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ABOUT THIS ISSUE

The convergence of the “right” and “left” in capitalism’s traditional political parties worldwide has opened the way for new leftwing parties. Hatching in the U.S. are no less than three the New Party which has the endorsement of Chomsky the anarchist, the recently created Labor Party, the child of the capitalist union movement’s Labor Party Advocates, and the Nader candidacy under the aegis of the Green Party U.S.A. The newest ornament in the political crown of British leftism has been christened the Socialist Labour Party, a name that will reverberate among many U.S. readers of the DB. The title of Adam Burck’s article from the May 1996 Socialist Standard makes it clear that he regards the new SLP as Scargill’s version of the old Labor Party, not a “socialist” party. The next article, from the journal of the left Leninist journal Revolutionary Perspectives contrasts the leftwing social democracy

(To p. 5)
The Scargill Labour Party

Socialists have a certain amount of respect for Arthur Scargill’s decision to leave the Labour Party because of its now openly and awfully capitalist aims, but we can only wonder why he has started a new party, the aims of which amount to nothing more than futile attempts to reform capitalism into a system supposedly organised in the interest of the working class – particularly as Scargill himself is on record admitting that this can’t be done.

This month sees the launch of a new political party, the Socialist Labour Party, the first leftwing breakaway from Labour at national level since the old SPL disaffiliated itself in 1932. Behind it is Arthur Scargill, President of the rump NUM and possibly the best known trade union leader in Britain today.

What finally led him to tear up his Labour Party membership card and launch a new party was Labour’s decision last year to amend its constitution by replacing Clause 4 with a new aim which committed it to support “the enterprise of the market”, “the vigour of competition”, and “a thriving private sector”. We can well understand his repugnance at having to walk around with a card in his pocket with such views printed on it.

Although in a later statement of his reasons for quitting Labour, Scargill appeared to go further and accept the view put forward by people like ourselves that Labour never was socialist, it is clear that he thinks that Clause 4 did commit Labour to socialism at least on paper. Clause 4, however, was never a definition of socialism. What it was – and was meant to be by the Labour leaders of the time who drew it up – was a commitment to nationalisation, or state capitalism, to be achieved “for the workers” by the actions of the Parliamentary Labour Party. It was a rejection not of capitalism as such, but only of one institutional form of capitalism (private enterprise) in favour of another (state enterprise). Production was to continue to be for the market and workers were to continue to work for wages, only this was to take place under the direction of the state.

Common ownership is indeed the key defining feature of socialism but common ownership by all the people under their democratic control, with production not for the market but directly to satisfy people’s needs. State ownership is something quite different. The state does not represent the people. As an instrument of political control standing above the rest of society it represents the ruling class. Under capitalism it is “a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie class” (Marx), “the ideal collective capitalist” (Engels).

When the state takes over an industry it does so, not on behalf of the people, but on behalf of the capitalist class as a class and runs it for their collective benefit. The whole history of the nationalised industries in Britain is confirmation of this (as Scargill should know from his experience of the former Coal Board). Nationalisation is neither socialism nor a step towards it. It is state capitalism.

Scargill and the SLP have not learned this lesson, but in re-adopting Clause 4 they repeat the mistake of confusing state capitalism with socialism. In fact, the revised version which has been incorporated into the SLP’s constitution is more explicitly state-capitalist than the original version. That the wages system, which is the basis of capitalism, is not to be abolished is specifiedly spelled out this time, with references to “employment” and “employees”. Specifically spelled out too is the fact that financial institutions such as pension funds will continue to exist, so making it clear that a money economy and the market are to continue too.

Chasing the impossible

The SLP is also committed to the discredited view which Labour once held that the effects of capitalism can be overcome by state intervention if sufficiently resolute and far-reaching. Hence Scargill’s claim that a “British government” could abolish unemployment “even within a capitalist society”. This is a fantastic statement from someone who has on occasions given evidence of some knowledge of Marxian economics (after all, it was Marx...
who showed how an "industrial reserve army of labour" made up of fluctuating numbers of unemployed workers was necessary, and so inevitable, under capitalism. It is, however, an accurate statement of what all those who campaign for "the right to work", "full employment", "a 4-day working week with no loss of pay" and the like implicitly believe, even if in the case of the SWP and other Trotskyists they are not so honest as Scargill to say so openly.

It's all wishful thinking. Let's suppose for a moment that a "British government" decreed a 4-day working week without loss of pay; in other words, that employers should pay people who now work five (or even six) days a week the same as for working four.

This would represent a massive increase in their labour costs. The money to pay for this would have to come out of their profits. No doubt some firms would be able to do this on a short-term basis, but many would not and would have to declare themselves bankrupt, so increasing the number of unemployed again. And in the longer term the massively reduced profits of those firms that did survive the immediate impact would undermine their competitiveness and so their survival too.

With the rate of profit so low capitalists wouldn't invest in them. Nor would enough profits be made to invest in up-to-date machinery and productive methods so that British-made goods would lose out both on export markets and in the home market. The result would sooner or later be—sooner rather than later, in fact—a massive economic slump. Scargill's recipe for reducing unemployment would have failed and had to the opposite: a massive increase in unemployment.

Unemployment is not the only problem that Scargill and the SLP believe can be solved "even within a capitalist society". Although the SLP was not officially launched till this month it put up a candidate in the by-election in February in the South Yorkshire constituency of Hemsworth. In getting 5.4 percent of the vote, saving its deposit and finishing behind the Green Party they didn't do too badly for a new party. However, the programme on which they contested the election was pathetic, consisting of a list of attractive but quite unrealistic demands to be implemented under capitalism.

Higher pensions, a free health service, a massive house-building programme, more spending on education and social services, these would be very costly. Although unlike a 4-day week without loss of pay this burden would not fall so obviously and so directly on profits, it would do so indirectly via taxes. To pay for them Scargill's "British government" would have to raise taxes, which would ultimately fall on property and profits. So the result would be the same as with his recipe for abolishing unemployment: a fall in profits retained by businesses resulting in bankruptcies for some and a winding down of competitiveness for others—and ending in a slump.

The fact is that you can't buck the capitalist system. If you choose to work within it—as the Labour Party has always done and as Scargill has the honesty to say his new SLP will be doing—then you have to accept that profits have to be made and that profit-making has to be given priority over meeting people's needs. Unemployment, poverty in old age, bad housing, inadequate health care, etc, etc, etc cannot be solved within the capitalist system, not even by the most ruthless of leftwing governments. Only the establishment of a socialist society of common ownership and democratic control with production solely for use can provide the framework for solving these problems.

No alternative under capitalism

At the moment capitalism cannot even sustain the reforms it was able to afford at an earlier period. Since the post-war boom came to an end in the first half of the 1970s, there have been no beneficial reforms—no improvements in housing, pensions, health care, social services or state benefits. Quite the reverse. Pre-existing reforms have been whittled away and things have got worse in all these fields. Nor is there any prospect of them getting any better; all the signs are that they will continue to get worse.

The reason for this is the world economic crisis that capitalism entered into after the long post-war boom came to an end and which it has still not escaped from. This has meant increased competition on world markets, which has forced all governments whatever their political complexion—the Labour governments in Australia and New Zealand were just as "Thatcherite" as the mad woman herself in Britain—to give priority to trying to ensure the competitiveness of businesses operating from within their frontiers. To do this they have had to reduce the amount of money they tax away from profits to finance their spending including on reforms.

When Thatcher kept shouting "TINA"—"There Is No Alternative"—to cutting back on spending on reforms, she was right though to be accurate she should have said "TINAUC"—"There Is No Alternative Under Capitalism"). There was, and there still is, no alternative to doing this within the present context of capitalism.

The Labour Party, under Blair and Smith before him, now fully accepts this and has reshaped its policies accordingly.

- Programme - Reformist dream land

Vote Nixon
Socialist Labour

- Programme - Reformist dream land

Vote Nixon
Socialist Labour
‘Nationalisation is neither socialism nor a step towards it. It is state capitalism’

Leftwing Labourites refuse to face this reality but still imagine that capitalism today can offer social reforms. The only difference between them and Scargill is that they believe in staying in the Labour Party as an irrelevant minority while he believes in setting up a new party to campaign for the sort of reforms the Labour Party used to specialise in.

We in the Socialist Party draw a different conclusion. The fact that capitalism at the present time is unable to offer any reforms, and is unlikely to be able to in the foreseeable future, reinforces our view that what Socialists should be campaigning for is socialism and nothing but. Quite apart from the fact that support gained on the basis of proposing reforms to capitalism is not a solid basis on which to build up a socialist party, what’s the point of campaigning for reforms if there’s no chance of getting them?

The widespread rejection of the Labour Party by radically-minded people does provide the basis for the growth of a genuine socialist party on sound principles, but Scargill’s SLP does not fill the bill. It has nothing to offer except the failed old policy of state intervention and state control to try to make things better for people. Despite the repeated demonstrations this century that this reformist policy does not work, the new SLP wants to have another go, flying in the face of the inescapable conclusion that capitalism just cannot be made to work in the interests of the majority.

Certainly, the SLP says it wants to replace capitalism with a socialist society but this turns out to be, not real socialism, but the state capitalism that nationalisation represents. This is the past. We’ve seen it and it doesn’t work.

ADAM BUICK

of the new SLP to the revolutionary industrial unionism of the British SLP organized in 1903. The references in the article to its embracing the Bolsheviks joining the Communist Party of Great Britain reflect the sad historical fact that most of the prominent members and much of the rank and file—although apparently not a majority—did just that. The story in the U.S. SLP was that the SLPress at 50 Renfew Street Glasgow was running day and night, publishing English translations of Lenin’s pamphlets — and nothing by De Leon. Today the De Leonist SLP in Britain is reduced to a few contact people and has no organizational existence. In a third article, Laurens Otter, after a survey of the diversity among British opponents of the effects of capital, concludes that revolutionaries might be able to use Scargill’s Labour Party, as Adam Buick calls the new SLP, to reach what he sees as an “emergent generation” of British radicals.

In a recent letter, David Lazarus comments on the thinking of Larry Gambone and David Stratman as well as the future of the working class and the revolutionary project. Laurens Otter’s second letter reacts rather negatively to David Stratman’s New Democracy, especially to what he regards as the residue of Stratman’s experience among the Maoists. Charmian Skelton’s article takes issue with Robin Cox’s expression of the SPGB’s position on reform in DB76. Monroe Prattack, while arguing that our class is so unaware of its economic interests that it can’t identify with Connie Furdeck’s “Economic Declaration of Independence” (DB77), still concludes that a socialist revolution is in the offing.

