming that there are not many (more) occasions when the police employed a jackboot approach, but in general that jackboot approach has had community "sympathy", perhaps through ignorance, so it does not show a difference between the police and the general populace.

In dog-eat-dog capitalism, the "just following orders" defense is tried, true and justified. How many of us would tell the boss to shove his job because we thought that what we were doing might be deadly. If it was common we would not have the reality of capitalism today.

In truth the bully-boy approach of the police is partly based on following orders and partly based upon general societal beliefs. When unions are hated by the general populace, the police will hate them too.

Of more significance is the firmly rooted popular support for LAW AND ORDER. As long as this ruling class idea prevails and comprehension of the reasons for our problems is low, the knee-jerk law and order responses to "problems" will continue. And they will continue to have popular support.

As long as property rights are superior to human rights, in the minds of the majority, the police will continue to enforce property rights.

The East German revolt for "democracy" was accomplished without the police slaughtering the populace, precisely because the police are not a separate entity apart from society. The Tiananmen massacre was preceded by police and military refusal to fire upon the protesters.

Your thesis is based, I think, on not clearly analyzing societal norms. This is a major problem that I think extends to most of our disagreements.
I do not count on the police for a "last-minute display of proletarian solidarity." I count on them being socialists, just like the rest of the majority.

#5.05  R. Elbert, 19 March 1993

To:  M. Lepore <mlepore@mcmail.com>
From:  R. Elbert <ronel2@aol.com>

The "IU concept," you begin, is what you call a "switch over" theory, a "new system of industrial planning [that] has to be assembled, at least in its basic or foundation stages, that any socialists implementing that still exist to work under a new democratic system." You single out some of the salient characteristics of the new system as (1) "we need to erect the skeleton of the new system, as the IWW preamble points out, "within the shell of the old"; (2) "we need to reidentify, not some, but all of the workplace connections we have with another;" and (3) "the revolution will mean redefining, not some, but all of the workplace connections we have with one another."

It would be out of keeping with historical materialism to deny any of these points as qualitatively, but what you subsequently do with them presents certain problems. In the first place, you take a misleadingly concrete focus on the whole question of expropriation; you picture the revolution as happening AT THE WORKPLACE. Workers "in each facility" will, if necessary, "lock them [the managers] outside." The world outside each workplace is made up of "different types of work facilities" (which communicate with each other as the revolution moves along) and an undefined mass of social experiences and activities. The revolution itself consists of replacing the capitalist-inspired hierarchical arrangement of work relationships ("Plan A") with a non-authoritarian arrangement based on the satisfaction of workers' needs ("Plan B"). Of course, as a result of this seizure of what to the capitalist class appears as capital, the capitalist class itself ultimately disappears, bringing "the industries under social ownership." The class consciousness workers have developed up to this point ceases to be a means to an end: it becomes social consciousness, an end in itself.

But are things so simple? Capital accumulation, the progressive appropriation of value (profit) by the capitalist class at the point of production, is a FUNCTION. Whoever controls the use of capital becomes an investor and therefore a capitalist; the names investors give themselves do not matter. Merely seizing capital assets and re-deploying them for the direct benefit of society does not by itself abolish the use of capital in production. If necessary, it will guarantee that the "social ownership" claimed will materialize. This happens because the ownership of the means of production is also a function; it is the "soul" of a system of production, and it resides as a generality through the entire community of possessors. (World socialists insist for this reason that the revolution must be essentially worldwide in character -- it must happen everywhere.)

The revolution in consciousness that precedes and directs this replacement, this "switchover," has to be functional AT THIS LEVEL. This makes it not only a takeover of the production and distribution of products and services in the economic sense (wealth) but also the replacement of a system for producing and distributing wealth in the political sense. This revolution only completes itself when it has become society's official decision to make access to goods and services unconditional, as a result of the consciously expressed desire for it by a clear majority of people -- workers or otherwise.

World socialists stress also that workers generally (not simply in industry) must UNDERSTAND AND WANT common ownership, and they must want it because they can control the production and distribution of wealth democratically. This phrase, "understand and want," is admittedly a bit of shorthand we have gotten very used to wielding without much reflection; it signifies precisely what you have been speaking of as the class-conscious workers formulating their "Plan B" and following through on the impulse to implement it in place of the capitalists' "Plan A." Where would workers get a concrete sense of the implications of common ownership if not from their own experience of the class struggle? And where else would they get a sense of the urgency of replacing an anti-social system of production for sale at a profit on the market with a system of production based on the satisfaction of human needs? So "understanding and wanting" common ownership means this process you have rather simplifiedly described as the decision to abolish capitalism, however, can only occur OUTSIDE the workplace, and in fact it really occurs nowhere in
particular because, as the implementation phase of a revolution in consciousness, it occurs everywhere in general. It has to be on a generally understood, politically defined, signal that the revolution is enacted -- the explicit, formal abolition of the use of capital in production and of any prior restriction on gaining access to needed goods and services. (It might take a little longer than five minutes.) Terminally, massively and completely decapitalizing wealth production is the only feasible alternative. Having a "Plan B" and "taking and holding" is not enough.

It's easy to see why De Leonists would accuse us of concentrating exclusively on the political aspects of this changeover in the basis of society. We have all been sold by the propaganda system on the top-down character of the political parties doing their Byzantine thing at the pinnacle of the pyramid of privilege. But to this you have added the oversimplification I mentioned above: picturing the revolution as a concrete event. "How," you ask, would the working class...logically and quickly handle the redesign of industrial interconnections" if they simply decided at the polls to replace profit for use as the motor-force of the production system? You very consistently maintain the concrete frame of projecting the working class as uniting politically but not industrially and being then forced to "start remaking the industrial links, from the very first steps, after announcing that the old management system is ejected." And you add a dreary finishing touch to the whole picture: "Meanwhile we would very soon get cold and hungry while waiting for production to resume." (Also, the unintended implication of this scenario is that, pending the outcome of this way of proposing a change of Plans ("B" for "A") and putting it into effect, the revolutionary socialist government would meanwhile become involved in the government, i.e., it would at the very instant of carrying out the revolutionary mandate cease to be socialist.)

