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ABOUT THE DISCUSSION BULLETIN

The Discussion Bulletin is affiliated with the Industrial Union Caucus in Education (IUCE). It serves as the financially and politically independent forum of a relatively unknown sector of political thought that places the great divide in the "left," not between Anarchists and Marxists but between capitalism's statist lettering 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 copy-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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A LIBERTARIAN MARX?

Marx's famous address "The Civil War in France," written in the name of the General Council of the International Working Men's Association two days after the crushing of the Paris Commune, is an inspiring text for Libertarians. Writing in the name of the International in which Bakunin had extensive influence, in it Marx revises some passages of The Communist Manifesto of 1848. In the Manifesto, Marx and Engels had developed the notion of a proletarian evolution by stages. The first stage would be the conquest of political power, thanks to which the instruments of production, means of transport, and credit system would, "by degrees," be centralized in the hands of the State. Only after a long evolution, at a time when class antagonisms have disappeared and State power has lost its political nature, only then would all production be centered in the hands of "associated producers" instead of in the hands of the State. In this later libertarian type of association, the free development of each would be the condition for the free development of all.

Bakunin, unlike French socialists, had been familiar with The Communist Manifesto in its original German since 1848, and didn't miss a chance to criticize the way in which the revolution had been split into two stages—the first of which would be very strongly State controlled. He put it like this: "Once the State has installed itself as the only landowner... it will also be the only capitalist, banker, moneylender, organizer, and director of all the nation's work and distributor of its products. This is the ideal, the fundamental principle of modern communism." What's more:

This revolution will consist of the expropriation, either by stages or by violence, of the current landowners and capitalists, and of the appropriation of all land and capital by the State, which, so as to fulfill its great mission in both economic and political spheres, will necessarily have to be very powerful and highly centralized. With its hired engineers, and with disciplined armies of rural workers at its command, the State will administer and direct the cultivation of the land. At the same time, it will set up in the ruins of all the existing banks one single bank to oversee all production and every aspect of the nation's commerce.

And again:

We are told that Marx's people's State there will be no privileged class. Everyone will be equal, not just legally and politically, but from the economic point of view. At least that's the promise, although I doubt very much, considering the way they go about it and their proposed method, whether it's a promise that can ever be kept. Apparently, there will no longer be a privileged
class, but there will be a government, and, note this well, an exceedingly complicated
government, which would not simply govern and administer the masses in a political sense, as all
present governments do, but which would also administer the economy, by concentrating in its
own hands production, the fair distribution of wealth, the farming of the land, the establishment
and development of trades, the organization and control of commerce, and, lastly, the application
of capital to production through the only banker, the State.

Goaded by Bakunin's criticisms, Marx and Engels felt the need to correct the overly statist ideas they had
held in 1848. In a preface to a new edition of The Manifesto, dated June 24, 1872, they agreed that "in
many respects" they would give a "different wording" to the passage in question in the 1848 text. They
claimed support for this revision in (among others) "the practical experience gained first in the February
Revolution (1848), and then, still more, in the Paris Commune, where the proletariat for the first time
held political power for two whole months." They concluded that "This program has in some details
become antiquated. One thing especially was proved by the Commune, viz., that the working class cannot
simply lay hold of the ready-made State machinery and wield it for its own purposes." And the 1871
Address proclaims that the Commune is "the final discover of the political form by which he economic
carnival of labor may be created."

In his biography of Karl Marx, Franz Mehring also stresses that on this point "The Civil War in France,"
to a certain extent, revises the Manifesto in which the dissolution of the State was certainly foreseen, but
only as a long-term process. But later, after the death of Marx, Lehning assures us that Engels, struggling
with anarchist currents, had to drop this corrective and go back to the old ideas of the Manifesto.

The slightly over-rapid volte-face of the writer of the 1871 Address was always bound to arouse Bakunin's
scepticism. He wrote of the Commune:

> It had such a great effect everywhere that even the Marxists, whose ideas had been proven wrong
> by this insurrection, found that they had to lift their hats respectfully to it. They did more; contrary
> to the simplest logic and to their own true feelings, they proclaimed that its program and
> aim were theirs too. This was a farcical misrepresentation, but it was necessary. They had to do
> it—otherwise they would have been completely overwhelmed and abandoned, so powerful was the
> passion this revolution had stirred in everyone.

Bakunin also observed:

> It would appear that Engels at the Hague Congress [September, 1872] was afraid of the terrible
> impression created by some pages of the Manifesto, and eagerly declared that this was an
> outdated document whose ideas they [Marx and Engels] had personally abandoned. If he did say
> this, then he was lying, for just before the Congress the Marxists had been doing their best to
> spread this document into every country.

James Guillaume, Bakunin's disciple in the Jura Federation, reacted to the 1871 Address in similar terms:

> This is an astonishing declaration of principle, in which Marx seems to have thrown over his own
> programme in favour of Federalist ideas. Has there been a genuine conversion of the author of
> Capital, or has he at any rate succumbed to a momentary enthusiasm under the force of events? Or
> was it a ploy, aimed at using apparent adherence to the program of the Commune to gain the
> benefit of the prestige inseparable from that name?

In our own day, Arthur Lehning, to whom we owe the learned edition of the Bakunin Archives..., has also
emphasized the contradiction between the ideas in the Address and those of all Marx's other writings:

It is an irony of history that at the very moment when the struggle between the authoritarian and anti-authoritarian factions of the First International had reached its height, Marx, influenced by the enormous effect of the Parisian proletarian revolutionary uprising, had given voice to the ideas of that revolution (which were the very opposite of those he represented) in such a way that one might call them the program of the anti-authoritarian faction which [in the International] he was fighting by all means possible. ... There can be no doubt that the brilliant Address of the General Council... can find no place in the system of "scientific socialism." The Civil War is extremely un-Marxist.... The Paris Commune had nothing in common with Marx's State Socialism, but was much closer to Proudhon's ideas and Bakunin's federalist theories....

According to Marx, the basic principle of the Commune was that the political centralism of the State had to be replaced with the workers governing themselves, and by the devolution of initiative onto a federation of small autonomous units, until such time as it was possible to put trust in the State.... The Paris Commune did not aim at letting the State "wither away," but at doing away with it immediately.... The abolition of the State was no longer to be the final, inevitable outcome of a dialectical process of history, of a superior phase of social development, itself conditioned by a superior form of production.

"The Paris Commune," Lehning continues,

abolished the State without effecting a single one of the conditions previously laid down by Marx as a prelude to its abolition.... The defeat of the bourgeois State by the Commune was not with the aim of installing another State in its place, ..., but the replacement of the State by social organization on a federalist economic basis.... In "The Civil War in France," it's not a question of a "withering away," but of an immediate and total abolition of the State.

Likewise the marxologist Maximilien Rubel has admitted that: "It is undeniable that Marx's idea of the proletariat's conquest and suppression of the State found its definitive form in his Address on the Paris Commune, and that as such is differs from the ideas given by The Communist Manifesto."

Nevertheless, there is disagreement between the two scholars. Lehning, who, for right or wrong, sees in Marx an "authoritarian," asserts that the Address is a "foreign body" in Marxist socialism, whereas Rubel... would like to see a "libertarian Marx," and holds that Marxian thought found its "definitive form" in the Address.

For all this, the 1871 Address still has to be seen as a point of departure in the effort today to find a synthesis between anarchism and Marxism, and as a first demonstration that it is possible to find a fertile conciliation of the two streams of thought. The Address is libertarian marxist.
A WORLD FIT FOR HUMAN BEINGS

by Karla Ellenbogan

Last fall Karla Ellenbogan wrote that she felt New Democracy should spell out its idea of a revolutionary society more clearly. We invited her to describe her vision of a good society, as a way of beginning the discussion. This is what she wrote. Karla is a member of the World Socialist Party (US).

Being clear on goals is central to getting where you want to go. If the goal is not clear, it’s unlikely that action will lead in the right direction. Unfortunately, most “socialist,” “leftist,” and “radical” groups betray their basic confusion when the subject of goals comes up. The oft-heard rallying cries for “The Right to Work,” or “Jobs for All, with a minimum wage high enough for everyone to have a decent standard of living” are examples of what I mean.

Do we want “jobs”? I’d rather not need a job in order to live well. I go along with Paul Lafargue, who argued not for the “right to work” but for the “right to be lazy.” Our goal must be free access to everything we need or want.

Money is only useful when there is a need to limit access to things because of scarcity; but the reason things are scarce under capitalism is not that we working people can’t produce enough — it’s that if things became too abundantly available, they could no longer be sold profitably.

Money is no longer socially necessary. After the revolution that ends capitalism, production won’t be contingent on profits, but on the necessity of satisfying our own human wants and needs.

Another important goal must be the ability to make meaningful choices about our own lives (the prerequisite to real democracy.) Very few real choices are ours to make as long as we are forced to earn a living. If we’re lucky, we may get to make a decision about how to earn a living, but not about whether we want to. For most ordinary people, earning a living takes up so much of our time and energy that there’s not much left over for other things.

Only when we have free access to our needs, will the ability to make meaningful choices about our own lives become possible.

A third goal most people share is that we want to be part of a community of equals. In capitalist society, there are two classes of people: those who are exempt from the necessity of earning a living because they own the means of production (the capitalists), and the rest of us. Capitalism creates an atmosphere of scarcity that encourages selfishness and greed, and makes it inevitable that some people will have an easy life while others are homeless and hungry. So another way of phrasing this third goal (living in a community of equals) is that we want a classless society.

Imagine, then, a classless, moneyless system of society, where everybody has a common right of access to the wealth of the world. This would be a world fit for human beings to live in. What would it be like?

