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ABOUT THE DISCUSSION BULLETIN

The Discussion Bulletin is affiliated with the Industrial Union Caucus in Education (IUCE). It serves as the financially and politically independent forum of a relatively unknown sector of political thought that places the great divide in the "left," not between Anarchists and Marxists but between capitalism's statist leftwingers and vanguardists and social democrats and the real revolutionaries of our era: the non-market, anti-statist, libertarian socialists. They are organized in small groups of syndicalists, communist anarchists, libertarian municipalists, world socialists, socialist industrial unionists, council communists, and left communists. The perspective of these groups with their rejection of capitalism's wage, market, and money system as well as capitalist politics and unionism constitutes the only real alternative to capitalism in both its market and statist phases.

In the DB the often 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 limitation 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.

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Dear Frank:

We were much impressed by the Einstein essay, "Why Socialism?" which you reprinted in DB75. This, together with your concurrent reprinting of the Socialist Labor Party's open letter response to Einstein, impels us to point out a fundamental difference between the SLP's concept of socialist democracy and our own concept.

The lead-in to the subject is a grave concern, eloquently expressed by Einstein thus: "How is it possible, in view of the far-reaching centralization of political and economic power, to prevent bureaucracy from becoming all-powerful and overweening? How can the rights of the individual be protected and therewith a democratic counterweight to the power of bureaucracy be assured?"

The essence of the SLP position is reflected in Stephen Emery's response, as contained in the following quotes:

"The questions referred to indicate sincere and penetrating thought. However, they also indicate that you, Dr. Einstein, have not escaped being infected by one of the most vicious of the many fallacies regarding Socialism in circulation today; the erroneous notion that the governing agency of Socialist society will be political in character--i.e., a State; and the corollary notion that control of Socialist industry will be vested in a bureaucracy...."

"To seek to realize Socialism through the instrumentality of the existing machinery of government, to seek to adapt the present political mechanism to the requirements of Socialist society by even the most radical reforms conceivable--must fatedly result in a totalitarian 'planned economy.' Events in Stalin's Russia (as well as elsewhere) speak volumes on this head.

"Why is this so? Why cannot the State be bent to Socialist purposes? For the fundamental reason that the political form of government was not designed to serve as the instrument of the popular will. On the contrary, the origin of the political State traces to the desire and the need of a rising oligarchy to destroy the ancient influence of the people in communal affairs. And down through the centuries...the political State has, by a process of adaptation, continued unfailingly to perform its essential function, that of being the organized power through which the majority has been oppressed and a minority's self-interest imposed as the social law...."

"There remains, however, the larger question still unanswered: What is to be the structure of government under Socialism?"

"This problem was solved...by the American Socialist, Daniel De Leon, who formulated the ground plan for an industrial representative government, an economic administration democratically constituted by all those engaged in the industries and vocations on which our collective welfare depends...."

"In lieu of extensive treatment [here] I earnestly recommend that you study De Leon's works, and with them the scholarly 'Ancient Society' of Lewis Henry Morgan, a masterwork which laid the basis for modern anthropology...."
The essence of our own position is centered in our thesis or position paper, DEMOCRACY: POLITICAL AND INDUSTRIAL, a paper first launched in September of 1992 for consideration by the Advisory Committee of the then De Leonist Society of U.S. (and subsequently published in both the first issue of The De Leonist Review, and in Discussion Bulletin 70. The paper recognizes, and we believe solves, what has been a serious problem in socialist democracy—a problem that had been officially recognized as such by the Socialist Labor Party some thirty years postdating Emery's reply to Einstein (Minutes of the SLP's 1978 NEC Session). The problem was a growing shortfall of democracy in the SLP program generated by ongoing demographic change! The solution sprang from our eventual realization that while State government implies political government, contrary to SLP belief political government is NOT NECESSARILY State government! Quoting as follows:

"The central problem was how to reconcile the introduction of the industrial vote with annulment of the political vote; how to harmonize De Leon's definition of Socialism in which control will be exercised by the people (the people as a whole!) with the existing concept of industrial democracy wherein control is not exercised by the people as a whole; that is, how to equate self-government of the producers [i.e., the Work Force of the day] with self-government of the people!

"We could not do so.

"The question that then propelled itself forward was the question of sovereignty; WHO in a true socialist democracy must needs be sovereign, (must decide and control economic and social policy)--the people as a whole or merely those actively engaged in the workforce?

"The answer to the question was of course immediately self-evident--the people must be sovereign.

"Not immediately evident, however, were the means by which the people could become truly self-governing! The answer was there, awaiting recognition, but certain erroneous habits of thought blocked our perception--namely (1) Political democracy is synonymous with the political State, therefore (2) The Central Directing Authority of a Socialist Republic must needs be the All-Industry Congress of the projected industrial democracy.

"Finally, after reflection, the way opened up. Political democracy is not synonymous with the political State; on the contrary, it will attain its fullest expression through abolition of the State. Socialist democracy is not industrial democracy instead of political democracy but a harmonious combination of both....

"The form of socialist industrial representation and administration, based on industrial constituencies, is our heritage from the genius of De Leon; the form of political democracy, based on geographic constituencies, is another priceless bequest tho from a more distant past....In short, the political form as well as the industrial form being at hand, it now seems clear to us that the revolutionary act that will lock out the capitalist from the workplace and shatter his control of Congress and Parliament must not thereby merely clear the industrial field for inauguration of indus-
trial democracy, but also the political field for inauguration of political democracy."

Now we would of course have to agree that our pivotal "discovery" cannot stand without a solid foundation to support it. After all, it challenges the long-held SLP position so vividly expressed by Emery in his open letter to Einstein, to wit: "...one of the most vicious of the many fallacies regarding Socialism in circulation today [is] the erroneous notion that the governing agency of Socialist society will be political in character—i.e., a State..." No question but that the SLP identified (and continues to identify) political government and State government as invariably one and the same! But again, on what grounds did we contest this position? Not on idle speculation but on the very "masterwork" that Emery recommended to Einstein, viz.: "the scholarly 'Ancient Society' of Lewis Henry Morgan." In fact, Morgan's research indicates that a political form of government did not, as Emery implies, come into existence as a ruling class instrument (the Marxian State) but as a democratic organ in a "free state" serving the whole citizenry! Quoting Morgan:

"Cleisthenes...placed the Athenian political system upon the foundation on which it remained to the close of the independent existence of the commonwealth."

"Omitting minor particulars, we find the instructive and remarkable fact that the township, as first instituted, possessed all the powers of local self-government.... All registered citizens were free, and equal in their rights and privileges, with the exception of equal eligibility to the higher offices. Such was the new unit of organization in Athenian political society, at once a model for a free state, and a marvel of wisdom and knowledge. The Athenians commenced with a democratic organization at the point where every people must commence who desire to create a free state, and place the control of the government in the hands of its citizens."

The way is now clear for a deeper look into the question: How is it possible to prevent bureaucracy from becoming all-powerful and overweening? How can a democratic counterweight to the power of bureaucracy be assured?

The question arises from the questioner's awareness that the State can become a breeding ground for bureaucratic despotism. Starting from this premise, the replies proffered by the Socialist Labor Party and the Canadian De Leonist Society are markedly different. The SLP program replaces State government with a representative government based on industrial constituencies—and thereby concludes that the problem of socialist democracy is solved. We disagree. We point out that industrial democracy without political democracy not only disfranchises all in society except the Work Force of the day but we ask, in our turn, what assurance can be given that a socialist industrial administration will prove impervious to anti-social ambition?

The De Leonist Society, too, calls for abolition of the State and the institution of industrial democracy. However, unlike the SLP we neither hold that political democracy is inseparable from the State nor do we
postulate Socialist Industrial Administration as the government of a Socialist Republic. On the contrary, both the political and industrial "structures" of government being at hand, we hold that social control of these structures rather than the structures per se must be the overriding concern of socialist democracy. Accordingly, in sharp contrast to the SLP program, our program retains the political form, vests ultimate control of both the political and industrial forms in the people (in the body politic) and so doing empowers society rather than the Work Force alone to determine both social and industrial policy. What is more, given dual branches of government (political and industrial) it should now become apparent that checks against bureaucratic usurpation are thereby greatly enhanced. Now not only can a Socialist Industrial Executive serve as a "democratic counterweight" to possible corruption of the political branch, but the latter can if necessary perform the same service for the industrial branch.

We must nevertheless conclude with an admission and an admonition. The point is, that while we have advanced social control of both the political and industrial government forms as the best protection against corruption of socialist democracy, what guarantee is there that such control, once won by society, might not one day slip out of society's grasp? Obviously there can be no such guarantee, only the counsel that survival of a Socialist Republic must ultimately hinge upon vigilance, eternal social vigilance!

Sincerely,

THE DE LEONIST SOCIETY OF CANADA
P.O. Box 944, Station F, Toronto
Ontario, Canada M4Y 2N9

February 3, 1996

(from p. 2)

Like many other libertarian socialists of the De Leonist and World Socialist denominations, he seems to be hung up—as De Leon was, in my estimation—on the legal problems of revolution.

Larry Gambone expresses something rather rare in the DB, a account of the effect on him personally of his encounter with new ideas—in this case, those of Joseph Dietzgen. Next Alan Kerr comments on the Marxism of a splinter group from the Socialist Party of Great Britain. Issue 17 of Socialist Studies the periodical of the group recently published an article on reformism, which we reprint here along with Robin Cox's open letter to the group. (I should add that contrary to the article in Socialist Studies, the DB has not published by a member of the Islington Branch of the SPGB). The question of what exactly constitutes reformism has caused controversy within revolutionary groups since the great worldwide schism that divided the socialist movement around the turn of the century. For example, is it reformist to advocate measures designed to enable revolutionary groups to get on the ballot or to increase their access to the media? Cox discusses these matters in his open letter.