The "continuity" of production already operates now against a global backdrop of ongoing, routine disruption and dysfunction: continuity seems a rather moot point, on the whole. Also, in this age of Social Democracy's decline (and Bolshevism's demise), the corrosive question of where exactly is this working class anyway seems to have been broached. If "workers" must be employed in industry, and unemployed or non-industrial workers excluded? The trouble with the industrial union concept is that it pegs itself too narrowly to one specific phase of capitalism's evolution, while unearthing a majority of wage-slaves are employed in production these days in the rich, developed centers of the capitalist world-system. This question of a "majority of 51 percent" you bring up is thus problematic, since industrial workers have become so productive they no longer even constitute a majority of their own class. How can an "industrial" union speak for the majority, if most workers are not industrial?

But the whole problem of counting heads is insidious. Exploitation may look a lot fuzzier where you count it down to a microformula (as Marx did in CAPITAL), but its functions and effects still bedevil everyone who works for a living. It may be much more of a "syndrome" for most people than it was in the classical heyday of theoretical socialism ("you say you're exploited -- what do you mean?"). The mix between "workplace" and "community" (as Cs. Szalai points out) should not depend on such narrowly defined relationship -- especially one so vulnerable to the pressures of dynamic transformation -- as the organization of industry.

The only coherent approach is to treat the organization of labor as a political question: since all workers have a stake in it, no matter how their experience of exploitation may have affected the way they conceptualize the system. The majority in the marketplace thus translates directly into a political majority -- one whose consciousness is not tied in any case to a number of differential categories of occupation.

Finally, your mention of "the Constitution" fits in well enough with seeking merely to replace "Plan A" with "Plan B": whereas the transmutation of class consciousness into social consciousness IS the new "constitution." A document analogous to those which litter today's visions is strictly unnecessary, consisting on the most for the literal: Moreover, it creates a trap-door back into the system of exploitation, because the whole purpose of a political constitution is to spell out regimes of privilege and pecking order, within each society. Political constitutions reflect the class division of society. But your casual reference to one (even taking it metaphorically) demonstrates exactly why we find the socialist revolution so important in global political terms. We do not propose "pure political organization" but, we do insist that the crucial phase of the socialist revolution is the political one. And while De Leonists, on the other hand, may concede rhetorically that this phase has some importance, for purposes of carrying out the replacement of capitalism this really only dwells on the aspect of industrial organization.
Control of the government certainly includes what you refer to as "riot control," but a working class that has felt its muscle should have relatively little to worry about from its "recently-deposed" employers (who will be more flabbergasted than anything else at the majority's succumbing to "social sadness"). The main reason is rather that the process of de-capitalizing production and de-commercializing consumption (breaking the money-commodity-money cycle) requires an act of political coordination. Once this act has been definitively accomplished, the need for controlling the government, and with it the role of the Socialist Party, becomes superfluous -- to say nothing of any further need for repression.

#5.06  M. Lepore, 06 April 1993

Your article, Ron, highlights some of the crucial questions facing the movement. I hope the readers are starting to form a picture of your party's unique solution.

First I'll reply to some of your specifics, and then I'll make a general observation about how your philosophy sits with me.

> If "workers" must be employed in industry, are unemployed or
> non-industrial workers excluded?

The word "industrial" in the phrase "industrial union" refers to the use of a tree structure which defines union membership according to the output or the function of the work site. For example, if you're a school nurse, you would be represented in the education workers' branch. It would be called "craft unionism" for the school nurse to be part of the medical workers' branch. (This distinction is made for the transition out of capitalism, and is not necessarily a permanent feature.)

Any usage of the words "production" and "industry", by any Marxian as well as any syndicalist source, includes all career activities which the population finds use for. The IWW has been wise to realize this fact, and so it has organized subdivisions for everyone from poets to exotic dancers. Since the word "industry" isn't meant to imply the popular image which the word invokes, perhaps someone will suggest a word that isn't so misleading.

Unemployed individuals need to be included in general membership branches, although usually not in the workplace branches.

> The trouble with the industrial union concept is that it
> pegs itself too narrowly to one specific phase of
> capitalism's evolution

The various types of social boundaries given by capitalism are used as vehicles for getting beyond them. Your movement does something similar when it forms national political parties. After the revolution, there will be no limit to the changes we can make to the form of democracy. No longer will we have to specialize in one career, nor act within national borders. We won't have to continue using any of the transitional forms of organization. But we must walk before we can throw away our crutches.

> the new "constitution." A document analogous to those which
> litter today's junkyard of nations is strictly unnecessary
> the whole purpose of a political constitution is to spell
> out regimes of privilege and pecking orders showing everyone
> where their place is.

You're speaking of a POLITICAL constitution, where the task at hand is to do anything necessary to preserve class rule, such as collecting taxes, regulating commerce, and fighting wars.

An ECONOMIC constitution would be a snapshot of how all economic parts are arranged within the whole at any given moment. For instance, it might say that school bus drivers are being
represented by two delegates to a local education council, and three delegates to a local transportation council. It would also give the formula for determining whether each administrative decision is to be referred to central planning, to municipal planning, or to the occupational associations. Perhaps, because of the huge volume of detail required, "almanac" is a better word than "constitution." I would call it a constitution because democratically amending the form of the economic departments and democratically amending the reference record would be the same action.

Finally, some general notes --

Your philosophy and mine both advise the working class, not to follow leaders, not to install leaders, but to attain an understanding of the better life we could have, and what we must do. Then we will express that new consciousness by building a classless society. No disagreement there. However, we seem to disagree on the type of details which we must learn to hold in our consciousness, and why.

I argue that the manner in which we organize will largely determine the result we will end up with. The working class needs to focus on the question of what sort of administrative structure our collective economic planning should have, and we must organize along the lines which will implement that goal. Failing to do this, we may acquire some bureaucratic system which is not what we have intended.