Start by picturing what your own life would be like if money were no object (literally)! If money were no object, wouldn’t we want to do things the best way we could? We wouldn’t settle for less! We would want to be surrounded by beauty in our homes, and our communities. We would want to breathe unpolluted air, feed our kids healthy food, be able to travel when we wanted to. (I remember when my son was in nursery school, he and his best friend Ian both got terrible colds. Ian’s parents, without any hesitation, took him to a Caribbean island where he could recover in the warmth of the sun. That’s something everyone should be able to do.)

The division between “work” and “leisure” will be blurred in a world fit for human beings, and many things that thought of as leisure activities now result in benefits to the community. P will no longer be prevented from
socially useful things by the necessity to spend eight hours a day at labor that tires them out and is so boring that their imaginations atrophy.

Once we can organize our time to suit ourselves, there’s no way of knowing exactly what society will get to look like. Social evolution will not end just because capitalism ends. As time goes on, gradually things will change, according to the way the community chooses. Society will certainly be democratic (in the real sense); no one will have any way to coerce anyone else into doing something they don’t want to do. But there are dozens of ways people might choose to run things. Organization and management will be no less necessary than they are now — only where now the goal of management is to maximize profits for the capitalist elite, in the world which is our goal it will be to increase efficiency and pleasure in accomplishing a task.

Some work may be so distasteful that nobody will want to do it. If no one wants to mine coal, for example, then no coal will be mined; other ways have already been found to heat homes. But it’s human nature to be happiest when engaged in goal-orientated activity. Most socially necessary work is not so inherently unpleasant that people won’t be willing to take their turn.

When goods are produced and services performed with no thought of making money, the outlook will be very different from what it is today. It’s not just that the people planning production will be doing it to satisfy the needs of their community, but also that the people involved in production will have chosen that involvement freely. If a worker would rather be doing something else that day, she won’t be at work — she’ll be elsewhere: playing with her kids, fishing, painting the living room. The only people engaged in production will be people who want to be, and who will therefore do it well.

(If anyone reading this is worried about the work of the world not getting done, remember what huge numbers of people today are not “working” at all: the unemployed, the homeless, the disabled. Even of those who are “working,” many of us are not working at anything socially useful. I’m thinking of people in the armed services, in insurance, in advertising, in banking and lending, the police force — the list of paid jobs that will become completely unnecessary can go on and on. And also consider how many people are “working” now, only to compete with other people doing the same thing! It certainly doesn’t make sense, for example, that so many competing auto plants are running at once. When money is “no object,” maybe only Cadillacs and Rolls Royces will be produced, and with skilled workers who like to make cars organizing their own plants, it won’t take as many of them as it does when you’ve got all those different, competing outfits. Actually, this may be a bad example, because it’s perfectly possible that once production is for use instead of for profit, automobiles will be replaced altogether with means of transportation that don’t seem “practical” under capitalism — hovercraft? Moving roadways? Who knows?)

By a generation or two after the revolution, the people who have been born and raised in a classless, moneyless society will have conceived all sorts of ways of managing that we can’t begin to picture.

Huge changes, however, don’t usually happen overnight. It’s my guess (only a guess, of course) that the day after the Revolution most people will go to their usual workplace just as they did the day before. Old habits die hard, and besides, for a lot of people the workplace is where they feel the strongest sense of community. The people whose jobs serve no purpose at all (bankers, insurance salesmen, and the like) may not continue meeting their former fellow-employees very long, or maybe they’ll decide to begin some venture together that would be pleasant and useful. Those of us whose work is useful will certainly recognize that and continue to perform it. Gradually, we can alter the conditions of work to suit our own needs and those of society as well. (Example: I myself am a nurse. I like what I do. Many nurses today like their work, but most probably would
rather not spend as much time at it as they do now. So nurses who work in a hospital can get together, either with or without some help from the Scheduling Department, and figure out a mutually agreeable schedule of work.)

This kind of flexibility is something that is sure to be valued. Who wants to do the same thing day after day after day? It's hard to make a change now because work is all connected to being able to pay for things. Once that connection is broken, once you don’t have to pay for things, if you get tired of doing something you can just stop. And decide what you’d rather do. And if you don’t feel like doing anything at all for awhile, fine! We’ll have the right to be lazy.

NEW DEMOCRACY, MAY-JUNE 1997

WHAT KIND OF SOCIETY DO WE WANT?

By John Spritzler

We in New Democracy have hesitated to spell out our ideas for a new society for several reasons. Creating a new society will be the work of millions of people; we don’t believe in prescribing blueprints even if we had any. Most ideas for a new society tend to focus on finding a "perfect" structure; we feel, however, that there is no such thing as a perfect structure. The main thing about a new society is what ideas and values underlie it and what role ordinary people play in it. Is it really based on solidarity and equality and democracy, or is it based on some other values, such as the "need for economic development?” Do ordinary people really determine its direction, or is it democratic in name only?

In the following article, John Spritzler proposes four principles on which a new society might be based. These principles suggest that any meaningful idea of a revolutionary society must be rooted in the best of what people do now in their everyday lives. Creating a better society is not a step into the unknown, but the fulfillment of dreams and struggles and values that have always been important to most people.

John’s proposals are intended as food for thought and discussion. We welcome your ideas on the question of a new society.

***

Is there a realistic alternative to capitalism and communism that can fulfill our aspirations for a better society? For the last century these two undemocratic systems have each claimed to be the only alternative to the other. The fact that both are terrible has made fundamental change seem hopeless.

But capitalism and communism are bad for a specific reason: they are both forms of elite rule based on the same profoundly wrong ideas about people. Both social systems view ordinary people as selfish and unfit to rule. Both assume that the highest goal of society is to increase economic production.

With different ideas about people, a different kind of world is possible.

FOUR IDEAS FOR A NEW WORLD

ONE. In a good society the value of any policy would be measured by its impact on the quality of human relations. The most important things that people produce are not commodities, but human relations of love, solidarity, mutual aid, and trust. These relations are what make security and happiness possible. If economic production helps fulfill these human relations, it is positive. But economic growth is by no means always beneficial and should not be the goal of human society.

TWO. In a truly democratic society work would be voluntary. The reward or punishment for contributing more or less than one’s fair share would be the better or worse quality of relations one has with others as a result. Most people seek to give their lives meaning through work, creativity, and acts that benefit others. People want
to do the work that they believe is required to enable themselves and others to live, prosper, and be happy. When people are free to do this they don’t need to be compelled. We see this today in all sorts of volunteer work, as well as the countless things people do for each other without even thinking of it as “work.” Compulsion, in the form of no pay for no work or more pay for more work, is only required when people are not free and an elite is forcing ordinary people to work for them.

THREE. In a society based on solidarity and trust, the economics of producing and distributing things would be like sharing within a family, rather than buying and selling for profit in a marketplace. The wealth of any society is the fruit of collective efforts. People are naturally inclined to share goods and services according to need with those they trust. We see this sharing today within families, despite the pressure from capitalism to make competition and self-interest the dominant motivation everywhere. The circles of trust within which people share according to need will widen tremendously when society is no longer ruled by elites who view human solidarity as a threat to their power.

FOUR. Democracy consists of ordinary people with shared fundamental values actually shaping all of society according to their values. Democracy means that everywhere people live and work, they decide what their own goals are and how they will cooperate to reach them. It means all concerned have an equal say. It means people are free to assemble to discuss anything and everything with full access to all information, and they are free to make and carry out any decision no matter how revolutionary.

What would a society based on these ideas look like? Probably it would look different in various places and change over time as people experimented with different ways of doing things. Whatever the details, it would be a world where people supported and trusted one another, where people felt safe among strangers, where people didn’t feel alone in dealing with natural catastrophes, sickness or bad luck, where children were optimistic about their futures, and where people found real meaning in what they did all day.

(from p. 2)

Ellenbogen’s strikes me as being more detailed, as one might expect from a movement that has been giving thought to this matter for ninety years or more. Spritzler’s description seems rather more abstract, but somehow I think each would feel comfortable in the other’s New Jerusalem.

In the first of the three letters that follow, Monroe Prussack proposes to add to DeLeonism the idea of preserving the U.S. Constitution after the revolution. Pat Murtagh locates Bob Black’s niche in the history of anarchism and, after discussing the difficulty of defining leftism, solves the problem by listing its attributes, one of which is its dependence on the state to carry out social changes. Tony Laffan speaks to the problem of reformism and anti-reformism, suggesting that revolutionaries must be guided in their activity by the spontaneous action of our class.

Next the De Leonist Review criticizes The People, the Socialist Labor Party paper for asserting that workers in the socialist industrial union (SIU) will engage in the day-to-day struggles of our class. I was under the impression that The People’s position is that held by De Leon, who saw the socialist industrial union as serving a two-fold purpose of advocating socialism and carrying on the class struggle. The following article involves a dispute in the other wing of the SIU movement, the IWW. The Industrial Worker carried an article, reproduced here, by two members who advocate industrial cooperatives as the
Dear Readers:

Irving Silvey wrote lengthy articles in DS 33 & 34, explaining the program of De Leon for Socialist Industrial Government as De Leon would have explained it. Of course, the interest in De Leon's ideas and writings when he was alive no longer exists, because new believers are not readily attracted. In my opinion De Leon and his followers could have done a better job in making Marx's ideas complete about how to establish socialism. Lenin read the major works of De Leon and said that his idea of industrial government added to Marx's thinking, and that Marx would not be complete without De Leon. Now I am going to attempt to show how that De Leon is not complete, and I will add to De Leon's ideas of how to establish socialism in an industrialized capitalist country.

