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ABOUT THIS ISSUE

In Noam Chomsky we libertarian socialists probably have the closest thing to a popular spokesperson we have had since Eugene Debs in his IWW period or Bill Haywood. By occasionally identifying himself as an anarchist or anarcho-syndicalist he has gained our support and respect. And certainly he is hard to beat for name recognition. So why does this issue bash him? Well, in part Chomsky bashes himself. It was he who wrote the passages that the liberal editors of The Progressive selected from his most recent book Class Warfare and printed under the title “You Say You Want a Revolution?” It urges us to forget our revolutionary ideas and go what’s possible under the existing system. The review of Class Warfare that follows comments on the inconsistency of Chomsky’s anti-capitalism—or at least anti-corporatism—his identifying himself as an anarchist, and his reformist solutions to social questions.

ABOUT THE DISCUSSION BULLETIN

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

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

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

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You Say You Want a Devolution

BY NOAM CHOMSKY

Imagine yourself in the office of a public-relations firm trying to turn people into ideal, manipulatable atoms of consumption who are going to devote their energies to buying things they don’t want because you tell them they want those things. They’re never going to get together to challenge anything, and they won’t have a thought in their heads except doing what they’re told. A utopia.

Suppose you’re trying to do that. What you do is get them to hate and fear the government, fear the bigness of the government, but not look at the Fortune 500, nor even medium-sized businesses, not ask how they work. You don’t want people to see that. You want them to worry about the one thing they might get involved in and that might protect them from the depredations of private power. So you develop a mood of anti-politics.

That’s what has happened in America. People hate the government, fear the government, are worried about the bureaucrats.

Take, say, health care. There’s a lot of concern that the government bureaucrats will be controlling it, yet there are many more bureaucrats in insurance offices who are already in control. But that’s not what people worry about. It’s not those pointy-headed bureaucrats in insurance offices who are making us fill out these forms and telling us what to do, and we’ve got to pay for their lunches and their advertising while they propagandize us. That’s not what people’s anger is focused on. What it’s focused on, after a very conscious manipulation and a perfectly rational design, is this dangerous federal bureaucracy.

What’s going on now with the attempt at devolution—the effort to reduce decision-making to the state level—makes great sense if you believe in tyranny. Devolution could be a step toward democracy, but not when you’ve got private tyrannies around.

General Electric is not influenceable by the population except very indirectly through regulatory mechanisms, which are very weak and which they mostly control anyhow. But you can’t vote to decide what GE ought to do, and you can’t participate in those decisions.

When you’ve got private tyrannies around, the only institution that at least in part reflects public involvement, that can cope with them, is the federal government.

Let’s say you send block grants down to the states. Even middle-sized businesses have all kinds of ways of pressuring states to make sure that this money ends up in their pockets and not in the pockets of hungry children. Devolution under these circumstances is a great way to increase tyranny and to decrease the threat of democracy as well as to shift resources even more dramatically toward the rich and away from the poor. That’s the obvious consequence of the current devolution.

But I’ve never seen it discussed in the mainstream. What’s discussed are complete irrelevances, like whether we can trust the governors to care for the poor.

What’s that got to do with anything? It’s totally meaningless. But that kind of absurdity is what’s discussed, not the obvious, overwhelming fact that distributing governmental resources to the lower levels will simply make them more susceptible to the influence and control of private power. That’s the major fact. And it’s part of the same anti-politics: to weaken the federal government.

But not all of the federal government is being weakened. It’s just being channelled.

The security system is expanding, not only the Pentagon, but even the internal security system—jails, etc. That’s not just for control, although it’s partly for that. It’s also a way of transferring resources to the rich, which is virtually never discussed.

In fact, this manipulation is almost off the agenda, unless you read the business press. But it’s overwhelmingly significant. It ought to be a front-page article every day.

By now the sham is so obvious it’s hard to miss. The Russians are gone. The Pentagon’s budget stays the same; in fact, it’s even going up.

It’s there for the same reason it always was. How else are Newt Gingrich’s rich constituents going to stay rich? You obviously can’t subject them to market discipline. They’ll be out selling rags! They wouldn’t know what it means to exist in a market.

What they know is, the government puts money in their pockets, and the main way it does so is through the whole Pentagon system. In fact, the criminal security system is beginning to take on this character. It’s reached, if not the scale of the Pentagon, a sufficient scale so that the big investment firms and even the high-tech industry, the defense industry, are getting intrigued by the prospects of feeding off another public cash cow. So it’s not that the government is getting weaker.

But the long and very successful effort over many, many years to get people to focus their fears and anger and hatreds on the government has had its effect.

We all know there’s plenty to be upset about. The primary thing to be upset about is that the government is not under popular influence. It is under the influence of private powers. But then to deal with that
by giving private, unaccountable interests even more power is just beyond absurdity. It's a real achievement of doctrinal managers to have been able to carry this off.

The new Republicans represent a kind of proto-fascism. There's a real sadism. They want to go for the jugular. Anybody who doesn't meet their standards, they want to kill, not just oppose, but destroy. They are quite willing to try to engender fear and hatred against immigrants and poor people. They are very happy to do that. Their attitudes are extremely vicious. You can see it all over.

Take the governor of Massachusetts, William Weld, who's supposed to be a moderate, nice-guy type. Just last week every day in the newspapers there was another headline about forcing people out of homeless shelters if he didn't like the way they lived.

Some mother took a day off to take care of a mentally retarded child. OK, out of the homeless shelter. He doesn't like that. He thinks she should work, not take care of her child.

Some disabled veteran didn't want to move into a well-known drug den. OK, out in the street.

That's one day. The next day he says state social services have to report to the INS if they think somebody may be an illegal immigrant. Then that person gets deported. Which means that person's child gets deported. The child could well be an American citizen. So American citizens have to be deported, according to the governor, if he doesn't like their parents being here.

This is day after day. Pure sadism. Very self-conscious.

Weld is not a fool. And he's trying to build public support for it by building up fear and hatred. The idea is, there are these teenage kids who are black by implication (although you don't say that in a liberal state) who are just ripping us off by having lots and lots of babies. We don't want to let them do that. So let's hate them and let's kick them in the face. That's real fascism.

And that's the liberal side. It's not the Gingrich shock troops. That's the liberal, moderate, educated side. This aggression runs across the spectrum.

In the long term, I think the centralized political power ought to be eliminated and dissolved and turned down ultimately to the local level, finally, with federalism and associations and so on. On the other hand, right now, I'd like to strengthen the federal government. The reason is, we live in this world, not some other world. And in this world there happen to be huge concentrations of private power that are as close to tyranny and as close to totalitarianism as anything humans have devised.

There's only one way of defending rights that have been attained, or of extending their scope in the face of these private powers, and that's to maintain the one form of legitimate power that happens to be somewhat responsible to the public and which the public can indeed influence. So you end up supporting centralized state power even though you oppose it.

I would propose a system that is democratic, and you don't have democracy unless people are in control of the major decisions.

And the major decisions, as has long been understood, are fundamentally instrument decisions. What do you do with the money? What happens in the country? What's produced? How is it produced? What are working conditions like? Where does it go? How is it distributed? Where is it sold?

Unless that range of decisions is under democratic control, you have one or another form of tyranny. That is as old as the hills and as American as apple pie. You don't have to go to Marxism or anything else. It's straight out of the mainstream American tradition.

That means total dismantling of all the totalitarian systems. The corporations are just as totalitarian as Bolshevism and fascism. They come out of the same intellectual roots, in the early Twentieth Century. So just like other forms of totalitarianism have to go, private tyrannies have to go. And they have to be put under public control. Then you look at the modalities of public control. Should it be workers' councils, or community organizations, or some integration of them? What kind of federal structure should there be?

At this point we're beginning to think about how a free and democratic society might look and operate. That's worth a lot of thought. But we're a long way from that.

The first thing you've got to do is to recognize the forms of oppression that exist. If slaves don't recognize that slavery is oppression, it doesn't make much sense to ask them why they don't live in a free society. They think they do. This is not a joke.

Take women. Overwhelmingly, and for a long time, they may have sensed oppression, but they didn't see it as oppression. They saw it as life. The fact that you don't see it as oppression doesn't mean that you don't know it at some level. The way in which you know it can take very harmful forms for yourself and everyone else. That's true of every system of oppression.

But unless you see it, identify it, understand it, you cannot proceed to the next step, which is: How can we change the system?

I think you can figure out how to change the system by reading the newspapers that were produced by twenty-year-old young women in Lowell, Massachusetts, 150 years ago, who came off the farms and were working in the factories. They knew how to change the system. They were strongly opposed to what they called "the new spirit of the age: gain, wealth, forgetting all but self." They wanted to retain the high culture they already had, the solidarity, the sympathy, the control. They didn't want to be slaves. They thought that the Civil War was fought to end slavery, not to institute it.

All of these things are perfectly common perceptions, perfectly correct. You can turn them into ways in which a much more free society can function.
CLASS WARFARE: Interviews with David Barsamian by Noam Chomsky, 1996, 185 pages paperback. $15 from Common Courage Press, P.O. Box 702, Monroe, Maine 04951.

For over thirty years Noam Chomsky has been fighting the good fight, using his talents as a writer, researcher, and speaker against the effects of capitalism. His unrelenting criticism of the economic and political decisions of the ruling class from the Vietnam War to the current rollback of social programs spearheaded by the “Contract with America” have made him the best known opponent of U.S. foreign and domestic policy. In this latest volume he comments on the stepped up economic offensive against our class, the militia movement—which he sees as one form of working class resistance, the consequences of the technology that permits the instant global transfer of wealth, and other aspects of international capitalism. Chomsky’s occasional advocacy of libertarian socialism or anarchism—as in Notes on Anarchism, his response to a questioner in the video Manufacturing Consent in which he identifies himself as an anarcho-syndicalist, and for matter his statement in the final paragraphs of “You Say You Want a Revolution” above—has also endeared him to the anti-reformists of the Discussion Bulletin’s political sector.