"Hope and Revolution" is a flyer issued by the newest addition to the list of non-market, libertarian socialist groups that constitute our political sector. Somehow New Democracy, the new group, seems to have germinated without having been fertilized by any contact with the other groups. A writer once said, speaking of the Trotskyists, that they grow like an amoeba—by dividing. The same can be said of us; in the past new libertarian socialist groups have invariably consisted largely of dissenters or
DEAR SIRS,

THE LAST FEW ISSUES OF DE HAVE CONTAINED POINTS OF VIEW THAT SEEK TO EMBELLISH THEIR ARGUMENT. GRIN AS ONE MIGHT, HOWEVER, THEIR CONCERN, IF DISMISSED OUT OF HAND, COULD CAUSE US TO MISS WHAT MAY BE AN IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION, WHICH IS THAT IT POSSIBLY CONCEALS A HEALTHY SUSPICION OF THE LARGELY Ephemeral "Charts", "Blueprints" and VERBAL SANDCASTLES THAT VACUOUSLY TOY WITH A PRETENSE THAT WE ALL KNOW WHAT AN SIU IS, WHAT 'IT' IS SUPPOSED TO DO AND HOW 'IT' IS SUPPOSED TO DO IT. THE PRETENSE GREATLY ASSISTS IN AVOIDING ANY SERIOUS CONSIDERATION OF THE DEFICIT OF FORM AND FUNCTION CONCEALED THEREBY; QUESTIONS CONCERNING STRUCTURE ARE RARELY, TAKEN PAST THE POINT OF IRRESOLUTE GENERALIZATION.

PART OF THE REASON THIS IS SO MAY BE BECAUSE THESE QUESTIONS ARE NOT ANSWERABLE ALL OF A PIECE. I WOULD LIKE TO BELIEVE, IN ALL GENEROSITY, THAT THIS FACT MAY HAVE BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR THE NEW SYSTEM PARTY'S AND THE DE LEONIST SOCIETY OF CANADA'S ALL TOO HASTY RETREATS FROM LEON'S PRECEPTS AND THAT THEY ARE NOT SIMPLY EXPEDIENT SURRENDERS TO WHAT SEEMS A DESPERATE ISOLATION WITHIN THE CURRENTS OF WORKING CLASS POLITICS.

HOPEFULLY, IT IS DUE TO NOTHING MORE THAN CONFUSION IN THE MINDS OF SIU ADHERENTS ARISING FROM THE TWO-FOLD REQUIREMENT ESTABLISHED BY DE LEON THAT THE SIU BE FIRST THE "BATTERING RAM" FOR KNOCKING OVER CAPITALISM AND THEN THE "GOVERNMENT" OF A FULL FLEDGED SOCIALIST SOCIETY. SUCH CONFUSION CAN'T AVOID BEING COMPOUNDED BY A TOTAL LACK OF ATTENTION TO WHAT CONSTITUTES THE ORGANIZATIONAL NUTS AND BOLTS OF SIU GOVERNMENT AND OF HOW THESE MUST BE VARIOUSLY COMPOSED TO FULFILL BOTH GOALS.


HYPERBOLE ASIDE, IT WOULD BE HYPOCRITICAL OF ME TO NEGLECT AN OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE THAT STRUCTURAL TREATMENT FOR WHICH THE AVOIDANCE BY OTHERS HAS BEEN MADE HERE A SUBJECT OF CRITICISM. TO THAT END IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO BRIEFLY REFER TO THE OTHER TWO MAJOR PRINCIPLES WHICH, TOGETHER WITH CAUCUS, ARE THE BASIS FOR SIU ORGANIZATION PROPOSED BY
SECTION LOS ANGELES, THOUGH, THE FOCUS OF MY ATTENTION WILL BE ON CAUCUS AS IT CONCERNS "COMMUNITY". THESE OTHER PRINCIPLES ARE CALLED BASIC_SHOP_MIX AND CYCLIC_ROTATION. THE ONE ESTABLISHES "COMMUNITY" BOUNDARIES, THE OTHER IS A GUARANTOR OF THEIR CONTINUED ENFRANCHISEMENT.

THE PRIMAL SIU "COMMUNITY" IS DEFINED BY THE PRINCIPLE OF BASIC_SHOP_MIX TO BE THAT COLLECTION OF INDIVIDUALS WHO REPRESENT ALL THE INDUSTRIAL FACETS OF A SOCIALLY SIGNIFICANT ECONOMIC PROCESS. THE FACT OF IT BEING A WIDELY REPRESENTATIVE AGENCY (INCLUSIVE EVEN OF "HOUSEWIVES" AND "PETTREES") PROVIDES THAT LONGED FOR AVOIDANCE OF THE PROPRIETARY STRUGGLE OVER JOBS WHICH AFFLICTS LABOR TODAY, AND WHICH THE DE LEONIST SOCIETY OF CANADA SEEMS RIGHTEOUSLY TO FEAR.

BASIC_SHOP_MIX EXTENDS NETWORKS OF PRIMAL COMMUNITIES TO ALL COUNCIL LEVELS, AND THE FUNCTIONS AND SHAPES OF CAUCUS FORM THEMSELVES ACCORDINGLY. THEY ARE THE MEANS BY WHICH THE MULTIPLICITY OF INTERESTS ARISING OUT OF LOCAL, REGIONAL AND SUPRA REGIONAL PRIORITIES SORT THEMSELVES OUT INTO THE VARIOUS DECISION MAKING BODIES, MEMBERSHIP IN WHICH DEFENDS ON THE LOCAL, REGIONAL AND SUPRA REGIONAL INDUSTRIAL CONSTITUENCIES OF EACH REPRESENTATIVE. THIS PROCESS ENSURES THE REPRESENTATIVES WILL HAVE OPPORTUNITIES TO EXAMINE ANY ISSUE FROM PERSPECTIVES THAT RANGE ALL THE WAY FROM THEIR LOCAL SHOP EXPERIENCE TO THEIR PLANT, INDUSTRY AND SUPRA INDUSTRIAL AFFILIATION. IT IS THROUGH CAUCUS THAT "COMMUNITY" FINDS ULTIMATE EXPRESSION AND WHICH THE SIU CAN UNIVERSALLY PROVIDE.

CYCLIC_ROTATION, THE THIRD PRINCIPLE, MANDATES THAT REPRESENTATION MUST ROTATE THROUGHOUT THE INDUSTRIES ON A CYCLIC BASIS, ENSURING THAT ALL SEGMENTS OF SOCIETY ARE ENGAGED IN THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS AND THAT NONE CAN GET A LOCK ON IT.

FINALLY, A WORD ABOUT "COMMUNITY", WHICH COMES IN MANY FORMS AND FLAVORS. IT IS COMMON PRACTICE TO SPEAK OF THE "SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY", THE "MEDICAL COMMUNITY", THE "LEGAL COMMUNITY", THE "PROTESTANT COMMUNITY", ETC., WITHOUT HAVING TO BE SPECIFIC ABOUT A GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION. APPARENTLY RESIDENCY DOESN'T ALWAYS DEFINE A PERSON'S "COMMUNITY" AFFILIATIONS. THERE ALSO CAN BE CONSIDERABLE OVERLAP BETWEEN A LARGE NUMBER OF THESE "COMMUNITIES", HOWEVER MUCH THEY MAY BE UNRELATED. FOR INSTANCE, A PERSON CAN BE A LAWYER AND A PROTESTANT AND A STUDENT AND A MOTHER OR FATHER, WHICH MEANS HE OR SHE IS A MEMBER OF A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT, WELL DEFINED "COMMUNITIES". OBVIOUSLY WE CAN ENUMERATE A PERSON'S UNIVERSAL RELATIONSHIPS AD INFINITUM. THE MAJOR PROBLEM WITH THE SUGGESTIONS OF THE NEW SYSTEM PARTY AND THE DE LEONIST SOCIETY OF CANADA IS THE LACK OF A RATIONAL FOR WHERE TO DRAW THE LINE.

IN ALL HUMILITY, I WISH TO REPEAT MY PREVIOUS SUGGESTION THAT SOME ATTENTION BE PAID TO DEFINING THE SUBSTANCE OF THE SIU BEFORE DISMISSING IT AS EITHER AN INCONSEQUENTIAL CURIOSITY OR, MORE CURIOUSLY, A THREAT TO THE "COMMUNITY".

YOURS RESPECTFULLY,

P.O. Box 325, Cedar Glen, Ca 92321

IRVING SILVEY
Dear Readers,

It is my desire to take issue with the concluding paragraph of Frank Girard's article in D.B. 74. He mentioned there that at some time, sooner or later the state will collapse like a black hole in the universe and take with it the accumulated junk of centuries of class rule. He based his predictions on what De Leon said about the arrogance and contempt the rulers of this country have for the working class, masses and our defiant reaction. The above reasoning goes beyond De Leon's program for Socialism to have Socialist supporters seize control of the national government (that implies victories in state and local elections as well) and make Socialism and Democratic industrial government legal. It certainly was beyond the comprehension of De Leon to visualize vital production and exchange taking place in the interim between Capitalism and Socialism when the state has collapsed and industrial union government has not been established. Is it not more rational for Frank Girard to observe that people choose a new group of politicians for office when they are not satisfied with the way incumbents do things? De Leon explained that the true issue in any election is reform or revolution but unfortunately the majority of voters have chosen one gang of reformers over the other.

The Republican Party which is more popular with voters currently calls for a balanced budget in seven years while the Democrats want the budget to be balanced in ten years. There is not much difference between the two major parties in what they say but generally Democrats want government to have a larger role in our lives than the Republicans do. Often the Democrats are wrongly called Socialists while the Republicans are called Conservatives and supporters of free enterprise. Most people would like to improve their conditions or have their conditions improved for them. However, a balanced budget implies that much government spending for the retired, the disabled and medical assistance will be cut. Unemployment threatens to increase because automation, computerization, business mergers and businesses leaving the country more than before. Most other capitalist countries have conditions similar to ours and most often people have lower standards of living but governments do not collapse as an institution of society. People can't express action that promises liberation that they can agree upon. While we Marxists try to work out societies problems as well as our differences let us not resort to science fiction to provide smooth answers as popular propaganda.