In the Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte Marx explained that people comprehend current revolutionary developments in reference to some event from the past. The Socialist Labor Party regarded this book by Marx as being so powerful that it made many socialists who were stalwarts for the cause. When De Leon explained the socialist movement as an effort to restore the liberty, equality, and fraternity of our savage and barbarous ancestors (which Morgan had written about in Ancient Society) in a socialist revolution with no class divisions, he did not hit the nail directly on the head. We live as citizens of our country, and are left alone as long as we obey the laws and do not step out of line conspicuously. Our identity is determined by where we live much more than by our family or racial heritage. As long as socialists do not recognize that we can not identify with our common savage ancestors to pattern the revolution after, we will make no waves no matter how much events cry for revolution.

The emancipation from despotism of the people of England and later the people of this country should inspire us to end wage slavery and bring real freedom and justice to this country. We inherited the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, and we should base our revolutionary goal on adapting our glorious past to an even more promising future. Our constitution was devised by capable people, who wanted us to survive in a great country. It is adaptable to changing conditions because it allows for change based on the will of the people. The abolitionist movement before the Civil War demanded the end of chattel slavery and it prevailed; slavery was abolished. It is for us to demand the end of wage slavery through the social ownership of the means of production. It is legal for us to do this in the open, a fact which De Leon, the great legal scholar, pointed out. However, the big difference between what I say and De Leon's program is that I seek to keep our constitution after the revolution. Such a goal is not inconsistent with the realization of socialism, because the private ownership of the means of production can be amended out of our law.

The great Greek philosopher Aristotle said that when all work can be done by machines we will no longer need slave or master. As the millennium approaches, we can fulfill that dream if we become aware of our potential as productive, intelligent, and loving beings.

Fraternally yours,

Monroe Prussack
Dear Frank,

I enjoyed your review of B.B.'s latest little crack at fame (DB July/Aug, 1997), but I disagree with some of your opinions. Your quotation of Black's self description as an "unenthusiastic anarchist" echoes the description made of him in the April 1997 edition of Harper's Magazine as a "self described anarchist". The Harper's writer is one of many writers, editors and publishers who have to the defense of freedom of expression in relation to the case of Jim Hogshire, and Black's little contribution to the hysterical American "war on drugs" was mentioned in the tiny little aside it deserves.

Bookchin may indeed not "realize that Black is an anarchist", but I would suggest that Bookchin reserved his spleen for those he considered to have more intellectual substance or influence. Black's position in the universe is several orders of magnitude less than what either he or his publisher might fantasize.

I also take issue with your assertion that Black's views on anarchism or anything else for that matter, are typical of lifestylist or primitivist ideologues. I do not mean to defend these people. I have already expressed my opinion that they don't belong, and I slot them into the same category as the Jehovah's Witnesses. Yet we have to be honest. Despite holding quasi-religious views whose logical extension is mass extermination of most of humanity these people disagree vehemently amongst themselves, and most have succeeded in compartmentalizing their ideology from their personal morality.

Black has offended many "lifestylists", just as the lifestylist attempt to expropriate individualist anarchism to their beliefs has offended true individualists such as Fred Woodworth. One of the most telling criticisms of Black that I have seen comes from the pen of Ward Churchill, a man who could easily be described as a "primitivist".

More importantly your definition of "leftism" is only one of many. I recognize that it is hard to put an exact definition on the varied social trends that the left has degenerated into, and your definition contains a grain of truth. Words change meaning over time, and at one time leftism would have been virtually synonymous with socialism in its Various forms rather than with reformism. Your inclusion of "Leninists", many of whom style themselves as ultra-revolutionary, as "leftists" should give you pause as to whether your definition is accurate.

Where your definition rings true is that leftism IS intimately connected with modern social democracy. While I think that Comrade Bookchin's political tactics are incomplete, and I agree with syndicalist comrades that they have been overly exclusive in the past, I would still recommend his essay 'The Left That Was' as a signpost to what leftism once meant and what it has lost in its present degeneration.

I cannot offer a definition of leftism, but I can offer a few opinions on its attributes that are both widely held and destructive of what socialists would like to see.

1) Tribal politics: This is the elevation of particular group grievances to an overwhelming significance. At its worst this can degenerate into what can only be described as insanity. In its majoritarian expression, however, it results in the type of
reformism that you deplore. People can and do make money by either acting as representatives of oppressed groups or signing up as state employed "helpers" of the oppressed. The tragic thing is that the status of the vast majority of the "helped" rarely improves through such efforts.

This social tendency has been described as "the culture of victimhood". What may be even worse is the habit of many leftists who lack a convenient victim identity to elevate the ideology of "marginalism" over the universal ideals that socialism once represented. Third Worldism is one glaring example. The needs and desires of the majority of the people in the places where such leftists live are given no importance, and even worse marginalists usually end up expressing nothing but contempt and hatred for ordinary people ("the workers" as most of your correspondants would put it).

2) This leads on to another point, leftism's abandonment of the universal ideals of justice and equity FOR ALL that socialism once stood for. In its place is a mishmash of "demands" for various groups. These demands simply don't hold together as a coherent body of thought (Marxism) or ethics (Anarchism). They are held as a conglomeration of beliefs much more by social pressure within a declining in-group than as derivatives of either a logical or ethical structure. When the demands of the victims of the month conflict, as they surely will because most involve merely throwing more government money in a given direction (the reformism that you dislike), the left has no answer. That's because there is none. The government is not an endless source of free money, and the demands of various groups DO conflict in ways other than who gets the best state treat to suck on. All the left can do is repeat rhetoric that is quite detached from reality.

7) The incoherence of leftism's "demands" is mirrored by its abandonment of coherent thought and ethics. It has been many years since I have considered myself a Marxist. I consider almost all of Marxism to be either plain wrong or merely matters of common sense that need no philosophy to doll them up (and warp them). Yet classical Marxism at least had the virtue of intellectual coherence. As many of your correspondents demonstrate Marxism can have the further virtue of being self correcting, at least for a minority of Marxists.

Leftism's incoherent Marxism IS NOT capable of self correction. Academic Marxism's postmodernism, not unconnected with tribal politics, abandons all of the—scientific and common sense—virtues that could lead to a politics more connected with reality. Besides being worthless as an intellectual pursuit post modernism abandons all ethical values such as honesty, fairness, objectivity, humility and compassion. Their "deconstruction" of science is actually an attack upon common sense. Their apotheosis of "power" as the one determining method of viewing social questions is merely decadent Stalinism, as has been seen by more than one commentator on their ramblings. This is a different thing from the type of Marxism I see in your pages, no matter how dogmatic I may think that some of it is. I don't see the shadow of the gulag in what you term "our political sector". I do in modern pseudo-Marxist leftism.

4) Power! This is the point where you are closest to the truth
about leftism. Leftism relies almost exclusively upon the state to push its agenda. While a small minority of leftists influenced by anarchism or certain currents within the "new movements" may opt for "direct action" this "direct action" almost invariably takes the form of either ritual demonstrations of tribalism or, more commonly, mere militant protest in the hope that the state will or will not do something. I see great hope in the development of community economic development strategies, in the work of anarcho-syndicalists and in the movements for community resistance (which will hopefully sometime in the future develop into the sort of libertarian municipalism that Bookchin envisions.)

Yet far too little of this sort of multi-prong action is being undertaken today. Far too little that is constructive rather than mere flashy militance. In the absence of such constructive action social democracy will remain a dominant force because the demands of leftism, whether expressed with militance or party politics, can only be catered to by social democratic formations. The tragedy of this is that the situation of both oppressed groups and the majority of people will remain the same under social democratic regimes. This is despite all the illusions of leftist sympathizers. In many cases the remedies proposed by such regimes will be even worse than the original disease, a concept alien to a left that is so "psychologized" that the fact that good intentions can lead to ill effects is incomprehensible.

I prefer to style myself a "reformist", to call a spade a spade and not fudge around the point with terms like "non-violent revolutionary" or "revolution is a process not an event". I am not a pacifist, and in other times and places other methods might be the best. But it is too obvious to me that "revolution" is an unrealistic goal in advanced industrial societies - at least if libertarian socialism is the goal and not merely a change of rulers. It is also obvious that the realistic actions of even the most ideologically commited revolutionary will be reformist, whatever the intentions, in the near and medium term future.

Reformism is NOT social democracy. The goals and methods of a libertarian reformism are totally different from those of "leftism". This deserves further elaboration, but I will leave that for the future. I speak as an ex-social democrat, though my resignation from the NDP is well over a quarter of a century old. Yet I continue to know the workings, not just from past experience or the media but also from the inside. People talk. You have to know social democracy intimately to hate it completely, something I suspect many of your correspondants fail to do, having rejected social democracy on ideological grounds rather than from experience.

Maybe the majority of your correspondants are right and I am wrong. Maybe all that can be done is to preserve an uncompromising ideal for some time 40 or 50 years in the future when conditions are different. I don't think so. I would like to see a real socialist left, one capable of appealing to the majority. I would like to see an alternative to the "left that is" whose failings have turned far too many people towards neo-conservative demagogues. What differentiates the "political sector" that Comrade Girard speaks of from "leftism" is not so much that it is
revolutionary as that it has not cooked a snotty nose at ordinary people as today’s left has. That is what makes it socialist and not “leftist”, and that is what makes it a hope for the future rather than a Frankenstein’s Monster. I think a lot of tactics have to be re-evaluated to become more effective. Maybe others don’t. Time will tell.

In Solidarity,
Pat Murtagh

Winnipeg, Man.