Why then do I come away from a Chomsky tape or book with the feeling one gets from drinking decaffeinated coffee or eating sugar-free ice cream? I suspect that part of the dissatisfaction stems from my early experience in the Socialist Labor Party. I grew used to talks and reading articles about poverty, war, racism, and the like that did more than lay bare the facts. They traced the cause to the workings of the profit system and called unequivocally on workers to abolish capitalism and build a socialist society. Articles in the SLP’s Weekly People, used to end forthrightly—if rather monotonously—with “Capitalism must be destroyed!” “Organize for socialism.” “Build the Socialist Industrial Union!”

In contrast with this explicit call to revolutionary anti-capitalism, Chomsky and the radical left as we see them in Z Magazine and elsewhere prefer a less direct style. The target is not capitalism or free enterprise or the market system or the wages system as such, although that idea may be in the back of their minds. Instead it’s “the corporations” and the solution to our problems is real “democracy.” Little attention is paid to capitalism as the economic system that has created the framework for exploitation by little as well as big business and which holds the power to control governments at all levels. Solutions to the problems Chomsky exposes so well tend to focus on how to remedy the situation within the existing economic system.

This isn’t to say that he doesn’t spell out the ultimate objective occasionally, but then all leftwing reformists used to pay it lip service—until the New Deal sucked in the social democrats and the revolutionary fervor of the Communist Party gave way to the reformism of the anti-fascist Popular Front and later to winning capitalism’s WWII. In fact, I think that few DB readers would argue with the broad landscape of the alternative social system he presents. The trouble is that although Chomsky may toy in an idle moment with the thought of an alternative social system, he sees his role as that of alerting people to the need to combat the effects of capitalism. Like dozens of other leftists and radicals who apparently lack his insight into the capitalist cause of social problems, he dreams the impossible dream: that through capitalism’s political system (mismnamed democracy) the people can castrate the corporations, control the media, take over the banks, and relieve the economic misery so many of us find ourselves in.
Ordinarily Chomsky is content to lay bare the facts about the system and allow his readers to draw their own conclusions about the course of action they should pursue. Unfortunately the Republican revolution and the "Contract with America," seem to have changed his thinking about his role as mere observer and reporter. In this book he advises his readers as to the action they should take, and his advice is disheartening to put it mildly. We are urged to forget the ultimate objective and try to save existing social programs. "There's only one way of defending rights that have been attained, or of extending their scope in the face of these private powers [the corporations], and that's to maintain the one form of illegitimate power that happens to be somewhat responsible to the public and which the public can indeed influence. So you end up supporting centralized state power even though you oppose it." (See elsewhere in this issue the essay "You Say You Want a Devolution," consisting of passages selected from Class Warfare and edited for publication in the March issue of the Progressive.)

If one looks back as Chomsky apparently does—as in a chapter heading, "The Return of Predatory Capitalism,"—to the kinder, gentler, and presumably "non-predatory" capitalism of FDR's New Deal, Kennedy's Camelot, Johnson's War Against Poverty, and even Nixon's administration—"the last liberal president" according to Chomsky—then the immediate task is to do what we can to stop neanderthal Republicans and support the more enlightened element within the capitalist political system. Although he doesn't say so directly—unlike Gus Hall and the Communist Party—that can only mean playing capitalism's political game by voting for the more humane of the capitalist politicians—in this presidential election that would be the friend of hungry children, Bill Clinton. Ironically as capitalist politics stack up now, the enlightened—pro Clinton—element in the ruling class are largely the bankers and ultra large corporations which Chomsky identifies as the enemy, while the small business, local Chamber of Commerce types are the backbone of support for Gingrich, Dole, and company.

Should revolutionary socialists read Class Warfare and continue to hold Chomsky in high regard? The answer to both questions is yes. We can't find more complete information or a better analysis of the forces that have produced capitalism's present all-out attack on the working class. But if you are looking solutions or a fightback strategy, go elsewhere.

Frank Girard
WHO IS CHOMSKY?

Noam Chomsky is probably the most well-known American anarchist, somewhat curious given the fact that he is a liberal-leftist politically and downright reactionary in his academic specialty of linguistic theory. Chomsky is also, by all accounts, a generous, sincere, tireless activist, which does not, unfortunately, confer his thinking with liberatory value.

Reading through his many books and interviews, one looks in vain for the anarchist or any thorough critique. When asked point-blank, "Are governments inherently bad?" his reply (28 January 1988) is no. He is critical of government policies, not government itself, motivated by his "duty as a citizen." The constant refrain in his work is a plea for democracy: "real democracy," "real participation," "active involvement," and the like.

His goal is for "a significant degree of democratization," not the replacement of political rule, albeit democratic rule, by a condition of no rule called anarchy. Hardly surprising, then, that his personal practice consists of reformist, issues-oriented efforts like symbolic tax resistance and ACLU membership. Instead of a critique of capital, its forms, dynamics, etc., Chomsky calls (1992) for "social control over investment. That's a social revolution." What a ridiculous assertion.

His focus, almost exclusively, has been on U.S. foreign policy, a narrowness that would exert a conservative influence even for a radical thinker. If urging increased involvement in politics goes against the potentially subversive tide toward less and less involvement, Chomsky's emphasis on statism in itself gravitates toward acceptance of states. And completely ignoring key areas (such as nature and women, to mention only two), makes him less relevant still.

In terms of inter-governmental relations, the specifics are likewise disappointing. A principal interest here is the Middle East, and we see nothing but an anarchist or anti-authoritarian analysis. He has consistently argued (in books like The Fateful Triangle, 1983) for a two-state solution to the Palestinian question. A characteristic formulation: "Israel within its internationally recognized borders would be accorded the rights of any state in the international system, no more, no less." Such positions fit right into the electoral racket and all it legitimizes. Along these lines, he singled out (Voice of Dissent, 1992) the centrist Salvadoran politician Ruben Zamora when asked who he most admired.

Chomsky has long complained that the present system and its lap-dog media have done their best, despite his many books in print, to marginalize and suppress his perspective. More than a little ironic, then, that he has done his best to contribute to the much greater marginalization of the anarchist perspective. He has figured in countless ads and testimonials for the likes of The Nation, In These Times, and Z magazine, but has never even mentioned Anarchy, Fifth Estate, or other anti-authoritarian publications. Uncritically championing the liberal-left media while totally ignoring our own media can hardly be an accident or an oversight. In fact, I exchanged a couple of letters with him in 1982 over this very point (copies available from me). He gave a rather non-sequitur, pro-left response and has gone right on keeping his public back turned against any anarchy point of view.

Chomsky's newest book of interviews, Class Warfare, is promoted in the liberal-left media as "accessible new thinking on the Republican Revolution." It supposedly provides the answers to such questions as "Why, as a supporter of anarchist ideals, is he in favor of strengthening the federal government?" The real answer, painfully obvious, is that he is not an anarchist at all.

Long a professor of linguistics at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, he achieved fame and fortune for his conceptions of the nature of language. Professor Chomsky sees language as a fixed, innate part of some "essential human nature" (Barsamian 1992). Language develops along an intrinsically determined path, very much like a physical organ. In this sense, Chomsky says language "simply arose" (1988) and that we should study it as "we study any problem in biology" (1978).

In other words, language, that most fundamental part of culture, has no real relationship with culture and is a matter of instinct-driven formation through biological specialization.
Here, as everywhere else, Chomsky cannot even seem to imagine any problematics about origins of alienation or fundamental probings about what symbolic culture really is, at base. Language for Chomsky is a strictly natural phenomenon, quite unrelated to the genesis of human culture or social development. A severely backward, non-radical perspective, not unrelated to his unwillingness—this "anarchist" of ours—to put much else into question, outside of a very narrow political focus.

The summer 1991 issue of Anarchy magazine included "A Brief Interview with Noam Chomsky on Anarchy, Civilization, & Technology." Not surprisingly, it was a rather strange affair, given the professor's general antipathy to all three topics. The subject of anarchy he ignored altogether, consonant with his avoidance of it throughout the years. Responding to various questions about civilization and technology, he was obviously as uncomfortable as he was completely unprepared to give any informed responses. Dismissive of new lines of thought that critically re-examine the nature of civilization, Chomsky was obviously ignorant of this growing literature and its influence in the anti-authoritarian milieu.

Concerning technology, he was, reluctantly, more expansive, but just as in the dark as with the question of civilization. His responses repeated all the discredited, unexamined pro-tech clichés, now less and less credible among anarchists: technology as a mere tool, a "quite neutral" phenomenon to be seen only in terms of specific, similarly unexamined uses. Chomsky actually declares that cars are fine; it's only corporate executives that are the problem. Likewise with robotics, as if that drops from heaven and has no grounding in domination of nature, division of labor, etc., etc. In closing, he proclaimed that "the only thing that can possibly resolve environmental problems is advanced technology." Yes: more of the soul-destroying, eco-destroying malignancy that has created the current nightmare!

In the fall of 1995 Chomsky donated much of the proceeds from a well-attended speech on U.S. foreign policy to Portland's Freedom and Mutual Aid center, better known as the local anarchist info-shop. As if to honor its generous benefactor appropriately, the info-shop spent the money first of all on a computer system, and several months later financed a booklet promoting the info-shop and the ideas behind it. Among the most prominent quotes adorning the pamphlet is one that begins, "The task for a modern industrial society is to achieve what is now technically realizable." The attentive reader may not need me to name the author of these words, nor to point out this less than qualitatively radical influence. For those of us who see our task as aiding in the utter abolition of our "modern industrial society," it is repellent in the extreme to find its realization abjectly celebrated.

John Zerzan

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(from p. 32)

women under capitalism mirrors that of their husbands, brothers, and fathers and that the emancipation of women will come with the emancipation of the working class as a whole. This position, which makes good sense to me, has gone out of fashion--at least stated so baldly--even in some non-market socialist groups. 15 pages plus wraps, 50p/$2 postpaid from the Socialist Party of Great Britain, 71 Ashbourne Court, Woodside Park Road, London N12 8SB, England.