Fraternally yours,

Monroe Prussack

Monroe Prussack
A PERSONAL NOTE ON DIETZGEN'S PHILOSOPHY

Thank you Frank, for reprinting my little brochure on Dietzgen. It was written back in 1987 and I am now working on a much more in-depth examination of his philosophy to be published this year.

I would like to say something personal about Dietzgen's philosophy and how it changed my life for the better. When we are young, we feel there is something wrong about the world, but lack the knowledge and maturity to do much. I went from the Ban-the-Bomb movement to the Trots, became an anarchist, then was enthralled by the Situationists, then the councilists and so on. Each time I was a "true believer", only later to discover faults in the ideology and to reject it totally, then grabbing on to some new ideology. I was engaged in a vain search for THE TRUTH and THE REVOLUTION.

Had I read Dietzgen, I would have been aware that no ideology or theory is the complete truth and would not have tormented myself like this. Rather than true believerism alternating with leaping about, I could have synthesized the best ideas of the various groups. Fifteen years of my life could have been better spent in some other manner than these obsessions.

In some ways any familiarity with philosophy would help. We always put the cart before the horse. We become activists without the most basic philosophical concepts to protect us from the pitfalls. We are not taught philosophy in school, hence are unable to construct logical arguments or recognize fallacies. Much, if not most, of what passes for political discourse is composed of straw men and red herrings, avoidance of contrary evidence and emotional appeals. Ignorant of this, we are easily bamboozled by politicians and ideologies.

We also waste a lot of time and energy. Hostility is a great energy sink. Even more wasteful is the construction and maintenance of those huge mental fortress we build to protect our dogmas. People of different ideologies shout past each other and no one learns a thing. Dietzgen shows the impossibility of absolutism and the necessity of looking for the truth in our opponent's arguments. Good bye sectarianism! Good bye scapegoats! In some ways our opponent is our best friend, for he points out the weaknesses in our beliefs, which no believer can ever assess.

When you know that all theories and ideologies are limited it frees your mind. How inventive can you be trapped in ideology? How can knowledge advance? Freed from absolutism you can speculate and explore, and though wrong often as not, you may also make some genuine discoveries. There is also no crime in being wrong — everyone else is!

By throwing off the mental enslavement of absolutism I became a free man, for Dietzgen's philosophy is both libertarian and personally liberatory. I know it sounds a bit like a Born Again or a reformed alcoholic, but my life has improved remarkably in the twelve years since I studied Dietzgen.

Larry Gambone
Dear DB,

I've been interviewed for membership by the expelled socialists who have, to use their own term; "reconstituted" the Socialist Party of Great Britain.

I thank one of their interviewers who asks will Karl Marx's way of thought, or, as he puts it; will the "MCH" — materialist conception of history — operate in socialist society?

The correct answer is: Yes. Surely; people will still think about, and develop, Karl Marx's way of thought.

If any reader has any comment to share, I'll be very pleased to hear from you.

Incidentally, this is, at the same time, of special interest to would-be socialists who, enquire about: Will socialist society need management? Will we need authority? And, What will it be like? Karl Marx looked at past, present and future society.

So. Turning to page 305 chapter XIII of volume I of Capital. Lawrence and Wishart edition, Karl Marx says:

"Capitalist production only then really begins, as we have already seen, when each individual capital employs simultaneously a comparatively large number of labourers... The workshop of the mediaeval master handicraftsman is simply enlarged."

Page 305.

Already, at this stage, Karl Marx observes 8 advantages obtained through the labourers so co-operating together (combined labour). And how a result that was more expensive, or impossible to produce (such as lifting a heavy weight), is accomplished, because of the 8 advantages in the co-operation.

At this same stage, of social evolution, the small employer is freed from actual labour. He specialises in directing other peoples' labour.

On his page 313, Karl Marx says:

"All combined labour on a large scale requires, more or less, a directing authority, in order to secure the harmonious working of the individual activities... A single violin player is his own conductor; an orchestra requires a separate one."

Page 313.

To direct. To guide. That's a kind of authority which becomes necessary for all combined labour on a large scale.

But. The motive of capitalist production is to exploit. To exploit to the greatest possible extent. Capitalist authority must counter resistance. Must be "despotic".

So it is, under capitalist production, that, two very different roles for directing authority; to guide labour, and; to exploit it; these two different roles are tied up together. They cannot be separated, as long as the capitalist system of production lasts.

On his next page, 314, Karl Marx notes that the capitalist "hands over" the roles of directing authority. He notes:

"Just as at first the capitalist is relieved from actual labour so soon as his capital has reached that minimum amount with which capitalist production, as such, begins, so now, he hands over the work of direct and constant supervision of the individual workmen, and groups of workmen, to a special kind of wage labourer. An industrial army of workmen, under the command of a capitalist, requires, like a real army, officers (managers), and sergents (foremen, overlookers), who, while the work is being done, command in the name of the capitalist. The work of supervision becomes their established and exclusive function."

Page 314.
In this way, a capitalist grows less and less necessary. He now hands over even the directing to special wage labourers. Managers and foremen. Ultimately, all he (the capitalist) need do is to live by the exploitation of the working class, upon which capitalist society is founded.

If we now look again, at what has been said, we recall that, on his page 313, Karl Marx writes:

"All combined labour on a large scale, requires, more or less, a directing authority..."

That holds good for socialist society too. Directing authority is still needed, after socialist society has been established.

Quite apart from anything else, what interests us here is Karl Marx's way of thought. This is neither a cult of authority nor of anti-authority. It is a study of what must be. Depending on improving methods of production.

In a socialist society, (of the future), the land and means of labour are the property of the labourers. This can be the case as their private property under small production. Or, collectively; that is, socially, under production on a big and increasing scale.

Production for use replaces buying and selling. Production for use may be of two kinds. First: Individual production for self use. Such as an individual who produces for his own immediate wants. Second: Combined production to satisfy the wants of a society. The combined product is divided:

"One portion serves as fresh means of production and remains social. But another portion is consumed by the members as means of subsistence. A distribution of this portion amongst them is consequently necessary. The mode of this distribution will vary with the productive organisation of the community, and the degree of historical development obtained by the producers."

Page 83. Chapter 1. Same volume.

Clearly, that new society (socialist society), of free individuals, by no means takes away both of our two root causes which give rise to and determine the character of directing authority. No. What is taken away is the exploitation of the labourers. But. What still remains is that other, no less important, root cause: The necessity to direct and guide the combined labourers. Like an "orchestra conductor".

These pages from his book show, with examples how: Yes. People will continue, and develop, Karl Marx's way of thought.

In November, the "reconstituted" Socialist Party of Great Britain published a new "MCH" pamphlet which deals correctly with this "membership interviewed" question. The last page concludes:

"END OF CLASS SOCIETY"

"A further question is concerned with what will happen in Socialist society. The question has been asked what place will the MCH have after the abolition of capitalism? That is, in Socialist society. In Marx's reading of past history, an essential element is the struggle of classes for power, one class with an interest in changing society and another class with an interest in resisting change. The question has been put 'what happens when there is no class struggle'? Does this mean that society will stagnate? "Marx's answers would be of course not. Man is always bound by the terms of his existence to engage in production activity. Man will still have to work to secure his livelihood and to solve the problems that will arise out of this, the problems of production and distribution, the struggle to control natural forces will still be there, and therefore there will still be a need for technical and scientific developments, which will go on. Marx's simple answer was this; he pointed out that social evolution will not cease, but it will cease to be political and we quote 'It is only in an order of things in which there will no longer be political".

Alan Kerr

(from p. 22)

disaffected.

David Smith

by an of.

His review and the article on Marxism in "Kane and the New pamphlet"

"An Alternative"

class struggle

and I hope

For Delano on the subject of post-revo.

that is resistant can find not union movement.

as usual we

The DB is co.

but only by at.

Like a starve alive, the DB other work of actually every office fees.

The logical so the cost of U.S. theory about in the real cost. Recently. One members of the
will no longer be classes or class antagonisms that social evolution will cease to be political revolutions.' This quotation is from the end of Marx's 'Poverty of Philosophy.'"

New pamphlet. Taken from last page.

Alan Kerr 13 Hunting's Farm Green Lane Ilford England IG1 1YE

(from p. 6)

disaffected members of other groups. New Democracy, seems to have originated among enthusiasts of David Stratman's book We Can Change the World, published in 1991. Somehow it escaped detection by any of us until the author sent a copy to the New Unionist, which published a review by George Kane. His review is reprinted here preceded by my own, which takes a much more positive view of the book and the ideas presented. A major problem for many of us whose ideas of socialism derive from Marxism will be Stratman's complete rejection of Marx's thinking. It is of the importance of this that Kane and I differ in our approaches to the book. Next is an excerpt from the book. Under the subhead “An Alternative Model of History and Society” Stratman summarizes his non-Marxist thinking about class struggle, capitalism, revolution and the new society. The book is easily obtainable at a low price, and I hope readers will check it out and send their comments to the DB for publication.

For DeLeonists, who will be interested in New Democracy's views on unions, I have included their flyer on the subject. What is missing is the DeLeonist view that industrial unions will serve as the framework of post-revolutionary society as well as the force that brings it into being. But of course this is a view that is rejected other libertarian socialist groups with the exception of the syndicalists. Aside from this I can find nothing in the flyer that conflicts with the basic DeLeonist position on capitalist unions and the union movement.

As usual we close with some notes, announcements, and short reviews.