As you pointed out, I do believe that the revolution must occur at the workplace. I view the revolution as the act of implementing workers' control of industry, and an end to the extraction of surplus value. I begin with merely this, because there will be many future opportunities to do more. There will be plenty of time to change our whole thinking, to give up our metaphysical superstitions and our material greed, and to make additional social changes that might now be beyond our comprehension.

When we make our history, we have to find our way as though a strobe light were intermittently shining on an obstacle course. I propose that we take just one leap, and then we can take another look at where we are. Perhaps the workers' council structure will be a temporary phase, but it provides a definable way to move from class rule to a new collectively coordinated system. You're probably right to say that "the revolution is not completed" until we transcend many remnants of the past, such as the use of exchange values, the division of labor inherited from capitalism, and so forth. But my objectives would also be transmutable into yours, by a majority vote, and I think that course can be taken more easily than moving directly from the violent storm of capitalism to a system completely free of all remnants of capitalism.

It wouldn't be fair of me to attempt to paraphrase you, but I'll tell you what your message sounds like to me, subjectively. -- There's no need to experiment early on with workers' councils, because when the revolutionary period comes, we will spontaneously deduce, and we will nearly all agree, how society needs to be arranged. The working class will attain such a highly evolved collective mind that the new socialist system won't even need a constitution. We won't need to rearrange any structural safeguards against bureaucracy, because, in our condition of supercharged awareness, bureaucracy couldn't even begin to take hold. We won't even need that section of the constitution which guarantees individual freedoms, because no one will ever think of infringing on anyone else's freedoms. We won't need to require people to contribute some work before they can go shopping, because no one will ever think of being greedy or egotistical. And exactly how are we going to arrive at this elevated plane? I suppose that we're going to write our socialist pamphlets in such a convincing manner, that the whole working class will attain Buddhism. Then we will all act in unison and synchrony, making a world in which no one will show any signs of competitive behavior, forevermore. Again -- I'm not claiming that this is what you said, but that's what your transitional program sounds like to me.

However, I'm skeptical about this leap to enlightenment that's supposed to take place -- our minds prior to the revolutionary period, if we were capable of that, I suppose we would have already done it long ago. While humans are capable of improving our reasoning capacity in gradual phases, we are not a wholly logical species. I see that, in a recent poll, between 65 and 80 percent of the U.S. population (depending on the age group) said they agree with the statement that "the Bible is the totally accurate word of God." TIME Magazine, April 15, 1991, p. 47) Even if we leave aside the matter of blind faith for a moment, to conclude that any book so filled with self-contradictions can somehow be at
accurate" shows our frequent inability to reason properly. If this is how the human species is, if we are often unable to recognize a simple logical fallacy when we trip over one, then I propose that we should set out to enlighten ourselves by one step at a time. Therefore I don’t begin with a goal that expects people to abandon all false thinking before historical progress can commence. Instead, I identify the immediate goal to be the replacement of class rule by workers’ collective self-management. Let our mental unfolding, and much additional social restructuring, come as it will.

We may guess what habits and values we will live by a hundred years after the revolution, but we must be concerned now with the first decade after the revolution. At that time, we will show some tendency toward greed and chaos and bureaucracy, and we must have structured our revolutionary goal and program to work around these recurrent traits. The industrial union idea builds stability into the instrument of transition, the type of organization itself, so that we won’t have to demand so much of "pure" consciousness. Industrial unionism is a program that we can enact without every member of the working class first becoming a Buddha.

(Cont’d from p. 2)

Mar Robit. We might add that Comrade Mann’s Little Free Press seems to have returned to the land of the living. Tom Dooley of Minneapolis sent us a copy of the most recent production.

In a letter to DB enclosing Kamunist Kranti’s document for the Euro-Asian Conference in Hong Kong, Sher Singh of the Indian group explains the purpose of the conference—of which I hadn’t heard—describes an “international rally” in Paris this June—of which no word seems to have reached the U.S.—, and describes KK’s activity in India. (KK’s pamphlet Arguments With Obduracy was reviewed in DB58.) KK’s brief statement to the Hong Kong Conference strikes me as eminently clear, pointing out a central aspect of the privatization controversy that others calling themselves socialists or communists seem to ignore: that besides "statization"—a term KK seems to have coined for state ownership of the means of production—there is another alternative to privatization: abolition of the market system.

When Samuel Leight’s letter to the editor of the [Tucson] Arizona Daily Star was not published, he ran it as an advertisement. We publish it here gratis as an example of that most valuable—and usually free—method of agitation. We end by reviewing a new English language quarterly from Russia.

FINANCES: Our financial condition continues to improve and, in fact we have crawled up out of the red and have a fingerhold in the black. Actually, though, we may be better off than the figures below suggest. According to the bank statements, a discrepancy in DB’s favor seems to have crept in, but your innumerate bookkeeper doesn’t have the time or inclination to check it out at the moment.

CONTRIBUTIONS: Tom Dooley $10; Anonymous $22; Curtis Price $21, Heinrich Fleischer $9, Lynn Olson $5; Jeff Stein $5. Total $72. Thank you, comrades.

| BALANCE | April 21, 1993 | [deficit] $19.43 |
| RECEIPTS | Contributions $72.00 |

(Cont’d on p. 30)
Personal Reflections on the Class Struggle

This is a purely personal contribution, although it is influenced by my 40 years plus in what is now the Clapham (London) based Socialist Party (SP). I recently resigned, not just because of the creeping reformism in that party, but because I feel that the SP no longer understands current trends within capitalism. My definition and concept of socialism, however, remain unchanged, although changes within the SP may affect the correspondence between my ideas and the current majority view within the SP.

Let us first consider why the socialist movement has remained a very small minority. Reformism is basically a simpler task than a revolution. Hence we can only expect support from those who are totally convinced that no progress is possible within the capitalist system, however much reformed. I have been thus convinced since I joined the old SPGB in 1952. Such a long spell of total conviction can blind one to the fact that other workers have seen things differently. Yet it must surely be conceded that if the workers’ position within society has consistently become worse over such a long period, and there are still those who contend this, then the revolution would have occurred long ago.