To DB Readers:
In the late 20th Century the future appears to be bleak for many ordinary workers and their families. It does of course depend on location and industry for fine detail but many face downsizing, redundancy and extensive periods of prolonged unemployment. Capital in order to generate profit and survive competition must constantly innovate to increase productivity per worker. Those who survive downsizing work in a more intense style with increased stress. If they work in the public sector they must work with fewer resources to achieve or appear to achieve more. Any ongoing socialist critique of contemporary capitalism has no shortage of material to draw on to support the basic proposition that capitalist society is a form of barbarism. This is just not at the level of relationships within production it is also about ecological crisis as well - witness the ongoing environmental disaster in Indonesia at the present time.

It follows from this ever present tendency of capitalism to degenerate from a crisis affecting an industry or even an entire economy into forms of barbarism that the burning question is how to get out. How to change the system. It is at this point that socialists really begin to diverge.

The term socialism has been used to cover a multitude of diverse political tendencies. While some would like to claim that true socialism has never been attempted the name has been appropriated to cover many proposed solutions. The fact that these have been failures, including some of the most brutal state capitalist regimes such as Stalin’s Russia, has made the very term socialism one that has lost much of its attractiveness. But if you take as a definition of socialism not the achievement of some glorious program but the actual class struggle you get a different perspective. The fact that there is a massive and continuing class war going on shows the direction of social change. It is in relation to the straight jackets that socialists have sought to impose on this living movement in the name of their doctrines that I wish to make some comments.

While classic reformism (for socialists) of the type put forward by Bernstein is clearly now just a management system for capital’s labour discipline problems this does not end the debate. There is a ceaseless massive day to day struggle for reforms at all levels of the system. Some may reconcile people to contemporary reality others may not be achievable in any permanent sense while capitalist relations remain but that question is not normally put by those engaging in the struggle.

It seems to me that the SPGB line of opposition to reforms has some fundamental problems associated with it. The article “Redefining Reformism” DB76, as well as many others, seems to me to put forward the view that reforms are not only futile but
lead away from socialism. At its worst this becomes an instruction to people not to struggle. It is vaguely akin to King Canute ordering the tide to stay still. It can line socialists up with those who are contented with the existing social order.

With class struggle as the base of the socialist project we get a different perspective. The ordinary "non political" person does not have a fully developed "socialist consciousness" and may never do so. But what they do have is a willingness to challenge things as they are. To refuse to buckle under the inhuman system of capitalist relationships as it affects them personally. This is what rescues us from barbarism. Without this constant revolt we would be reduced to pure reformism. The experts and social technicians would be free to devise marvellous schemes and having secured consent from above would be free to carry out their policies of social adjustment. Imagine life if Tony Blair was all we had to look forward to. It is the delightful creativity of the ordinary worker as they struggle to achieve specific aims (eg prevent 12 hour shifts, obtain workable day care, protect their environment, give a particular boss a heart attack etc) that socialists should glory in. Absenteeism may not achieve the glorious revolution but it will do as a first installment.

To Leninists, of all varieties, this class struggle has to be given direction and meaning if it is to achieve liberation - the abolition of capital. There is a continuous search for shortcuts to history. First wise men would lead the class as it battered down the ramparts one by one, classic reformism. Secondly a wise leadership would seize power on their behalf. All the class was required to do was salivate at the correct time. Contemporary reality shows the class the results of such projects and their abstinence from participation in the traditional class based formations eg mass labour parties shows that the lesson has been well learnt.

It is by looking at what the class is actually doing and not at what we think it should be doing that we will make some progress. Over the past two centuries there have been massive changes in the types of social relationships. It is one thing for a group of socialists to envisage a society that is free from exploitation, racism and sexism. It is another to achieve it. For example the early socialists proclaimed an international, reformist governments took part in World War One. The Russian Revolution proclaimed internationalism but Stalin’s government was anything but. There is no short cut. The ideal of internationalism has to be achieved in the course of struggle.

All that can be expected is that socialists will be part of a class in struggle and as active participants will have the right to analyse and seek to influence those struggles. This struggle to reform or modify specific aspects of capital’s rule always has the prospect of going beyond what is normally acceptable. This real movement for social liberation is one that exists it does not need to be created by revolutionary elites. However it is not necessary to see this movement as doomed to spontaneity (although this may not be bad). Those who call themselves socialists can be capable of rational discussion. Their dialogue doesn’t have to be sectarian posturing. The workers (of both sexes and all races) are just as capable of understanding history as anyone else. Their constant struggle gives us much to be optimistic about.

It is safe to assume from the above that I feel Kommunist Kranti is closer to a solution than the Communist Worker’s Organisation DB85.

Fraternally
Tony Laffan
ORGANIZING FOR SOCIALISM (I)

As social conditions under Capitalism continue to slide from bad to worse with no respite in sight, much more thought should be given to unionism's "historic mission"—the rearing of a Socialist Republic. To this end we think it timely to again air what we hold are two basic flaws in the Socialist Labor Party's presentation of Socialist Industrial Unionism.

Each of these two serious defects is manifest in the May 1997 issue of the SLP organ, The People. The first appears in the lead article, What's Wrong With The Labor Unions? The second appears under the head, SOCIALIST INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM: The Workers' Power.

As to What's Wrong With The Labor Unions?—here is a double exposure! Not only does The People nail today's unions as "corrupters" and "pervert- ers" of "the historic mission of unionism" but by its advocacy of "something now" unionism it exposes the SLP itself to the same charge. Thus:

* The People charges: "Instead of concentrating on building a classless society in which exploitation, unemployment and poverty would be abolished, they [today's unions] limit their aspirations to a vague 'fair day's wage for a fair day's work.'" In the next breath, however, The People to all intents and purposes itself shoves the classless society aspiration off-stage in favor of the "something now" or "immediate demands" syndrome. To wit: "By organizing all workers...the SIU [the Socialist Industrial Union] will enable workers to fully use their organized strength in waging the day-to-day struggle."

* The People charges that whereas today's unions accept the capitalist system "as a finality" they thereby "pervert the historic mission of unionism." Nevertheless, albeit The People, unlike these unions, does not envisage a never-ending capitalist reign, its call for classwide union organization for amelioration of conditions under Capitalism inescapably tar the Socialist Labor Party with the same brush—exhibits the SLP's own corruption, its own deflection from, its own turning aside from, that is, its own perversion of, the historic mission of unionism.

* The People declares: "While waging the day-to-day struggle with unity and militant vigor, the SIU will never[!] lose sight of the real goal, namely, a reconstruction of society that will socialize the industries..." What, never? Here, at last, is the quintessence of all and sundry tongue-in-cheek prognoses. More to the point, in keeping with real life how could an SIU help but lose sight of a "real goal" put on hold in favor of the day-to-day struggle?

The notion that organization for "improved conditions" is compatible with organization for Socialism, will not wash. It defies both logic and the experience of the socialist movement. Hope for "something now" is a lightning rod that waylays the revolutionary spirit, rendering it impotent by running it into the ground. Time and time again De Leon sought to drive the point home:
* "Workers who ask for 'improved conditions' do not ask for freedom. They ask for a lightening of the yoke of slavery."

* "Request a little, when you have a right to the whole, and your request, whatever declamatory rhetoric or abstract scientific verbiage it be accompanied with, works a subscription to the principle that wrongs you."

* "The 'demand' is ONE—it is the proclamation of the goal. The so-called 'immediate' demands are legion...The importance of the distinction lies in its practical bearing. The moment things that are not in the nature of a 'demand,' because they are not the goal, are raised to the dignity of a 'demand,' they are apt to be, and generally are, confused with the goal itself. A political party that sets up 'immediate' demands by so much blurs its 'constant' demand, or goal. The presence of 'immediate' demands in a Socialist platform reveals pure and simple politicianism—corruption, or the invitation to corruption."

Organizing for Socialism means organizing for Socialism; it does not mean organizing for 'something now,' "improved conditions," or so-called "immediate demands." The former is impelled by class consciousness, the latter by job consciousness. The former implies repudiation of the capitalist social order, the latter implies toleration of it. What is more, experience has proved that these two mindsets (these two organizing aims) cannot be made to harmonize, cannot be reconciled—has demonstrated that organization to abolish the wages system and organization to improve conditions under it are, willy-nilly, at cross purposes.

Has this cardinal truth, this principle forged at great cost by past generations of Socialists, been absorbed by the SLP? Evidently not! "Organizing all workers...to fully use their organized strength in waging the day-to-day struggle" remains a plank in the SLP platform—a non-revolutionary plank, a plank that belies the urgency of the revolutionary goal, a plank that contemplates ongoing working class-capitalist class relations rather than abolition of class rule.

But let The People itself tell the tale as it does in its May 1997 lead article under the sub heading, What Real Unions Would Do:

"Socialist Industrial Unionism aims to achieve solidarity of labor. However, before workers can achieve genuine solidarity they must rise above job consciousness and become class-conscious. They must learn that their own interests as individuals are linked together with those of every other worker. Then and not until then can they organize themselves as a class, employed and unemployed, skilled and unskilled, office worker and factory worker. Divided, they are exploited, abused and deprived of the potential for using their collective strength. United, they will no longer be an easy class to rule. On the contrary, the exploiters and their labor lieutenants will learn that their ruling days are numbered."

Brave words, but hardly a "specter" that is haunting America! Workers do not rise above job consciousness by uniting to ease the burden of wage servitude. They become class-conscious only when they become aware of their class interest—abolition of the wages system! Until workers become truly class-conscious, that is, until they embrace Socialism rather than
"A fair day's wage" as their goal, the exploiters and their labor lieutenants are unlikely to "learn that their ruling days are numbered!"

