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ABOUT THIS ISSUE

This issue begins with the rather delayed publication of Dave Stratman’s “Fight to Win.” It was originally circulated as the draft you see on pages 3-12. Unfortunately, I couldn’t locate the newer version that was later published in New Democracy when I was ready to paste it up for publication here. I’m reasonably sure no major changes were made, but interested readers can write to New Democracy for a free updated version (PO Box 427, Boston, MA 02130). I agree strongly with the four things Stratman believes are necessary to bring life to the labor movement—“revitalize” strikes me as the wrong word, for I don’t think it ever had a revolutionary potential. I continue to disagree just as strongly as ever with his section on “The Legacy of Marxism.”

(To p. 12)
FIGHT TO WIN: A STRATEGY FOR LABOR
by Dave Stratman

The disasters for working people of the last twenty-five years form a litany of rank-and-file heroism and AFL-CIO betrayal: PATCO, Local P-9, the Staley Lockout, Caterpillar.... In each of these struggles, working people acted with courage and commitment. In each of them also the AFL-CIO leadership acted to isolate the workers, undermine their struggle, and force them back to work against their will.

The power of U.S. corporations is great. The defeats we have suffered in these years, however, have not been mainly a function of corporate power. Each of these struggles could have been won with appropriate support from the "labor movement." Instead they were sabotaged by AFL-CIO leaders. Within the AFL-CIO unions there are millions of rank-and-file members and thousands of labor reformers who are well aware of the treacherous role played by the leadership. In spite of decades of effort, however, labor activists have not succeeded in building a movement capable of reversing the direction of the unions.

I believe that it is possible to rebuild the labor movement, but only on a basis very different from the efforts of labor activists to date. Though the enemies we confront are powerful, the chief obstacles to our success have been internal problems within the labor reform movement itself. It is within our power to solve them.

The first step in solving the problems is to discuss them openly and democratically. This article is an attempt to contribute to that discussion.

I want to discuss four things I believe we have to do to revitalize the labor movement. We must:

—Name the enemy in the class war.
—Explain what is at stake in the fight.
—Expose the role of the AFL-CIO leadership.
—Fight to win.

These things are all obvious, common sense things to do in a fight. And yet they are not being done now by labor activists. We need to discuss why. Finally, I'll propose a strategy for victory in the class war.

NAMING THE ENEMY

A number of years ago I was invited to give the keynote address on "The Attack on Public Education" to the Minnesota Education Association convention. I began by telling the audience that "I am going to use a word in this speech that is not permitted in polite company. You won't hear this word on TV—not even on late night TV—and it's not used on radio. You'll seldom even hear the word at cocktail parties. This word is the "e" word...(By now, people were really perked up in their seats.) That word is "capitalism.""

I went on to explain that the attack on public education is part of a corporate and government strategy:

The problem is that our young people have more talent and intelligence and ability than the capitalist system can possibly use and higher aspirations than it can possibly fulfill. To get young people to accept their place in the capitalist economy, enough of our children's hopes and dreams must be crushed so that they will accept their place in a more unequal, less democratic society.

I was a little nervous before speaking—it was the first time I had explicitly attacked capitalism in a speech, and I wasn't sure how the audience of 3,000 teachers would react. The audience did indeed react with shock—not shock at my use of the word "capitalism," but a shock of recognition that what I said was true, and shock at the horrifying implications of it.

I mention this story because it says
something about the situation all of us face trying to build a movement. The capitalist class has for many years tried to make discussion of the system that they control illegitimate. Even to name the system is taboo, except to say, "God bless our capitalist system."

We have allowed the enemy that surrounds us on all sides and assaults us everyday to deny its own existence. Most of us understand that we are indeed involved in a "class war"—the events of the past few years have made this pretty clear—but we never name the class enemy. We don't talk about capitalism or explain the nature of the capitalist system or show the relationship of particular companies like GM to the system as a whole. Instead we avoid naming the enemy, and come up with inadequate and misleading codewords like "corporate greed." But just condemning "corporate greed" is a dangerous tactic, for it suggests that capitalism is OK—as long as it doesn't get too greedy.

How can we fight an enemy that we don't name? How can we help others to fight—to be clear on the scope and meaning of the conflict and on the tasks necessary to win—if we don't name the enemy? Just by naming the enemy we gain some measure of power over it. That's why it's virtually "illegal" to name the capitalist class as the enemy. Naming the enemy is the first step in defeat in defeating it.