The Anarchist Resistance to Franco: Biographical Notes by Antonio Tellez consists of pictures and short biographies of 17 young men who were executed during the guerilla war against Franco from 1946 to 1963. This is the first English translation of the pamphlet which was originally published in Spain (Barcelona, 1991) as the published version of the catalog of a pictorial exhibition designed to preserve the memory of the resistance. According to Tellez's preface "The clandestine struggle against the new
A REPLY TO LAURENS OTTER

In his review of my book, *We CAN Change the World: The Real Meaning of Everyday Life* ("Reinventing the Wheel") Laurence Otter falsifies much of what I say while ignoring the central theses of the book. Otter’s misrepresentations are so numerous that I must limit myself to dealing with just a few.

In regard to China: Otter says, "...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."

I think nothing of the kind. What I say is that:

The goals of workers and peasant in the [1989] struggle...were not so clearly articulated [as the goals of the elite students], at least not in the Western media. Workers and peasants called for an end to inflation and unemployment, and they too were against corruption. But it hardly seems likely that the Chinese masses were in favor of more of the reforms that have ravaged their lives in the last few years. More likely is that the uprising expressed deep popular revulsion against the changes in Chinese society brought about by the [capitalist] reforms....the capitalist reforms attacked the egalitarian and collective relationships which reflect traditional peasant values and which have been central to Chinese life since the revolution of 1949.

The values of Chinese workers and peasants and their goals for the society are embodied in their social relations....To fulfill the vision of society implicit in these values, however, will require the overthrow of the Communist party and the transformation of Chinese life by the people themselves.(pp. 223-24)

This is not "simple nostalgia for the days of Mao" but acknowledgment of the fact that the lives of ordinary Chinese have been under ferocious attack since 1976, and especially since the economic reforms of 1982, as the Chinese Communist Party seeks to undermine collective relationships among people and throw them into a cauldron of competition and insecurity.

This is not to defend what the Chinese had before 1976 as desirable, any more than pointing out that the capitalist rulers of the U.S. and Great Britain are cutting social welfare programs with the same purpose—that is, to make people vulnerable and desperate—is to defend these programs. I believe that Chinese working people need to overthrow Communism now—after Mao—and I felt that they needed to overthrow Communism when Mao was in charge and they still had "the iron rice bowl" and other social guarantees.

My analysis of Mao and the Cultural Revolution is apparently too nuanced for Otter to deal with. I point out that the Chinese Revolution had two aspects: "On the one hand it was an authentic mass revolutionary movement, which articulated the struggles and aspirations of the vast Chinese peasantry and others. On the other hand it was a movement tightly controlled and directed by a Marxist-Leninist hierarchy, which channelled the revolutionary energy of the people according to its own interpretation of the needs and possibilities of social change in China."(p. 108) "[The relationship of the Communist Party to the people] was one of dictatorship—a dictatorship...which became increasingly oppressive after Liberation in 1949, as the party consolidated its power...."(p. 110)

I show that the Cultural Revolution began as a factional struggle within the Chinese elite but that, when Mao encouraged ordinary people to criticize the Party, people seized the opening
provided and began to submit the whole oppressive regime of Chinese Communism to questioning. As one ex-Red Guard wrote, "Mao Tse-Tung ignited the revolution but he could not control it....The genuine revolution was born from the pseudo-revolution." There were in effect two Cultural Revolutions, just as there were two Red Guards: the original Red Guards, encouraged by Mao and recruited from Beijing University and other elite schools and with close ties to party cadre; and the second, "rebel" Red Guards, who "were not attached by blood to the party and were prepared to attack it." (p. 112) The original Red Guards were a conservative force. It was they who were guilty of the "red terror" against "bourgeois consciousness" among the people, which was a means of deflecting criticism of the party.

The struggle took many twists and turns, but when "the masses" overstepped the bounds and began to make genuine revolution against the Communist party, Mao intervened savagely. I examine at length the ideas of the "ultra-left" in the Cultural Revolution—before it was wiped out by Mao—and show that "The ultra-left was defeated because it stayed trapped within the Marxist conception of people and change which had brought forth the Red bureaucracy it was up against....It could not enable the Chinese masses to realize their ability to make a revolution of a new type, without the party and without Mao." (p. 116)

In regard to the New Left in the U.S.: The recurring theme of We CAN Change the World is that it is impossible to build a popular movement for revolutionary democratic change without a positive view of and approach to ordinary people—though one would never guess this from reading Otter’s review. Focused on his own idiosyncratic view of history, Otter manages completely to miss the point of my discussion of the New Left and the student movement in the U.S. in the ’60s. I show that the New Left accepted the profoundly elitist and anti-democratic ideas of people such as Herbert Marcuse and others which cut it off from working people and doomed it to fail:

To the extent that the New Left [following Marcuse] depicted the working class as "partners and beneficiaries in global crime," it was carrying out the most important of tasks for the ruling class: convincing the growing movement that ordinary people were the problem in society rather than the solution. (p. 92)

What began as an open and expansive movement experimenting with new democratic forms degenerated into sectarianism and terrorism.

In regard to the British miners strike and the National Union of Miners: I devote a chapter of We CAN Change the World to a discussion of the British miners’ strike and the year-long strike of American meatpackers at the Hormel plant in Austin, MN. My point in this extended discussion is to show that these struggles, which were focused on the specific issues of pit closures in the miners’ strike and safety and wages in the meatpackers’, had a deeper meaning which came through in interviews with the strikers. Participants in these strikes persisted in the struggle at great cost to themselves and their families because the strikes had an unspoken goal of creating a society which reflected the egalitarian values and solidaristic relationships of the working people involved in them. My extensive interviews with strike participants showed that “In the values and relationships which were the strength of the strike, the miners and their wives and supporters were creating an image of the world as they believed it should be. They were creating the potential basis for the transformation of the whole society.” (p. 40)

According to Otter I make “all sorts of wild statements that the NUM didn’t try to challenge the general political culture of class society...& that the NUM didn’t - until after 9 months - try to spread the strike.” This is not at all what I say.
What I do say is this: The government's tactics in the strike were to present itself as the voice of progress in closing pits which were "uneconomic," and to depict any violence on the picket lines as the result of the miners' selfish refusal to accept the inevitable. The National Union of Miners, however,

made little organized attempt to answer either of these charges. Virtually all the resources of the union were thrown into the picket lines....There was no attempt at a mass public education campaign, no attempt to reach the public with an analysis of the real issues and the significance of the strike for the whole working class....With the exception of a couple of leaflets produced locally in South Wales over four months into the strike, there was no literature produced by the NUM to members of other unions or the general public until the year-long strike was 9 months old. These few pieces, when they came, were wholly inadequate.(p. 39)

The above statement was based on interviews with 34 participants in the strike, including NUM officials. If Otter has evidence to the contrary, let him cite it.

In my view—which is hardly unusual on this point—the attack on the miners by the government was part of a larger offensive by British capital to smash the organized power of the working class, to force it to submit to the idea of civilization imposed by the capitalist class.

Given the significance of the capitalist attack, I argue that

The choice for the miners was to accept the government's characterization of being dragged unwillingly into a capitalist future, or to point to a revolutionary future which they, and the rest of the working people of Great Britain, could create together....It would only have been in going beyond trade unionism to adopt revolutionary goals that the importance of reaching out to other unions and the public, or of explaining the relationships among the issues which confront the working class, or of posing the alternative futures which lie open to Britain....would have been clear. Given the determination of the ruling class to break the union, the NUM could have won only by changing the game.(p. 41)

I would not characterize this as a "wild statement," and I stand by it. I make a statement referring to the Hormel strike which applies to the miners as well: the "weaknesses of the strike...were a function of the extent to which the real goals of the struggle were not spelled out and acted upon....In fact the condition for winning either their short-term or their long-term goals was the same: the strikers had to state openly that they were trying to organize a working class movement for fundamental change, and carry out a strategy reflecting this purpose."(p. 43)

Why did neither the NUM nor Local P-9 carry out such a strategy? I state that "These strikes were defeated by the absence of a concept of change capable of expressing their real significance."(p. 44) Neither of the unions had ready to hand a vision of a new society which could articulate the real goals of the strikers and behind which they could have organized a revolutionary movement of the working class. We CAN Change the World is an attempt to answer this need by constructing a new revolutionary vision to replace the failed model of Marxism and by showing that revolutionary change is indeed possible.

In regard to Stalin and WWII: As Otter acknowledges, my chapter, "Communism and Counterrevolution," shows that Communism has played a consistently counterrevolutionary role in the twentieth century:
The history of Communism subsequent to 1917-1921 was true to its beginnings. As the Soviet state consolidated its power and recruited former members of the bourgeoisie into its fold, its distance from the ordinary people of Russia increased, along with its need to crush any authentic revolutionary aspirations among party members or workers. The Communists ruthlessly exploited the working people and peasants, and with growing cynicism used the prestige of this first "socialist" revolution to mask their real role in Soviet and world society. (p. 150)

I show that this counterrevolutionary role was not due, as some have argued, to a defensive need by the USSR to defend "socialism on one country." I argue that the Soviet ruling class stood in the same relation to workers in the Soviet Union as capitalist rulers stood to their working classes; the Soviets acted to suppress revolution chiefly because "the Soviet Communists' fear was that revolution from below in Europe would lead to revolution from below in Russia, and the end of the Soviet ruling class." (p. 156)

Referring to the Popular Front approach of the Comintern beginning in 1935, I point out that, "While the alliance with capital was justified by Communist leaders as a temporary tactic to forestall the Fascist advance, in fact it too was a function of the nature of the Soviet regime as much as of the international situation...In 1934 Stalin had begun the great terror...The Communists were liquidating the remnants of the October Revolution at home; it only made sense that they liquidate their nominally revolutionary policies abroad as well." (p. 150)

Yet Otter claims that in my book, "Stalinism...is excused for most of inter-war crimes, because it was forced to fight fascism...." I can't imagine what Otter is referring to here. Since Otter, here as elsewhere, never refers specifically to any alleged statement of mine, it is impossible to tell. Otter's writing is more a smear than a book review. (Otter seems upset that I refer to the resistance forces in Occupied Europe as Communist-led. If I am incorrect on that point, I'd be glad of information to the contrary rather than mere ranting.)