How, then, would a "Real Union" be recognized? As we put it on a former occasion:

"A Socialist Industrial Union does not concede capitalist right of possession of industrial property, hence does not bargain with the capitalist class. On the contrary, an integrally-organized SIU is a national weld of revolutionary thought in an industrial form designed to dispossess the said class and conduct production for the benefit of all."

(from p. 9)

road to abolition of the wages system and Mike Hargis, an IWW member associated with the Libertarian Labor Review demolishes the idea. This idea is as old as the workers movement. In the 1880s members of the SLP established furniture and cigar manufacturing coops and a cooperative foundry in Detroit. By 1890 these had disappeared without a trace.

Erik Parsels' article from the New Unionist parallels quotations from Marx's Communist Manifesto with a description of the current scene that confirms his analysis of 1848 and dissociates Marxism from events in the Soviet Union. The universal response of journals in the libertarian socialist political sector to the settlement of the UPS strike was that once again the capitalists and the union bureaucracy won and the UPS wage slaves lost. It would be interesting to examine the similarities and differences among them, but this issue carries a leaflet published during the strike by Internationalism because it explicitly comments on a suspicion that I suspect many of us have that strikes and the union movement in general, like politics and elections, are pretty much coordinated by the ruling class. The difficulty I have with this leaflet is that it infers from events a ruling class conspiracy, whereas I think that our masters are just doing what comes naturally in their role in the class struggle.

A review copy of Reflections on Marx's Critique of Political Economy arrived from India (to be followed, I hope by copies for free distribution here). The review here does little more than describe the book. I hope to comment on the ideas expressed in it in a future issue. Readers will find two pages—one text, the other graphics—in which the authors describe what they see as the legacy of the flaws in Marx's analysis. As usual we end with some notes, announcements, and short reviews.

**BULLETIN MATTERS**

In one respect production of the DB should improve. Instead of having to run each page very slowly through the copier, I've acquired a Gestner duplicator of an early vintage but serviceable and cheap. It promises to cut the cost of printing and to end the frequent copier repair bills as well as speed up the printing by a factor of ten.

**Finances**

It seemed nice to begin this issue with a healthy financial balance. And we didn't lose anything during the past two months. In fact we made a profit, if I may use the word. Also, for the first time in my memory income from subscriptions exceeded donations, in part because of two libraries which renewed after a hiatus and bought back issues.

(to p. 26)
Abolishing the Wage System
Are Industrial Cooperatives One Answer?

As Wobblies, our goal is to abolish the wage system. How are we going to make this quantum leap? What tool will we use to make the transition? We have set ourselves a Herculean task, a task that when we think about it square on stretches our imaginations to the limit.

Today as a union we are damn good at organizing, educating, agitating — and even growing. As powerful as our goal is, and as effective as our traditional, time-honed tools are, we must admit that the forces we are up against dominate our society and our own ways of thinking.

The yoke of the AFL-CIO is around our necks. With less than 15 percent of working people organized under their wing, these overpaid piecemeal declare they are the chief spokesmen and representatives of all the working class. They run business unions. Their business is to negotiate contracts, collect dues, to hold annual conventions in pricy resort hotels. They give wads of money and loads of time to the Democratic/Republican political machine, the fronts for Big Business. The Democratic/Republican political machine champions privileges for Big Business, setting rules for collective bargaining, fencing us in with Taft-Hartley, deciding who sits on the do-nothing National Labor Relations Board, or pushing the hoaxes called Labor-Management Cooperation.

Having the AFL-CIO negotiate a contract for working people is like playing strip poker with a stacked, marked deck. We give up vacations, overtime, pensions, health insurance — even the right to run our own locals. The only chip we have is a job, and this is in the pot already, anted up before the game even starts.

We have a long, hard road to walk if this is the starting point on our quest to abolish the wage system.

But is there a Wob alive who disagrees with what Big Bill Haywood said: "The bosses' brains are under the workers' caps!" We're smart enough to go into business ourselves, using every law now giving the advantage to the AFL-CIO, Democratic/Republican, Big Business machine. We are a union, the real union. And as owners we can abolish the wage system, one business at a time.

The industrial cooperative is the one tool in labor's kit which can put workers at the steering wheel riding down the highway toward our goal. Not walking.

And why shouldn't we go with the flow? The United States is the most capitalist nation in the world. Government is the executive board, managing laws to suppress and to oppress labor to the great benefit of capitalists.

By organizing industrial cooperatives we take advantage of their laws while, at the same time, we learn how to avoid the potholes. By creating industrial cooperatives we collectively own the means of production. In these businesses labor controls capital. We decide working conditions, hours and on the way we pay ourselves. The industrial cooperative is used for these ends around the world today.

For example, New Jersey has a statute (NJSA 34:17, Cooperative Societies of Workingmen) which construction workers in Cape May County are using as an escape route from the wage system.

Their first step has been to charter an industrial union, the IWW, of course, embracing all trades in the construction industry. Workers joining this labor pool agree among themselves on the working conditions, and on what jobs they'll bid.

Seventeen other states have similar laws. Every state allows what are called Limited Liability Corporations. These laws let us organize industrial cooperatives if we choose, and if we have the get-up-and-go. In many, many communities from Biddeford, Maine, to South Central Los Angeles, workers are going for worker ownership.

The Industrial Workers of the World is the only labor organization with a philosophy and matching rules to permit this type of organizing.

What is an industrial cooperative?

There are several types of cooperatives, but only one, the industrial cooperative, can
put full control of the business in the hands of the workers. Some use direct democracy to make decisions or to elect managers. Many more use representative democracy to elect a board that in turn hires or fires managers. All use the basic rule: one worker, one vote.

In the industrial cooperative every worker makes a capital investment equal to the investment every other worker makes. Every worker is an owner, and after a varying period of mentored apprenticeship, only owners work. The first investment everyone makes is know-how and experience. The second is labor. The third is money. All these investments are at risk.

These are the basics, the fundamentals, which make industrial cooperatives different from any other cooperative—marketing, agricultural, purchasing, insurance, credit unions, or the like.

Obviously there are many other factors which must be considered: Is there a market for the labor pool? In other words, are jobs available? Will someone buy what is produced, or is the service provided? Is the labor pool deep enough to get the job done right, on time, and without a hitch? Are there management skills in the labor pool? Is enough money pooled to keep the business going when (not if) times get tight?

Organizing and running an industrial cooperative demands more energy than we put out for the Business Machine. We have to use the brains under our caps to the fullest. The same for our job skills. We have to be willing to learn new skills. Further, while we want to organize work on our terms, we must organize work efficiently. We must learn about the wise use of and expansion of our capital. Nor can we forget to agitate for a swift end to the dog-eat-dog capitalist society.

We have to associate with other industrial cooperatives in the same industry, and then link up with other associations of industrial cooperatives until there is One Big Industrial Cooperative.

Operating industrial cooperatives is not easy. They are not for everyone. But there are many advantages:

Organizing an industrial cooperative is easier than organizing a union for the purposes of negotiating a contract with the bosses. When you go for the latter you go up against every repressive labor law on the books. Workers are fearful of losing their jobs, even of being seen with an organizer. The capitalist press beats your brains out.

If you are successful in organizing the union, then you are committing yourself to a life-long struggle with the boss, the courts, or both, costly haggling over wages, hours, working conditions. Some of us will, and must, keep on keeping on with this job.

The industrial cooperative can eliminate these problems. You devote your energies to the collective security of every owner, and to the welfare of your community.

We believe, and many before us agree, that the Industrial Workers of the World and industrial cooperatives are two sides of the same coin. The IWW is its members. The union is wherever its members work. The same holds for the industrial cooperative. We workers own it, and if successful the industrial cooperative is an integral part of our lives and our communities. IWW members have political clout in the union, voting on every matter of consequence. Every owner has political clout, voting on business as we decide and on civic affairs if and as we choose. On the other hand, in conventional businesses, every employee leaves her or his civil rights at the front door of the plant or office.

The IWW gives members a platform to speak out on labor’s central issues. The industrial cooperative gives us a rostrum to speak against capital’s exploitation and domination of labor, an example of what we are talking about, not just an exhortation.

As importantly, industrial cooperatives draw into their ranks people willing to declare the Wobs’ inspiring motto: An Injury to One is an Injury to All. How easily this world-famous saying translates into AI for One, and One for All.

These two sayings embody ethical beliefs which are crucial to pooling the knowledge and the abilities of working women and men so that we, not capitalists, enjoy the fruit of our labor. We set the pay by the way we work together.

Richard D. Neill X332713
Cape May Courthouse, NJ
Frank T. Adams X342513
Asheville, NC
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**Co-ops No Answer**

I don’t know where FWs Neill and Adams ever got the idea that the IWW’s philosophy envisions “abolishing the wage system, one business at a time,” via the workers becoming capitalists (albeit collective ones).

Ever since the dawn of wage slavery, individual workers have dreamed of saving up their pennies and one day starting their own business, thus escaping wage slavery. Escaping wage slavery is not the same as abolishing it. Sure, the individual worker has ceased to be a wage worker. They have, in fact, become petite bourgeoisie, different only in scale from their bigger brethren. Indeed our current economic system has its roots precisely in the realm of small commodity production.

If you look at the experience of the Mondragon Cooperatives in Spain, we can see the steady development, under the pressure of the capitalist market, of class divisions within the cooperatives in the hierarchy of compensation (i.e. wages) between the managers and the workers, and between skilled and unskilled. We also see the recent development of the Cooperatives opening up plants in the Third World where the workers are not co-op members, but wage slaves being exploited by the co-ops (see the last two issues of the Libertarian Labor Review). Similar developments have been occurring in the Israeli Kibbutz movement. Even within the small U.S. co-op sector, many co-ops hire temporary wage labor at busy times.