The socialist movement remains small mainly because the majority of workers, having over a long period observed the results of reformist (including trade union) activity, have concluded that something useful has been achieved by these means and hence that more of the same is indicated. Unfortunately some workers do seem to suffer from backwards tunnel vision.

Pseudo-socialists, and to a lesser but by no means insignificant extent the genuine variety, have shown a marked reluctance to accept such a conclusion. Manipulation and distortion by the capitalist class and their news media, which undoubtedly do take place, are often given exaggerated credit. It stretches credibility, however, to claim that they have deceived most of the workers for most of the time over such a long period. It thus appears that until trends within capitalism change significantly, until indeed the majority have become convinced that whatever may be said of the past, conditions will worsen from this point onwards, the growth of the movement will continue to be a case of an odd one here, an odd one there. Such a change of outlook could come about via the Third World situation, where trends are in the opposite direction, but capitalism and the proletariat have been in existence for a lesser time. An upsurge in socialist consciousness in these countries could trigger a favourable reaction in the developed areas, and serve to reduce the insularity of the workers there.

One of the later trends which I noticed within the SP was the more frequent insistence that the party "should become more involved in the class struggle at grass roots level". This inevitably was accompanied by suggestions that certain members, deemed not to be so involved, were remote from the day to day struggle, "living in their ivory towers". Curiously this line has been pursued by the opponents of the Socialist Party of Great Britain (SPGB) throughout the party’s existence. Yes, but what is the class struggle at grass roots level, and how does it tie in with the socialist project? Whatever struggles workers have been involved in, and many brave battles have been fought, few have had the overthrow of capitalism as their aim, if for no other reason than that very few workers have had that as their aim, period.

What then can we say about the class struggle? Firstly, it has to be divided into two parts, the industrial and the political, because many of the participants are acting different roles in each. This despite the obvious fact that the two parts are indissolubly linked by their common origin in the class structure of capitalism. Let us comment on the industrial struggle first.

The industrial struggle, despite all the glamour which left-wing propaganda often gives it - "the militant working class" - can only involve itself with the division within capitalism of the wealth produced by and taken from the workers. Often, after bitter struggles, the workers have won concessions that the capitalists have fought tooth and nail to prevent. Yet,
after these famous victories, they remain wage workers, compelled to sell their labour power under basically the same conditions as previously. The capitalists remain capitalists, buyers of labour power, maybe biding their time until the chance of revenge comes along. The system remains effectively unchallenged. In the SP today there is more emphasis than formerly on "supporting trade unions", but less often is there an examination of what that implies. Among the questions that require an answer are what do the unions actually do and say, and what union activities are worthy of socialist support.

My own union experience has been exclusively within the white collar union MSF, formerly TASS, still earlier DATA. I have held the branch treasurer'ship and on occasions have sat on the union's national aerospace advisory committee and taken part in wage negotiations. Some may object that white collar unionism is not real unionism, etc., etc., - we know well this depressingly familiar stuff. I beg leave to disagree and believe my experience to be reasonably representative, and further that it qualifies me to make the following comments.

Firstly, what is the basic mechanism of the industrial trade union struggle. Is it strikes and lock outs? In a minority of cases it is. However the basic mechanism is negotiation, often confrontational certainly, but leading in the end to an agreed, signed compromise. Secondly, at least in the larger firms, the capitalists do not appear personally. The firm's case is put by salaried employees who themselves have interests opposed to those of the firm in respect of their own conditions of employment. Most left wingers have praised the walkout led by Arthur Scargill at the 1982 TUC. While I do not endorse the invitation extended to the CBI, the implication that the industrial struggle can be conducted like the political, with only confrontation between the sides, smacks of cloud cuckooland.

Next, it is quite possible for individuals to be effective trade unionists and yet consistently support the capitalist political parties, hence taking part on opposite sides in the two portions of the struggle. The views of the most active unionists however, in my experience, largely belong to the left wing of the Labour Party. These people think the capitalist system is made of plasticene, as any impartial reader of Union Conference Agendas will observe. Curiously this situation has persisted although the average worker now has a much more realistic idea of what is possible under capitalism, in terms of job security, welfare, etc. The credit for this welcome feature, incidentally, is very little due to the efforts of socialists, lying instead with a combination of the current world slump and the simple "facts of life" economics lectures given by Thatcher and her supporters.

"Getting involved with the class struggle at grass roots level" means mixing with all of this. I prefer to state what my strategy has been rather than try to lay down socialist tactics. Personally I have supported only what I consider to be genuinely part of the struggle for better wages and other working conditions, including, in redundancy situations, attempts to force the capitalists to employ more hands than are considered necessary by their own criteria. However when it is a question of supporting reformist activity, I can put my hand on my heart and say that I have done so only when I have been a mandated delegate. I'm sectarian, mate!

On the political field, the class struggle is often defined as the struggle for and against the replacement of capitalism by socialism. While in terms of class interest this ought to be a simple struggle of capitalists against workers, in practice, as we know only too well, most workers who do vote (the percentage who do seems to be going down) vote for parties which openly or otherwise support the capitalist system. What then, politically, does "getting involved in the class struggle at grass roots level" mean, if it is to be more than merely spreading socialist propaganda, important though that activity is?

The concept cannot be extended to cover support for reform measures when it can clearly be seen that some capitalists support and will benefit from these
changes. This has unfortunately been the case in the recent changes in Eastern Europe. Firstly the governments in these countries were imposed by the Red Army and were not properly representative of the interests of the national capitalists. Secondly, these capitalists, having over a long period been able to compare the performance of their economies with those in the West, began to press for change. For tactical reasons, in order to obtain a hearing while the old regime retained its crushing power, these movements looked as though they were moving out of "communism" in a leftwards direction. When victory was won, however, they soon revealed their openly capitalist nature. That is not to say that valuable gains were not made in the form of multi-party democracy and trade union rights. They were, but the struggle for these was not a class struggle for the reasons stated.