Apart from Otter's misrepresentations is the fact that he totally ignores the main theses of my book. The purpose of We CAN Change the World: The Real Meaning of Everyday Life (Boston: New Democracy Books, 1991), is to show that revolutionary change is possible, but only on the basis of a new understanding of the role of ordinary people in society. I show that Marxism and capitalism are based on the same paradigm of history and human development, and I put forward several theses:

1. Communism and socialism failed as alternatives to capitalism because they accepted capitalism's view of people: that economic development is the basis of human development, that self-interest is the primary human motivation, and that ordinary people are a passive mass or a dangerous problem. The basis of a new and democratic society is a new view of ordinary people.

2. Most people in their everyday lives struggle against a culture based on competition and exploitation to create relationships based on equality and commitment to each other. This means that most people are trying to create a better world. This effort is not pure or unmixed in people's lives, and people are not necessarily aware of the meaning of their efforts. But whatever equal and committed relationships people have in their lives, they have created by struggle against a culture based on inequality, competition, and exploitation. People's everyday lives have revolutionary meaning. The everyday struggle of ordinary people to humanize the world is the force which creates both the wealth of society and whatever positive human relationships and values exist within it.
3. Class struggle is a struggle over what values and relations should shape society, what goals it should pursue, and who should control it. Class struggle is a struggle over what it means to be a human being.

4. Revolution to create real democracy is both necessary and possible. Revolution is necessary because the problems we face are rooted in a system of elite rule that controls people by attacking relations of solidarity and equality. These problems cannot be solved one by one, or without creating a new society. Revolution is possible because the struggle of working people to humanize the world is the force that drives history, and because the vast majority of people want what only a revolution can make possible: a truly democratic society based on equality and commitment to each other.

Otter does not deal with my ideas, except to say approvingly (and this is high praise) that they represent an update of Kropotkin on Mutual Aid. (I was unfortunately unaware of Kropotkin’s wonderful book when I wrote mine. I don’t have space here to discuss the relationship between Kropotkin’s views and my own, except to say that they are certainly complementary and closely related. Kropotkin’s are more ambitious, extending as they do to the entire animal kingdom; mine are more focused on political analysis and the struggles of everyday life.)

If there is any of Otter’s criticism that is justified, it is that my book reflects considerable ignorance (though not as much as Otter alleges) of the libertarian left. I can only plead that the ignorance was not willful (I made numerous unsuccessful attempts, for example, to obtain some—any—of Anton Pannekoek’s writings), but reflects the marginalization of the libertarian left.

I fail to see, however, how this changes anything. My critique of Marxism still stands, as do my criticisms of the liberal, socialist, and Communist left. My insistence that a new revolutionary movement can be organized only on the basis of a new and positive view of ordinary people likewise is not at all diminished by the fact that such great writers as Kropotkin have criticized Marx before me or themselves had an understanding of human motivation profoundly different from capitalism and Marxism.

Honest debate is a crucial part of clarifying our understanding of the world and enabling us to build a revolutionary movement. Dishonest or misleading characterizations of another’s writings have no place in the discussion. Otter appears to be playing a bizarre game of academic one-upsmanship rather than honestly trying to judge what will and what will not help us to change the world. If Otter means to carry on his attack on my ideas, let him cite page and text and discuss what I really say rather than what he imagines.

Dave Stratman

*We CAN Change the World: The Real Meaning of Everyday Life*, by David G. Stratman (Boston: New Democracy Books, 1991) is available from New Democracy Books, P.O. Box 427, Boston, MA 02130 for $3.00, postage included ($5.00 U.K., postage included).
A Further Reply to Frank Girard:

In his letter in DB #77 responding to my earlier piece, Frank Girard effectively articulates the Marxist point of view toward people and human nature. I feel I should begin this somewhat lengthy reply to Frank by explaining why I think it is worth our while—and the reader's time—to pursue this discussion.

In his landmark book, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Thomas Kuhn makes the point that scientists do not abandon a paradigm or model for understanding the world, no matter how much that model may seem to have failed, unless there is a new paradigm to take its place. In my view, Marxism is in a profound state of crisis. Communist regimes which, rightly or wrongly, have claimed Marx as their progenitor, have collapsed. Marxist parties in advanced capitalist countries—that is, operating in those societies which Marxism would lead one to believe would be best suited to the growth of Marxist movements—have become marginalized or reformist or both. The idea of global revolution against capitalism, to create a new society based on cooperation and sharing, is in retreat even while such a transformation seems more and more necessary.

Marxism remains the most coherent and fully-articulated body of revolutionary ideas. All who are conscious revolutionaries and all who yearn for a better world are affected by the crisis of Marxism, which has led to a crisis in the idea of revolution itself.

I believe that the task before us on which all our success depends is to construct a new way of seeing the world—a new paradigm for how the world works and how revolution can be made—which makes revolution possible.

I am very grateful to Frank, a dedicated revolutionary and a Marxist, for his willingness to engage in the debate and to carry it in the pages of DB. Though Frank and I disagree on some very important points, we are in full agreement on the goal of creating a new society. I hope that the readers find that this debate, while it may not change any minds, may at least help to clarify our revolutionary goals so that we may succeed in them together.

**Human Nature and Class Values**

Frank asks, "Is there a particular proletarian form of human nature not shared by the 10 percent of the population who, because they own capital, exhibit a different and capitalist kind of human nature? I submit that there is only one kind of human nature..."

Of course there is only one "human nature," and I do not argue otherwise. What I do argue is that human nature, while it is neither good nor bad, is social, and that the social nature of human beings leads us to value those relationships with other humans which most express and develop our social nature. Equal and collective relationships most support full human development; most human beings have sought to establish equal and collective relationships throughout history and in mankind's prehistory as well, regardless of the state of economic development. The source of revolution against exploitation, inequality, and competition is rooted firmly in our nature as human beings.

I do not see human productive activity as unimportant. On the contrary, I see the question of the role of classes and of individual human beings in relation to production as central to defining their values.

In their struggle to shape nature and human relationships to meet the needs of human development, working people create the bases of human life. Workers' role in production both expresses and reinforces fundamental human values of collectivity, equality, and solidarity.

Capitalist values and ideas about human life are also rooted in the relationship of capitalists to productive activity and to other human beings. Capitalists as capitalists do not labor; rather, they exploit the labor of others. In capitalist culture, the sanctioned relationships to other human beings are selfishness, competition, inequality, and exploitation.

Throughout *We CAN Change the World*, my point is to show that revolution is possible because working people are the active source not only of all material wealth but also of all that we recognize as positive values in society—values such as equality, solidarity, and
democracy—and that most people are engaged in a daily struggle to shape the world with these values. I maintain that working people are the active subjects of social change—that is, that they have goals and values opposed to capitalism which they actively pursue, rather than simply passive interests the fulfillment of which requires “socialism.” I show that the revolutionary transformation of society is the logical end and only possible fulfillment of the goals and struggles of the great majority of the world’s people.

I counterpose my views to Marxism, which sees economic development as the basis of human development and which accepts the capitalist idea that self-interest is the fundamental human motivation. As Marx put it, “every individual seeks only his particular interest.” Marxists do not see working people as having any moral qualities different from capitalists. Thus Frank says,

Certainly capitalists can and do show the same qualities in everyday life that workers do. Capitalists too can demonstrate nobility of character, self-sacrifice, class solidarity, kindness and love within their families, sometimes in the same struggles in which they are opposing and oppressing workers. By the same token, workers, when their economic condition endangered, can exhibit the same level of barbarism and betrayal as our rulers.

In the Marxist view, working people do not have any values of their own as a class; they simply respond to the appropriate stimuli to fight for their interests. This explains why in an earlier piece I described Marxists viewing workers like “pigeons in a psych experiment.”

Since they do not see workers as having any values of their own, Marxists must deny that workers’ actions in class struggle have moral significance beyond self-interest, as Frank does in his references to the Hormel and Staley workers. Frank says,

The fact that David Stratman and we see the struggles of the Hormel and Staley workers as heroic and of the corporations as villainous reveals more about where we happen to be situated in the class structure than it does about any inherent set of virtues our class possesses.

For Marxists, the working class and capitalist class are morally equivalent forces in a history driven by economic development.

In We CAN Change the World I analyze the Hormel meatpackers’ strike to show that the real meaning of class struggle lies much deeper than the economic issues which are the occasions for strikes, and leads people to make sacrifices in strikes which make nonsense of the idea that they are motivated by self-interest. The Hormel strikers continued their struggle at great cost to themselves and their families long after the possibility of winning on the stated issues had passed. They continued not from hope of economic gain—though a raise to $10.69 an hour was certainly one of the original issues—but because they thought that they were fighting a cause of importance to all working people, and their belief that it was the right thing to do.

In a speech to Boston supporters seven months into the strike (after the International union had already betrayed the local), Pete Winkels, business agent for Local P-9, said:

Our people are never going to get back what we’ve already lost financially. We know that. But we’re fighting for our families and for the next generation. And we’re not going to give up.

The phrase “for our families and for the next generation” in Pete’s speech has to be interpreted as meaning “for our class,” since it was precisely the strikers’ families who were suffering the most, as the strikers lost their insurance, their cars, their jobs and, many of them, their homes. I report a number of interviews with striking Hormel meatpackers in which I ask them why they would continue a strike where they had already lost more economically than they could possibly hope to regain, even in the by-then totally unlikely event that they would win.
Vicki Guyette, wife of the local president, replied, "I hope I never have to go through another one. But if the situation was the same, I'd be all for it. It's the right thing to do, and you can't compromise on right." I asked a Hormel meatpacker from Ottumwa, Iowa, who was fired for refusing to cross a roving picket line set up by strikers from Austin, MN, why he would sacrifice so much for a struggle that wasn't even his own. He replied, "My father fought for my generation, and I'm going to fight for the next one."

In a speech I made during the strike to Local P-9 and their families, I said "Your strike is really over what it means to be a human being." There was a tremendous outpouring of emotion as the strikers and their families got to their feet and cheered.