These developments are inevitable, in my opinion, because the capitalist economy operates by certain laws of development that require capitalists to maximize profits. Collectivizing a business does not get rid of those economic constructs. Sure, a collective would eliminate parasitic management to keep production costs down, whereas a corporation or individually owned buyiness often eliminates useful workers. The object, however, is still the same – to improve the profit margin, not to meet social needs.

The IWW was set up to fight the capitalists. Neill and Adams want to avoid this conflict. They’re looking to make an end run around capital and the state. When we declare in our Preamble “By organizing industrially we are forming a new society within the shell of the old” we have in mind a fighting industrial organization that could take over and run the means of production which have been created by generations of working people. Of course this is hard. That is why it is called a struggle.

We must continue to inscribe on our banner the revolutionary watchword “Abolish the Wage System,” not “Avoid the Class Struggle.”

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Mike Hargis
GLOBAL ECONOMY CONFIRMS MARX'S ANALYSIS OF CAPITALISM
(From the August, 1997, New Unionist, 2309 Nicollet Ave., #102, Minneapolis, MN 55404)

By Erik Parsels

With Russia and the former so-called “communist” countries of eastern Europe embracing free-market capitalism, and even China rushing headlong to welcome billions of foreign capitalist investment dollars, it seems to many people that Marx has been proved wrong.

But the Communist Party dictators, despite the claims of friends and foes alike, never had anything to do with Marxism or genuine communism. To find out about Marx you have to look at what he actually said, rather than what ill-informed people say he said.

. The best place to start is the Communist Manifesto, published in 1848, because this work condenses almost the whole of what is essential to communism or socialism down to a single small volume.

The bourgeoisie, by the rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by the immensely facilitated means of communication, draws all, even the most barbarian, nations into civilization. The cheap prices of its commodities are the heavy artillery with which it batteres down all Chinese walls.... It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the capitalist mode of production; it compels them to introduce what it calls civilization into their midst, i.e., to become bourgeois themselves.

In this not what has happened in the century and a half since Marx wrote these words? Small-scale craft production has been replaced all over the world by the factory, by mechanization. All countries are now pretty much plugged into the world market and operate on the capitalist model of investment for profit.

The bourgeoisie... has agglomerated population, centralized means of production, and has concentrated property in a few hands.

In America since the mid-19th century, the population has shifted from the countryside to the cities, until now only about 2% of the population actually lives on the land. New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Miami—the cities have swollen to immense size, and the same development has and is occurring throughout the world.

The means of production have also been centralized. Most of the world’s auto production is concentrated in a few places in a few countries, with the U.S., Japan and Germany leading the way. Boeing and Airbus have passenger aircraft production pretty much to themselves, and a few huge companies are taking over the computer business.

As for the concentration of property, in the 1980s alone the richest one-half of the population in America increased its share of the wealth from just over 25% to more than 30%.

In proportion as... capital is developed, in the same proportion is... the modern working class developed, a class of laborers, who live only so long as they find work, and who find work only so long as their labor increases capital. These laborers... are a commodity, like every other article of commerce, and are consequently exposed... to all the fluctuations of the market.

As the factory system spreads around the world, farmers and small businessmen lose any independent property they might have had and have to go to work for someone else. My family no longer owns a family farm where I could go eke out a living growing beans and potatoes if I couldn’t find a job. Nor does yours, I bet. We are all dependent on the job market, as Marx says, though he was writing before most of this process had happened.

The modern worker... instead of rising with the progress of industry, sinks deeper and deeper below the conditions of existence of his own class. He becomes a pauper... And here it becomes evident, that the bourgeoisie is unfit any longer to be the ruling class in society... It is unfit to rule because it is incompetent to assure an existence to its slave within its slavery, because it cannot help letting him sink into such a state that it has to feed him, instead of being fed by him.

In the U.S. blue-collar wages fell more than 7.5% from 1987 to 1992, and white-collar wages dropped 3.5% over the same period. This is not an isolated trend but an expression of the well-known adage that the rich get richer while the poor get poorer. Marx wrote these words about the capitalists having to feed the worker rather than being fed by him long before there was such a thing as a “welfare state.” Perpetual reliance on assistance was something Marx foresaw 150 years ago!

So much for Marx being wrong in his analysis of capitalism. But what about his prediction of coming revolution? Wasn’t he wrong about that?

With the development of industry the proletariat not only increases in num-
ber, it becomes concentrated in greater masses, its strength grows, and it feels its strength more... the workers begin to form combinations (Trades Unions) against the bourgeoisie; they club together in order to keep up the rate of wages; they found permanent associations in order to make provision beforehand for these occasional revolts.

In less than a century following the writing of the Manifesto, the trade union movement developed, gathered steam and came near to sparking world revolution. Mass demonstrations and strikes in Russia in 1905 and again in 1917 brought down the hated Tsar, paving the way for the Bolshevik revolution. Strikes in Germany forced the Kaiser to abdicate at the end of World War I and brought the Social Democratic Party briefly to power.

In this country unions fought for and won the right to organize. During the Great Depression the workers' movement forced the capitalists to back down and accept unions and government programs as the price for preserving capitalism.

Although workers all over the world hailed the Russian revolution as the start of the great world revolution, the fact remained that the Bolshevik takeover in Russia was not so much a revolution as a military coup. There was no working-class majority in Russia; 80% of the population were peasants. Lacking a working class that had grown up in and become accustomed to a working-class lifestyle and democratic principles, the Bolsheviks under Stalin decided to accomplish the nasty job of driving the peasants off their land and into the factories themselves.

By thus doing the capitalists' dirty work of industrializing Russia, the Bolsheviks gave the Western capitalists a ready-made bogeyman, whipping boy and scapegoat all rolled into one. But what did Marx say?

The proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interest of the immense majority... the first step in the revolution by the working class is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class, to win the battle of democracy.

According to what Marx says, the Bolshevik revolution was not socialist at all. A takeover by a minority, led by one party which did not extend democracy to the whole working class, is not socialist.

So the failure of the Soviet experiment, whatever you want to call it, hardly represents the failure of socialism. It represents the failure of Stalinism, the doctrine that the working class can be dragged into the promised land by a determined effort on the part of a dictatorial state. Such trickle-down communism deserves to fail as much as capitalism does. But if the Soviet Union and China weren't the answer, what is?

Now and then the workers are victorious, but only for a time. The real fruits of their battles lie, not in the immediate result, but in the ever expanding union of the workers. This union is helped on by the improved means of communication that are created by modern industry and that place the workers of different localities in contact with one another... This organization of the proletarians into a class, and, consequently into a political party, is continually being upset again by the competition between the workers themselves. But it constantly rises up again, stronger, firmer, mightier.

Capitalism is a world system, depending for its survival on an ever-expanding market. The capitalist market has now swept almost the entire world into itself. It is rapidly running out of room to expand. Soon its own weight will bring it crashing down, with a little push from a united working class.

We do not revere Marx because he was some kind of wizard or saint. We respect Marx and read his writings because he was a brilliant social scientist. As a keen observer of the trends going on right before his eyes, he could interpret and analyze the workings of this society and project a practical alternative to capitalism that would be freer, egalitarian and far more democratic.

And now it might be appropriate to share one final quotation from Marx:

The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles... oppression and oppressed stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.

A great struggle lies ahead of us. Whether we welcome it or fear it or deny it or want to avoid it, it will come, because the economic laws of the capitalist system will force it on us. Let's hope it ends in a fairer reconstitution of society rather than the common ruin of us all.
The Meaning of United Parcel Strike

I - The issues

The current strike by 185,000 truck drivers, warehousemen, sorters, loaders, and other workers at United Parcel Service (UPS) is the largest strike in the U.S. in more than a decade and has been the focus of an incredible media barrage. The strike is run by the Teamsters union, the largest union in America with 1.8 million workers, and one which was "reformed" by the bourgeoisie some five years ago when the government intervened in the internal affairs of the organization and presided over an election which brought Ron Carey, a reformist union leader, backed by the leftists in the Teamsters for a Democratic Union, to the presidency, ending 50 years of domination of the union by mob-connected union hacks.

The main issues in the strike include the question of part-time work. As many companies have done in the U.S., UPS has increasingly relied on large numbers of part-time workers who receive lower wages and benefits than fulltime workers, to the point where 60 percent of the 185,000 workers are parttimers. In the last four years as UPS profits have soared, the company has added 48,000 workers, but only 12,000 of them have been fulltime. In 1982, parttime workers earned $9 per hour, and fulltime workers earned $13. Fifteen years later, parttimers still earn an average of $9 per hour (the range is 8-11 dollars). Fulltimers earn $19.95 per hour. Many of the parttimers are guaranteed only 3 or 4 hours work per day, sorting packages in the early morning hours to load on delivery trucks. Clearly, this issue taps a real anger and discontent among UPS workers, and because so many workers in other service industries are similarly trapped in forced parttime positions, triggers tremendous sympathy among many workers.

Other central issues include:

1) control of the pension fund, which has traditionally been controlled by the union and has always been a tremendous source of patronage. UPS wants to take control of the pension fund to protect it for the workers, they claim, but obviously they want to benefit from the same investment opportunities as the union has in enriching themselves.

2) wages. The union wants to raise parttime wages by $3.67 over four years; the company proposes to raise wages by $2.50 over five years. Not a great disparity and neither would compensate workers for 15 years worth of inflation.