When, however, it appears that the capitalists are fairly solidly opposed to a reform package there is a case for regarding the fight as a class struggle. There have been many such cases in working class history, often leading to bloody conflict. The fact is that in the 1990's we still have a strong capitalism controlling world events with remarkably little in the way of a revolutionary challenge. This situation must be taken as massive endorsement of the stand taken by the SEGB pioneers in 1904 when they came out of the SDP to form an independent revolutionary party. Thus even in these extreme cases it is difficult to label fights which are basically only over reform packages as instances of the class struggle. However the ruling class saw things at the time, in retrospect we can see that their interests were insufficiently compromised to justify such a description.

What we make, then, of the call for greater participation in the class struggle "at the grass roots level"? Within the SP the call coincided with an increasing tolerance of reformist causes, tending in some cases to open socialism. It can also be seen as another uncalled-for trend. The SP has misinterpreted the current trend back towards openly capitalist politics. For some years workers have been less inclined to support the allegedly labour parties, such as the Labour and "Communist" models, with some associated increase in support for the openly capitalist ones. At the same time many of the left wing parties have themselves become more openly capitalist in their stance. To me this is the unsurprising result of reformism in action in the 20th century. The fruits of which are now clearly visible. Unless there had been a higher level of support for the socialist project, it is difficult to see what else could have happened. The recent events in Eastern Europe and the victories of Thatcher and Reagan are part of basically the same phenomenon, in which the left wing parties are paying the price for 40 years practical experience of their ideas and policies. The more realistic assessment of the workings of capitalism which this has given to many workers is the main benefit accruing to the socialist project from this period.

The SP, however, sees these trends as a decline in class consciousness. In a very depressed debate at one of its recent Conferences, it was even claimed that Thatcher "had put a stop to the class struggle in the South of England" and the party ought to concentrate on the North where class politics were still possible! Presumably this was because they returned more Labour MPs! It seems that the SP expects the Revolution to be proceeded by the election of a succession of ever more leftwards leaning governments. This idea had some justification in the first half of this century, but has surely been contraindicated to the point of ridicule by events since. I doubt whether there will be much of a decline per se in reformism in the broadest sense. Instead I expect it to take on more and more an openly capitalist character, in contrast to the reforms enacted earlier this century. The movement of workers away from the leftist parties may continue for a bit longer, to be followed by the direct conversions of conservatives to the socialist cause, something that is still quite a rare event.

The call for "greater involvement in the class struggle at grass roots
level" therefore seems to me to cut across these recent historical trends. It looks very much like an attempt to revive the now moribund left wing movements because these are still believed to be filled with "the more class-conscious workers". The call to join in "the class struggle at grass roots level" is basically no more than a call to revert to reformism.

E. C. Edge
(The Sectarian Bird)

The Constitution of the Socialist Labor Party:
Still Stalinist, Despite Changes.

Ed Jahn
4408 Oak Creek Court #503
Fairfax, VA 22033

This is a followup on my earlier comments about the constitution of the Socialist Labor Party (SLP). Those comments aroused the defensive anger of Frank Girard and some other former members of the SLP, so that, for example, Girard asserted that I had not actually read the SLP constitution. In fact, I had read it, but quite some time ago, and immediately thereafter I threw it away in disgust.

Knowing that my comments had been based on memory -- seeing apparently rational adults claiming that this constitution is democratic -- and wondering if my memory had somehow deceived me -- I proceeded to buy a new copy and to study it.

I found major differences in wording between today's version and my memory of the version that I read in the late 1960's. The title page of today's version indicates that it has been amended thirteen or fourteen times since then. That's a lot more change than I expected. It no longer contains provisions to expell people for writing to each other about Party policy, or for "circulating a lampoon". These are improvements. Unfortunately, when carefully examined, they turn out to be improvements only in style. In substance, the SLP constitution is as completely opposed to democracy as it was before.

Those who disagree with me may, perhaps, have a different definition of "democracy" than I do. So I'll spell out my definition. But I think it more likely that they just don't understand the implications of the various provisions by which the SLP constitution attacks democracy. So I'll spell out those implications, too.

Definition: Democracy = Majority Rule + Individual Rights.

Majority Rule, in an organization, means that all important decisions are made by majority vote of the organization's members. "Important decisions" include the election of officers, decisions about the organization's money, and the setting of organization policies. If these things are decided in any other way that by majority vote of the members, then the organization is not democratic.
The SLP constitution provides that SLP members do not vote on any
important decisions. Not for national officers. Not on party
policy. Not on constitutional changes.

They vote for delegates to a National Convention; these delegates
elect the officers and (supposedly) make the decisions (Article
VII, various sections). In fact, conventions are extremely easy
to manipulate, so the real decisions are probably not made by the
delegates, but by power brokers behind the scenes.

The convention's decisions are "submitted to the membership for a
general vote" (Article VII, section 11 (a) 3, 41. But this gives
the members no real choice. In theory they could vote against the
decisions, but in practice they won't because they have nothing
else to vote for.

The constitution of the Teamsters' Union has similar provisions,
and for the same purpose: to prevent the membership from
controlling the organization.

So the SLP constitution is undemocratic because it does not
provide majority rule. But it is also undemocratic because it
does not provide individual rights.

Individual Rights, in an organization, means that all members
have certain rights which cannot be taken away -- even by a
majority vote. These include:

Right to fair trial if accused of wrong-doing. Also called the
right to "due process", this includes things like to right to
answer the charges against you and to present evidence in your
defense.

Right to know what is going on -- to know what the organization's
officers are doing, how the organization's money is being spent.
To know what is being done about all those important decisions
that should have been decided by majority vote. To hear arguments
for and against candidates who are up for election. And so forth.

Right to free speech -- to discuss organization issues with other
members, to disagree with the party line, and to join with others
to argue for whatever policies you favor.

Some people argue that democracy means majority rule and nothing
else. This is really a side-issue as far as the SLP is concerned,
since it does not have majority rule. But it's an important issue
nonetheless. Suppose a majority votes to take away the right to
fair trial, to know what is going on, etc. Do you still have
democracy?