What does Frank, from his Marxist point of view, make of all this? He simply says that "the worker Stratman quotes in his book as saying that he is striking for his children and grandchildren means that he wants to preserve the economic basis of a higher quality of everyday life than the capitalist class is willing to grant."

In regard to Frank's comment about capitalists "showing the same qualities in everyday life that workers do": In my view a capitalist—a person who by definition values profit over human beings and is driven by selfishness—cannot, as Frank says, "demonstrate nobility of character" or "self-sacrifice" while acting as a capitalist. If a capitalist does act nobly or selflessly, he is acting in spite of his role in society and the values of his class, not because of them. When a worker acts in an egalitarian and solidaristic way, he is acting consistently with the role and values of his class. Thus even if some capitalists were to act nobly as human beings, the two classes are not morally equivalent.

A capitalist may indeed attempt to deal with his wife and children with kindness and love, even while he is treating thousands of employees with brutality and exploitation. The capitalist's attempt to create in his family "a haven in a heartless world" is, after all, consistent with my argument that loving and supportive relationships are most satisfying to human nature.

But the values of human beings are profoundly affected by their role in production. If a man is an exploiter in relation to human activity outside the home, how likely is it that his way of relating to other human beings will not finally seep like poison into his relation to his family?

Also note the contrast here. If a capitalist bestows kindness and love on his family, he is attempting to preserve one small piece of the world from the capitalist values of competition and selfishness with which he is trying to shape the rest of the world. In bestowing kindness and love on their families, working people are trying to shape a piece of the world over which they have relative control with their values of solidarity and equality. When workers' collective confidence increases, they build strikes and movements and revolutions to shape the whole world with equality and cooperation and solidarity. (I have just been reading Gaston Leval's book, Collectives in the Spanish Revolution, which illustrates very well the outcome when working people can shape the world with their values—just as the triumph of the Francoist forces shows what happens when the elite succeed in shaping the world with theirs.)

Individual Workers and Class Values

My view that human nature is social and that workers' role in creating the bases of human life both expresses and reinforces collective values does not suggest that working class life or the actions of individual workers are "pure" or are determined by this role. The conflict over what values and relationships should shape human life go on in all parts of society and in every person's life. Nothing is automatic. We can contribute to others or we can exploit them. We are always more or less free to choose how to relate to others. Individual human beings are always under conflicting influences and pressures which affect whether they will, for example, act in solidarity or scab on a strike; or, far more commonly in everyday life, whether they will act supportively or competitively with their wife or husband or friends or co-workers.

My point is not to show that ordinary people lead blameless lives. That would be ludicrous and also irrelevant. The point is that, whatever positive values exist in society, they do not come from politicians or priests or capitalists or economic "experts" or from blind economic forces. Rather they come from the struggle of ordinary people to create human life and to fill
it with meaning.

Capitalism Versus Human Nature

Why is it important to show that the drive to revolution is rooted in human nature and that working people share revolutionary values rooted in human nature and expressed in their role in society? Let me mention just a few reasons.

One is that it helps make the case that capitalism is not human nature. The feudal ruling class claimed that their rule expressed the Will of God and was therefore eternal. The capitalists claim that capitalism is human nature and so cannot be changed. I show that capitalism, far from expressing human nature, can only survive by attacking those things most fundamental to us as human beings: our understanding of ourselves and each other and our relationships to other people. Human consciousness and connectedness are enemies of capitalism and must be attacked and misdirected by the exploiters if they are to stay in power, and they devote tremendous energy and resources to this task.

A second reason is that it helps conscious revolutionaries realize that we are fighting for goals which most of the world's people also share. We are not alone, and we can win.

A third is that it helps us to understand the lives and struggles of working people in a new way, and to deal with people with the respect which they deserve. An important reason why New Democracy flyers "have legs" and are circulated by many working people in their workplaces and to friends is that they can recognize themselves in them. Our flyers are really about people rather than just about economics, and assume that the people we are addressing share the values of equality and solidarity and the goal of revolution.

The Logic of Marxism

On another question, Frank says, "As to the 'Marxist paradigm,' I'm not sure exactly what Stauman includes in the paradigm." Actually on pp. 162-163 of We CAN Change the World I enumerate exactly what I consider to be the essential elements of the Marxist paradigm. (I failed to cite this in the index, however.)

My point in discussing the Marxist paradigm there is to show that, while Marx made statements which contradict Leninism (such as his often-quoted statement that "The emancipation of the working class must be the work of the working class itself"), the logic of Marx's thought leads to Leninism. If history is determined by economic forces beyond human control, how do human beings consciously intervene in history to make a revolution? If working people have no goals beyond economic self-interest and have been dehumanized by capitalism, who will act on behalf of humanity? If class rule is necessary until the economy has been sufficiently developed, who will rule backwards Russia after the revolution?

Lenin's conception of the revolutionary party was his attempt to answer these practical questions posed by the logic of Marxism. When the Bolsheviks dismantled the Workers Committees in the factories and replaced them with one man rule, they did so in the name of economic development and argued, like good Marxists, that the toiling people of backwards Russia—the pigeons—were not ready for democracy.

Building A Movement

A month or so ago I talked with Mike Griffin, one of the leaders of the Staley workers, to ask him his opinion of the New Democracy flyer, "The Staley Lockout and the Meaning of Strikes," which I had sent him. Mike said,

That flyer is exactly right. The fight wasn't just about money or safety. We were fighting for what we believe in. We were fighting for democracy in America. And we're still fighting. I fought in Vietnam, but now I find out that the real enemy of democracy is the multinational corporations. The real enemy is within, and it's more subtle and
deadly than you can imagine....Democracy in America is a lie, an illusion."

Mike then offered to put our flyers out at an upcoming international labor conference in Decatur which he was helping organize. (His reaction to two other New Democracy flyers which he also set out, "Hope and Revolution" and "Can We Make Unions Strong Again?" was to say, "There's nothing in those flyers I've seen that I can disagree with.") Workers are a moral force. Marxism, however, is blind to the real significance of the lives and struggles of working people; Marxism must even deny that workers' struggles have the significance which workers themselves claim that their struggles have for them. This puts Marxists in the absurd position of denying that working class struggle against corporate power and for real democracy exists, even when, presumably, that is the very thing that Marxists like Frank Girard have devoted their lives to bringing about.

Working people today are not going to respond to a theory such as Marxism which does not respect them as a moral force, nor should they. If we do not express the values and aspirations of working people, we will accomplish nothing. On the other hand, a movement which expresses and validates the deeply-felt values of working people and their profound desire for a world based on equality and solidarity can sweep all before it.

It is high time that we construct a new revolutionary movement based on a view of working people which makes democratic revolution possible because it fully recognizes their humanity.

Dave Stratman

(from p. 2)

While the next article, John Zerzan's Chomsky critique, comes from his anarcho-primitivist viewpoint and concentrates much of its fire on Chomsky's willingness to accept technology as a given part of a new social system, it too comments on his inconsistency.

In the next two articles David Stratman replies to the DB78 articles by Laurens Otter and me. Something tells me that the likelihood of Stratman's being reconverted to Marxism is about the same as my being reconverted to Methodism, but I owe him a still further reply that will straighten him out and correct some of his misconceptions, including those related to "The Logic of Marxism." Irving Silvey continues his debate with Canadian DeLeonists and demonstrates a problem that arises occasionally here at PO Box 1564. Submissions must be single spaced. This article was published because I neglected to get back to the author in time to request that it be reformatted.

The last issue of the DB mistakenly referred to the Workers Solidarity Movement in Ireland as anarcho-syndicalist. A letter from the group's international secretary sets us straight, and their position paper explains their critique of anarcho-syndicalism, which is based largely on events during the Spanish Civil War. In the next article Subversion's recounts the history of Spanish anarchism during that period and argues that events show that anarchism is not a valid revolutionary alternative. As usual we end with some notes, announcements, and short reviews.

**BULLETIN MATTERS**

Finances

The DB held its own financially this month largely due to the generosity of contributors. If it had to live on its earnings, it would soon starve to death.

(to p. 25)
Dear Sirs,

In this reply to the De Leonist Society of Canada's critical response to my letter in DB #76 I need, at the very beginning, to apologize to the De Leonist Society of Canada for seeming to lump them so uncereemoniously with the IUP. Actually, my emphasis was on the fact that both have, themselves, rather uncereemoniously treated the "community", or the "society-as-a-whole" or "housewifes", or the "jobless" or the "retired" or ? as composing lumpy categorical conglomerates disqualified for inclusion in the SIU and, hence, for full enfranchisement within a socialist society governed by the SIU. Both the IUP and the De Leonist Society of Canada deserve some credit for pressing their points to the limit and bringing others to focus more forcibly on the nature of the SIU. I suspect their efforts may have grown out of prolonged exasperation at the failure of De Leonists to deal more substantively with the concept of the SIU. Having said this, however, one is left with little else to compliment them for, considering that, with special reference to the Socialist Society of Canada, the logic of its thesis runs so counter to its thrust that, out of its own mouth and with its own reasoning it reduces to ruin its very argument, that is, of a marriage between political democracy of "society-as-a-whole" and the SIU. In acknowledging this, there seems no point to further efforts in that direction, except to stoop and clear the debris and then, perhaps, redraw the lines for future dialogue.

Some loose material requiring tidying up concerns the definition of "industrial". My Webster gives eleven possible interpretations of the term if, with the De Leonist Society of Canada's permission, we include the word "industry". I won't list them, as I'm sure there are more; my Webster is but the Collegiate version, a mere shadow of the Webster's International from which it's abridged. From these alone, however, it's difficult to avoid the conclusion that the De Leonist Society of Canada conceives the term "industrial" in an exclusive and restrictive sense. This allows the De Leonist Society of Canada to toy with the option of birthing a whole host of supposed non-industrial occupations with which it may choose to draw imaginary lines of demarcation separating SIU and non-SIU employment. I, on the other hand, am comfortable with all of Webster's interpretations. This allows me to consider an industrial activity to be any that, on any
scale whatsoever, impacts the means of social production.