The DB isn’t a socialist history magazine, but Peter Newell’s article on John Keracher and Revolutionary Perspective’s article on the British SLP both relate to a key period, 1918-1920, when the Lenin and the Bolsheviks were using worldwide enthusiasm among workers for the Russian Revolution and the unlimited cash they came into when they grabbed power in Russia to establish their hegemony over the revolutionary wing of the international socialist movement. I never met Keracher, but I knew one of his admirers, Clarence Ford, in Grand Rapids in the early fifties. Like many working class revolutionaries he was shockingly—to me in those days—uninterested in the relative doctrinal purity of socialist organizations and had been a member of both the SLP and Keracher’s Proletarian Party. And from reading Newell’s article I gather that the refusal of Keracher and his party’s to become a part of the CP was based on principle and not just personal antagonisms as I had assumed.

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Capitalist companies have a whole panoply of laws dealing with copyright, patents and trademarks to prevent competitors from deceiving prospective purchasers. History, regrettably, does not prevent political organisations from working equivalent contrivances. For decades the Stalinist, Maoist and Trotskyist groups confused workers by peddling varieties of state capitalism as "real living socialism" or even "communism". In Britain, the Scargill-led movement, anxious both to keep their followers within the traditions of Labourism and also to breathe fresh life into the lie that state intervention equals socialism (or at very least the road to socialism) opted for the name, Socialist Labour Party.

Whether by accident or design, Scargill, by choosing that title has perpetrated the type of mislabelling more normally used by the capitalist crooks who own the sweatshops churning out imitation designer clothing. The fact is, and one assumes that Scargill or some of his clique are aware of it, that unlike the present project of developing a fraction of the Labour left outside the confines of the official Labour Party, the original backers of the name Socialist Labour Party were committed to organising to destroy capitalism rather than to administering it more kindly or efficiently.

The first SLP - part of our revolutionary inheritance

The original SLP was formed in 1903 at a conference called by the former Scottish divisional council of the Socialist Democratic Federation (SDF). One of the founding statements of the party, gives a clear indication of the grounds on how the SLP defined itself against the other erstwhile Socialist or Labour parties operating in Britain. As part of a Manifesto to the Working Class one of the founders of the new party, John Cartwright, defined Socialism in a way which clearly differentiated the SLP and today's revolutionaries, from the leaders of the SDE and Scargill and other brands of leftists. Defining socialism the SLP wrote,

"By this we do not mean what is variously called 'State Socialism', 'Public Ownership' or 'Municipalism' - that is, the ownership of certain public utilities by a community in which capitalism is still dominant. A worker is as much exploited by a capitalist state or corporation as by a private employer - as post office or municipal employees can testify. We insist upon the political overthrow of capitalism as an absolutely necessary preliminary to the emancipation of the working class. Otherwise an industry controlled by an individual capitalist state differs from one controlled by an individual capitalist only in the superior powers of the former to rob and oppress those under its thrall.

It is of interest that the original choice of the name SLP was not without some controversy. There was already in existence a party of the same name in the USA whose positions, particularly the emphasis on working class struggle, rather than electoralism, helped inspire the founders of the SLP. Living links between the US SLP and British socialists had been strengthened the previous year when James Connolly had carried out a speaking tour of the USA. The SDF opponents of the founders of the British SLP attempted to portray them as puppets of the American party but despite that the founding conference adopted the same title as their US counterparts.

Again, the self-definition carried out by the early SLP serves as an example of socialist clarity against the mystifiers and confusionists of both then and now. Separating the three elements of their chosen name they declared their meaning as:-

Socialist because through Socialism alone can the workers be emancipated,
Labour because by the labouring classes alone can Socialism be attained,
Party because we are not merely an educational or propaganda body but stand for the political expression of our class interests, for the formation of the Socialist Republic.

Naturally, there are formulations within those definitions which read strangely from our vantage point more than ninety years later. We could question what was meant by the "labour-
ing classes which were to attain socialism. Similarly the question of a "Socialist Republic" may appear vague or even dangerous. However it must be borne in mind that, when considering the question of proletarian political power the comrades in 1903 had only the brief and unique experience of the Paris Commune as an historic reference point against which to refine their theory and practice. The three points above actually stand out like a beacon of clarity when contrasted to the positions adopted by their contemporaries in the Independent Labour Party (ILP) or the Social Democratic Federation (renamed the British Socialist Party following the merger with some ILP branches in 1912).

The first ten years — Marxists and militants

From the party's creation in 1903 until the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 the SLP built its roots amongst some of the most class-conscious workers in a situation where there was a rising tide of industrial militancy. Responding to this militancy and the appearance of new formations such as the shop stewards' movement the SLP intervened by arguing against the divisiveness of the old craft-based trade unions and in favour of all-embracing "Industrial Unionism". In its journal, The Socialist in June 1907 it explained its position as follows,

Let us then organise industrially as well as politically for our class emancipation. Industrially, to build up within the womb of capitalism the foundations of the future state of society, reared upon the structure of our class interests, matching shoulder to shoulder, studying up our class in their onward march to economic freedom. Politically, to unseat the capitalist class from the power of government, to remove the legal encumbrances that today safeguard the rights of private property to prevent, if possible, the capitalist class from using the physical power of the nation against the industrial workers of this or any other nation.

In combining its intervention in the industrial organisations of the working-class with the Marxist understanding of the struggle for political power, the SLP also defined itself against the syndicalists who believed that industrial unionism could replace the political struggle and particularly the need for a revolutionary party.

Syndicalism was, nevertheless, able to attract a layer of workers who were repelled by the day-to-day practices of those, such as the early Labour MPs who sat in Parliament - described by Ben Tillett, a leader of the London dockers, in 1908 as "These unctuous weaklings [who] will go on prattling their nonentities while thousands are dying of starvation". In the same year the struggle between the SLP and the "pure" syndicalists became particularly critical with a split in the organisation, the Advocates of Industrial Unionism which the SLP had helped launch 12 months previously.

Marxist educational circles

The SLP, from its inception, demanded a high degree of clarity and political agreement from its members. In its Aims and Method it described how A party which has undertaken the work of revolutionizing society must be dominated not only by a common purpose but also a common plan of action. A revolutionary socialist party ... must present not only the appearance but the reality of an intelligent disciplined unity.

In line with its understanding for the need for revolutionary theory, the early SLP also made a major contribution to the working class through its institution of educational circles. Classes were started in many working-class areas particularly in Scotland. The classes were organised rigorously with a formal structure ensuring that worker militants were equipped with a thorough grasp of basic Marxism.

As well as formal classes and examinations the SLP also organised correspondence courses for isolated militants. In their educational activities the SLP were soon joined by others such as John Maclean of the SDF and the Plebs League which originated in 1909 amongst radical socialist students at Ruskin College, Oxford.

Up to 1914 the overall experience of the SLP was certainly a positive one. The historic tests for its claim to stand as part of the revolutionary working-class movement came with the outbreak of war and in November, 1917, with their response to the outbreak of proletarian revolution in Russia.

A socialist response to imperialist war

In common with the rest of the European socialist movement, the majority of British socialists in Britain collapsed into social chauvinism, siding with their "own" national ruling class, at the outbreak of the First World War. In contrast the SLP opposed the war from the position of proletarian internationalism. The SLP's journal, The Socialist wrote in September 1914, Our attitude is neither pro-German nor pro-British, but anti-capitalist and all that it stands for in every country of the world. The capitalist class of all nations are our real enemies, and it is against them that we direct all our attacks.
In the same edition the leading article poured scorn on those who talked nonsense about fighting to preserve civilisation.

No explanation is offered as to what civilisation has done for the workers that they should fight for it. To the majority, civilisation means

The Socialist also printed in November, 1914, an article from the Berner Tagwochtl by the Dutch revolutionist, Anton Pannecoeck, calling for the creation of a new International.

Although, as an organisation, the SLP clearly stood against social chauvinism there are a number of issues where questions need to be raised. Firstly, at least one prominent member, John Muir, the editor of the Socialist, was initially in favour of certain defenestrator positions. Secondly, the position taken by their conference in April 1915 seems to reflect a position nearer to social pacifism than to revolutionary defeatism. Leading from that resolution many SLP militants were to become conscientious objectors rather than fighting for internationalism alongside their fellow workers.

If the latter positions would tend to place the SLP in an equivalent position to the right rather than left-wing of the International Socialist conference held at Zimmerwald the SLP’s revolutionary credentials were reconfirmed by their response to the Russian October revolution.

Support for the Russian Revolution

During 1917 the SLP journal consistently argued for and then welcomed a specifically working class revolution in Russia. Its support for and agreement with those working to that end is shown by the articles written by Lenin which appeared in its June and September issues. Indeed The Socialist claimed the Russian Revolution as vindication of the SLP’s own political method. Following a further article from Lenin in the edition of February, 1918 the March edition carried the comment that

The SLP is the only party in this country which has compelled the SLP and BSP to realise that socialist tactics do not mean how to juggle men into Parliament. Socialist tactics mean the education of the proletariat and the organisation of the political weapon to destroy capitalism, backed by the industrial unions taking over the means of production.

For years the SLP has been jeered at and jeered at, but now Russia, in the transition towards the Socialist Republic, shows the SLP is right.

By December, 1918 The Socialist was declaring,

We are denounced as ‘British Bolsheviks’. We do not seek to conceal our views. We are proud of the title. The SLP is the only political organisation that stands wholeheartedly and uncompromisingly for the Soviet idea. Let it be known: We are the British Bolsheviks.

SLP and the founding of the CPGB

Although the Russian revolution could be fairly claimed to vindicate the SLP against the socialism and parliamentary chauvinism of many of their opponents it is ironic that it was the tortuous, and sometimes Byzantine, moves to establish a section of the Comintern in Britain which marked the end of the SLP as a serious political force.
It was no coincidence that internationally the conferences and negotiations which took place during 1920 took place as the revolutionary wave which had swept Europe (and other parts of the world) was already ebbing. Indeed, during 1920, at the same time as British delegates were arguing against affiliation to the Labour Party at the 2nd Congress of the Comintern Lenin's Left Wing Communism appeared in Britain.

The appearance of Lenin's ill-informed and politically unhelpful document together with direct interference from the Comintern produced a situation where only a small minority of the SLP entered into the embryonic CP (heavily dominated by ex-BSPers) in the summer of 1920. A more substantial element led by Gallacher (who had supported the abstentionist and anti-Labour position when departing for Moscow but arrived back accepting Lenin's positions as a child takes the rebuke of a father) fused with the CP at a second Unity Conference early in 1921.

Although the SLP retained a formal existence after the trauma of 1920-21 it was not able to effectively compete with the CPGB. One of its few remaining roles was to act as a temporary stepping place for John Maclean, on his way to the Scottish Workers Republican Party and Scottish nationalism.