No, you don't -- because you cannot have majority rule without
individual rights. There are two main reasons for this:

1) A majority that doesn't know what's going on does not really
rule. It doesn't know what's going on if it cannot hear
differences of opinion. So the majority can only rule if
individual members have the right to free speech.
(2) A majority made up of people who are afraid to disagree does not really rule. The majority does not rule in an organization that that denounces, suspends, expels members who disagree with official policy. Why? Because the majority is made up of individuals. If individuals are intimidated, the majority is intimidated.

The US constitution provides for individual rights in the Bill of Rights. (It didn't originally -- because its authors didn't want ordinary citizens to have those rights -- but they were forced to accept it by public protest.) The constitution of the SLP has no Bill of Rights. It has exactly one provision, discussed below, that could, by some stretch of the imagination, be considered to provide an SLP member one of the rights in the US Bill of Rights.

SLP members do not have the right to know what is going on. This is insured in various ways, for example by the provision that "All meetings of the NEC shall be held in executive session [Art. V., Section 7(b)]. "Executive session" means "secret from members".

SLP members do not have the right to free speech. A member who questions the party line is subject to charges which lead to suspension and/or expulsion. This attacks democracy in two ways:

(1) It prevents the members from questioning official policies, by punishing them for doing so. This prevents them from having any control over the organization's policies.

(2) It insures punishment by allowing unfair trial procedures.

The one provision that could be considered to provide an SLP member the rights in the US Bill of Rights is the provision in Article XI, Section 3 and 4, that requires charges against a member to be specific and in writing. Once having been notified of charges against them, however, SLP members do not have any of the rights needed to insure a fair trial.

The SLP systematically gets rid of everybody who disagrees with the party line. This makes majority rule impossible. The SLP sort of pretends to have majority rule, but in fact, behind the scenes, it is controlled by a few leaders who tell the members what to think. You SLP expelled and drop-outs who write for the Discussion Bulletin know this to be true, but some of you seem to think it is contrary to the SLP constitution. Far from being contrary, it is guaranteed by the SLP constitution.

A Multi-Stage Filter

The SLP constitution sets up a multi-stage filter for the elimination of people who question the party line.

The first stage of the filter is the Section. If you question the party line, the Section is expected to expel you [Article XI, various sections].

You can appeal to the National Executive Committee [Article XI, Section 13]. That's the next stage of the filter.
Suppose you really did question the party line. In this case, the National Executive Committee turns down your appeal. You have no further appeal. The filter has eliminated you. Victory for the party line!

Suppose you have been done a terrible injustice. You didn’t question the party line. Those bad guys who expelled you did! In this case, the National Executive Committee reinstates you and suspends the “bad guys” (Article V, Section 12). You pass the filter -- they don’t. Another victory for the party line!

I say the “National Executive Committee (NEC)” because that’s what the SLP constitution says. The SLP constitution makes it appear that this NEC has enormous powers. It gives more space -- 42 out of 113 sections -- to the NEC than to any other topic. But among these many sections is one that tells the real story:

"The NEC shall meet once in regular session between National Conventions" (Article V, Section 7(a)).

That means no more than once every two years. Supposedly the NEC decides everything, but it has no time to actually make the decisions. This means that it is really only a rubber stamp for somebody else.

The constitution of the state of Virginia has similar provisions. So, too, did the constitution of the late, unalmated Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. All such provisions have the same purpose: to prevent the people who cast their ballots from having any real control over the decisions made in their name.

The NEC has no time -- and, even if it had the time, none of the needed resources -- to make any real decisions. This means that it gives almost automatic approval to the decisions presented to it. Presented by whom? By the National Secretary, and/or by the office staff which is hired and fired by the National Secretary.

The real boss of the SLP is the National Secretary. You SLP expellees and drop-outs who write for the Discussion Bulletin know this to be true, but some of you seem to think it is contrary to the SLP constitution. Far from being contrary, it is guaranteed by the SLP constitution.

Note that the Socialist Labor Party allows neither unionism nor any kind of employee rights to the people it hires. Just as it preaches democracy but does not practice it, so, too, it preaches unionism, but does not practice it. This is contrary to its professed ideology, but not at all contrary to its constitution.

What the SLP does today is a good indication of what it would do if it got power. Be glad that it has no chance of ever getting any.

Dear DB Readers,

Ed Jahn’s letter above raises the same kinds of questions that troubled me about his letter in DB53. The fact is that the SLP’s constitution is no more “Stalinist” than those of other groups that
Larry Gambone claims that in my response to his piece on "stateless socialism", that I take a "good guy vs. bad guy" approach and charge the Marxists with lying about their true aims. No, this is not my position at all. Rather what I tried to point out by quoting from Lenin’s *State and Revolution*, is that one cannot simply take the "anti-stateism" of Marxists at face-value. The Marxist conception of the state is intertwined with dialectical materialism and its economic interpretation of history, that put it on a completely different wavelength than anarchism. This makes it possible for Marxists to attack the "state", while working to create a new state at the same time, and to be consistent doing both.

I would contend that it is Gambone, not I, who takes a simplistic "good guy vs. bad guy" approach. According to him, the soviet regime was the product of Kautsky and Lenin’s "bad Marxism". But then, as I showed, by quoting from Lenin, that the Bolshevik seizure of power was not inspired by Kautsky, but by the works of Marx himself, primarily Marx at his most "anti-state" in *The Civil War in France*. Gambone simply has not done his homework.

Larry Gambone basically takes a revisionist view of Marxism, disowning those elements of Marx and Marxism that lead towards the centralization of power, as being "bad Marxism", while cobbling on elements of Proudhon, and other anarchists. Rather than a synthesis of revolutionary theory, however, Gambone’s writings tend towards political confusion. As a case in point, Gambone wrote a letter to the British anarchist journal *Freedom*, in which he claims that the rise in pension funds and the collective ownership of capital in the forms of stocks and mutual funds, represent a move towards the "socialization" of the means of production. While it may be true that these represent a change in how capitalism functions, to speak of this as "socialization" shows a basic misunderstanding of socialism. Formal ownership means nothing without the ability to make decisions and to have control. Capitalism is certainly less personal and more bureaucratic than a century ago, but this does not represent a trend favorable to workers’ self-management. Individual capitalists have simply found a way to minimize their personal risks by shifting these risks on to others, while retaining the profits and the control.