BULLETIN MATTERS

Finances

The DB is continuing to live beyond its means. Receipts picked up a bit over the last two-month period but only by about $18. At the same time expenditures rose considerably. None of these were avoidable. Like a starving person lying in bed whose caloric intake is exceed by the energy burned just in staying alive, the DB has no way of reducing expenditures. The printing via copier is done at home as is all other work of that sort. The problem is that costs are skyrocketing, led by the price of paper, but actually every thing has gone up sharply including postage, copier repair, PO box rent, and other post office fees.

The logical solution would seem to be to increase the subscription price. We haven't had an increase in the cost of U.S. subs since we began publication in 1983. The trouble is that I am influenced by the SLP theory about pricing socialist publications: that we keep the price low and count on donations to cover the real cost. In the past readers' contributions have taken up the slack, but these have fallen off recently. One problem with independent periodicals like the DB is that their subscribers are mostly members or supporters of groups with publications which, like the DB, are always short of funds.

(to p. 29)
REDEFINING REFORMISM

The Socialist Party of Great Britain has always been clear about support or opposition to reforms. A socialist party cannot advocate reforms as doing so would attract the support of people interested more in these reforms than in Socialism. In their circular What do we mean by Reformism?, the Clapham based Socialist Party's Islington Branch argue that reformism should be redefined as:

"...an attempt to modify the way capitalism functions as an economic system... What we call reformism must amount to a programme of economic reforms. This in turn, suggests that reforms of a non-economic kind, even if implemented via the state, are not strictly reformist. Insofar as they are directed towards problems that lie in the realm of society's 'superstructure' (political, religious, cultural, etc.) - as opposed to its economic 'base' - we can label them as consciousness-modifying activities*.

The practical implications for their party would involve deciding whether particular reforms should be opposed as economic or might be tolerated ('consciousness-modifying'). Take the key feminist demand for equal pay. Since pay is an economic issue, they should oppose this demand. But since 'sexism' is involved, the matter is also non-economic.

Apparently while economic reforms come up against capitalism's iron laws, other reforms, in the realm of 'superstructure' are supposed to be less futile. The following quotation shows the utter confusion of those who want to support certain undefined reforms in Socialist propaganda:

"Economic reforms are an attempt to modify capitalism. Political reforms are an attempt to change the political superstructure that presides over capitalism. There is clearly a qualitative difference between them." (Discussion Bulletin 72 July-August 1995)

This is a distinction without a difference. The effect of this re-definition of reformism would be to enable the Clapham based Socialist Party to broaden its appeal; to attract those who oppose racism or dictatorship; those whose prime concern is not in ending capitalism and establishing Socialism, and for whom class is a secondary issue, an outmoded concept.

The Islington Branch circular (a member of whom publishes the Discussion Bulletin) shows how bogus is the claim of the Clapham based Socialist Party to be a socialist party. There is a world of difference between this opportunist re-definition of reformism and the Principles of The Socialist Party of Great Britain (SPGB).

The SPGB view has always been clear:

"Reforms had always blunted the theoretical weapon, and continued to do so until genuinely socialist conceptions became submerged in a welter of reform; instead of being just steps on the way to the achievement of Socialism..., the achievement of reforms became ends in themselves..." (The Communist Manifesto & The Last 100 Years SPGB 1948 p26-27)

The Islington circular states that the Socialist Party policy is to "press for the establishment of elementary political rights" where these do not exist. That policy also was rejected by the SPGB.
In several editions of our pamphlet *Questions of the Day* we argued:

"Unemployment, poverty, insecurity and other evil effects of capitalism remain, no matter whether the form of its political administration be democratic or dictatorial. Freedom to cry working class misery from the house tops will not, in itself, abolish that misery". (Page 16, 1978 edition).

Only Socialist understanding and class consciousness would make democracy, as a weapon, useful, not suicidal, for the working class. However "democratic" capitalism may be, it simply cannot operate in the interests of the working class. This point cannot be argued effectively by those who blur the issue.

**BASE & SUPERSTRUCTURE**

Underlying the Islington Branch argument is the theoretical misconception that 'base' and 'superstructure' are separate. In the circular, there is a repeated emphasis on the difference between the (economic) base and the (political, cultural, etc.) superstructure. This arises because of a lack of understanding of historical materialism, and in particular, their ignorance of the *interaction* between base and superstructure.

In several letters, Engels warned correspondents against a simplistic view of historical materialism. While economic conditions primarily determine historical development, this is not the only factor:

"Political, juridical, philosophical, religious, literary, artistic etc. development is based on economic development. But all these react upon one another and also upon the economic base... There is interaction on the basis of the economic necessity, which ultimately always asserts itself". (Engels to Starkenburg 25th January 1894).

The policy of combining opposition to all economic reforms with support for selected political reforms is totally ignoring the reality of interaction between base and superstructure. There is no difference between economic and political reforms, as far as political action is concerned.

We repeat the SPGB argument:

"...a socialist party which advocates reforms would attract the support of people interested more in these reforms than in Socialism. In these circumstances, the party would be dragged into compromise with capitalism... As Socialism can only be set up when a majority of workers understand and want it, a socialist party must build up support for this aim alone". (Questions of the Day page 27, 1978 edition).

There are plenty of parties advocating reforms. A socialist party can have only one aim -- Socialism. To flirt with reforms is pure opportunism.

From SOCIALIST STUDIES No. 18

71 Ashbourne Court
Woodside Park Road
London N12 8SB
England
Dear Sir/Madam

I would like to respond as a member of the Socialist Party of Great Britain to your article "Redefining Reformism" (Socialist Studies No.18). This concerned a circular published by our Islington Branch in which it was argued that socialists have traditionally tended to focus on three major kinds of activities relevant to the socialist case - namely, revolutionism, trade unionism, and reformism - and that we need to expand our "classification system of activity categories" from this three-fold one to a five-fold one, incorporating also "consciousness-modifying activities" and "voluntaristic" or non-market activities. The effect of this will be to provide a much sharper definition reformism which has hitherto served as a kind of residual catch-all category under which heading we have inadvertently included various activities which are not strictly reformist.

In the circular the question was asked (which, unfortunately, you have not attempted to answer) - namely, what is it that we really mean by "reformism"? To answer that we have to ask what is it that reformism seek to "reform"? The answer, it seems to me, is an obvious one: it is capitalism that reformism seeks to reform. But this begs a further question: what do we mean by capitalism? Again, the answer seems clear: capitalism is an economic system based on private (including state) ownership of means of production where these means of production take the form of capital. Reformism thus represents an attempt to modify the way this economic system operates as a system. That is to say it seeks to ameliorate the adverse symptoms of the system rather than tackle their underlying cause which is grounded in the economic behaviour of the system itself.

So the focus of reformism must be an essentially economic one - it is illogical to argue otherwise unless you redefine what you mean by capitalism as something other than an essentially economic construction. You quote from a letter I wrote to Discussion Bulletin as follows:

Economic reforms are an attempt to modify capitalism. Political reforms are an attempt to change the political superstructure that presides over capitalism. There is clearly a qualitative difference between them" (DB no.72)

(Incidentally, neither I, nor any other member of Islington Branch, are involved in the production of this journal as you claim, though I do believe it provides a very valuable forum for debate and so would recommend it highly to my fellow socialists. But let that pass.) As far as the above quote is concerned you assert that this signifies a "distinction without a difference". Once again, unfortunately, you do not provide any evidence or logical argument to back up this assertion so
it is rather difficult to comment; we only have your opinion.

Next, you say that the practical implication of differentiating between consciousness-modifying activities and reformism 'would involve deciding whether particular reforms should be opposed as economic or might be tolerated ("consciousness-modifying")'. In the first place, it should be stated that we in the Socialist Party of Great Britain are not in the business "opposing particular reforms". What we oppose is reformism; indeed opposing reforms is paradoxically a reformist position. It may be that your group feels that it is indeed the business of socialists to "oppose particular reforms" in which case it ought to be made clear to your readers that you are in fact a reformist organisation insofar as you take one side against another over a particular reform issue. Certainly no socialist could belong to such an organisation.

Secondly, it was made abundantly clear in the Islington circular that in differentiating between consciousness-modifying activities and reformism we do not necessarily support or even tolerate the former as against the latter. It entirely depends on what those activities are, their purpose. Furthermore, it was pointed out that even if such activities are worthy of support, how we seek to promote them - and by "we" we have also to distinguish between "we" as a political party and "we" as individual socialists - is emphatically not by pressing the state to implement enabling legislation which is (another) essential feature of reformism.

However, there is one exception to this which was mentioned in the Islington circular and that concerned the need to press for elementary political rights to enable a socialist political party to operate in climate where no such rights yet existed. You claim this policy was "rejected by the SPGB". I am afraid, this is not the case. If you look at our pamphlet Questions of the Day (1978), you will see that we clearly state that, in above circumstances, workers, "besides trying to organise into a socialist party ought also to struggle to get the freedom to organise into trade unions and win elementary political rights" (p64, emphasis added). You say that "however democratic capitalism may be, it simply cannot operate in the interest of the working class". This is true, but you miss the point: without such elementary political rights a socialist party itself "simply cannot operate". Is this what you want?

Curiously, you totally contradict the thrust of your argument against the Islington circular when in the same issue of your journal you state that "we have nothing to do with reactionary sentiments like racism, nationalism, religion and other primitive states of mind" (p.16) Good. I'm glad to hear that. But have you considered the implications of what you are saying? After all, opposition to racism, nationalism and religion etc., does not in itself constitute a revolutionary position, does not make one a socialist. Nor, since I assume you do not claim to be a reformist organisation, do I think you
think such opposition to be reformist. Is someone who is not a socialist yet vigorously opposes religion, a reformist because he opposes religion? I think not. So how then would you classify such opposition to religion? And what is so invalid about assigning it to a separate category called "consciousness modifying activities"?