Failings and shortcomings

Like any Marxist organisation the history of the SLP should not be seen as a balance sheet where every figure is positive. Only idealist scenario mongers with no connection to the living development of the working class prefer to rewrite history to force it into the straitjacket of their own conceptions (and misconceptions).

Certainly, we can with the benefit of hindsight, consider the tactics taken in 1920-21. We could also explore further the exact nuances of the SLP's attitude to Industrial Unionism and the Shop Stewards Movement. There were certainly debates within the party about the precise attitude to elections and the acceptance of elected office. There is also evidence that the party's original emphasis on the importance of full political agreement and commitment from its own members may not have been fully adhered to in later years. The presence of pacifist strands in the SLP's opposition to the war has been mentioned earlier. On balance, though, these mistakes and omissions appear primarily as honest failings by sincere, committed and serious revolutionaries who had a real presence within the class struggles of their times. As such the history of the real SLP is part of our revolutionary heritage which does not deserve to be besmirched by those who now choose to use the name.

Scargill steals our history

Writing about the early years of the original SLP, Challinor commented that,

the SLP encouraged all its branches to hold regular outdoor meetings .... Sometimes difficulties were experienced in getting the initial crowd to stop and listen. One speaker in Liverpool used to overcome this by shouting, at the top of his voice: 'I've been robbed! I've been robbed!' Quickly an inquisitive audience would assemble, and he would explain how the thieves were the capitalists.

Some ninety years later our old comrade's party name has been robbed by Scargill's worshippers of state capitalism.

We will leave Scargill and Co. to disappear into political oblivion dragging the misappropriated name with them. For revolutionary Marxists the essence of the old SLP's politics, the struggle for working-class self-emancipation and opposition to all reformism and nationalism, lives on in our programme and the struggle for a communist future.

Notes

1. From this point onwards all references to Socialist Labour Party (SLP), except where stated otherwise, refer to the revolutionary proletarian party of earlier this century.

2. This and all subsequent quotes from SLP literature, except where stated, are taken from The Origin of British Bolshevism by Ray Challinor.

3. Connolly was later to move to Ireland where he founded the Irish Socialist Republican Party whose politics attempted to combine elements of Marxism with Irish nationalism. Connolly was executed by British imperialism following the defeat of the Nationalist Easter Rising in Dublin in 1916.
Has Scargill's SLP a future?

It is stating the obvious to say that the Blair Labour Party is far to the Right even of the Wilson-type 1960s & 70s Labourism & that the Ashdown Liberal Demo bear no relationship to the unilateralist non-statist egalitarianism that marked Grimond's Liberalism at that time. Nor that both the main parties "of the Left" are now to the Right of even the Tories of those Macmillan-Heath days.

That at a time when direct action, whether displayed by road protestors at Newbury, in industrial action, by the upsurge, a year or two back, of "compassion in farming" protest against the conditions in which animals were exported, is probably as widespread & strong as at any time since the Sixties.

There is a direct activist left there. It has not, at least as yet, in any large numbers, turned to the formal anarchist movement. The upsurge of "Class War" & similar anarchist groups (arising out of a wider youth counter-culture) in the early 80s passed, as did that that accompanied resistance to the Poll Tax. Though by no means negligible, the similar resistance to the Criminal Justice Bill, has not brought about a comparable sudden upsurge of anarchist activity & didn't, for long, bring many people into anarchist ranks.

There is always a discrepancy between the numbers the Media accept as having taken part in the democratic process & those who actually try to make their views felt. One needs look no further than Doug McIlvoy's manipulation of the NUT postal ballots, as one Guardian correspondent commented last year: "when Stalin used to get 90% votes, the Media wet itself with laughter, but when McIlvoy gets 90%, it is taken as good coin." Another pointed out, after McIlvoy had denounced FACE as a Far Left plot, that in Shropshire & Gloucestershire more than three times as many NUT members took part in FACE demos, as he, allegedly on the basis of one of his ballots, conceded actually supported FACE.

The formal anarchist movement, is by & large, a number of residual factions, with just enough people independent of each & all of these, to create a demand for a wider unity: without having a basis to build it.

But, beyond that, there are (at least) two prongs of a nascent movement.

A Green Movement that is not going to wait for the Green Party: an NOP poll for a Radio Four News Programme in late March astounded the pundits, by showing that 36% of those questioned support the Newbury anti-roads demonstrators; that is they not merely opposed the rush to build more roads, but they support direct action methods of countering these, & obviously reject the legal & parliamentary facade & claim to have made democratic representations to consult the public.

A youngish industrial movement, whose knowledge of the past doesn't really go back much further than the miners' strike: so that though it is not by any means exclusively politically Scargillite, nevertheless (at least for the moment) seen as in Staghill a symbol of the reaction of parliamentarianism.

Whether one can add on to that the animal question: - remember that in some small sea-side ports, generally ones that had never been associated with radical protest, (since the meat trade was deliberately seeking out, outlets where it thought that there was no possibility of action by militant dockers;), reporters said that it appeared that the whole population of the town had
turned out to support the protests; or whether their support for direct action was only on this one issue is hard to say.

Similarly, with opposition to the cuts in council spending, where the protests a couple of years' back started in Tory rural areas. One quarter of the population of Bishop's Castle, a seemingly totally feudal market town in the South West of Shropshire, & sizable contingents from all the surrounding villages, turned out to protest at cuts in the schools' provision, in that for the elderly, & for children's homes. The cuts were made by a Labour-led Council to meet Tory Government policy. The protesters were under no illusions as to whose policies had caused the cuts, but they were equally unwilling to be used by Labour or Liberals to attack the Tories, showing few illusions about the cowardly acquiescence of the "Left" councillors.

There is a budding Left out there, but it hasn't yet found an home. It won't just come to anarchism; we have to find it, go to it, show that anarchism is what they are instinctively seeking.

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Back at the beginning of the 80s, the Thatcherite "Revolutions" succeeded because the Tories managed to get the electorate to accept two plainly untrue theses: (Indeed so obviously were they untrue that one wonders just how deep that acceptance went; did people pretend to believe, because they thought their neighbours did & they feared they would be cranks if they held out, was pressure to conform to this orthodoxy all a product of the Medias?)

(1) that capitalists, not workers, are the "creators of wealth";
(2) that wealth trickles down (not up) in society, so that if the rich become richer, the poor benefit as well.

Previously - at least since Keynes - one did not need to be a socialist to know that "wealth is created by those who work" (Indeed - pace the Adam Smith Institute - it was almost universally known, that it was Adam Smith, not Karl Marx, who produced the Labour Theory of Value.) Many people who considered it socially necessary & desirable that a large part of this wealth be appropriated by a minority, & used (as dead labour,) to change the productive process, would still have taken it as axiomatic, that all such wealth was created by workers.

Similarly, it was widely understood that the profits of business depend on the buying power of workers, that the incomes of that variety of professions that exist in society, which are socially necessary, but not directly profitable, (e.g. teachers, doctors, firefighters, sewage workers,) all depend both directly & indirectly on the pay packets of agricultural & industrial producers.

How then, was it, that these two fundamental lies obtained majority credence in the late 70s? No doubt the Medias pushed them, but this we nothing new. No doubt there were corrupt teachers & lecturers in economics, as well as psychology & philosophy pundits, around ready to pontificate about the essential truths of these falsehoods. But again what was new? Well there was something, but its hard to pin down. When I was at college, desire to know what the enemy thinks led me to read Hayek. I remember it was a Tory economics post-graduate who deigned me for reading such nonsense. Presumably, during the intervening quarter century, Tories had regained a confidence in their own traditional myths.
From the time of the 1920s slump, and even more since the war, big business had accepted Keynesian ("bureaucratic collectivist"/"managerialist") constraints. Had realised that for capitalism as a whole to survive, the individual capitalist had to forego certain roads to profit. Accepted that capitalism needed an healthy & educated working class: that it was best for capitalism that the state tax the individual capitalists for this. (That if they could get the working class to shell out towards this, that was an added bonus, though as the capitalist has anyway already taken his/her cut from the worker, that additional cruelty can hardly have been essential. They could have lived with Nye Bevan as easily as with Hugh Gaitskell.)

Above all it was understood that all capitalist industry depended on an infrastructure of transport, power, etc. That these were generally older industries. That because of the falling rate of profit in old industries, these could not be profitable. The War-time coalition saw that this meant the infrastructure was under-funded & inefficient, and that whole of British capitalism was consequently in a bad way. It started, (& the post-war Labour Government continued,) the process whereby the state — under the name "Nationalisation" — took on subsidising this infrastructure for the benefit of the rest of capitalism.

We were told it was socialism, the evidence for which was that a few superannuated right wing Trade Union officials were put on the Nationalised Boards, otherwise made up of the former owners & directors & a number of buckshoof generals for whom they no longer had any use. Vastly inflated sums were paid in compensation to the former owners (e.g. L.M.E.P. shares hadn’t paid any dividends for fifteen years, people used share certificates to paper their walls, yet they were compensated on the basis of their 1920s value, with 3% government-funded stock.)

This "Managerialist Revolution" (whether as the product of the war-time coalition, & then, Labour, here; of the New Deal in the States, of fascism between the wars, and the post-fascist "re-structured democracy" after, or of Third World Revolutions,) came everywhere, & everywhere saw vast sums of compensation money given to the old bosses.

The money that flowed into the pockets of the "dispossessed" owners created a new form of finance capital, with neither roots in industry, nor in the old city institutions. This needed new outlets & we in Britain saw an age of take over bids & the birth of asset-stripping. A new social stratification was created. A parasitic layer, who did not directly prey on workers, but on capitalists. A new robber-baron elite. Not truly capitalist, in that the capital that they provided was not destined for the expansion of industry, but using the verbiage of nineteenth century capitalism. It found in Hayek & his followers a pseudo-justification for its actions.

It was not an unprecedented emergence. When entrepreneurial capitalism triumphed after the Great Reform Bill it too pumped money into the pockets of the ancient regime. (the land-owners & the mercantilists.) & in the mid-C 19th there was a similar (temporary) political restoration of "Old Corruption". Obviously such a restoration could only be short-lived, despite the wealth gained in compensation, the parasites lack all roots in the economy, & thus cannot
survive as a restored ruling class.

But, however temporary the economic order that gave Thatcherism its raison d'être, we not only have a government able to command a parliamentary majority for (slightly modified) Thatcherism, but two opposition parties who give it no less support. All three parties regard the Thatcherite myths about wealth as unchallengeable truths, & Labour is eager to discipline anyone who criticises any Thatcher-type policy.