As always seems to be the case with Marxists, Gambone still puts too much emphasis on formal economic "modes of production", and
and not enough on power relationships. This is why Marx got it wrong about the state, and why some of his followers ended up building state capitalism in Russia instead of socialism. It was not a question of good vs. bad intentions, but understanding the nature of the problem.

Fraternally, Jeff Stein

Little Free Press, 1011 6th Avenue, NE, #21
Little Falls, MN 56345
$8.95

Free I Got expands the ideas in Mann's first book, I Was Robot. Mann details how he found freedom by eliminating the useless pursuits and conspicuous consumption that we have been conditioned to value. He defines utopia as a practical possibility. On page 229: "If we look at Utopia as, not a perfect society, but as one that is as near to perfect as we can make it—then we can start working on it." Mann discusses how we need only change our work arrangements to find freedom. He offers, on page 95, some basic guidelines: Eliminate profits and wages, money, political representatives, government, armies, and laws—and provide all products and services free of charge.

He reminds us how working for wages is a form of slavery—wage slavery—and that we can escape this slavery by eliminating both profits and wages. He describes how we give away our freedom. On page 249: "We don't actually need to take freedom—we merely need to stop giving it away...We give some of our freedom away every time we vote for a representative, every time we take pay for our work, every time we pay taxes, enlist or allow our self to be drafted into an army." Mann suggests that instead of giving away our freedom by working for pay and for profit—we could keep our freedom by giving away what we produce.

Freedom includes finding meaningful purpose in the work we do. On page 101: "...individual freedom means this kind of power over one's work...Otherwise you don't have freedom—you just have another ant colony." On page 68: "We would have everything that we needed free of charge, so we would work for the fun of it." On page 69: "...we could use more of our creativity to produce a better product or service and find more enjoyable ways to do it." And on page 99: "Free access to vocational guidance testing will help people recognize their abilities, aptitudes, attitudes and potentials...will make it easier to choose an occupation that is pleasing. People will no longer select their job by how much it pays." Freedom means more than just being free of constraint and restriction. Freedom means the responsibility to develop our potentials to their fullest—a serious responsibility that only a few of us ever realize.

Mann discusses how the media works to control our thinking and our attitudes. On page 243: "...allowing the mass media to lead our minds is...allowing a slave collar...around our necks." How would we accomplish the change-over? On page 102: "The way to implement this Priceless Economic System...is to first; publicize it. Now, for the first time in history, we have the
means to publicize...by using copy shops, instant printers..."
And on page 260: "Just by being an example of a person who is
sure 'Free' and enjoying life more...we are teaching."

Forceful change is out. On page 101: "To use force...would
be contradictory to...volunteerism and freedom...Force...would
give power to the few." And would only perpetuate the existing
evils. On page 269: "Who really wants a dictatorship of the
people to rule them?" On page 271: "There is no advantage to
belonging to a party or a group...One becomes one's own leader."
And on page 65: "There are campaigns telling us to be 'anti'
just about everything...Some groups tell us to 'Smash the State!'
and steal, vandalize and sabotage the big corporations. But,
attempting to 'destroy' the present system wastes our energy
and creativity. It's what the Monster provokes us to do and
then feeds on our energy."

Mann admits his ideas are not new. On page 104: "I do not
pretend to own these ideas. The American Indians, the South
Sea Islanders and the Eskimos and many other peoples lived these
ideas long ago until they were invaded and their Utopias destroyed."
Mann's ideas can be found in other libertarian writings. But
Mann puts these ideas into a simple and readable form. His
writing is down to earth. His examples are concrete and everyday.
You can open his book to any page and start reading with easy
understanding. And with a 4 inch by 7 inch size the book fits
readily into pocket or purse.

Reviewed by Lynn Olson

Dear DB,

Enclosed is our response to the Euro-Asian Conference at Hong Kong
(April 10-11-92). This conference has been called "1. In defense of
public services and living conditions that are the target of
privatization, 2. In defense of political and union rights in every
country. 3. To promote united and conjoined actions in front of the
International Monetary Funds plans."
We came to know about KAB-KDO
Moscow and the Moscow appeal to workers of the world from the
bulletins published by the organizers of this conference.
(The Moscow appeal: "Whereas all over the world similar plans,
policies and institutions are oppressing peoples and workers; Whereas
working class unity to confront these plans on an international scale
must be strengthened and broadened! We, workers meeting in Moscow,
fully respectful of each other's opinions and analyses, hereby decide
to establish an International Committee Against the IMF Austerity and
Privatizations. We call on workers all over the world to sign this
appeal and to join our committee. We hereby decide to convene an
international rally in Paris in June 1992 to listen to reports from
delegations the world over. We also agree to publish a bulletin in
Russian, French, Spanish, and English to exchange information and
analyses. Moscow, October 12, 1992.")
The initiators of this conference [Hong Kong] seen to be from
France and among the participants are also parliamentarians and trade
union representatives from a number of countries. The Lambertist
faction of the Trotskyists may be involved in all this.
We hope you received a copy of "Arguments With Dithuray" that we sent you in December 1992.

From a few texts that we have published in English, it is reasonable for you to characterize us as "Theoretical Marxist." But in fact, the little theoretical work that we have done has been forced on us by the problems we have faced in practice. We are publishing an edition of Faridabad Naidoor Samachar (FNS) in Hindi and English. This book, A Glimpse of the Working Class Movement, will have about 200 pages (24 cm x 20 cm). The seven sections are: 1) Frame for viewing events, 2) Detailed reports of struggles in some factories in Faridabad, 3) Reports of working class struggles in other parts of India, 4) Reports of working class struggles from the world at large, 5) Workers' life and working conditions, 6) Analyses of events and conditions in India, 7) Russia-China-Marxism. The Hindi version of the book is in press, and the English version will follow it. We hope that this book will provide sufficient material for you to change our characterization from "Theoretical Marxist."