II - A Bourgeois Maneuver

It is clear from the anger of the workers on the picketlines (at the time of this writing the media reports 31 workers arrested in picketline incidents and court injunctions have been issued in Minneapolis, Florida and Massachussets to stop workers from blocking scab (trucks driven by management personnel) that there is growing militancy among the workers. This development is an inevitable worsening of the economic crisis and conditions of the working class. However, this militancy, in the absence of a clear understanding of how to fight on the proletarian terrain, sets workers up for manipulation by the bourgeoisie.

It is equally clear that the bourgeoisie wants and is promoting this strike as evidenced by:

- the provocation by the company, which proposed to create only 200 fulltime jobs per year under the new contract;
- the incredible publicity barrage about the strike (much of it sympathetic to
the workers' grievance about part-time work). The strike has been on the front page of the NY Times everyday, with accompanying articles inside the paper, for example. And it is featured every night in the television news. There is no BLACK Out!!! in this strike as there usually is in cases of class struggle;

- the decision of president Clinton NOT to intervene in the strike, by refusing to comply with a request from various businesses and business associations to impose a 90-day "cooling off" period, under a Taft Hartley injunction and forcing the workers back to their jobs. The president claims that this strike by 185,000 who are responsible for transporting 80 percent of the merchandise parcels in the US has not created an emergency situation. In contrast, last February when 2000 pilots at American Airlines decided to go on strike, the president saw that as an emergency situation and sought an injunction to block the strike, even though there were twenty other airlines operating without interference. Clearly, the government wants this strike to proceed!

- the fact that this strike was provoked and called at a moment most convenient for the bourgeoisie, i.e. the middle of the summer, during slack months for the nation's retail industry which relies so heavily on UPS. In November/December, as the holiday season approached, the workers could have maximum impact with a work stoppage.

III - The goal of the maneuver

A central political goal of the bourgeoisie in the current period is the strengthening of the left to control the working class in the years ahead. The revitalization of the AFL-CIO, reestablishing the credibility of the unions, has been underway steadily now for two years since the election of John Sweeney as head of the international union. Teamster Union Ron Carey is posturing very radically, posing the question of part-timization of labor as a central issue for the working class, a practice that shows the viciousness of the employers who make their profits on the backs of the workers. The union calls on workers to take the strike from the picketline to "Main Street" and vows to organize solidarity rallies. The unions and the bourgeois media conspire together to hide the union's own complicity in imposing the two-tier wage system in UPS. In 1982, the union agreed to the increase in part-time workers and in contract after contract since then agreed to permit the number of parttimers to rise and for the wages to remain stuck at the 1982 level. The situation that is denounced by the union leaders today is not something that the company unilaterally imposed, but something that the union participated hand and glove in setting up over the years.

Whatever the final outcome of the demands, whether the union appears to "win" something, or loses badly, the unions will have gained in reestablishing credibility, by pretending to stand up and fighting to defend the workers. If they lose, they will claim it is because the unions are not strong enough, as they said when the Detroit newspaper strike was lost last spring. Either way the unions gain, and therefore the bourgeoisie as a whole gains in strengthening the union grip on the class.

In much the way that the bourgeoisie has maneuvered in the past two years in France and Belgium to push workers into premature struggles, this strike is a pre-emptive effort by the bourgeoisie, forcing a confrontation on the question of part-time work before the working class is prepared to fight this battle on its own terrain. By strengthening the unions it will help pave the way for other pre-emptive measures in the future.

IV - Perspective of the strike

While the issue of parttime work is resonant in other sectors of the proletariat, it does immediately connect to the conditions prevailing in key sectors of the industrial proletariat, such as auto, telephone, transit,
etc. As such, while there is some potential for spreading (i.e. to other service sector groups), and in garnering sympathy from other workers, this issue is at the moment is not a point of departure for the generalization of struggle, even if the level of consciousness was higher in the proletariat at the moment.

While this is a national strike, involving many workers, it is politically isolated, due to the regression in consciousness in the class as a whole, suffered after the collapse of the stalinist bloc in 1991 and the onset of the bourgeoisie’s propaganda campaign about the end of communism and the triumph of democracy.

The union is in total control of the struggle. As the strike deadline approached, and was then extended, there was no outbreak of wildcat actions here and there across the country by militant workers. There was a very careful controlled and manipulated planning to the strike.

The strike has no perspective to spread or to lead to an outbreak of more general struggle.

To the extent that other workers are drawn in, it will only serve to strengthen the bourgeois maneuver to validate and credibilize the unions.

V - Intervention of revolutionaries

Regarding this strike, revolutionaries must intervene to the class as a whole, the UPS workers, and other political groups to denounce the bourgeois maneuver to strengthen the unions, to expose the character of the strike, to point out how the unions helped created the current situation; to point out the unfavorable conditions of the struggle, to point out the necessity for the workers to prepare the way to struggle on their own terrain in the future. It is crucial that revolutionaries act to counter the tendency to tail after the struggle, to support it and see as a positive development in the class struggle for the proletariat. In this sense we must be prepared to struggle against the grain, as the ICC did in exposing the bourgeois maneuver in France in December 1995. - Internationalism

(from p. 18)

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BALANCE
October 24, 1997

$458.17

Fraternally submitted,

Frank Girard
for the DB
Reflections on Marx’s Critique of Political Economy, Collectivities, August 1997, 45 pages, 8 1/2 by 11, Free from Majdoor Library, Autopin Jhuggi, N.I.T. Faridabad, 120001 India. Also accessible at the following website — http://www.geocities.com/capitolhill/lobby/2379. [Although the DB does not yet have copies for free distribution, readers who prefer not to send to India for individual copies can order them from the DB.]

The book carries the following on the title page:

Marx’s concepts and categories have become an intrinsic part of common usage. They are also used by statist tendencies to legitimise their claims to power and to suppress the questioning of the foundations of existing hierarchical society. This text seeks to dissolve the aura that surrounds Marx’s concepts and categories. In doing so it seeks to free them from the deadweight of tradition that has rendered them incapable of performing a critical function today.

The readers of this text need not be acquainted with Marx’s critique of political economy. The section ‘Concept Notes’ has been included to facilitate an understanding of Marx’s concepts. We hope that this text will help in challenging the hierarchy of the Marx-read, polemically-literate, quotation-flinging gurus and their disciples.

Critique of Political Economy concerns itself with what it calls “limitations in Marx’s Critique.” The authors see these as 1) the failure of Marx and his successors to stress sufficiently the role of simple production under capitalism, i.e. production and exchange by non-wage workers and 2) the transformation of individual capitals into corporate capital in the century that has followed the publication of the last of the three volumes of Capital.

In each of the book’s five major sections the authors examine an area of Marxist theory in which they find flaws. Each of these sections begins with an explanation of Marx’s thinking followed by “Our Critique,” both with marginal annotation. Perhaps because of space constraints, the authors present their material concisely and—I might add—clearly. The five sections (1. “Basic characterization of capital,” 2. “Extent of domination of the capitalist mode of production,” 3. “Significance of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall,” 4. “The problem of extended reproduction,” 5. “Monopoly capitalism and imperialism”) are followed by “The Legacy,” two pages in which the authors attempt to show by words and graphics the consequences of the limitations of Marxism: the heritage of so-called Marxism/Leninism with its emphasis on nationalism, state capitalism. If all goes well, these two pages will be included in this issue.

Next come eleven pages of “Concept Notes,” which summarize eight of Marx’s concepts along with comments. Among the eight are “A. Commodity and Value,” “B. Value and Equivalents,” dealing with exchange, and “C. Production Managers of Extraction.” In the last of these the authors claim—astonishing to me—that “A conservative estimate of their total share [i.e. the share of the ‘managers of discipline, control, and coercion’: the ‘managements of extraction’] would be 85 to 90 percent of the total product!” Other concepts discussed include “E. The Politics of Wage and Time Bargain,” “G. Average Rate of Profit and Its Tendency to Fail,” and “H. The Accumulation of Capital: Problem & Solution.”

--Frank Girard
The legacy

Marx’s critique of political economy concentrated on commodities produced in factories owned by individuals. It premised its concepts and conceptual framework on the private ownership in the means of production.

The limitations of Marx’s critique form neat slots in a logical flow which theoretically underpin the formation of state corporations.

If abolition of private property is the abolition of capital (as per Marx’s characterisation of capital) then nationalisation can be equated with socialism. The legitimising roots of this lie quite deep. "... in this branch (alkali production, the United Alkali Trust) which forms the basis of the whole chemical industry, competition has been replaced by monopoly in England, and the road had been paved, most gratifyingly, for future expropriation by the whole of society, the nation" F. Engels, 1894 (Capital, vol. III, Part V, Chapter 27- 'The Role of Credit in Capitalist Enterprise').

If capitalism can be studied country by country as Marx does in deriving national rates of profit (“What we want to show ... is precisely the way in which a general rate of profit takes shape in any given country.” K. Marx, Capital, vol. III, Part II - ‘Conversion Of Profit into Average Profit’ Ch 8) then “national solution” will constitute the centre stage dispersing the global edge of wage-workers resistances & struggles.

Marx wrongly shows extended reproduction in a closed capitalist system. This erroneous understanding of the accumulation of capital removes from the theoretical purview the prime basis of the crises of capital. The global systemic crises of capital are then per force shown to be only crises of disproportionate production in different branches of production. Then planning becomes a solution to the crises of capital. World Bank, IMF and WTO like institutions are trying to do this on a global scale, whereas caricatures a la Bukharin (“State capitalism is crisisless”) do it on a national scale.

Lenin’s theory of “imperialism” - hides the struggles of wage-workers against capital, and instead supports and engenders the politics based on oppressor and oppressed countries i.e. politics based on state identities. This forms the ideological support for the vociferous “anti-imperialist” struggles for the formation of alternative state structures.