Obviously a dangerous trap yawns before us: while there can be no advance without debunking the Thatcherite lies, any mere re-statement of the Keynesian alternative would lead back to the same evils. That statist Left (whether Trot, Scargillite or Stalinist,) however much it might criticise Keynesian theory (as a departure from Marx) has always only differed from reformism in that it wants to reach the same ends faster.

There is an orthodox political consensus, of the three main parties, all regarding as sacrosanct economic policies that are essentially doomed. There is a statist Left consensus, (from Benn through Scargill's immediate followers to the Trots, & including the leaders of the Green Party,) which (with minor adjustments,) merely wishes to repeat the mistakes of the Forties. Then there is just the beginnings of a new radical generation, which at present looks to Scargill or the Greens, for its ideas, but which has grasped the need for direct action.

We need to reach that emergent generation. To do this we need to be near enough to Scargill for them to see that we are on the same side & far enough from Scargill, that they will see we have different ideas, and see a need to consider them. We have to meet the new generation both in terms of sharing in its direct action, & in terms of providing it somewhere it can share its own ideas & consider ours.

Many - if not most - libertarians will say that in suggesting getting this close to Scargill I am proposing an impermissible compromise. But even if we maintain greater distance: we have to debunk the Thatcher myths, but so do without leading the workers back to the statist cul de sac: we cannot, however, debunk Thatcherism without in some way aiding Scargill &/or the Trots: so the compromise is forced on us, however purist we may attempt to be. It is better under the circumstances, to weigh our options, to consider how we tread the thin path between liquidating our ideas & over-tower abstention.

By the same token of course, we cannot counter Scargill's & the Trots' statism, without in some measure providing ammunition for the defenders of Thatcherism, obviously including Blair & Asbourn. 1

Fortunately the way to push the statists faster than they wish to go, is the same, the more that we can make the links between Newbury type direct action and the direct activism element within Scargillism, the more we make the case against a return to bureaucratic collectivism.

Laurens Otter
Thanks for your sample copy of 3-4/86. I felt pleased & refreshed to read the open-minded article on David Stratman’s book (WE CAN CHANGE THE WORLD), and especially Larry Gunston’s piece on his experience of personal & intellectual liberation. I’ve realized a similar result from the study & practice of Buddhism, having seen some positive ideas but nothing really workable in the realm of politics as such.

I’d extend Larry’s remarks to say that, as he implies, much of our trouble comes from the fact that we tend to bothe the problems outside of ourselves only. We don’t want to admit that we too are flawed, fallible, and incomplete. But in fact, facing our own shortcomings is the only way forward. Sure, we can say that Marx is still valid and that Leninism & its offspring are perversions of Marxism, but we might want to ask ourselves why only the perversion has ever attained much “success” as “Marxism-with-power” (the Dalai Lama’s term, denoting his distinction between authoritarian versions of Marxism, and the compassionate & liberating aspects of Marxist theory.) Marx does contribute something to the problem of the later distortions of his ideas, since like other modern Western thinkers, he lost himself in the world of external phenomena, failing to realize the part his own consciousness played. Marx was unable to see how much his own unaware anger and resentment colored his thinking and expression.

This is why I see a lot of hope in realizations like Larry’s, Frank’s (in his review of Stratman’s book), and my own. We need to, and can, heal ourselves, (maybe with some help), and become the kind of people others will be interested in joining with. We need to live now as we would want to after the revolution (to the extent that we can), to not so much make the revolution as BE the revolution. Self-examination and self-awareness is the way to free ourselves from the old conditioning which controls us to a much greater degree than we might think. For a thorough introduction to this domain, I’d recommend the work of Thomas G. Sargent & Rick Blum, especially Sargent’s well-documented book, THE BEHAVIORAL & MEDICAL EFFECTS OF STRESS. (Available for $11.00 [price includes shipping] from Designed Change Pubns., 3 Columbia St., Hartford CT 06105.) While at first glance the title may seem to have little to do with what we’re discussing, the book demonstrates clearly how we’re controlled by past, unwanted learning, & how it can be un-learned.

It may be that the most fruitful thing we can do is first to admit defeat, like the alcoholic who begins the 12 Step program. The confirmed drunk is one who never admits defeat or significant error; s/he just blunders on, like capitalist America, insisting that s/he is right & not caring what harm & damage is left in her/his wake. Paradoxically, it’s only by admitting defeat & error that we can take a new course and continue growing; what appears to many to be weakness is in fact a great strength. If Marxism-with-power has so far resulted only in statist perversion, where do we go from here? Why is it that we’re able to gather so little support from the general population, even though there seems so much discontinuity to work with? I do think we need to begin, as I’ve said, with ourselves. From there I don’t know. Possibly we could develop small communities which would live “off the grid” while experimenting with the economic and social values we desire. If successful, these could also be a way that the general public could see the revolution at work in the flesh.

In closing, I’d like to comment on Frank’s statement regarding the economic basis of life & of the class struggle. It seems that Stratman in the relevant passages wants to emphasize values, & in fact researchers have found that workers are interested in work issues other than pay alone; in the book THE HIDDEN WOUNDS OF CLASS, which Stratman cites, workers valued autonomy more than pay in ranking their regard for various jobs and professions.
Also, it would seem that what we observe is not so much a determining of consciousness by economic conditions, as an interaction between the two: for example, Native Americans, partly because of their belief systems concerning their relationship to nature, never developed their environments as did the Christian West, which saw man as separate from nature and destined to subdue it.

Finally, although I don't like to admit it, I'm not aware of any historical examples of any social revolutions (other than Leninism) which came from a group of people trying to impose certain theoretical concepts ("successful" revolutions, that is, ones that lasted more than a brief time). Socio-economic systems grow up in some more or less organic way from their antecedents; they tend to be pragmatically based rather than conceptually based, even though concepts and ideology may be generated to justify and support the system. The American Revolution was actually a civil war more than a revolution; it extended the concepts of English politics and law, & didn't intend to revolutionize society (which helps explain how readily the new U.S. carried out its own imperial program & quickly realigned itself with its momentary enemy, Britain.) But the Constitution and Declaration of Independence contained seeds of radicalism which were tended by people prepared to go further with them than the Founders had been. In an age in which computers and satellites and other forms of electronic surveillance make organized, armed revolution less & less of an option, we will increasingly, I think, be called on to begin by revolutionizing ourselves (are sharing that with the people we encounter in our everyday lives; defeating the old system in ourselves & becoming ourselves the revolution may be, after all, the ultimate, & most effective, subversion.

David Lazarus

(from p. 5)

"Striking Times" details events in the international resistance to capital and the flyer gives us New Democracy's slant on the Staley Lockout. As usual we end with some notes, announcements, and short reviews.

BULLETIN MATTERS

Finances

Through the generosity of contributors the DB has climbed out of the red and can even show a small profit—at least until the copier goes haywire again. But this can be a real financial blow. A house call with no transplants or other major surgery now cost $75, up from $45. But let's look at the bright side; here are the figures:

Contributions: John Crump $10; Connie Furdeck $5; Rado Mijanovich $30, Joseph Tupper $50; Mark Manning $5; Herb Edwards $15; Heinrich Fleischer $17; Richard Whitney $4; Roy Beat $5; Joe Travascio $6; Harry Wade $25. Total $172. Thank you, comrades.

BALANCE April 19, 1996 (Deficit) $70.72

RECEIPTS

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(to p. 21)
Reinventing the Wheel:  
David C. Stratman: "We can Change the World - the real meaning of everyday life."

This is both a wonderful & a profoundly irritating book.

Wonderful, because coming, obviously, from outside the anarchist tradition the author has (without knowing) produced an update of some of Kropotkin's writings: showing that Mutual Aid is inherent in working class life and that, in times of struggle, this comes to the fore even more than usual.

Wonderful, because the author is good at dealing with the Leninist Left in the same abrupt terms that Herbert Read used to use. Also he argues a case for what he calls "Revolutionary Democracy", (a rank & file, direct actionist, libertarian, green & ethical socialism) in the same vigorous terms that Nick Acland used to use when he talked of "Vital Democracy." & launched Common Wealth.

Wonderful, because writing from an American angle, he interprets Mutual Aid, struggle and solidarity, in a way that with which those workers who think of themselves as being in middle class professions will empathize: - much like Colin Ward, or the "Libertarian Teacher" in Peter ford's day.

Irritating because for all that he has shed his belief in Marx & Lenin, and denounced their theories & philosophies, the author still accepts as good coin Stalinist-Maoist distortions of history.

Irritating to the point of exasperation, because the author thinks that the growth of resistance to the regime in China is a mixture of simple nostalgia for the days of Mao, & the recurrence of the ultra-Mao Red Guard Left: no doubt there is an element of that, the ethnic minorities & other "non-Believers" traders on the streets of Beijing or at the Great Wall. will produce amongst their other goods for sale, second hand & dog-eared copies of the English text of the "Thoughts of Mao." & the comment. "I have one" intended to prevent further solicitation. instead provoked lengthy conversations: but the idea that because the workers & peasants resist capitalist speed-ups & the introduction of the market economy, they therefore think Mao-type collectivisation was socially & desirably is balderdash.

Irritating beyond measure, because though the author appears to have read every book you can imagine by every political careerist; his knowledge of the Libertarian Left seems miniscule: a few references to Parvati 关星's & Maurice Brinton's work, a quote from Avrich, in turn quoting Velasquez, a one from Chomsky & that, unless one counts the fact that he takes Situationist claims at their face value is that. Similarly, though founders of the New Left, (not Foucault, but Socialist Humanists such as E.P. Thompson, Charles Hill, & Chuck Taylor.) not favourable mentions, the New Left is equated with the Maoist-Stalinist (Althusserian) perversions that arose after 1962.

The author (both in the role of teacher & that of parent.) has obviously been involved in some very worthwhile struggles; and (assuming his account is true.) when recounting these - wittingly or not - he writes what one would expect from a militant anarcho-syndicalist teacher: even though one might miss references to the writings of such libertarian educationalists as Ferrier, Homer Lane, Holt, Ilich, or Duane.

But when he recounts his political past, and he comments on the Left in the Sixties, one can only feel that his past must have been distorted by some curious alignments: when he gets to the Seventies, he is dealing
with a period in which he was himself active on a rank & file industrial level he had learnt to think as a socialist for himself, & no longer followed an elite party line, so then his history is sound, but in the Sixties it is not; & that what he rightly attacks in the movement of the past, are his own former beliefs.

Even when he writes about the USA, (the New Left therein,) he is unreliable. While rightly saying that the left of those days can be seen in terms of the Black Movement, the student movement, & the labour movement, (the feminist movement, at that point is only added as a sort of afterthought, & the anti-Vietnam War movement is subsumed under those headings:) so there is no understanding of how the earliest Black civil disobedience, bus struggles etc., started with War Resisters in the Forties, that it was the effect of that struggle that won the Supreme Court victory of 1954/5 which sparked off Montgomery & inspired later struggles. There is no understanding of the interplay between the early Civil Rights' struggles & opposition to nuclear weaponry. That of course makes his failure to appreciate the importance of resistance to the Vietnam War explicable.