With greetings,
Sher Singh -- for Kamunist Kranti

For presentation at the Euro-Asian Conference at Hongkong

Dear friends,

We are a small group working in Faridabad, a major industrial town at the outskirts of Delhi. We analyse and disseminate information about industrial conflict occurring in Faridabad and other places, both in India and abroad. Besides publishing a monthly newsletter, we participate in an active dialogue with workers. Our involvement and intervention has been going on for the past eleven years.

For us any international response to the problems faced by the working class presents an arena for dialogue. We would like to take up the following points here which are of crucial importance for present day working class movement.

1. Privatisation: Production for exchange underlies social relations in the world today. The crises of the existing social formation have been deepening for quite some time now. Among the standard responses of the representatives of capital to this have been statisation and privatisation. Both entail an increase in the exploitation of the working class. Privatisation and statisation are sides of the same coin. Singling out one of them for attack instead of helping the movement for emancipation of the working class, hinders it. This is because, instead of challenging the existing social relation it confines attention to one form of it. Not only is it a hindrance, it has disastrous consequences. Seven decades of brutal exploitation of the working class in Russia and elsewhere under statisation and exploitation of the working class in America and other places under privatisation must be kept in mind. Phases of nationalisation/post-nationalisation in England, France and India are illustrations for clarification. Nationalisation and denationalisation are measures forced on countries by the deepening crises of production for exchange. To remain competitive in the global market, factions of
capital are forced to take measures for increasing productivity through repression and economic restructuring which at times take swift turns. This involves retrenchment, increase in workload, decrease in real wages etc., whether in the form of privatisation or statisation. Person, party or institution (IMF or any other) play at best a secondary role. Thus, highlighting particular institutions or persons hides the underlying process.

2. Trade Unions: Our experience, largely in Faridabad and information from other parts of the world, and our analyses have led us to the conclusion that trade unions today no longer serve the interests of the working class. Changes in the ownership pattern have made old forms of organisation and struggle obsolete. This has also led to the co-option of old forms of organisation by the representatives of capital. A by-product of this situation is the obliteration of democratic functioning in trade unions.

Any emancipatory movement has to grapple with production for exchange and its dynamics. A basic premise for emancipation of the working class is the abolition of production for exchange.

We would like to participate in the exchange of information about new forms of working class struggles and organisations emerging in different parts of the globe.

Kamunist Kranti
Majdoor Library
Autopein Jhuggi
Faridabad-121001
India.

3rd April 1993

* Three essays in 'Arguments with Obduracy' broadly present our understanding.

(Cont'd from p. 18)

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Fraternally submitted,

Frank Gizard
for the Discussion Bulletin
Trade unions on the road to a socialist death. Trade unions in the USSR, the old trade unions, are no more. The old trade unions, and in their place, the new independent unions, are the subject of articles: "Socialist cooperation of the all-Soviet soviet trade union movement and the national trade unions of the USSR." The new independent unions are taking the place of the old trade unions and are dealing with the problems of the trade union movement.

The national trade unions are subject to intermediate soviet trade union movement and the national trade unions of the USSR.

Kommunist, February 10th, 1937. "Interests of the working class and the state are identical categoría. The most important of these is the fact of the formation of economic entities that directly affect working conditions in the USSR. The reader can find much larger materials on these topics in the publications of the Labor Information Center, which publishes regular issues of the Labour Review, a monthly, small format paper, translated into English, Labour Review, No. 1, 1939.
AN UNPUBLISHED LETTER TO THE EDITORS
I Wonder Why!

None of the issues touted by the Presidential candidates are fundamental to the interests of the working class. They constitute political red herrings that divert attention to effects while detracting from the basic cause of existing social evils - CAPITALISM.

Abortion should be regarded as a non-issue politically. In a sane society it would be a personal matter between individuals, their physicians and their conscience. The economic conditions that had created the necessity or need for most abortions would have been eradicated.

If a law were passed that totally eliminated taxes for members of the working class, it would not matter one iota, because wages would eventually be adjusted downwards to compensate for the illusory, temporary benefit.

Those concerned with gun control, pro or con, should realize that legal violence in the form of war is the main perpetrator of senseless death and destruction. Illegal violence can never be removed from an environment that spawns it, regardless of whatever laws are passed.

We are asked to agonize over the National Debt (a problem for the capitalist class) while wages never seem sufficient for mortgage payments, rent and basic necessities, placing most workers in a state of perpetual indebtedness or delinquency.

Poverty is the economic condition of the working class as COMARED to that of the wealthy. It is a built-in feature of the system, coupled with insecurity and unemployment. History confirms that they are impervious to reforms.

In short, capitalism can never be reformed to operate in the interests of the majority. "Leaders" and "Parties", be they "Democrats", "Republicans", or self-proclaimed problem-solvers cannot alter this basic position. The ultimate solution rests with a worldwide, peaceful, democratic revolution sponsored by a knowledgeable working class whose banner will espouse "Abolition of the Wages System, Money and Profit."

Samuel Leight
state and party have collapsed and the army is demoralised but the trade unions still have a unified organisational structure. It is a structure which still exists throughout every section of the still state-dominated national economy and is supported by a potentially strong membership base. Needless to say the "new role" is remarkably similar to that of the AFL-CIO.

Articles on political developments include "Founding Congress of the Russian Party of Labour" and "Russian Social Democrats Crash Before Take-Off." "On the Ruins of the CPSU" details the history of the factional splits among the organizational descendants of the CPSU. The author lists nine and describes their development, positions, and the degree of support they enjoy.

In the words of the introductory editorial, RLR's publisher, the Labour Information Centre "KAS-KOR," ...possesses the most independent and reliable information about the activities of the trade union structures that have appeared after the miners' strikes of 1990, about the old "official" trade unions, about workers and strike committees, as well as about political forces striving for interaction with the workers' movement." "The people who are producing RLR have different political views. They all are united by the desire to help organize a strong workers' movement in Russia."

For this reader the remarkable fact about the articles in RLR is their acceptance of the market system in some form or another as the wave of the future.

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