The next issue requiring some clarification involves the use of the phrase "society-as-a-whole", used loudly, but indiscriminately (either quality being a characteristic of a loose canon). On page 10 of DB #73 the De Leonist Society of Canada observes, in reference to De Leon's "...incomparable definition of Socialism", that it is "...a definition containing the key phrase 'by the people' --a phrase that unquestionably implies, and a phrase that democracy insists, must mean by the people-as-a-whole!" Pressing on, it then proceeds to confront "people-as-a-whole" with "...the fact[MJ of a radical change in the 'demography' of the people over the near century!" (My brackets.) so that, "... while in De Leon's day the work force (the people actively engaged in production) may have for all intents and purposes been broadly perceived as synonymous with the people (the people-as-a-whole), the 'second industrial revolution' has destroyed the credibility of such perception." Despite this fast shuffle with hyphenated phrases and "second industrial revolution" word bites, the definition of working class status, regardless of "demography", remains constant, as belonging to one who has nothing to sell but their labor power. The fact of being unemployed due to lack of a job, whether technologically instituted or not, cannot affect that status in the least.

Where one would expect to find the De Leonist Society of Canada's argument most firmly structured is in its principal thesis, which insists that socialists ought to accept the notion of political democracy based on geographical constituencies. Yet, an attentive examination reveals such an absence of substance that one experiences the sensation of examining something akin to a Cheshire Cat, whose grin (grimace) is, in the end, all there is to be found of it. For, the De Leonist Society of Canada suggests socialists commit themselves to a programmatic principle that, by the very terms the De Leonist Society of Canada has set for it, and despite its claims to the contrary, is self-defeating. Whereas De Leon is up front about the dissolution of political government, the De Leonist Society of Canada, on the other hand, is being strikingly obtuse in failing to note how its proposal must, by its own logic, have a similar outcome, which occurs as follows: In committing to the creation of governing bodies apart from or in partnership with the SIU, they insist that those bodies be founded on an absolute proprietied relationship based on geography. This is
very much in line with the modus operandi of capitalist political democracy', so nothing unusual there. Then, and I quote from the De Leonist Society of Canada's article in DB #73, page 16: "...the political field and political government (reformed to suit classless society's needs) can provide the necessary forum and machinery to enable society-as-a-whole to discuss and determine social policy...". The key terms here are "forum" and "machinery". Once again, as I mentioned in DB 76, we find ourselves requiring a rationale for where to draw some lines. Who is to administer and maintain the property allocated to serve the political appointees? Who will conduct voting and supervise the efficacy of those who perform these services? Who maintain the "forum" and the "machinery"?

We are finally at the stage requiring apprehension of those all important, nitty, gritty, nuts and bolts. Since the De Leonist Society of Canada has already dismissed SIU members as being too distracted and exhausted from their labors to diligently attend to these concerns, that leaves us with its housewives, able-bodied unemployed, retirees, children, the halt and the helpless, (fetuses too, maybe?). It has already disposed of all the able-bodied employed, too busy at their jobs for such "social" labors it maintains are extraneous to "industrial" labor. Or, perhaps it does not classify such administrative labors as work? How about the representatives of the political arm of its democratic "society-as-a-whole"? Will it be nothing but playtime for them? Who will be delegated the labor of organizing the balloting and disseminating information vital to the "social" issues it insists a socialist society must be prepared to deal with, although everything it mentions in that regard is, arguably, Capitalism's bag, which it is less than candid about why it should be Socialism's fate to carry. All the above unanswered questions are preliminary to the following one which aims at the heart of the thesis. The question is, if once a productive occupation associated with the "machinery" of political legislation is awarded to a member of its "society-as-a-whole", at whatever level of labor that might happen to be, why does that individual not then assume their rightful place as an "active" worker and, thence, part of the SIU and, subsequently, on the very grounds laid down by the Socialist Society of Canada, be disqualified from the labors of political legislation, which must, by any stretch of the imagination, be a multifarious task requiring great skill? Excuse the awkwardness of these remarks. They are the natural result of trying to
describe someone or something in the act of swallowing its hind side.

Put more simply, "active" workers are members of the SIU. Members of the SIU are too busy to engage in the making of "social policy", therefore we need to give "inactive" persons that authority by creating political machinery. Political machinery requires "active" workers to run and maintain it. But "active" workers are members of the SIU. Shall we go round again?

Now, may be a good time to offer some nuts and bolts the De Leonist Society of Canada required of me in its submission to DB #77. The ones, in particular, that they asked for involved, as you recall, the inclusion of "housewives and retirees" within the framework of an SIU that is defined in terms of "active" workers, a definition neither of us disputes. As for "housewives", the notion that they are just a bunch of layabouts who contribute nothing to the industrial output of society and perform no productive labors on its behalf is, I stubbornly repeat, sufficient cause for that grin they criticized me for wearing when I belabored the De Leonist Society of Canada for making such an inference. Frankly, I believe the De Leonist Society of Canada owes housewives an apology for its heavy handed libel. Even by the strict interpretation of "industrial" that the De Leonist Society of Canada employs, the labors of housewives are not to be slighted. They come under the heading of Maintenance which Capitalism has long seen fit to recognize as consisting of a host of functions, that when performed individually are then, through the medium of wages, demonstrated to be as essential to production as those of boilermakers.

Coming next to the question of retirees, it is difficult not to sense a dizzying chasm, or disconnect, in the reasoning of the De Leonist Society of Canada with respect to difficulties arising out of this mode of "inactivity". I hope the De Leonist Society of Canada will graciously excuse me for thinking that this is a condition that all members of the SIU would have a vital interest in dealing with. If memory fails me not, hasn't this concern long been a major bargaining issue between labor and capital? Pray tell, then, what are those issues which they would have us believe require retirees to assume an adversarial posture in respect to the SIU? If there were any to be found, isn't it to be expected that it would be in the self-interest of every member of the SIU to immediately devote his/her full attention to harmoniously reconcile any conflict that arose?
Underlying its perception of class and generational conflicts within an SIU governed society, is the inability of the De Leonist Society of Canada to think in other than proprietary terms. Such is the way they treat work, lack of which destroys jobs and, thus, participation in the decision making bodies of the SIU. For the De Leonist Society of Canada a job carries ownership rights for the performance of a certain quantity of work. It may well have been something of the sort at the beginning of the industrial revolution while feudal practices lingered. Capitalism has made short shrift of that notion, to the dismay of generations of workers. Yet, the De Leonist Society of Canada fails to note this obvious fact in its zeal to establish a snag in De Leon's plan of socialist government. It leaps to the conclusion that SIU membership must of necessity be limited by the amount of work required, so creating a class of dis-enfranchised persons and, thus, a crisis of democracy. It is entrapped by the dichotomy of "active" versus "non-active" workers to assume, further, that "inactive" workers are totally disengaged from production, despite the fact that Capitalism has also dispelled that quaint notion. The working-class-as-a-whole (The De Leonist Society of Canada is not the only one who can use hyphens) has long been subject to the same process of rationalization which Capitalism afflicts upon all capital commodities. "Active" processing of labor goes on today during all stages of working class procurement, from concern for proper pre-natal care to accession of bodily organs of the recently deceased. Would they deny that students are "active" in their preparation for their tasks ahead or that pre-school age children are just plain "active", if not "over-active"? Further, are not childbearing and nurturing functions "active" occupations? But the De Leonist Society of Canada finds no room for them in the SIU simply because Capitalism considers it unnecessary to arbitrate their lot except in terms totally advantageous to itself. Thus, the De Leonist Society of Canada's inability to advance beyond the proprietary concept of job-work as practiced during early Capitalist and pre-Capitalist eras leads it to forsee dilemmas answerable only by the paradox it mistakes for a solution.

But the De Leonist Society of Canada might well ask, how can these occupations be organized within an industrial context so as to provide an equal measure of democratic participation for all? The short answer is that, for non-adults it can't be done, nor should it be, except as it is considered advisable to create a gradient of democratic roles arising from
industrial responsibilities within a socialist context. One vote one person may sound good, but what about children during their various developmental stages? Would not a gradually increasing voting power suffice for them as they negotiate rites of passage within the SIU?

It is highly likely that, for most socialists, threat of unemployment within a socialist society is an oxymoron. De Leonists and others have long expressed the belief that in a socialist society the more workers there are, the fewer hours each need work. However, due to its proprietary bent the De Leonist Society of Canada seems unable to accept this principle. On the other hand, how a worker in its politicized version of society is supposed to gain possession of a job over other workers is totally ignored. Who is to decide who works and who doesn't? Solutions abound if we think of jobs in other than proprietary terms. The most obvious one of simply taking hours out of the workday is not the only solution. Another allows the creation of multitudinous categories of endeavor, e.g. in the arts and sciences, research and exploration.

More fundamental, yet, to dispelling any notion of a competitive struggle over scarce jobs is the proposition that in a socialist society the right to pursue an occupation must be as basic as the right to food, housing, education, health care, etc. In addition, a socialist society may enjoy the luxury of an ideal that allows every citizen to come to social maturity with a personalized vocation. In other words, the citizen need not apply for a job in order to work. Instead, he/she brings their job to the work (something Capitalism promises, but rarely delivers).

Are these aspects which the SIU is able to administer? It is at this juncture that the principle of basic shop mix affects the situation, since each shop must submit to the discipline of that particular industrial function for which it is responsible. Here it is that a community of workers constituting a specific shop discovers how pertinent are its operations to its own members and the members of all the shops which together make up the basic mix. In a socialist society we should expect production to be holistic, not merely "-as-a-whole".

Finally, a plea to those interested in continuing this line of inquiry: instead of trying to square Western civilization's classically denatured social hype with Socialism's requirements, please devote time to an examination of the fertile fields of anthropological research, which are filled to overflowing with studies of real life attempts by humans of every
historical and cultural description to "get a life". A real revolution that creates a genuine socialist society is going to be made by real people, and 'natural lore' is more apt to offer them solutions far superior to those imagined by the practitioners of politics.

Irving Silvey

(from p. 18)

**Contributions:** Flora Tristan $11, Karla Ellenbogen $15; Bill Frieser $7; Frank Girard $22; Philip Colligan $12; Jerry Maher $11; Anonymous $13.83; Harvey Coble $2.50; Joseph Tupper $12; Robin Cox $5; John Crisman $10. Total $121.33. Thank you, comrades.