When he writes about France, he implies it was all done by the Situationists: the movement round Cohn-Bendit gets nary a mention. Some comrades may remember the anarchist camp in Cornwall in 1968: we had a number of Parisians by then, & there. Two things distinguish them: none of them had played any part in les événements de Paris, they were all adept at disrupting libertarian meetings. Others may remember the attentions of a bunch of their co-thinkers to the London Anarchists' meetings a year or so earlier: they displayed the same characteristics, even, when, in at least two cases, they had been a year or so earlier extremely good Committee of 190 & Solidarity Group militants.

The Cultural Revolution in China, which tried to cut workers' wages, is described as an egalitarian movement trying to eliminate differentials between backward peasants & workers: with no mention of the fact that as part of it, Mao organized a movement of "millionaires & other capitalists" who published a pamphlet saying how they were prospering. No mention is made of the imperialist, racist & sexist characteristics of the Cultural revolution; nor of its brutality.

We are told it was a movement mobilised to comment on everything: not that though just before it was launched Mao had said "let an hundred flowers bloom," the main characteristic of the Red Guards was the suppression of all heterodox opinion, all dissenting political writings, all unorthodox artistic or cultural creations, and the imposition, of a mixed "socialist realist" & deeply nationalist culture. Like its predecessor, the Stalinist "Third Period," the Cultural Revolution mobilized mass hysteria, driven by a secret police state, in order to stamp out the last vestiges of autonomous workers' power.

Like the Stalinist Third Period before it the international effect of these policies were a very curious mixture. In the Thirties, while denouncing reformists & dissident communists as Social Fascists, the Communists had reciprocal membership with the Nazis in Bavaria for six months in 1928, & later, 1931, in Prussia allied with the Nazis for the Red-Brown Referendum. Mao similarly, while denouncing any social democrat or liberal progressive regime, found his allies in despotic monarchies such as Saudi Arabia.
Just as the Third Period & the Moscow Trials, the Yagoda & Yezhov mass purges that characterized them, bred - though in concentration camp conditions - all sorts of new dissent. As one set of butchers turned on another, and the reminders of the earlier secret police groupings, suddenly, after losing power, began to look at the society they had served and to produce a criticism based on the policies they had previously enforced, so the Red Guards produced their "Ultra Left." Stratman's description of these, - despite his illusions about the origins of their movement, - roughly accords with the reports that at the time, Kaya Donayeyskaya & others obtained.

Incidentally before he reaches his comments on the Sixties Left, he gives a friendly account of the 1984 Miners' Strike, evidently he was over here just after it, & interviewed many of its militants. Nevertheless we are treated to all sorts of wild statements that the NUM didn't try to challenge the general political culture of class society; (no doubt Sarg Ellis & others had both semi-stalinist & semi-reformist illusions, but nevertheless that is a nonsensical overstatement.) & that the NUM didn't - until after 9 months - try to spread the strike.

What happened certainly was that the NUM at first had to confine itself to trying to get other union leaders to bring their unions on; & that only later did the NUM appeal to members of other unions over the heads of their leaders. But if the rank & file is to call a General Strike, it does not need union leaders to call them; that was not happening, to appeal to the union memberships over the heads of their union leaders, was, unfortunately, under the circumstances, a gesture of confession of defeat.

Anarchists will see immediate encouragement that where he has a chapter, (Ch. 7.) entitled "Communism & counter-revolution" he is not contrasting the two but identifying them. The analysis (despite the residual Maoist misconceptions.) is much as we would make it, but (given that Maoism one must quibble occasionally; the October Revolution is said to have been led by the Bolshevik Party, when in fact only a minority of that party supported it, so that contemporary accounts attributed its leadership to the for smaller Maximilist Party;

the Bolsheviks is said to have been alone amongst the Social Democrat parties of Europe in opposing the war, in fact there were Bolshevik ("Red Bolshevik") "Social Patriots," & if we are to rely solely on majorities either the Italian Socialist Party, the British I.L.P., or indeed the Russian Mensheviks could dispute that unique title. What (arguably) distinguished the Bolsheviks was that they were in a position to expel from there faction - though, not from their party. - all those who supported the War;

the distinction between the bolsheviks & the mensheviks is totally mistated: the author seems unaware that it was over what constituted party work, in assessing how much work party members had to perform, & while the author is correct in saying that the Mensheviks thought that Russia couldn't have a socialist revolution, he wrongly thinks the bolsheviks disagreed;

the slogan, "the land to the peasants, the factories to the workers, all power to the Soviets," are said to have been coined by the bolsheviks; not the anarchists. The author would appear to be
unaware that when Lenin on his return to Russia, partially adopted these slogans the majority of the Bolshevik Central Committee tried to expel him from the party, arguing that he had abandoned Marxism. The word communism in July 1917 was still used as a term of abuse synonymous with anarchist, though it was applied by the Bolsheviks to Trotsky's Mensheviks as well as to the anarchist.

the author certainly seems to be unaware, that Lenin, (when in conflict with the rest of the Bolshevik leadership after he'd published the July Theses.) said: "the Party masses are ten thousand times more revolutionary than the party leadership, & the non-party masses ten thousand times more revolutionary than the party masses." Which in effect means that when it came to the crunch Lenin abandoned his belief "in a disciplined party of professional revolutionaries."

Stalinism though blamed for the crushing of the Spanish revolution, is excused for most of inter-war crimes, because it was forced to fight fascism, no mention being made of the times when Stalinists & Nazis were allies. WWII is portrayed as a time of revolutionary struggle, at a time when the C.P.G.B. was calling for the death penalty for strikers, ordering its members in the armed forces to inform against those who promoted socialism within the ranks. (We have the evidence for this revolutionism on the strength of the vilest of French stalinist hacks.)

We are told in France, Italy & Greece the Communists were the largest working class parties during the war & so played a major part in the resistance. It is not mentioned that the reason that they were the largest parties was that they started the war in France & Italy as allies of the Nazis, & were given a free hand at liquidating the leaderships of the rival parties. (In Greece they had massacred the bulk of the rank & file of such parties.) Nor that, in Italy, right back in 1929, the Communists provided Mussolini with the names, addresses, etc., of all non-Communists known to them.

We read of Stalin's attempts to prevent the Yugoslav & Chinese Revolutions; there is no mention that in these, Albania & Vietnam, the communists only turned to revolutionary action when communications with Moscow were ended & they misjudged Stalin's wishes; that by the time communications were re-established, the local leaderships, having put their heads over the parapets could not back down even if they wanted to do, so that they were forced to choose between total destruction & incurring Stalin's wrath. But there is no mention of the fact that in 1944 in Italy it was flown back to Italy to prevent a socialist revolution, (let alone that he succeeded,) nor that Thorez, in 1946, prevented one in France.

Yet despite all these manifold flaws, the author keeps coming back to advocating direct actionist, mutual aid based, workers struggle for self-liberation. If his view of the past fitted his present theory, he would be an anarchist.

The reviewer's assessment must be (given in examiner's terms:) "excellent beginnings, marred by previous bad instruction, there is a promise that in time this will be overcome, & much can be hoped for from this writer; nevertheless the student's grasp of history is weak, & this is an area where much attention & study is required."

Laurens Otter
On Redefining Reformism

Robin Cox's lengthy reply (DB*76) raises many side issues. I shall try to stick to the main point, which is that the argument he has been putting forward is not simply a matter of classification.

It has to do with practical, policy questions. What should be the attitude of Socialists to "the welter of movements and developments within capitalism?" (DB*76, p.128)

This question was decided by the Socialist Party of Great Britain in its early days. The position adopted was quite clear: a Socialist party can have only one aim - Socialism. To support or advocate reforms of any kind would only confuse the issue and sidetrack us from this aim.

Cox misrepresents the SPGB position on reforms. It is not, as he suggests, one of knee-jerk opposition to all reforms, but rather one of healthy scepticism. The key criterion being whether a reform would make Socialism easier to attain.

Since the main thing that stands in the way of Socialism is the fact that the working-class lack class-consciousness, I fail to see how Socialists advocating reforms of any sort could help bring Socialism any nearer. Surely the effect of such a position would merely be to blur the issue and confuse people as to what it is for which the Party really stands.

Cox argues that some movements and reforms should be re-labelled as "consciousness-raising". Obviously, this could apply to Women's Lib and anti-racists movements.

But it does not take a genius to see that people can be anti-racists, egalitarian, anti-sexist, etc without developing class-consciousness; without being opposed to capitalism; without acquiring Socialist consciousness.

Again, from the Socialist viewpoint, I cannot see any reason to support Cox's view that "consciousness-modifying" and "voluntaristic" activities hold out "the promise of progress even within capitalism". A progressive capitalism is still capitalism, still a class system which has to be opposed. However "progressive" it may be, however enlightened, it remains a system of exploitation.

To confuse the issue by combining our propaganda for Socialism with side-issues is not likely to further the Socialist cause. Our job as Socialists is to encourage class-consciousness, awareness of the urgent need for all workers "without distinction of race or sex" to recognise their common interest in ending the wages system and establishing Socialism.

In discussing the issue of elementary political rights, Cox quoted from the SPGB pamphlet Questions of the Day. The quote he selected - I use the term deliberately - was from the chapter on Socialism and the Less Developed Countries. It dealt with the situation in countries where, as yet, the workers are "only a minority of the population" (p.64, 1978 edition).

Oddly - and no doubt deliberately - he chose not to quote from the earlier chapter on Democracy and Dictatorship, which is rather more relevant, given that in Britain and America the workers are not a minority. Here the "lesser evil" argument is clearly opposed.

"We do not unite with non-socialist organisations which claim to be defending democracy, neither do we minimise the importance of democracy for the working class or the socialist movement.... Democracy for the working class can only be consolidated and expanded to the
Readers of D.B. may be interested to learn that, although Cox persuaded his branch of the 'Socialist' Party to circulate his ideas and put them forward at their party's conference, his argument was rejected, even by his own party.

Since he claims to write "as a member of the Socialist Party of Great Britain", even though his argument has been rejected by the Clapham-based party, this gives me the opportunity to advise D.B. readers that what he has said about our Party in this journal (72) in the past was misleading.

Further, the conference decision about the use of the short version of the party's name means that in writing letters to D.B. he must not use the full name of the party. He is, in fact, flouting the democratic decision of that conference. And, presumably, they will have to expel him. Just as, previously, they expelled those of us who stood out against such a nonsense, such an absurdity, as was that decision.