You may claim that you do not oppose these things in isolation from your advocacy of revolutionary socialism. But why then do you imagine that we in the SPGB do - or that the Islington circular would commit us to doing so? I think you can see that, on reflection, it is rather presumptuous to claim as you do that the thrust of the Islington circular is to enable the SPGB to "broaden its appeal; to attract those who oppose racism or dictatorship; those whose prime concern is not in ending capitalism and establishing socialism, and for whom class is secondary issue, an outmoded concept". One could equally say, were one simply intent upon scoring debating points, that this too was implication of your opposition to "reactionary sentiments like racism, nationalism, religion and other primitive states of mind"!

I want, finally, to address your comments on the subject of "base" and "superstructure". I think you have misunderstood the purpose of the Islington circular. It was not meant to be an exposition of historical materialism, an exploration of the relationship between the economic base and the superstructural elements within society. Rather, it was concerned with the more practical consideration of how a revolutionary political party ought to negotiate, and navigate its way through, the welter of movements and developments within capitalism, so that can arrive at its destination as swiftly as possible. That is, it was concerned with establishing more realistic limits on what socialists can and cannot do if they are to achieve their objective.

You assert that "underlying the Islington Branch argument is the theoretical misconception that 'base' and 'superstructure' are separate" and that there is "a repeated emphasis in the circular on the difference between" this base and superstructure. Well, firstly, it should be pointed out that if, as you seem to imply, there was no such difference between them then, of course, they would be indistinguishable - i.e. one and the same thing. That being the case, this would make nonsense of your reference to the "interaction" that is supposed to take place between them; that interaction implies the existence of two or more such different entities.

Secondly, the real issue is not whether such entities exist - that is to say that there are "differences" between them that allow us to discern them as separate entities but whether such entities are closed entities or open entities. An economic determinist would maintain that the economic basis of society is a closed entity insofar as it cannot be influenced or
penetrated by the superstructural aspects of society. This is not the position adopted by the Islington circular.

Yes, the circular did maintain that the economic laws of capitalism operate in quasi-autonomous fashion beyond the scope of human control. But such laws only come into operation because the general population more or less accept the "rules of the game" which allow such laws to come into operation. However, as the consciousness of the population begins to change as we can expect it will with growth of the socialist movement itself so the scope, if not the nature, of such laws are likely also to change. That is to say there is likely to occur a contraction of capitalist relations of production and a commensurate growth of voluntaristic activities referred to in the circular. What is this if not a good example of the superstructure - social consciousness - "reacting upon the economic base". Indeed, the capture of political power to which the circular also referred represents the culmination of this process resulting in the fundamental transformation of the economic base.

So far from simplistically denying the interaction between base and superstructure as you suggest, the schema proposed by the Islington circular much more effectively captures the complexity of such interactions.

Take, for example, the question of reformism vis-a-vis consciousness-modifying activities. You refer to the "key feminist demand for equal pay". Since "pay is an economic issue" you suggest that we in the SPGB should "oppose this demand". But since sexism is involved, the "matter is also non economic" and therefore we should, according to you, "tolerate" this demand. Presumably, your point is that by positing a separate category of consciousness-modifying activities, we would tie ourselves up in knots.

Well, firstly, since by your own admission the demand for equal pay involves both economic and non-economic aspects, the Islington Branch schema does at least have the advantage of providing a conceptual framework in which the interaction between these aspects can be made explicit. In contrast, your own schema by opposing such a demand as pure "reformism" banishes any semblance of "interaction" from the picture entirely. So having suggested that Islington's portrayal of historical materialism, the interaction between base and superstructure, is "simplistic" you now seem to be complaining that it is unduly complex!

Secondly, you suggest that insofar as the demand for equal pay represents a combination of reformist and consciousness-modifying activities this would put the Socialist Party of Great Britain in the invidious situation of having to chose whether or not to support or "tolerate" (whatever that may mean) such a demand. Actually this is not the case at all
because either way the purpose of such a demand is to pass legislation through parliament to outlaw unequal pay and as stated earlier this is not what a Socialist Party should be doing. Yes, we oppose sexism but our opposition to it is an integral aspect of our struggle for socialism. It is logically inconceivable to marry sexism with socialism.

That being the case what are we to make of your remark that according to the Islington circular "while economic reforms come up against capitalism's iron laws, other reforms, in the realm of 'superstructure' are supposed to be less futile". Would they, or would they not be "less futile"? Well, consider what would happen as the socialist movement begins to grow. Will racism, sexism and nationalism still retain the influence that they have today? If your answer is yes, then the implication of your answer is that it is quite possible for such attitudes to coexist with the (expanding) socialist consciousness.

On the other hand, if you do not think that that is possible and agree with Islington's contention that economic reforms will continue to come up against capitalism's iron laws - even if the scope and extent of capitalist relations may decline given the growth of voluntaristic activities - then what does this imply? Simply this. That while reformism will continue to be futile we can expect such conscious-modifying activities as opposition to sexism, nationalism and racism to become increasingly effective in transforming - or, if you like, reforming - the climate of opinion. This being the case, there are very strong a priori grounds for separating out consciousness-modifying activities (and, of course, voluntaristic activities), from reformism strictly speaking - the attempt to modify capitalism through economic reforms. The former holds out the promise of progress even within capitalism whereas the latter does not and cannot.

Try as you may, there is simply no way round this dilemma of your own making. At least it can be said of the schema proposed by Islington Branch that it does present a possible way of unmaking that dilemma.

Yours sincerely

486 Caledonian Road
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HOPE AND REVOLUTION

A Note to our Readers: Most people are disturbed about the direction of society, but feel powerless to change it. We believe people can change the world. The first step in change is that people discuss as widely as possible what society should be and how we can get there. The following is the first in a series of New Democracy flyers on creating a new society.

Revolution Is the Basis of Hope

As we near the end of the twentieth century, many people have lost hope in the future. The reason for this loss of hope is that there seems to be no alternative to the capitalist system. Communism and socialism have failed. The idea of fundamental change—the idea of revolution—has been defeated by the reality of it.

Without an alternative to the system, fundamental change seems out of the question. We seem doomed to live in the grip of a system which defines human life in terms of profit and loss, competition and inequality. Without an alternative to capitalism, the deepest human values and most important human relationships will be forever under attack by the demands of the economy and the dictates of the elite.

Hope in the future and belief in the possibility of revolution are inextricably linked. Belief in the possibility of revolutionary change is key to the belief that human beings have the capacity to create a human world.

What We Mean by Revolution

The problem in society is that it is completely undemocratic. The real power lies in the hands of an elite for whom working people are merely a source of profit or a dangerous problem. The elite manipulate the institutions of society to strengthen their power. They encourage unemployment to make people desperate. They set black and white and men and women against each other. They take from the poor to fatten the rich.

The present society is based on elite values of selfishness, inequality, and competition. Most ordinary people believe in the opposite values: sharing, solidarity and equality. Revolution means transforming all the institutions and relationships of society to reflect the best values of ordinary working people.

Most people already try to shape their little piece of the world with their values. Revolutions occur when ordinary people gain enough confidence in themselves as the source of the good in society to change the whole world.

Revolution means sweeping away elite power and setting up democratic institutions in every workplace and neighborhood, where the voices and votes of working people can determine the direction of society. It means unleashing the creativity and power for good in people, to fulfill together our potential as human beings.

Why We Need a Revolution

Many people fear the future, and indeed the future which capitalism holds for most people is ugly and frightening. People will increasingly be robbed of economic security, to make them more controllable. More power over our lives will be in the hands of the wealthy few. Technology will increasingly be used not to free but to enslave us to unfulfilling jobs or unemployment; millions of people, even billions worldwide, will be treated as surplus population.

But whatever the future holds, the real reason for revolution lies in the present. Capitalism is not just an economic system; it is a system of human relations which maintains its power by attacking everyday the things most essential to our humanity: our understanding of ourselves and our fellow human beings and our relations with them. Capitalism attacks every aspect of our lives by setting us against each other in a race for money and status. The need for revolution comes from the dehumanizing nature of capitalism in our everyday lives.

The problem is not Clinton or Gingrich or other front men for the elite, but the system of elite power itself. Real change requires that we abolish a system based on wealth and power for the few and create society based on real democracy and hope for the many.

Please copy this flyer and pass it on.

(Next: Why revolution is possible.)

New Democracy works for democratic revolution. Call Doug Fuda (617)323-7213, or John Spritzler, 566-9637. For more discussion, write for We Can Change The World: The Real Meaning Of Everyday Life, by David G. Straitman. Write New Democracy Books, P.O. Box 427, Boston, MA 02130. $5.00 postpaid.
REVIEW


Stratman’s book is a pleasant--sometimes shocking--surprise to those of us who have come to expect non-market, libertarian socialist literature to come only from the small Marxist or Bakuninist groups of syndicalists, DeLeonists, anarchists, world socialists and the like. The shock arises from the source of his analysis. He reaches the same conclusions we do about leftism, national liberation, Leninism, the Russian Revolution, capitalist unions, and the political system from a perspective that not only rejects Marxism but sees Marxist ideas as a major factor in the failure of the working class to abolish capitalism.

But aside from his views on Marxism, which seem to derive from a fundamental misreading of Marx, Stratman’s critique of capitalism runs parallel with that of libertarian socialism in virtually every respect. Like us he sees capitalism and soviet communism as aspects of the same system, and like us he visualizes a third social system which will differ from private capitalism and communism’s state capitalism in fundamental ways.

The book has four major divisions, each with a brief introduction. Here is the introduction to Part One:

Part One examines the link between class struggle and people’s everyday lives. It shows that, far from being mere passive victims of the system, most people are already engaged in a struggle to create a new world. It shows that the central dynamic of society is conflict over goals.