Together with this the politics of representation & delegation and “professional revolutionaries” provides the practical means of state-capitalist take-overs. It is not by chance that ‘Capital’, ‘Communist Manifesto’ etc. have been published and distributed in millions by state apparatuses in Russia, China, etc.
the legacy

Crisis only due to innumerable individual owners causing disproportionate production in various branches of production

Concentration followed by planning removes crises

Private property and individual owners of means of production i.e. the capitalists, equated with capital.

Removal of capitalists is negation of capital

What is to be done?

"Workers, poor fellows condemned to work discipline, cannot on their own go beyond mere economic struggles and attain revolutionary consciousness."

"Representatives / Professional revolutionaries needed to think, decide and lead."

"Revolutionary consciousness needs to be transplanted."

"Party is the vanguard of the proletariat."

What is required is a strong disciplined iron-willed party."

Planned Production

The New Management

Vanguard of the proletariat controls production and makes the workers work 'the way they should'

Global competition compels increased production and productivity through

- Increase in work intensity
- Extension of working hours
- Decrease in wage bill
- Higher discipline

Efficient secret services to know resistances
Standing army and mobile police (preferably tinted red) to crush resistances
Labour camps to atomize for resisting work and discipline

"The First Stage of Communism" III

Realities of Commodity Economy

Interdependent global grid of market relations

Global competition

To survive compete globally
NOTES, ANNOUNCEMENTS, AND SHORT REVIEWS

Saint Che: The Truth Behind the Legend of the Heroic Guerilla, Ernesto Che Guevara by L. Gambone, 1997, 12 pages; $2.00 from L. Gambone, Box 174, Montreal, QC. H3K 3B9, Canada. In a brief 12 pages Gambone explodes many of the myths surrounding the leftist hero of SDS and the Sixties: students. He argues, first all, that Che never ceased to be a Peronist, a follower of the nationalistic, fascist ruler of Argentina in the forties and fifties. He also argues that Che was a Stalinist and the architect of the alliance between the anti Batista 26 July Movement, led by Castro, and the Cuban CP which had originally supported Batista. Besides "Che the Stalinist," headings in the pamphlet include "Che the Executioner" and "Che the Bureaucrat. The last is "Che Died for Our Sins," in which he writes, "Che is every one of us who ever believed 'by any means necessary.'

Communism is the Material Human Community: Amadeo Bordiga Today by Loren Goldner, 1997, 28 pages, $2 - £1.50 from Collective Action Notes, PO Box 22962, Baltimore, MD 21203. Bordiga was an important figure in the Italian socialist movement. A major theoretician, one of the founders of the Italian Communist party and its first secretary general, he broke with the Russian Bolsheviks early on and was denounced by Lenin in Leftwing Communism: An Infantile Disorder. Goldner, writing after the collapse of the Soviet Union, attempts to explain its demise in a way that is compatible with the thinking of many DB readers and in keeping with that of Bordiga, who believed that the USSR was never anything but a capitalist nation. Goldner suggests that the USSR, because of shortages and other problems, simply succumbed to the disorder arising from a population which had lost confidence in the system.

According to Bordiga the success of the capitalist revolution can be measured by the extent to which it has destroyed small scale subsistence agriculture. The capitalist revolution in Western Europe then began in the sixteenth century. By 1900 it was pretty much completed there and reaching completion in the U.S., Canada, and Japan. In Russia and later elsewhere in Eastern Europe it was carried on under the segis of the so-called worker's state. It is presently in progress in the third world. Goldner has written a wonderful pamphlet, which deserves a much more thorough review than it has received here.

Escape is the new eight-page journal of a British group which identifies itself as "ultra left," a term I find hard to understand since I see the "left" as capitalism's left (reformist) wing. By that definition the ultra left would be ultra reformist. But such is not the case, at least for the Escape group; it is clearly in the same libertarian socialist political sector as the DB. The group has produced a critique of the twentieth century social democratic/ Leninist movement in all its manifestations. The group's basic ideas are found in a one-page essay, "Escaping the Twentieth Century," which denounces the traditional left for its blind attachment to the USSR and its failure to see in the collapse of soviet communism the role of our class's "revolt against work" and the possibility of a corresponding revolt in the west. Most of Escape consists of a seven-page article, "Beyond Kronstadt," which deals largely with the history of the USSR. It ends with the promise to explore in future issues a practical alternative to the failed politics of the historic left. No price given. Available from Escape, PO Box 2474, London N8 0HW, E-mail, escape@hotmail.com>.

Bulletin of the Kate Sharpley Library, 1997, No. 11 is the eight-page publication of an
organization "dedicated to countering the distortions and lies that pass for the history of anarchism and giving the anarchist movement a true view of its origins." This issue includes the notice of the Kate Sharpley Library's (KSL) publication of *The Friends of the Durruti Group 1937-1939* by Agustin Guillamon as well as an article by Jaime Balusu, editor of the Friends' newspaper defending himself from allegations made by other anarchists that he was a Marxist. There are also a couple of short biographies of "unknown anarchists" including one of Ross Winn by Emma Goldman. Ross Winn was a contemporary of the Haymarket anarchists and revived Spies's paper, the Chicago *Alarm*, after it had ceased publication. The KSL also publishes pamphlets dealing with anarchist history. For a list write to KSL, BM Hurricane, London, WC1N 3XX England.

*Any Time Now* which describes itself as the "The Anarchist-Decentralist Newsletter" is the recently revived journal of communitarian anarchism. The second issue since its rebirth contains a lively discussion between Ed Stamm and Larry Gambone on just exactly "what is anarchism?" as well as a debate between "minarchists" and "panarchists," two tendencies--as I understand it--in the communitarian anarchist movement (if one can properly use the word movement to describe anarchism). Other articles include "The Communitarian Aspect," "Bigotry is Bigotry" (in regard to the anarchist journal "The Blast"), "Reality Check - The Anarchist Economics Column," and other articles on Panarchy. *Any Time Now* also has a book service. For a list of anarchist and decentralist publications as well as a copy of the journal write to Affinity Place, Argenta B.C. V0G 1B0 Canada or to L. Gambone, Box 174 Montreal, QC H3K 3B9, Canada.

*MRTA: History, Politics, and Communiques*, March 1997, is a 104-page compilation of materials dealing with the Peruvian guerilla group Tupac Amaru (MRTA) made during their occupation of the Japanese Embassy in Lima. The pamphlet was published by the Chicago Autonomous Zone, who describe their mixed reaction to the MRTA and its hostage taking. They claim to be "inspired by their audacious action, however predictably tragic and hopeless the outcome must ultimately be... and we believe that some of the ideas that the Tupac Amaru express are compatible with anarchist thought." The short articles and documents are organized under six headings: Background and History, News Articles, Interviews, Communiques and Statements from the MRTA, and Statements of Solidarity. No price given, but I paid $2 for a copy at an Autonomous Zone literature table a couple of weeks ago. From Autonomous Zone, 1573 N. Milwaukee #420, Chicago, IL 60622 azone@wwa.com

*The Libertarian Movement in Chile: Mutualism and Anarcho-Syndicalism from 1840 to the Present* by L. Gambone (29 pages, 1997), chronicles the development of what can loosely be called a libertarian movement that has existed in Chile for 150 years. Somehow I found it hard to accept the idea of a developed movement of this kind in an economic backwater like Chile. Nonetheless it is all there including anarcho-syndicalist unions that dominated the labor movement as well as an important IWW presence amounting to over 10,000 in 1918. Like the IWW here, it was unable to compete with the Communist Party and began in the 1920s a slow decline that was accelerated by a fascist takeover in the 1930s. In his concluding section Gambone considers the superiority of still-surviving mutualism, the earliest form of anarchism in Chile, over anarchism and anarcho-syndicalism. $2.50 from L. Gambone, PO Box 174, Montreal, QC H3K 3B9, Canada.
Collective Action Notes #13 1997, 28 tabloid-pages $1.50/L1.50 ($1.7 for a four-issue sub) from CAN, POB 22962, Baltimore, MD 21203 E-mail: cansv@igc.apc.org As in earlier issues, much of this issue consists of reports from the frontlines of the class struggle. The first six pages report on the strike of the Liverpool dockers. Other articles describe events in France (“After the 1995 Strikes the Current Situation in France”), India (reviews of two books as well as Kamunist Kranti’s “Notes On Our Background” and the full text of KK’s debate with the Communist Workers Organization, which was published in DB85), Canada (“On Recent Struggles in Canada”), and Hungary. Many readers will be interested in CAN’s internet material, listing E-mail addresses of “ultra left” groups and publications. This issue also supplies the info on the “John Gray Web Site: <http://www.geocities.com/~johngray> and along with that a two-page list of “Resources,” publications and addresses—including internet—of “ultra left” groups.

Anarchist Age Weekly Review may be the last English language anarchist weekly publication in the world. Strangely enough it flourishes in Australia, which I never thought of as having a large anarchist movement. This issue of the four-page newsletter size paper, number 273, 27th of October-2nd November, carries articles on the new constitution for Australia—apparently the anarchists have some suggestions—, an article, “Hiss...”, which the editors claim is the sound of the air escaping from the over-inflated bubble of capitalism. The editor finds it difficult to understand “...how hundreds of financial advisers and financial and political commentators didn’t come to the same conclusion” as he: that the stock market was about to collapse. (Apparently he had predicted it in a radio show 12 hours before the collapse. Other articles deal with Australian political and economic matters. $50 for a 50-issue sub from PO Box 20, Parkville, Vic 3052 Australia. email: <anarchistage@geocities.com>.

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