Or could it be that this whole silly question was merely got up as a pretext in order to justify and legitimise an old-fashioned Leftist purge?

To conclude: "a rose by any other name would smell as sweet". The point is not what a party calls itself (Hitler, Mussolini, Lenin and Stalin all claimed to be 'Socialists'). The question is what in fact it does stand for.

Do Cox and others who share his views really believe they can press for further democratisation of capitalism, for an extension of democracy, without confusing the issue, sidetracking workers away from the key point: their class interest in ending capitalism and establishing Socialism? However capitalism and its institutions may be improved, however 'democratic' they may be, this is a system which can never work in the interests of the working class. And, surely, we have had enough of wars "to defend democracy" in this century?

Finally, apologies to the hardworking editor of Discussion Bulletin for the mistaken reference to Robin Cox as editor of this journal. Accidental, of course. In an ideal world - Utopia - no doubt there will be no errata. Maybe.

Charmian Skelton

(from p. 15)

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**Balance**

June 19, 1996

$65.28

Fraternally submitted,

Frank Girard

for the DB
Dear Readers,

It is useful for socialists to have a declaration of economic independence. The one submitted by Constance Furdick in DB77 has flaws I believe. The declaration of independence written by Thomas Jefferson sought to give purpose to people fighting British tyranny and strengthen the cause of independence and freedom from foreign domination. That document accomplished its purpose because people identified themselves with it.

The current declaration of independence is not relevant to most people today because we do not strongly believe we are in the working class. Most people have been flattered into believing that they are in the middle class because they are not in extreme poverty or extremely rich. From a historical perspective the middle class was the growing capitalist class that rose in feudal society from noble families as well as from serf and craftsman families. Capitalists were lower than nobles and higher than serfs and workers - they were in the middle, for addition to being flattered that they are in the middle class, many workers are deceptively flattered that they are professionals and so can consider themselves better than blue collar and white collar workers. Socialists say that industry is run from top to bottom by workers. However, chief executive officers and the staff of managers are paid extremely well given perks and are encouraged to buy company stock at bargain prices so they may believe that their interests are the same as the other capitalists who own the company. When Marx was alive there were no government, union or company benefits as we have today. It was simple then - you either worked or starved. Today multitudes of people depend upon pensions, veteran benefits, subsidized or free medical care and welfare as well as unemployment insurance. If workers were to seize industry in a crisis as many Marxists expect, will most people today relish that prospect? When Marx was alive people were enslaved to their employer or to other employers in the district. He knew he was a wage slave and reacted personally to the people he worked for. It is different today because the worker works for business that often is owned by foreigners and they depend upon the government for many necessary benefits. Today people feel that they are enslaved by the capitalist system and they know that it is futile to strike out against the system.

The program of the Socialist Labor Party that Daniel DeLeon devised was credible in 1905 when DeLeon said in the preamble to the constitution of the I.W.W. that the way to socialism is to organize workers in industrial unions to run industry and at the same time organize the people politically to win a majority in elections. Our constitution provides for its amendment and DeLeon hoped to amend the constitution out of existence once his supporters won at the ballot box. Instead of a political government as we now have to govern society we will have an industrial government elected by the same people to govern society through industry that is necessary for life and happiness. This great revolutionary idea was put before the people for more than ninety years and it is now accepted by fewer people than ever before. After so many years and so
much effort only a few people can explain this program for socialism correctly and even fewer people try to learn about it.

One paragraph in this declaration of economic independence is a quote from Abraham Lincoln’s first inaugural address that is used to bolster Constance Furdick’s belief that we can do away with our constitution if the people vote to do it. It goes as follows; “This country with its institutions belongs to the people who inhabit it. Whenever they shall grow weary of the existing government, they can exercise their constitutional right of amending it, or their revolutionary right to dismember or overthrow it.” The quote was taken out of context because Lincoln did not believe the people in this country wanted to change the constitution or to have a revolution. He was not elected by a majority of the voters and in order to govern by law he told the people that they have the power to change the law of the land. Until then he is the legitimate chief as provided in the constitution. When the civil war was half over, after the battle of Gettysburg Lincoln said in the Gettysburg Address “this government of the people; by the people and for the people shall not perish from the earth.” The government Lincoln referred to was based on the Constitution in spite of the fact that it legalized slavery which Lincoln deplored.

Our constitution adapted itself to freedom for the slaves with the Civil War through necessary amendments. Now our constitution is not much different than it was with those amendments as far as provisions for working people are concerned. These times of rapid industrial advance requires that we amend our constitution to make the means of production social property, industry should be run democratically through industrial unions of workers in each plant and industry. All social production should be for social use and not for sale for profit, and decisions on how people should live in our society should continue to be provided for in our constitution.

Monroe Prussack
JOHN KERACHER was born in Scotland in 1880. In 1909, he emigrated to the United States, settled in Detroit and, some time later, became a shoe salesman. Early in 1910, he came into contact with the Socialist Party of America, founded in 1901. In April, he joined the Party.

Despite its name, the Socialist Party of America did not have as its objective—its sole objective—the establishment of socialism. It was a basically left-wing, social democratic, reformist Party with, at that time, hundreds of thousands of members and supporters. And prior to the First World War, almost every kind of radical and reformer could be found in its ranks. Of the Party, and the various publications which supported it, Keracher observed:

... I heard some of its members speaking about the Materialist Conception of History. I had never heard the term before and was curious to know just what it meant.

Approaching those members, I asked for an explanation. Soon, I discovered, as it seemed to me then, that there was something mysterious about it. They told me that they believed in it and were sure that it was quite scientific ...

meanwhile, I had subscribed to a number of socialist papers and started to read socialist books and pamphlets. Soon I noticed that there was much contradiction existing on socialist theory. The authors and editors held different views, often quite opposite, on important questions of principle. This was explained to me as a 'permissible difference of opinion on the part of the writers'. I was assured that everything was all right, that 'in a democratic movement, such as ours, much allowance must be made for individual opinion'.

(How The Gods Were Made)

Keracher was not satisfied with such answers. Directly opposite views could not both be correct. Something must be wrong, he felt which permitted such a wide range of opinion on the principles of socialism. John Keracher decided to find out for himself.

Among the books which I had bought were some by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels ... I turned my attention to their writings and after a time began to grasp what was meant by the Materialist Conception of History. The more I read of their writings the clearer it became to me. I began to overcome my former indefinite position on religion, and upon other questions, such as social reforms, the function of industrial organizations (i.e. the unions), the State, and other institutions. I came to the conclusion that if Marx and Engels were correct, a great many others calling themselves socialists, must be wrong. (How The Gods Were Made)

Soon after, Keracher initiated an ambitious education programme, throughout Michigan, based on the study of the writings of Marx and Engels. Out of this grew what was termed the proletarian University, in which Keracher was its most popular lecturer. Meanwhile, across the Atlantic, the Socialist Party of Great Britain had published, in 1910, a pamphlet titled Socialism and Religion, an analysis of religion based on the very Materialist Conception of History which had concerned John Keracher when he joined the Socialist Party of America. Copies of Socialism and Religion soon found their way to North America, and began to circulate within both the Socialist Party of Canada and sections of the SPA, such as Michigan and Detroit.
WAR AND THE REVOLUTIONARY TEA DRINKERS

The First World War came as a great shock to the Socialist Party of America. At first, America was not involved, but many American workers had relatives in Europe. So, reluctantly, many took sides in what was their masters' quarrel. Many Socialist Party members did likewise. Not so in Detroit, however.

In Britain, right from the start, the Socialist Party of Great Britain opposed the war. But, because of its opposition, and the harassment of many of its members, some went on the run or escaped abroad. This was to affect the already militant Michigan section of the SPA under the influence of Keracher and others such as Dennis Batt.

Detroit was the centre of the automobile industry, and the auto workers suffered intense exploitation which tended to make them more militant, and sympathetic towards socialist ideas, than elsewhere in the United States. Not surprisingly, therefore, the SPA in that city began to look towards anti-war Marxists in Europe in general, and Britain in particular. The Michigan section soon came under the influence of the SPGB.

In 1915, an active and charismatic member of the SPGB, Moses Barit, arrived in Detroit, to be followed some time later by another member, Adolph Kohn. Barit was soon holding lectures in Duffield Hall and elsewhere, and was joined by members of the Socialist Party of Canada. By 1916, Moses Barit had moved on (and was later jailed for his anti-war activities when America became involved) but Adolph Kohn continued propagating socialist ideas. Meanwhile, a small group in Toronto, across the border to north-east in Canada, had organized themselves as the Socialist Party of North America, and had adopted the object and declaration of principles of the SPGB. A number of members of the SPA in Detroit felt that it was time that Marxist socialists in the United States should break away from the reformist Socialist Party, and form a new revolutionary Party, also basing itself on the object and principles of the Socialist Party of Great Britain.

John Keracher and Dennis Batt were themselves very sympathetic towards the "revolutionary tea drinkers", as the pro-SPGB group was called; but they thought that for the time being, Marxists should remain within the SPA, and try to influence it towards socialism, rather than organize a new, separate, political party.

WORKERS AND PROLETARIAN PARTIES

NEVERTHELESS, particularly at the urging of Adolph Kohn, a small group finally decided to organize a new Socialist Party. And on July 7 1916, the Socialist Party of the United States, adopting the Object and Declaration of principles of the Socialist Party of Great Britain, was formed in Detroit. About 20 members of the SPA resigned immediately, including a young socialist named I. Rab. But due to the fact that the organization was unable to make effective contact with socialists outside Michigan, and was without funds, they only began with 42 members. Bill Davenport became the first secretary, Bill Gribble the first organizer and Lawrence Beardsley wrote the Party's manifesto. The writer, Jack London just before his death, resigned from the SPA, and wrote the new party: "I congratulate you and wish you well in your adventure." Meanwhile, the SPA in Detroit went from strength to strength, although the new Party's influence remained strong. Indeed, in August 1918, the SPA in Michigan, under John Keracher, founded a new journal, The Proletarian, and like the new Party adopted the Object and Declaration of Principles of the SPGB. The new Socialist Party of the United States, however, was informed that the SPA had copyrighted the name "Socialist Party" and so, for legal reasons, renamed their party the Workers' Socialist Party of the United States (WSP/US). (In 1947, it was renamed a second time as the World Socialist Party.)
John Keracher and the Michigan Socialist Party, which had become among the largest of the Socialist Party's state organizations, came more and more in conflict with the national leadership. In 1917, revolution broke out in Russia, followed by the Bolshevik coup d'etat. Although John Keracher was well aware that a socialist revolution had not occurred in Russia, he and most of the SPA members in Detroit, like many workers and radicals elsewhere, became a vehement supporter of Bolshevism. Not only did this mean the party of the ways between Keracher and the "revolutionary tea drinkers" of the WSP and the SPGB, but also, in May 1919, the expulsion of the Michigan section of the Socialist Party of America, ostensibly for the Michigan section's anti-religious stance, in violation of the Party's statutes.