The chapters in this section describe struggles in which ordinary people resist ruling class efforts to impose further limitations on the meager remnants of control over their own lives that capitalism has left them. His examples are the struggle against school busing in Boston, the Hormel P-9 strike in Austin, Minnesota, the British miners’ strike of 1984-5. His thinking meshes with that of libertarian socialists as to the ruling class purpose behind school busing and in other aspects of education as well as the role of capitalist unions and union leaders. Perhaps the major difference between his analysis and ours is the significance and emphasis he places on spontaneous resistance to the ruling class as the source of class struggle, which he sees as the contradiction between the “competitive values and dog-eat-dog relationships of capitalism” and those of the mass of people. He sees their struggles as unconsciously aimed at revolutionary change.

Part Two examines the history of the ‘60s, to show that the movements of this period were defeated by their inability to break from capitalist and Marxist models of change. It shows that the history of the past two decades is driven not by competition among rival business economies, but by a struggle between the world elite and most people over the future of human society.

Here again those of us who regard ourselves as Marxists will agree with Stratman’s analysis in its main points but will argue that the Marxism he sees as the anti-revolutionary virus that destroyed the movements he is writing about was actually its Leninist and leftist perversion. The flaws he finds in the three he examines closely—the youth movement in the U.S. in 1968, the 1968 revolutionary upsurge in
France, and the Chinese cultural revolution—are identical to those detected by libertarian socialists. In the U.S. leftist reformism and its leadership orientation, black nationalism (derived from Leninism), the internal struggles for power among the leftwing elite, and above all, the failure of the movement to direct its efforts to the abolition of capitalism doomed the movement to failure except for the personal success of those leftists who found positions in the state bureaucracy or in academia. In France Stratman sees the cause of the defeat of the revolutionary upsurge in the Communist Party and its labor union wing, The CGT. In China the Cultural Revolution began as a deliberate effort by the Maoist wing of the CPP to use popular dissatisfaction with the system in a factional dispute. Mao and his allies turned it off when it its spread to the working class began to endanger the stability of their system. The same held true of the events that led to Tianamen Square.

Part Three reviews the role of Communism in the working class movements of the twentieth century, to show that it has been consistently counterrevolutionary, and that the Communist betrayal of working class struggle is the logical fulfillment of Marx’s theory of history and his view of people. It explains that trade unions and the left, to the extent that they accept the legitimacy of capitalism, function as instruments of capitalist control. It examines the collapse of world Communism at the end of the ‘80s, and shows that the way has been prepared for world revolution as never before.

The author’s analysis of the Russian revolution differs from that of most libertarian socialists only in the role he ascribes to Marxism. What becomes very clear is Stratman’s unfortunate isolation from the critical literature of such libertarian socialist groups and individuals as Anton Pannekoek, the Socialist Party of Great Britain, the Socialist Labor Party, Herman Gorter, the Industrial Workers of the World, and other groups and individuals from the 1917 on to the present. He also seems not to have read Lenin’s counterattack in *Left Wing Communism: an Infantile Disorder* and Herman Gorter’s 1920 response, *An Open Letter to Comrade Lenin*, reprinted in 1989 by Wildcat and reviewed in DB9. Except for this his chapters on “The Failure of the Left,” “The Role of the Unions,” and “The Collapse of Communism” mirror the critique of libertarian socialist.

Part Four describes an alternative view of history as the basis of a new kind of revolutionary movement. It discusses the meaning of political activity, the nature of the revolutionary movement, and the role of the revolutionary party which follow from a new model of social change and a new view of people.

Stratman’s alternative to Marx’s historical materialism is remarkably similar to it. The essence seems to be the mistaken idea that Marx, who said, “The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles,” could see it at work only in capitalism. And secondly that Marx saw revolutionary consciousness in capitalist society arising only after the working class had been exposed to the oppression and exploitation of the system. The objectives and methods Stratman proposes are identical in all essential ways to those advocated by non-market socialists, whether Marxists or not. Nor will any of us quarrel with his ideas for a revolutionary organization. Like us he sees the role of a revolutionary party as that of educating our class and enabling it to bring its own resources to bear on the revolutionary project. Like us he has no use for reformism, the futile efforts to attack the results of capitalism.

I believe that much of Stratman’s hostility to Marxism stems from an endemic problem in leftwing political and academic circles: the hegemony over Marxist theory by social democratic and Leninist “Marxologists” at the expense of any exposure to the thinking of the groups of non-market socialists who have resisted and exposed the betrayal of the movement by the left since before the turn of the
A second factor in his rejection of Marxism arises from his view of the class struggle. He locates its center in our “everyday life” where humanity struggles always against every form of tyranny to maintain the inherent natural qualities of cooperation, sympathy, community, and solidarity that have marked our species from its beginnings. He sees Marx's ideas about class struggle as narrowly economic, focused on economic self-interest. Perhaps he should consider this point: that basic to human existence—as indeed to the continued existence of any life form—is access to the means of life, in our case, food, shelter, etc. The struggle of “everyday life” can’t continue without the economic basis of life.

But the question of Marxism, it seems to me, is secondary—a matter for debate by those of us who find such matters interesting. The important fact is that Stratman’s book represents a fresh breath of air in the rather close confines of our political sector. It may be just the factor that will help build a new generation of revolutionary socialists.

I hope readers will write to Boston for the book at the special price of $5 and at the same time request the assortment of leaflets New Democracy has produced on such topics as unionism, education, unemployment, affirmative action, and the like.

--Frank Girard

(from p. 26)

ness is a new paradigm of history and society which shows the role of ordinary people in creating them.

The everyday conduct of ordinary people may, as Stratman claims, be sedulous of bourgeois hegemony, but by itself it has no revolutionary potential. At best it is reformist, and at worst it is conservative.

The workers as a class become revolutionary only when their survival requires conditions that are incompatible with capitalist rule. At that time—which is now here—workers can and must expand their focus from the tactics of daily class struggle to plan the overthrow of the class rule of the capitalists.

While Stratman’s critique of capitalism is excellent, there is little merit in his analysis of Marxism or his revolutionary alternative. Stratman has a BMW-revolutionary’s understanding of class struggle. Capitalism, he finds, provokes revolution because it is inconvenient, unfulfilling and anaesthetic—the perspective of the cranky, middle-aged, privileged knowledge worker.

Stratman alleges the radical movements of the ‘60s failed because they did not present a theoretical alternative to Marxism. Stratman fails because there is no valid alternative.

--from December, 1995, New Unionist, 621 W. Lake St., #210, Minneapolis MN 55408
ATTEMPT AT NEW THEORY OF REVOLUTION FAILS TO SUPPLANT MARX

By George Kane

A Massachusetts reader, David G. Stratman, sent a copy of his book, We Can Change the World: The Real Meaning of Everyday Life, to the New Unionists for review. Stratman is a veteran of the anti-war movement of the 1960s, when he became a student of Marxism. He later apostatized and "became firmly against communism of any sort, concluding that there must be something wrong with any tree that always bears bad fruit."

Stratman nevertheless retains the conviction that capitalism demands a revolutionary reply. His mission in this book is to replace Marxism with a new paradigm to rally a revolutionary working class.

Stratman is a perceptive critic of the evils of capitalism and the U.S. government. He expounds common themes of radical political criticism that he weaves into a compelling condemnation of class rule.

His insights into the specifics of capitalist exploitation in the United States of the 1990s are well-considered and often original. For example, he observes that "the real purpose of the [educational reform] movement is to lower the educational attainment and the expectations of most students, so they will accept less rewarding jobs and less fulfilling lives in a contracting economy and a more unequal social order."

Chapter 6, "The Empire Strikes Back," is worth the price of the book. In it Stratman chronicles the "corporate counteroffensive" against the working class in the 1970s and 1980s. Throughout this chapter Stratman exposes the hypocrisy of outrageous public policies specifically designed to enrich the capitalist class. For example, he points out that "huge military expenditures...were a way of transferring enormous amounts of public wealth to private corporations, without creating many new jobs."

In another sharp attack on government typical of this chapter, Stratman writes that "the Reagan Administration's purpose in slashing social programs...was to increase the pain and make people desperate enough to accept wage and benefit cuts." Stratman goes on to explore the significance to the class struggle of the trade deficit, unemployment rates intentionally kept high, the de-skilling of the work force through computerization, and the export of jobs.

Stratman loses clarity when his attention shifts from the specific evils of government policy to more general political theory. Some of his theoretical points are outlandish. He contends, for example, that capitalism has managed to maintain dominance only because of the counterrevolutionary influence of communism.

Many radicals concur with his observation that the implementation of so-called "communism" in the Soviet-bloc countries and China just reformulated class rule to continue the suppression and exploitation of the working class. But Stratman overshoots this point when he asserts that it was Marxism itself that led to oppressive elites seizing power in these countries. He condemns Marxism as inherently counterrevolutionary because it posits the historical necessity of a capitalist stage to create the conditions for the revolutionary overthrow of class rule.

While Stratman correctly represents this position of Marx, his evaluation only makes sense if we disdain the lessons of history.

Marxism is a theory of history as the unfolding of the conflict between social classes. These classes are defined by their relationship to the means of production. In every historical epoch since the breakup of ancient communal society, there are people who get rich by exploiting those who by their labor actually produce the wealth of society. The specific nature of that exploitation defines the historical epochs.

Capitalist society is characterized by a working class that must sell its labor to the owners of the industries in which they work. Profit and wages are in direct conflict: a gain for one is always a loss for the other. Competition for profit requires capitalists in all industries to progressively exploit the work force. A consequence of capitalism is an ever-widening gap in the distribution of wealth. The rich get richer and the poor get poorer.

Capitalism is inherently volatile because competitive pressures compel capitalists to continually revolutionize the means of production. To match the prices of other products in the market, industrialists must pare back their labor costs by employing increasingly productive machinery. In capitalist production, no one can stand still. If a company is not increasing its profits, it is on the road to bankruptcy.