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Fraternally submitted,

Frank Girard
for the DB

(from p. 8)

[Franco] regime was paid for by the loss of thousands and thousands of new fighters.” It is available for £1 [probably about $2] postpayed from the Kate Sharples Library, BM/Hurricane, London WC1 3XX England. Some of the other titles listed at the same price include Recollections of Anarchists in the Past: Personal Reminiscences of British Anarchists 1883-1939 by George Cores, The Walsall Anarchist Trial by David Nicoll, My Visit to the Kremlin by Nestor Makhno, and Spain 1962: The Last-Dutch Fight Against Franco by O. Alberola and A. Gransac.

--fg
Dear Friends,

Thanks for your recent review of our 1994-95 catalogue. As you guessed, much of this catalogue is still available - so the plug will be useful. May I also briefly advise you of a new publication that we are producing: *Red and Black Revolution*. I enclose a copy of the current issue for review (if you so wish) as well as a number of publicity sheets. We hope to bring out this publication one or twice a year with the intention of facilitating further discussion in the libertarian socialist and anarchist movement. *Red and Black Revolution* will have a proportion of its content dedicated to issues in Ireland; however the remainder, we hope, will appeal to a more international audience. Issue three should be available in Nov. 96.

One other point that may be of interest to your readers. Though we are a class struggle anarchist organisation, the Workers Solidarity Movement itself does not advocate anarcho-syndicalism. I enclose the relevant section from our position papers on *The Trade Unions* for reference. To be more brief than this, we believe that there are intrinsic weaknesses to anarcho-syndicalism, weaknesses that became very apparent in the movement in Spain during the civil war. The ‘apoliticism’ of the anarcho-syndicalist to our mind a mistake - we also feel historically that anarcho-syndicalist have also been unclear in their use and adherence of this principle.

When the opportunity arose in Spain in 1936/37 to move in the direction of a liberation communist society, there was an unwillingness on the part of the CNT-FAI to finally destroy the Spanish state. We trace this problem back to a historical problem in anarcho-syndicalism and its lack of clarity on the issue of state power. To our mind, irrespective of how anarchists organise in the workplace, there is a need for an anarchist political organisation separate and distinct from the workplace that will link libertarian principles and politics to all forms of the struggle, and to the crucial issue of how to abolish state power once and for all.

Kevin Doyle, International Secretary, Workers Solidarity Movement, P.O. Box 1528, Dublin 8, Ireland

*Workers Solidarity Movement: A Position Paper on THE TRADE UNIONS*

*Excerpt on Syndicalism*

**5.1)**

Syndicalism, and especially anarcho-syndicalism, has been an important current in many countries - particularly in Southern Europe and Latin America. Its basic ideas revolve around organising all workers into the "one big union", keeping control in the hands of the rank & file, and opposing all attempts to create a bureaucracy of unaccountable full-time officials. Unlike other unions their belief is that the union can be used not only to win reforms from the bosses but also to overthrow the capitalist system. They hold that most workers are not revolutionaries because the structure of
their unions is such that it takes the initiative away from the rank & file. Their alternative is to organise all workers into the "one big union" in preparation for the revolutionary general strike. They see the biggest problem in the structure of the existing unions rather than in the ideas that tie workers to authoritarian, capitalist views of the world.

5.2
Syndicalism does not create a revolutionary political organisation. It creates industrial unions. It is a-political, arguing all that is necessary to make the revolution is for the workers to seize the factories and the land. After that it believes that the state and all the other institutions of the ruling class will come toppling down. They do not accept that the working class must take political power. For them all power has to be immediately abolished on day one of the revolution.

5.3
Because syndicalist organisation is the union, it organises all workers regardless of their politics. Historically many workers have joined, not because they were anarchists, but because the syndicalist union was the most militant and got the best results. Because of this tendencies always appeared that were reformist.

5.4
Syndicalists are quite correct to emphasise the centrality of organising workers in the workplace. Critics who reject syndicalism on the grounds that allegedly it cannot organise those outside the workplace are wrong. Taking the example of anarcho-syndicalism in Spain it is clear that they could and did organise throughout the entire working class as was evidenced by the Iberian Federation of Libertarian Youth, the 'Mujeres Libres' (Free Women), and the neighbourhood organisations.

5.5
The weakness of syndicalism is rooted in its view of why workers are tied to capitalism, and its view of what is necessary to make the revolution. Spain in 1936/7 represented the highest point in anarcho-syndicalist organisation and achievement. Because of their a-politicism they were unable to develop a programme for workers' power, to wage a political battle against other currents in the workers' movement (such as reformism and Stalinism), and to give a lead to the entire class by fighting for complete workers' power.

Instead they got sucked into support for the Popular Front government, which in turn led to their silence and complicity when the Republican state moved against the collectives and militias. The minority in the CNT, organised around the Friends of Durruti, was expelled when they issued a proclamation calling for the workers to take absolute power (i.e. that they should refuse to share power with the bosses or the authoritarian parties).

5.6
The CNT believed that when the workers took over the means of production and distribution this would lead to "the liquidation of the bourgeois state which would die of asphyxiation". History teaches us different. In a situation of dual power it is very necessary to smash the state.

5.7
In contrast to this the Friends of Durruti were clear that "to beat Franco we need to crush the
bourgeoisie and its Stalinist and Socialist allies. The capitalist state must be destroyed totally and there must be installed workers' power depending on rank & file committees. Anarchism has failed. The political confusion of the CNT leadership was such that they attacked the idea of the workers seizing power as "evil" and leading to an "anarchist dictatorship".

5.8
The syndicalist movement, organised in the International Workers Association and outside it, refuses to admit the CNT was wrong to "postpone" the revolution and enter the government. They attempt to explain away this whole episode as being due to "exceptional circumstances" that "will not occur again". Because they refuse to admit that a mistake of historic proportions was made, they are doomed to repeat it (should they get a chance).

5.9
We recognise that the syndicalist unions, where they still exist, are far more progressive than any other union. But the anarchist-communist organisation will organise within its ranks and everywhere else workers are organised. We will not liquidate our specific politics and organisation into the a-politicalism of syndicalism.

Spain 1936: The End of Anarchism?

This year is the 60th anniversary of the Spanish Civil War, which began in July 1936 when General Franco led a fascist coup to replace the left-wing Republican government.

It was no coincidence that this happened at a time of intense class struggle in Spain. Limited concessions granted in the face of the struggle by the left wing of the ruling class - the 'Popular Front' government elected in February 1936 - had not succeeded in restoring the economic and social stability needed by capitalism. Strikes, demonstrations and political assassinations by the working class continued, as did land seizures and local insurrections in the countryside. The right wing of the ruling class recognised that strong-arm measures were needed, and acted accordingly.

Initially, across one half of Spain the right-wing coup was stalled by armed resistance from peasants and the working class, and only after three years of civil war was the fascist victory secured. But in one sense the revolt was an immediate success: the working class and peasants sacrificed the struggle for their own needs and demands and united with liberal and radical supporters of capitalism in a fight to defend one form of capitalist domination - democracy - against another - fascism.

However, that is not the aspect of the Spanish Civil War which we want to look at here. Instead, we want to focus on another important feature: the influence of anarchist ideas during the struggle in Spain.

ANARCHISM AND THE SPANISH 'REVOLUTION'

At the time of the Civil War, a popular idea amongst the Spanish working class and peasants was that each factory, area of land, etc., should be owned collectively by its workers, and that these 'collectives' should be linked with each other on a 'federal' basis - that is, without any superior central authority.

This basic idea had been propagated by anarchists in Spain for more than 50 years. When the Civil War began, peasants and working class people in those parts of the country which had not immediately fallen under fascist control seized the opportunity to turn anarchist ideal into reality.

Ever since then anarchists have regarded the Spanish 'Revolution' as the finest achievement in the history of the revolutionary movement - as the closest capitalism anywhere has come to being completely overthrown and replaced by a totally different form of society.

SELF-MANAGED CAPITALISM

The 'revolution' in the countryside has usually been seen as superior to the 'revolution' in the towns and cities. Anarchist historian and eyewitness of the collectives, Gaston Leval, describes the industrial collectives as simply another form of capitalism.
managed by the workers themselves: "Workers in each undertaking took over the factory, the works, or the workshop, the machines, raw materials, and taking advantage of the continuation of the money system and normal capitalist commercial relations, organised production on their own account, selling for their own benefit the produce of their labour."

We would add that in many cases the workers didn't actually take over production; they simply worked under the direction of 'their own' union bureaucrats with the old bosses retained as advisors.

The reactionary consequences of the working class taking sides in the fight between democracy and fascism, instead of pursuing the struggle for their own needs, was particularly evident in the way the industrial collectives operated. For the sake of the 'war effort' workers frequently chose to intensify their own exploitation - usually with the encouragement of their anarchist leaders.

In 1937, for example, the anarchist Government Minister in charge of the economy in Catalonia complained that the "state of tension and over-excitement" produced by the outbreak of the Civil War had "reduced to a dangerous degree the capacity and productivity of labour, increasing the costs of production so much that if this is not corrected rapidly and energetically we will be facing a dead-end street. For these reasons we must readjust the established work norms and increase the length of the working day."

However, although some anarchists are prepared to criticise the 'Government Anarchists' and the industrial collectives, all anarchists are unanimous that the rural collectives succeeded in achieving 'genuine socialisation', or, as it was popularly termed, 'libertarian communism'.

ORGANISING THE RURAL COLLECTIVES
What typically happened in the peasant villages was this. Once the fascist rebellion had been quelled locally, the inhabitants of the village got together in a big meeting. Anarchist militants took the initiative in proposing what to do. Everyone was invited to pool their land, livestock and tools in the collective. The concept 'yours and mine' will no longer exist... Everything will belong to everyone..." Property belonging to fascist landlords and the Church was also expropriated for the collective's use. A committee was elected to supervise the running of the collective. Work was parcelled out among groups of 10 or 15 people, and co-ordinated by meetings of delegates nominated by each group.