At an emergency meeting of the expelled Michigan members in June 1919, a resolution was passed calling for a new revolutionary party, to be formed in Chicago on September 1; and on that date, Keracher, Dennis Batt and others from the expelled Michigan section of the SPA, took part in the founding of a Communist Party. (At two simultaneous conventions, in Chicago, two Communist parties were formed!); fundamental disagreements, however, soon made it impossible for Keracher and the Michigan group to remain in the newly-formed Communist Party. Almost alone (except for the WSP), Keracher, Batt and their comrades were the only "communists" who did not believe that a proletarian revolution was imminent in the United States. Keracher also opposed the Communist Party's clandestine and anti-electoral orientation, its dual unionism, its "federation of federations" and its reformism. So, within a few months, in January 1920, the so-called Communists first tried unsuccessfully to take over Keracher's Proletarian University by force and, then, charged him and the other Michigan members, with Menshevism, and expelled them.

Six months later, in June 1920, the expelled members and several others, founded the Proletarian Party.

**UNION ACTIVISTS**

THE membership of the Proletarian Party was never more than 500 at the most; its stronghold remaining in the industrial midwest, especially in Detroit, Chicago, Cleveland, Flint and Rochester. It sent a delegate to the third congress of the Communist International, in Moscow, in June 1921, yet despite efforts by CI officials to get the "Proletarians" to re-enter the American Communist Party, the Proletarian Party stubbornly refused to, and pursued its own course while still supporting the Communist International globally. Indeed, not until the mid-1930s, when Keracher opposed the Popular Front, particularly during the Spanish Civil War, did the Proletarian Party actually challenge the authority of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union internationally.

Notwithstanding the Proletarian Party's support for Bolshevism internationally, the proletarian Party remained a "Menshevik" organization, with a kind of Marxism that owed much to Engels, and little or nothing to Lenin. Its members were, like Keracher himself, deeply influenced by not only Marx and Engels, but also by Darwin, Lewis Henry Morgan and Joseph Dietzgen. And, in this very much like the WSP and SPGB, its activities consisted almost exclusively of study classes, forums, debates, lectures and outdoor "soapbox" meetings. Many of its members, however, were active Trade Unionists.

During the 1933 Briggs Auto Body strike in Detroit, Proletarian Party members were very active; and, later, they were involved in sit-downs in Flint and elsewhere. In the early days of the United Auto Workers, their speakers spoke to large crowds, and for a small organization, the Proletarian Party provided the UAW with a large number of its best organizers, such as Frank Marquart who was initially influenced by I. Rab and Emile Mazey. Many other members of the Proletarian Party became top officials of other unions, including Carl Berreitter of the International Typographical Union, Al Renner of the Restaurant Workers, and Sam Meyers of
the Retail Clerks. And many others. Yet the Party suffered a large turnover of membership. By 1940, it had lost much of its membership. And by 1971, the Proletarian Party just faded away. Nevertheless, John Keracher left his mark, not only in Michigan but even as far away as Britain.

He wrote countless leaflets, as well as articles for the Proletarian News. And some of his pamphlets, such as Producers and Parasites (1935), Crime—its Causes and Consequences (1937) and particularly How The Gods Were Made (1929), all of which were published, not by the Proletarian Party, but by Charles H. Kerr and Company of Chicago, which Keracher had taken over from an ageing Charles Kerr in 1928, found their way to Britain, and into the hands of members of the Socialist Party of Great Britain including this writer.

John Keracher left Detroit for Chicago in the late 1920s and remained there until about 1950, when he retired to Los Angeles. He died in 1958.

THE WORLD SOCIALIST PARTY

FOLLOWING the entry of the United States into the First World War in 1917, and the subsequent persecutions of radicals, socialists and anti-war groups, the members of the WSP were forced to go underground, curtail their activities or to move away from Detroit, to other parts of the United States. And, like Keracher some members of the WSP supported the Bolsheviks, at least for a time. During the infamous Palmer Red Raids of 1919, thousands of workers, including socialists, were arrested.

Nevertheless, despite the difficulties, members of the WSP in Detroit carried on as the Detroit Socialist Educational Society between 1919 and 1922. In 1921, I. Rab moved from Detroit to Boston where he worked tireless for socialism, for many more decades. The Detroit Local of the WSP came and went over the years; and at one period, during the 1950s, it took over the functions of the WSP National Headquarters. At the moment of writing, there is no active local of the World Socialist Party in Detroit.

PETER E. NEWELL, Colchester, England

SOURCES:

The Monument, Robert Barltrop.
Encyclopedia of the American Left, edited by Mari Jo Buhle and others.
The Western Socialist, No.4, 1966.
Producers and Parasites, John Keracher.
Letter from Ronald Elbert, 30 March 1996.
STRIKING TIMES

Fire ants, Greece in Oct: A shipyard workers resist a closure confrontation policy.
Workers the world over are battling for better wages and conditions, against sackings and management attacks. Trade Unions are generally on the bosses' side. The strongest struggles are self-organised and spread to involve other workers and the community. This is a class war which will only be won by the working class community taking over all workplaces and resources, and running things for need not profit.

A wildcat strike in protest at planned job cuts by printers of the Herissant group at Roissy, outside Paris, prevented production of 3 newspapers on 21 Sept and on 10 Oct 8 million French public sector workers staged a 24-hour walkout in protest at the pay-freeze imposed by the government.

PRESS GANGS

On 4 Sept, 8 people were arrested as over 3,000 strikers and supporters blocked the gates of the Detroit News and Free Press's distribution plant in Sterling Heights, Michigan, USA. Delivery vans tried to crash through but were met by a hail of rocks and sticks. 2,500 workers walked out on July 13 over wages, staffing levels and work rules. For more info on US industrial struggles see Collective Action Notes, PO Box 22962, Balto., MD 21213, USA.

Following an 80% solid general strike on 25 Sept in protest at its economic policies, the Paraguayan government has charged union leaders with sedition. 10,000 municipal workers in Johannesburg struck, on 26 Sept, in solidarity with colleagues in 4 provinces demanding wage increases. They overthrew bins and scattered rubbish before being attacked by police with stun grenades and tear gas. In Sept, with inflation running at 100%, the Turkish Coalition Government was brought down after mass strikes by workers responding to a 5.5% pay offer.

REAL ANGRY

In the southern Spanish city of Cadiz, workers from the threatened shipyard and that of nearby Puerto Real, where the anarchistCNT has a strong influence, held an angry demo on the eve of the planned closedown of the 2 yards. "The time of good faith deeds has ended and the time for action has started," a speaker told the crowd, "We must fight, fight, fight!" After the demo, over 1,000 workers, along with local youth, battled police for more than 2 hours before going on a night-long rampage, burning barricades, smashing shopfronts and wrecking the ruling Socialist party's Cadiz offices. A branch of the savings bank Unicaja was ransacked when the rioting continued for a second night.

BLOW FROM BELO

The full force of the neo-Stalinist Belorussian state has been used to break a strike by transport workers. The government has introduced scab labour, imprisoned union activists, threatened to suspend groups and papers supporting the strike and banned union activity on the Minsk Metro as it sacks Metro workers. Meanwhile, international capitalism gave its backing to the repression in the form of a £200m loan from the IMF, issued on 12th September.

Since June 94, bus drivers in Esbjerg, Denmark have been involved in a battle against the privatisation of the local bus company by the council. The struggle escalated after the company, Ribus, removed toilets and proper restrooms, cut pay by 25% and sacked union activists. The workers began their latest strike on 10 Feb without the support of union leaders. Denmark's longest ever strike has seen mass pickets blockade the scab buses and suffer brutal police attacks which have only served to strengthen the strikers' resolve. Support committees have been set up in Esbjerg, Copenhagen and elsewhere. There are daily pickets of 100-200 and weekly mass pickets of 300-500 which prevent the scab buses leaving. The support committees organised a national day of action, in which 250,000 workers took part in the biggest solidarity strike in Danish history.

LABOUR vs WORKERS

FACED with wage cuts of £10 to £45 a week, residential care workers in Liverpool have resisted the use of sackings & other methods to break the strike by the Labour Council. In one home, Council Managers were sent to sledgehammer down doors barricaded against scabs by children in care. On 23rd September, strikers and supporters marched through Liverpool.

Similar attacks on wages & conditions were being resisted by Merseyside Firefighters & gaining massive public support. From 8 Oct, strikes were escalated to 24-hour stoppages. The London run Authority spent £14 million in one week by using the Army's green goddesses during previous strike action.

"We've had enough!" A solidarity strike in support of 5 Liverpool dockers sacked by Toride after refusing overtime without notice, escalated when another 15 refused & were sacked. After another 60 refused, all 80 were dismissed. By 6th Oct, the port was at a standstill as T&GWU union leaders failed to back the show of solidarity. "We've had enough and they aren't going to get away with it any more" declared an angry docker.

The lesson of a successful strike against Labour proposed Library cuts in Sheffield, earlier in '93, was the strategy to escalate the dispute by winning the solidarity of all 'leisure' workers.

Wobblies inspire victory

INCENSED by Union capitulation to compulsory redundancies, IWW members at Stevenson College, Edinburgh organised a pledge of resistance, which attracted the sup-
THE STALEY LOCKOUT and the MEANING OF STRIKES
A NEW DEMOCRACY Flyer

From June 27, 1993 until December 22, 1995, 740 workers from the A.E. Staley Co. plant in Decatur, Illinois were locked out of their jobs for refusing to accept contract concessions. Before the lockout workers waged an in-plant struggle against the company to try to force it to improve safety and to protect their contract. Once they were locked out, Staley workers stepped up their fight and inspired working people around the country. The most remarkable thing about the three-year struggle is not that the locked-out workers sent over 100 “road warriors” around the country to explain their fight and organize support. The most amazing thing was that, after repeated betrayal by AFL-CIO officials, and after nearly three years of living on $60 a week, and being gassed and arrested at the plant gates, and after the International union forced the local to vote twice on a contract which they had already rejected, they still nearly rejected it again, voting to accept by only 256 to 226.

What does the courage of the Staley workers tell us about the meaning of their struggle?

THE MEANING OF CLASS STRUGGLE

The Staley story shows that, while safety or wages are the occasions of strikes and other working class struggles, their real meaning lies deeper and causes workers to fight long past the point where costs of the fight far exceed the economic benefits of any possible victory.