This dynamism of capitalism distinguishes it from all earlier forms of production. The laws of the marketplace require it to be progressively exploitative, progressively divisive between rich and poor. While previous economies tended to be conservative and to persist for centuries with only gradual changes to their external forms, capitalism cannot stand still. That is one reason why capitalism alone provides the soil in which a revolution from below, to overthrow the class structure of society, can grow.

Stratman, however, dissents that history is important to revolution. He finds revolution inherent in human
nature. He asserts that "human nature is a constant, and in this sense a-historical."

While Marxism is a dynamic model of economic and social systems, Stratman's model of a conflict of class "values" is divorced from historical development, and therefore static. His rejection of Marx's historical materialism leaves Stratman with only insubstantial wisps of subjective idealism as a foundation for his new theory of revolution.

Economics is fundamental in Marxist analysis because society, in all of its manifestations, is an objective phenomenon. Human survival requires the production of the means of subsistence. The specific methods of production in any epoch define the relationships of people involved in production. These are all objective and observable. Power and control in any society are expressions of those class relationships.

Since he denies that social development is a proper subject for scientific analysis, Stratman naturally rebuts Marx's assertion that the collapse of capitalism is inevitable. "There is nothing intrinsic to capitalism as an economic system," Stratman contends, "which makes its destruction inevitable."

There is no point, however, on which Marx is more clear and convincing. Capitalism suffers from a terminal disease, the contradiction between the social nature of production and the private ownership of the means of production.

The external manifestation of this internal contradiction is the irreconcilable opposition of the interests of capitalists and workers. Capitalism cannot exist without a working class to produce its wealth, but the logic of capitalism forces the capitalists to squeeze the working class to the lowest acceptable economic level. The working class, in order to survive, must eventually overturn class society.

Stratman contends that class warfare is really a struggle between value systems and is not inherently economic. The true source of revolution, Stratman believes, is that capitalism conflicts with human nature and consigns people to dehumanizing relationships. "The motive force of history is working people's struggle to humanize the world," he writes, an eternal struggle to replace class relationships with a society based on equality and solidarity.

Of course, the proponents of capitalism defend it by the basis that it is the true expression of "human nature." For them, human nature is the behavior they observe in capitalist society, such as greed and selfishness. This leads to a hopelessly circular argument because it confuses cause and effect. Every society believes that its rules and systems are an expression of human nature.

Yet Stratman falls into the same error of extolling a couple of attributes, egalitarianism and solidarity, as representing eternal human nature. A Marxist understands that, while human nature is not infinitely malleable, people develop behavior patterns that their social and economic systems reward. Under genuine communism, people will be cooperative and act to promote the common good because such behavior will be rewarding for the individual, while the competitive, selfish behaviors of capitalism will no longer be rewarded.

Stratman argues against Marx's historical materialism by claiming it depicts the working class as the passive victim of capitalist exploitation. In Stratman's mind, this passive victim cannot develop the self-aware revolutionary consciousness necessary to overturn class rule. Material circumstances, Stratman avers, do not determine political consciousness.

This argument reveals a misunderstanding of Marx's vision of the working class. Stratman believes that in a materialistic theory of history the agents of historical necessity are automata, devoid of will and reason.

But Marx was keenly aware of the need for revolutionary consciousness. In the Communist Manifesto Marx wrote that "the proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interest of the immense majority" (my emphasis).

Marxists and Stratman agree that revolutionary consciousness is a consequence of class struggle. The struggle over wages and working conditions that drives workers into unions and onto picket lines is only the most obvious manifestation of the class struggle. Through the everyday struggles upon which Stratman bases his theory of revolution—against unemployment, homelessness, costly and uneven medical care, boring and stupid jobs, a mis-education system, consumerism, alienation and the degradation of the environment to name only a few—workers gain class awareness and learn that the capitalists are their common enemy. At his best, Stratman provides an update and expansion to Marx's writings on class struggle, not a substitute.

But Stratman's eccentric revolutionary program does not call for organizing the working class in economic and political opposition to capitalism. The source of true revolution, according to Stratman, is the everyday protests of ordinary people: "The condition for world revolution is greater consciousness among working people as the collective creators of human society. The condition of this greater self-conscious-

(to p. 24)
An Alternative Model of History and Society

I can now summarize the key elements of the model of history and revolution which I am proposing:

—The fundamental contradiction in society is between the values and vision of human life of the people who create human society and the values and vision of the people who exploit it—between slaves and masters, peasants and lords, workers and capitalists.

—Class struggle is a war over what it means to be human; this struggle goes on in every aspect of human existence: personal and social, political and ideological, cultural and economic.

—History is driven not by economic or technological development but by class struggle.

—The working class—whether slave, peasant, or proletarian, blue collar or white—creates all values necessary to the creation and development of human life; that is, it creates both the material wealth of society and the values and relationships conducive to human development.

—Human nature is social; the social nature of human beings leads them to value relationships most conducive to collective human development: relations based on solidarity and equality.

—Human beings are both products of society and products of their own creation; human beings create themselves in all their acts as they develop relationships in ways which reflect their vision—their values interacting with their consciousness—of what it means to be human.

—While all values are rooted finally in human nature, all values are mediated by class roles, class cultures, and individual choices bearing on one's relation to other people.

—Capitalism is not primarily an economic system but a system of human relations and class control; the force that drives it is not its own, but the power of the working class which it strives to contain.

—Capitalism contradicts human nature as it disguises, undermines, and attacks the social nature of people and turns all their works into weapons to assault the roots of their humanity: their consciousness and relationships with other people.

—The drive to revolution is rooted in human nature.

—Consciousness develops in history as the toiling classes encounter new problems to solve; these problems—such as capitalism—do not constitute necessary "stages of history," however, but obstacles to human development which could have proceeded more swiftly by different paths. Capitalism represents the defeat of the popular revolution against feudalism. One can only guess at the progress that would have been achieved if the popular revolution had crushed incipient capitalism as well.

—There is nothing internal to capitalism as an economic system which makes its destruction inevitable; it will be destroyed because it contradicts human nature.

—The revolutionary transformation of class society—the destruction of capitalism and Communism and the creation of a new society—is the only possible fulfillment of the goals and values of the vast majority of the people of this society and of the world.

—Most people are already engaged in important parts of their lives in a struggle to transform capitalist relations into their opposite; most people are already in a struggle to create a new world.

From Chapter 12

WE CAN CHANGE THE WORLD
CAN WE MAKE UNIONS STRONG AGAIN?
A NEW DEMOCRACY Flyer

U.S. unions, once fighting organizations of workers, have declined sharply. What's wrong with the unions? Can we turn them around?

WHY ARE THE UNIONS SO WEAK?

Thousands of working people gave their sweat and blood to build the first industrial unions in the U.S. Once the unions were established, however, the leaders changed from militant organizers to contract administrators who worked with management to ensure production. To gain greater control of the unions, union officials discouraged membership participation and undermined solidarity among workers. Union officials turned from organizing workers against the company to managing workers for the company.

The problem with the unions was not just bad leaders. The problem was that there seemed to be no alternative to the corporate system. Communism proved to be a disaster. With no apparent alternative to the profit system, the welfare of working people seemed tied to the profitability of U.S. corporations. Union leaders saw no option but to work with the system. "What's good for General Motors is good for the country" was believed by union heads and government and business leaders alike. The AFL-CIO leadership became militant supporters of capitalist power.

In the 1960s and early '70s, wildcat strikes and demands for union democracy swept the country. Movements of ordinary working people increasingly threatened the power of union bosses. The goal of union and corporate officials became the same: to destroy the growing power of the rank-and-file.

Corporate and government officials soon went on the attack against workers. The attack succeeded because union officials cooperated in it. When Reagan fired 13,000 striking air traffic controllers, AFL-CIO leaders did nothing. When Local P-9 waged a year-long strike against Hormel, AFL-CIO leaders helped break the strike. Having crushed the rank-and-file, union officials now urge workers to join the company "team" against other workers.

The problem with the unions is not that they are weak but that their leaders seek the wrong goal: to accommodate the owners. The unions can only be turned around by a movement which challenges elite rule and fights to create a society based on the values of working people: equality, solidarity, and democracy.

THE VALUES OF UNIONISM

At the heart of the unions, there is a struggle over values, goals, and control. On one side business owners and union and government officials fight for inequality, competition, and control by the elite. On the other side millions of ordinary working people fight for equality, solidarity, and democratic control.

The struggle inside the unions reflects the conflict in society between the people who do the work and the wealthy people who exploit that labor. This conflict is a class war over the direction of society. It affects every area of life.

AN ALTERNATIVE TO CAPITALISM

Working people resist capitalism with or without the blessing of union officials. Every time workers pace their work, or slow down, or refuse overtime, or support each other on or off the job, or create supportive relationships with their families and friends, they are resisting capitalist power and expressing their belief in a world based on equality and solidarity.

Union values are rooted in the social relations of working people, and offer an alternative to capitalism. Revolution means changing all of society to reflect values already present in most peoples' lives.

HOW CAN WE CHANGE THE UNIONS?

The only thing that can change the unions is a mass revolutionary movement of working people which challenges the company with collective direct action and fights to transform all of society with union values.

For union reformers, the real task is to help people see the significance of the struggles in which they already engage and the values they already share with other workers. With confidence in each other, we can build a movement of all working people for a new world.

Please copy this flyer and pass it on.

Join New Democracy, a new organization working for democratic revolution. For information, contact Doug Fuda (617)523-7213, or John Spritzer, (617)522-4460. For more discussion, see We CAN Change The World: The Real Meaning Of Everyday Life, by David G. Stratman. Write New Democracy Books, P.O. Box 427, Boston, MA 02130. $11.70 postpaid.
(from p. 13)

Contributions: Denis Kitchen $7, Samuel Leight $17; Paul Buhle $5; Bill Hellberg $19; Mark Shipway $2.30. Total $ 50.30. Thank you, comrades.