FREE ACCESS
A few collectives distributed their produce on the communist basis of free access - 'to each according to their needs'. A resident of Magdalena de Pulpis explained the system in his village:

"Everyone works and everyone has the right to what he needs free of charge. He simply goes to the store where provisions and all other necessities are supplied. Everything is distributed freely with only a notation of what he took."

For the first time in their lives people could help themselves to whatever they needed. And that's exactly what they did. Free access was not abused by 'greed' or 'gluttony.' Another of the collective's eyewitnesss, Augustin Souchy, describes the situation in Muniesa:

"The bakery was open. Anyone can come for whatever bread he wants. Are there not abuses of this? 'No,' answers the old man who gives out the bread. 'Everyone takes as much as they actually need.' Wine is also distributed freely, not rationed. 'Doesn't anyone get drunk?' 'Until now there has not been a single case of drunkenness.'"

(This was also partly a reflection of an anarchist puritanism which in other places led them to ban tobacco and even coffee).

THE WAGES SYSTEM
However, distribution of goods on a communist basis (i.e. free access) was not the norm. In the vast majority of collectives the level of consumption was not governed by people's freely-chosen needs and desires, but, just as it is under capitalism, by the amount of money people had in their pockets. Only goods in abundant supply could be taken freely. Everything else had to be bought from wages paid by the collective to its members.

THE FAMILY WAGE AND THE OPPRESSION OF WOMEN
The 'family wage' - which oppresses women by making them economically dependent on the male head of the household - was adopted by almost all the collectives. Each male collectivist received so much in wages per day for himself, plus a smaller amount for his wife and each child. For women in fact, the Spanish 'Revolution' could hardly have been less revolutionary. It did not challenge the family as an economic unit of society, nor the sexual division of labour between men and women. "It is eleven o'clock in the morning. The gong sounds 'Mass'. It is to remind the women to prepare the midday meal." Women also remained regarded as inferior social beings, frowned on, for example, if they joined the men in the local cafe for a drink after work.

THE PROLIFERATION OF MONEY
The equal family wage was generally not paid in the national currency, which most collectives discarded for internal use. In its place the collectives substituted other means of exchange, issuing their own local currency in the form of vouchers, tokens, rationing booklets, certificates, coupons, etc. Far from being abolished, as money would be in a communist revolution, during the Spanish 'Revolution' money proliferated as never before!

But the creation of literally hundreds of different local currencies soon caused problems. Few collectives were self-sufficient, but trade among the collectives was hampered by the lack of a universally acceptable currency. In 1937 the Aragon Federation of Peasant Collectives had to reintroduce a standard currency in the form of a uniform rationing booklet for all the Aragon Collectives. It also established its own bank - run by the Bank Workers' Union of course!

**THE EXCHANGE OF GOODS**

Not all the transactions between collectives were effected by money. Central warehouses were set up where collectives exchanged their surplus produce among themselves for the goods they lacked. Under this system 'hard cash' was frequently absent. However, the relative proportions in which goods were bartered was still determined by monetary values. For example how many sacks of flour a collective could obtain in exchange for a ton of potatoes was worked out by calculating the value of both in monetary terms. Just as under capitalism, prices were 'based on the cost of raw materials, the work involved, general expenses and the resources of the collectivists'.

This was not a communist system of production for use and distribution according to need, but a capitalist system of rival enterprises trading their products according to their exchange value. No matter how desperately they needed them, collectives couldn't obtain the goods they required until they had produced enough to exchange for them, since they were not allowed to withdraw a sum of goods worth more than those they had deposited. This frequently led to great hardship among the less wealthy collectives.

**MARKET COMPETITION**

As well as trading among themselves, collectives also had to find markets for their goods in competition with non-collectivised enterprises. A common consequence of this system has always been that goods which cannot be sold profitably end up being stockpiled or destroyed, while elsewhere people have to do without those goods because they don't have the means to buy them. The consequences of the Spanish collectives' capitalist mode of operation conformed to this pattern, for example.

"The warehouses owned by the SICEP (Syndicate of the Footwear Industry in Elda and Petrel) in Elda, Valencia and Barcelona, as well as the factory warehouses, were full of unsold goods, valued at some 10 million pesetas."

Such spectacles would be eradicated for ever in a communist society, where goods would not be produced to be sold for profit via the market, but to directly satisfy people's needs.

**THE END OF THE COLLECTIVES**

The Spanish collectives were eventually destroyed by in-fighting among the anti-fascists and by the fascist victory itself. One can only speculate about how they might have developed had they survived the Civil War. Our guess is that their basically capitalist nature would have become even more obvious.

In the capitalist economy market competition forces every enterprise to try to produce its goods as cheaply as possible so as to undercut its rivals. The Spanish collectives, trading with each other and competing with non-collectivised enterprises, would inevitably have been subject to the same pressures.

One of the ways in which capitalist enterprises try to cut costs is by increasing the exploitation of the workforce, for example by cutting wages, or increasing the intensity of work, or lengthening working hours.

Where this happens in enterprises owned and run by an individual boss or the state, workers can identify their enemy and fight against their exploitation. This is far less likely to happen where the entire workforce itself is the collective owner and manager of the enterprise, as was the case with the Spanish collectives. The workforce has a vested interest in the profitability of the capital which it collectively owns; it identifies with and willingly organises its own exploitation. It has to, in fact, to keep itself in business.

**THE END OF ANARCHISM**

Many present-day anarchists still stand for the type of self-managed capitalism established by the industrial and agricultural collectives during the Spanish Civil War. Because of this, we oppose them as resolutely as we oppose supporters of any other pro-capitalist ideology.

From the point of view of working class people's needs, self-managed capitalism is a dead-end, just as reactionary as private or state capitalism. The communist society we

One hundred years ago a familiar dispute raged within the anti-capitalism movement. Should we socialists organize our class to improve their lot under capitalism, or should we limit ourselves to educating workers about the need to abolish the system in its entirety? Today it's very clear that the reformers have won for the time being. To everyone except small grouplets of libertarian non-market socialists--DeLeonists, world socialists, and anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists--socialism and communism mean social welfare programs and varying degrees of government ownership of the means of production, all within the market system.

The three anti-reformist pamphlets collected in this volume were written between 1887 and 1915 by William Morris and two other prominent British socialists whom he had influenced. Steve Coleman, who probably convinced the William Morris Society to commission the book, has written a thirty-eight page introduction that places that debate within the context of the events and preoccupations of the spokesmen and organizations of the time. Morris wrote "The Policy of Abstention" (20 pages, 1887) after his new group, the Socialist League, split from the Social Democratic Federation over the question of reformism. Carruthers' "Socialism and Radicalism" (15 pages, 1894), written a few years later, describes the failure of the reformist--"radical" in his lexicon--policies of the Labor Party of New Zealand, where he lived for a time, to change substantially the lives of working people in that country when it held power. "The ABC of Socialism" by Fred Henderson (18 pages, 1915), was published by the Independent Labor Party, which supported Labor Party reformism but permitted dissenting views. It was published as part of a larger work presenting standard reformist ideas.

Coleman's introduction, after examining the historical context of the debate between the revolutionary/anti-reformist/impossibilists and the reformist/gradualist/possibilists in both England and abroad--including the U.S. where the IWW and the SLP are mentioned--concentrates on Morris's contribution to the book. His idea of abstention (boycotting elections) stems from the view that electoral activity by socialists must inevitably involve the advocacy of reforms to relieve the immediate misery working people suffer. Since Coleman belongs to that substantial part of the existing revolutionary movement that advocates electoral activity, he spends some time trying to explain and demolish Morris's contentions--and not too successfully as I see things now after decades in the electorally oriented SLP. But this aside, socialists will find the book useful both for its historical information on reformism and as a source for the never ending debates with the well meaning reformists we meet in our day-to-day discussions of social issues.

Here and Now, Double Issue, Nos 16/17 with Supplement on Guy Debord, fifty-nine pages with a twenty-seven page supplement, is the radical journal bargain of the year at £2.00 ($4.00). Its political
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orientation—from the looks of this issue—could be classified as anarcho-situationist. In terms of “accessibility” for those of us who didn’t get post-graduate degrees in radical political science, it ranks with *Midnight Notes*. Important articles in the magazine include the introductory editorial, “In Defence of Humans,” which responds to the ultra regressive branch of anarcho-primitivism that looks forward to a day when the planet has rid itself of the human species, an overview of factional and individual feuding in the British anarchist movement, and articles analyzing events in the former Yugoslavia, Italy, Chechnya as well as such exotic places as Glasgow and Leeds. It also contains an excellent three-page review of Ken Smith’s *The Survival of the Weakest*, reviewed in DB75. The Debord supplement goes beyond the adulation one might expect in a memorial issue to a critical analysis of both Debord, his writings, and situationism. Unfortunately much of it is written only for those who have already immersed themselves in the literature of situationism and its cultural and artistic roots.

*Red & Black Revolution: A Magazine of Libertarian Communism, Number 2* is the occasional theoretical journal of the Workers Solidarity Movement, an Irish libertarian socialist group which also produces the more frequently published paper, *Workers Solidarity*. Articles in this thirty-six page issue include “Incorporation,” on how capital and its state co-opt single issue campaigns and community groups. It should interest U.S. readers who have observed the environmental movement over the past few decades; “The Two Souls of Trade Unionism” with the following blurb: “Union activists are facing new management attacks but the trade union leadership speaks only of partnership with the bosses”; and “The Road to Revolution”: “...what is meant when anarchists talk about revolution, and what can be done to bring it closer?” “Chomsky on Anarchism,” is a five-page interview conducted by R&BR in which Chomsky reveals sympathy for libertarian socialism but little in the way of ideas for bringing it into existence, and there are articles on Russian anarchism, an “international gathering of libertarian communists at Ruesta, Spain, and more. All this for L1.50/ $4 from WSM, P.O. Box 1528, Dublin 8, Ireland.

*Women and Socialism: a Socialist View* begins with an historical review of the condition of women in England since the industrial revolution. The major point made by the pamphlet is that the oppression of