Class struggle is a fight over what kind of values should shape society and who should control it. The commitment of the Staley workers came from knowing that they were acting on their deepest values: belief in solidarity with each other and with working people everywhere, belief in equality and opposition to exploitation. They were standing up and declaring, “This is who we are and what we believe in. And we are willing to fight for the world as we think it should be.”

THE VALUES OF WORKING PEOPLE

The Staley workers are not alone in their beliefs. Recent mass strikes in France and the Detroit newspaper strike have the same underlying goals. The London Observer quotes one French striker that, for the past 15 years “The only criteria which counted were financial...ideas of progress, such as solidarity, were pushed back... This movement has perhaps seen a return of these values, a return of genuine solidarity.” The Detroit strike was triggered by workers’ opposition to merit pay, what one striker referred to as “suck-up pay, favoritism pay.” Another declared, “It’s about standing up for what you believe.”

In Detroit and France as in the Decatur “war zone,” the elite are trying to force people to compete with each other. Working people’s hatred of that mentality has drawn a battle line between opposing values: solidarity versus sucking-up, unity of working people versus competing to get ahead. These strikes represent the mobilization of workers around class values of solidarity and equality which reject the “me-first” values of capitalism. Their driving force is a vision of society as it should be.

HOW TO WIN THE CLASS WAR

We cannot attain our goals unless we openly declare them. We cannot defeat the corporate attack unless we challenge the world-view behind it. The way to win the class war is to make the real goals of our struggles explicit—to declare that we want a new society based on equality, solidarity, and democracy, and to mobilize working people worldwide on this basis.

There are two key steps to take:
1) Spread the message. Strikers should spread as widely as possible an explanation of the immediate issues in their strikes in the context of class struggle in the U.S. and the world. They should also explain the underlying issues by talking about what kind of values they respect and what kind of society they are trying to build. They should declare their goal of a world based on solidarity and equality.
2) Spread the strike. Strikers should call on other workers to support them by striking themselves—for their own demands, in solidarity, and for a new society.

We should make every strike a base for a working class movement challenging the goals, values, social vision, and power of capitalism.

The most radical way forward is also the most practical. We have a world to win.

New Democracy works for democratic revolution. Call Doug Fuda: (617)323-7213, or write New Democracy, P.O. Box 427, Boston, MA 02130. Internet: http://users.aol.com/newdem/newdem.htm. E-mail: newdem@aol.com.
On May 1 Lydia Muncey died in Ann Arbor, Michigan at the age of 94. She and her late husband Ralph were charter members of SLP Section Washtenaw County, organized in 1950. They resigned from the SLP along with the other dissenters in 1969. She and Ralph were active in the attempts to found a new national DeLeonist organization in the years that followed. By 1980 they gave up on this effort and along with a few others in Michigan, including Glen Johnson, whose obit was in the last issue of the DB, organized the Industrial Republic Association of Michigan, which had some ties to the Industrial Union Party. They published and distributed their own literature and remained active to the very end. Lydia was a kind, intelligent, soft-spoken woman who retained her mental faculties even as her physical strength waned.

David M. Lazarus, 66 Cameo Dr. Willimantic, CT 06266. "...would like to connect with any anarchist, syndicalist libertarian communist, etc. groups in Spain. I'm researching what life was like in the areas of Spain controlled by these elements during the Civil War and would like to obtain materials and memorabilia related to this including secondhand books on the subject in English and Spanish. (Please describe items including condition and price.) Letters in English preferred but Spanish is OK."

Pierre Lanneret, Atlas Camille: A Biography. followed by Third Camp Internationalists In France during the Second World War. This slender volume (51 pages) contains a biographical sketch of Lanneret as well as a translation of the historical sketch of non-Stalinist resistance to the German occupation Lanneret wrote for a French Trotskyist journal. Born in 1921, Lanneret was too young to be drafted for France's short period of military resistance to Hitler in 1939-40. During the occupation he made contact with the French underground resistance and with the anti-Stalinist ultra left groups ending up finally in Socialism or Barbarism, whose leading theoretician became Paul Cardan (Castoriadis). The text and footnotes provide the only reasonably clear explanation of the evolution of the ultra left in France that I'm aware of. Lanneret emigrated to Canada in 1951, working there at his trade as a printer. After seven years in Quebec he removed to California where he resumed political activity. After sampling the political groups in the Bay area, he settled for International Socialists (I.S.) the lineal descendant of Max Schachtman's brand of Trotskyism. Especially interesting are his observations on the ultra left in the Bay Area, taken from his correspondence: "The S.P. is dead; it only has a few old foggies left in the whole country...The group with the largest following is unquestionably the Socialist Labor Party, that venerable organization of Daniel De Leon's devotees. They are solidly organized and certainly have a number of pretty good people. However it would take some providential epidemic to rid the party of its eighty-year-olds so that the younger members can express themselves--assuming they have something to say..." In the early seventies he saw News and Letters and Internationalism, later a part of the International Communist Current (ICC) as the only alternatives to I.S., the group he had joined.

Lanneret's text, Third Camp Internationalists in France during World War II, is largely a history of the French left beginning in 1921 with the split in the French socialist party that resulted in the organization of the Communist Party. As in the bio, the reader gets a clear idea of the forces at work in the opposition groups that arose after Stalin grabbed power. Lanneret's sketch ends with a fairly detailed description of the repressive role played by the Stalinists in the French resistance to German occupation. Although it isn't mentioned in the book, Echanges et Mouvement made arrangements for its publication. L3.00 (about $6) from Phoenix Press, PO Box 824, London N1 9DL, England.
**The Real Deal: Labor's Side of Things** is produced by the Puget Sound General Membership Branch, Industrial Workers of the World. A twelve-page bimonthly in half-standard sheet format, its first two issues, March and May 1996, contain a good mix of labor history, labor struggle in the Seattle area, and IWW news. Articles include “Seattle Attacks Electronic Tech,” “Viva Zapata! (A Tribute from 1919),” “Benefits of IWW Membership,” “‘Microsoft Town’: The Inside Story,” and “Seattle Unemployed Lose ‘Hygiene Centers.’” Copies sell for 50 cents. -- from the Puget Sound IWW, PO Box 20752, Seattle, WA 98102

**Rebel Worker** is the monthly paper of the Anarchist-Syndicalist Federation, the Australian section of the International Workers Association (IWA). Something about Australia or perhaps Australian workers seems conducive to the longevity of militant labor papers, witness the *Anarchist Age Monthly* reviewed in DB77 and the review that follows this. The May 1996 issue was the 135th; it is in its fifteenth year. RWs twenty half tabloid pages concentrate on Australian labor struggles, some of which involve corporations with U.S. facilities like Nestles or else issues like sellout capitalist unions--one headline: “How to Recall a Union Rep Bosses’ Stooge.” Other articles cover the anarcho-syndicalist movement in Spain and Sweden, gun control (the author opposes it on the grounds that “An armed population, in particular an armed working class, will help them [the military] resist that temptation [to] obey an order to fire on workers in a picket line.” “Kennett’s Private Prison Industry,” a major article in this issue details the Australian activity of two U.S. corporations, Wackenhut and CCA (Corrections Corporation of America), which are also in the business of exploiting slave labor in the U.S. Gulag. Readers will also be interested in the listings of Jura News, the ACF’s literature arm. The list of new titles amounts to 58, many of which are not available here, even from A K Distribution. $20 per year surface mail from PO Box 92, Broadway, Sydney NSW 2007, Australia.

**Red & Black: an Anarchist Journal** appears to be an individual, rather than an organizational effort. Number 26, the autumn 1996 issue of this quarterly, suggests more than six years of continuous publication. Interesting to me because of my membership in the SLP, of which the Bulgarian Federation was a major part, is “Revisiting Bulgaria” by “Jack,” apparently J. Grancharoff, the publisher. It seems reasonable to guess that he immigrated to Australia after WWII and returned for an anarchist congress that turned out to be a disappointment. He bases his pessimism on the old age of most of the 300 participants, the materialism and lack of individuality promoted by years of Communist Party government, and the current manifestations of New World Order capitalism. Like most libertarian socialists the author recognizes that time is on the side of human liberation in Bulgaria as elsewhere. This issue also includes major articles on anarchist art, Richard Wagner, the corporate state and the Zapatistas. The last of these, translated from Italian carries some information about this movement that I hadn’t read before. $10 per year (make checks payable to J. Grancharoff) from PO Box 12, Quaama, NSW 2550, Australia.

**Cosmic Dialectics: Joseph Dietzgen’s Libertarian Philosophy** (1996 Red Lion Press) is Larry Gambone’s latest effort to rescue “the Tanner” from undeserved obscurity. His influence, according to Gambone, “died with the demise of the anti-authoritarian movement. It was displaced by the “Dialectical Materialism” (an oxymoron if there ever was one) of the vulgar Marxists, Georgi Plechanov and Karl Kautsky. The Communist Party finally obliterated anything that was left.” Gambone’s outline sketch of Dietzgen’s philosophy occupies the bulk of his twenty-page (plus wraps) pamphlet. In it he
summarizes Dietzgen’s egalitarian views about thought and his ideas about materialism, absolute truth, cause and effect, the problem of language, science, and other aspects of philosophy. While it strikes me that Gambone gives the SLP a bad shake in regard to the Haymarket Affair, his pamphlet is well worth reading, not just for the review of Dietzgen’s work but also for the historical explanation for its eclipse and replacement in the socialist movement by more authoritarian philosophical systems. $2.60 from A K Distribution, PO Box 40682, San Francisco, Ca 94140.

*Democracy & Nature* (formerly *Society and Nature*) has had a name change because of a dispute over what should be its relationship to the generality of “green leftism,” which seeks a convergence with the capitalist market system and its political manifestations. The newly named D & N retains the anti-capitalism stance of S and N as well as the support of Murray Bookchin and apparently the great majority of the editorial board. D & N and *Social Anarchism* have the distinction of being the only slick covered, book-size theoretical/academic journals in our political sector. Much the larger of the two at 173 pages, number 8 is the “Democracy and Liberalism” issue and carries articles by Bookchin: “Communalism, the Democratic Dimension of Anarchism,” Castoriadis: “The Problem of Democracy Today,” Fatosoulos: “Toward a New Conception of Democracy, and others.” Most of the contents are readable except for Castoriadis, who in this instance has given new meaning to the term “linguistically inaccessible” at least as it is related to my powers of comprehension. D & N is published three times per year. A single issue is $9.50; a one-year sub $25 from PO Box 637, Littleton, CO 80160.

*From the Bottom Up: Three Texts by Anton Pannekoek.* In DB76 this department carried a review of the pamphlet (34 pages + wraps) and managed to omit information on how to order it. The price is $2.50 in the U.S. and £3 in the U.K. from Collective Action, PO Box 22962, Baltimore, MD 21203.

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