BALANCE December 19, 1995 [deficit] $42.68

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BALANCE February 24, 1996 [deficit] $132.57

Fraternally submitted,

Frank Girard
for the DB

NOTES, ANNOUNCEMENTS, AND SHORT REVIEWS

**Daniel De Leon**, Steve Coleman’s 1990 biography (192 pp., cloth) published as a volume of Manchester University Press’s “Lives of the Left” series has been remaindered and is now within the reach of those of us who haven’t cleaned up in the Michigan lottery. It was reviewed in DB43 by Ben Perry. In a recent letter DB subscriber and book seller Bob Jones tells me we can order it for $10 or L6 from Northern Herald Books, 5 Close Lea, Rastrick HD6 3AR, England.

**From the Bottom Up: Three Texts by Anton Pannekoek** is the title of the most recent pamphlet from Collective Action, the councilist publisher here in the U.S. Pannekoek, whose writing career spanned at least four decades—someplace I have a Kerr pamphlet he wrote on Darwinism, probably around 1910—actively fought the Leninist takeover of the revolutionary socialist movement after WWI. These three articles (1940, 41, and 48) date from his latter years and reflect what had become by then the councilist conviction that the term revolutionary party was a sort of oxymoron like market socialism. The first of these essays was originally published in *Modern Socialism* the shortlived journal of a splinter from the Industrial Union Party, itself a splinter from the SLP. The second saw the light of day first in a 1948 issue of the *Western Socialist*, at that time the journal of the World Socialist Party, U.S.
Materialist Conception of History, according to the publisher’s blurb was written by Edgar Hardcastle, known in the Socialist Party of Great Britain, of which he was a prominent writer and member for over 70 years, as “Hardy.” His pamphlet, though, is published by a splinter group with whom he apparently cast his lot during a recent internal disturbance. The pamphlet certainly demonstrates his gift for explaining complex ideas in easily understood words. I should think this short pamphlet is ideal for those of us who would like a concise clear explanation of the materialist conception of history. Published in 1995, 13 pp., $2 or £1 postpaid from Socialist Studies, 71 Ashbourne Court, Woodside Park Rd., London N12 8SB, England.

Books for Anarchists, Workers Solidarity Bookservice 1994-5 Catalogue, despite the date, is probably current. This catalogue (four tabloid pages) contains besides a wide assortment of anarchist literature--some of it published by the group--material from other strands of libertarian socialist thought including London Solidarity, Marx and Engels, and Noam Chomsky. The one-page essay that begins the catalog defines anarchism as "...the idea that the mass of people, the working class, can change the world for the better replacing the exploitation, inequality, and injustice that are all around today with a new world based on socialism and freedom." This catalog and a tabloid periodical, Workers Solidarity, suggest a much stronger anarcho-syndicalist presence in Ireland than most of us were aware of. Free from Workers Solidarity Bookservice, P.O. Box 1528, Dublin 8, Ireland.

New Books from Charles H. Kerr, Publishers of Anti-Establishment Literature Since 1886 also includes some old books, among them a pamphlet by John Keracher I had never seen, Wages and the Working Day, for $2.50. Besides such remnants of Kerr’s inheritance from its long and honorable past including the Proletarian Party days of Keracher, the catalog contains some very useful books for the libertarian socialist, many of them dealing with the history of the socialist movement in the U.S. Deserving of special mention is David F. Noble’s Progress Without People: In Defense of Luddism, a recent Kerr publication. Part of the catalog blurb quotes Noam Chomsky, “David Noble’s excellent new book...shows that technological change is not about efficiency; it’s not about doing things better—it’s about power: the power of government and the owners of industry over everybody else.” Order the catalog from C.H. Kerr Publishing Co., 1740 West Greenleaf Ave., Chicago, IL 60626.

World Socialist Catalogue No. 3 with its subhead “If you’ve got to wear shades because the future’s so bright, you might try checking which planet you’re on” is the four standard-page catalog of the U.S. companion party of the Socialist Party of Great Britain. Most of the material in this catalogue comes from the British party, but it is a much more convenient way of obtaining their publications than writing to England for them. Items listed include audio tapes with such titles as, What Would a Socialist Society Be Like?” “Are Human Beings Naturally Bad?” and “Folk Music and Workers’ History “ as well as the full list of SPGB pamphlets. Some of the tapes were produced here, though, as well as the journal of the group, World Socialist Review and two books by Samuel Leight, The Futility of Reformism and World Without Wages. One U.S. item I thought had been out of print for decades, John Keracher’s pamphlet How the Gods Were Made, is available for $1.10 postpaid. Write to World Socialist Party (US), Box 405, Boston, MA 02272.

AK Distribution 1996 Catalog is bigger and thus better than the last (119 pages to 1995’s 81). The catalog begins with some items from AK Press, the publishing arm of the group. Among these is a new Chomsky audio compact disk, Class War: The Attack On Working People, a speech recorded live at MIT, where he teaches. AK Press’s new publications include The Struggle Against the State and Other
Excurs by Nestor Mahlino, the Ukrainian anarchist who led a peasant insurrection against the Bolsheviks in the early 20s, and a new title by Murray Bookchin, Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism: An Unbridgeable Chasm. After the first sixteen pages devoted largely to AK Press productions, we get fifty pages of non-fiction with an average of around 25 titles and descriptions to the page. These run the gamut from sex (much of it unusual) to socialism (most of it libertarian). Although some mainstream publishers’ products are listed, many of the titles were published by small groups whose pamphlets we are unlikely to learn about through any other source. The Discussion Bulletin’s Einstein and Chomsy pamphlets are cases in point. The 21 other categories mentioned in the contents include magazines, journals, fiction, videos, political tapes, music/spoken word, poetry/songs, Black Swan [surrealism], and Loompanics. The catalog is free from AK Distribution, P.O. Box 40682, San Francisco, CA 94140.

The New Enclosures is the tenth issue of a series of books and pamphlets produced by the Midnight Notes Collective. The theme of this 100-page, 8 1/2 by 11 book is that the enclosures of land in Britain from the 15th to the 19th centuries, which transformed agriculture from a self-sustaining peasant occupation into a market-oriented capitalist enterprise, has its counterpart worldwide in the last half of the 20th century. Just as the British peasants were driven off the land by acts of Parliament and the landlords who controlled it and transformed into beggars, so independent farmers and craftsmen everywhere are being driven from their communities, this time by the IMF and other financial organs of capitalism. A nine-page introduction lays down the basic ideas of the book. Eleven essays by members of the Midnight Notes Collective support the major contention that the process of enclosure is ongoing. Among them are these: The Debt Crisis, Africa and the New Enclosure * Holding the Green Line: Israeli Ecological Imperialism * Some Photographs That I Was Unable to Take * Inscrutable China: Reading Struggles through the Media * The Struggle Against Enclosures in Jay, Maine. The New Enclosures is available for $5 (if the 1990 price is still current) from Midnight Notes, Box 204, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130.

Lessons of Azikwelwa and The Big Sell Out by the Communist Party of South Africa and the African National Congress, two books by Dan Mokonyane, spell out the role played by Mandela and his supporters in the recent return of South Africa to the “community of nations.” The first deals with a 1957 bus boycott in Johannesburg and Pretoria that was the first successful action by South African Blacks against their white capitalist masters. According to Mokonyane, an activist at the time, the South African Communist Party and African National Congress bureaucracy was even then selling The Big Sell Out details more recent events prior to the election of Nelson Mandela as President of South Africa. Mokonyane is especially bitter toward the SACP, whose activity was designed to promote Soviet foreign policy in the region and the personal careers of the leading members. 119 and 140 pages respectively, L5 each from Nakong Ya Rena, P.O. Box 3671, London E1 2DX, England.

Bourgeois Influences on Anarchism by Luigi Fabbri argues that anarchism’s worst enemies are many of the people who regard themselves as anarchists but who are actually influenced by the culture of capitalism. Among these he counts the individual “hero” whose violent “deed” demonstrates the individualism celebrated by capitalism rather than the collective action advocated by anarchists. The same is true of the young anarchist whose rebellion against the adult world of parents, teachers, and authority in general is often empty of any social thought. Writing in Italy around the turn of the century during the era when the “propaganda of the deed” was associated with anarchists and anarchism through...
such mindless violence as throwing bombs into restaurants and the onto the floor of the French Chamber of Deputies, not to mention the assassinations of presidents, kings, and other prominent members of the ruling class, Fabbri sought to return anarchism to its roots as a philosophy of social liberation. Much of the pamphlet examines the literary glorification of violence by authors who had no connection at all with the anarchist movement, like Zola and Mirbeau. Fabbri is less than consistent, though; for instance he approves of assassination when it is carried on in the Russia of his day so long as it is not random terrorism that could harm blameless people. Translated from the Italian by Chaz Bufe, published in 1987, 35 pages, $1.50 plus $0.75 postage from See Sharp Press, P.O. Box 6118, San Francisco, CA 94101.

*This Is Class War: An Introduction to the Class War Federation* "...aims to explain the basic background and politics of the Class War Federation." Class War originated as a newspaper advocating direct action at the time of the 1983 British miners strike. Youth and punk music oriented, it seems to have recruited from thexxxx of disaffected young people in British society. As nearly as I can see from this small pamphlet its thinking and aims don't differ much from those of such British groups as the SPGB, Subversion, or anarchists, the last of whom they seem to resemble so far as a willingness to use methods of direct action. Consider the following under "What We Believe." "Capitalism has nothing to offer us except an endless cycle of war, famine, recession, and unemployment. It is not inevitable that it will die of its own accord, it could linger on for centuries yet, lurching from crisis to crisis; therefore it must be destroyed." 23 pp., 11 ($2) from CW, PO Box 772, Bristol BS99 1EG, England.

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