Only by naming the enemy can we spread an understanding of the fight to millions of other working people who will join the struggle and multiply our ranks. Only by naming the enemy can we have open and democratic discussion of what it will take to wage the fight.

Building a working class movement means helping each other and millions of other people understand everything that can be understood about the class war: who we are fighting, what is at stake, what are our goals, how do we achieve victory. No democratic movement can be built without this understanding. Any "reform" movement that conceals its views on these profound questions from the people it is seeking to reach and does not use its ideas on these questions as the basis of its organizing is not democratic but is manipulating people in the same way it claims to oppose.

Does it make a difference whether we identify the enemy as the capitalist class or simply as General Motors or Hormel or Caterpillar? It makes a huge difference.

Corporate America and the AFL-CIO leadership for years have promoted the idea that, "What's good for General Motors (or Ford or IBM or Hormel) is good for the country." "Teamwork" and "painlessness" and "Total Quality Management" (TQM) are built on the idea that workers and companies have the same basic interests, and the role of the union is just to negotiate the details. Any position which does not attack capitalism and the capitalist class does not answer the argument that "Generous Motors" is the source of the good things in life and needs our cooperation to remain "competitive." It is impossible to defeat "the company team" unless we show that workers and capitalists have nothing in common and that capitalism is a system of exploitation which must be opposed.

Naming the class enemy is also crucial for overcoming the idea that working people are a "special interest." If the enemy is defined as just Hormel or Staley or the Detroit newspapers, then the strikers can be attacked as a greedy "special interest" by a company "struggling to stay competitive."

People need to know that they are not alone in their fight. To know and declare that we are fighting the system is to begin to unite with the vast majority of people who are under attack by the same system and who want something better.

It's true that workers in some recent strikes have received tremendous support from other working people. But this support has been almost entirely limited to money and food to sustain the strikes. In no instance have the strikes spread to other companies or other sectors. Fighting one company at a time while the class enemy attacks the whole working class isolates and contains workers' struggles, so that one by one they go down to defeat.

To win the fight we have to spread it. To spread it, we have to declare that we are
fighting not just this company or that but a capitalist ruling class.

If we don't name the enemy, then the ruling class certainly will. Who will it be? The Japanese? the Germans? Black people? White people? Immigrants? Women? Men?

Naming the real enemy as the capitalist class in fact shows that change is possible. If we think that the enemy is "human nature" or "the tides of history" or "just the way things are," then we can't win. If instead we see that our problems stem from a small elite who have devised a brutal and undemocratic system as a means to maintain their power, then we can see that there is nothing inevitable or permanent about capitalism. Once we identify the capitalist class as the enemy we can imagine a world without them. We can imagine democracy.

EXPLAINING THE STAKES

Explaining the stakes in the class war is what shows we can win it.

The behavior of workers in strike after strike makes clear that, while wages or working conditions are usually the occasions for strikes and other working class struggle, the real meaning of class struggle goes much deeper and leads workers to make sacrifices all out of proportion to any economic gain they might possibly achieve.

Look, for example, at the Detroit newspaper strike. The economically rational thing for each individual involved in that strike would have been to scab, and in fact a number of workers have crossed the picket line. The motivations of the people who remain on strike obviously go far deeper than personal gain. They have been willing to sacrifice their own and their families' comfort and security for over a year, because they feel that their most fundamental values and beliefs about who they are and what human life should be like are at stake.

New Democracy recently wrote in an Open Letter to the strikers:

Your strike is not only a battle over a contract but part of a war between working people and owners every-

where. It is a war over what moral vision should shape our lives and our society: the capitalist values of greed and selfishness and inequality and competition, or the working class values of solidarity and equality and commitment to future generations.

This strike may seem to be just a "reform" struggle for a better contract. In fact it is an implicitly revolutionary struggle over what values should shape society. This is why the strikers are willing to sacrifice so much.

Strikes and other collective forms of struggle are just the most obvious and public forms of a class struggle which is being waged every day in every shop and office and in every other place where human beings interact. The most intimate acts of personal kindness and the most public acts of class war are on a spectrum of struggle by working people to shape the world with working class values of equality and solidarity and democracy. At stake in this war is not just a division of the wealth of society. At stake is the shape and meaning of human life.

The stakes in the class war are deeply felt by working people but rarely articulated. A critical part of capitalist strategy in suppressing working people is to define the struggle in society as merely one of special interests "dividing the pie." Capitalists hope in this way to get us all to feel that "other people's troubles don't concern me"—the opposite of the working class belief that "An injury to one is an injury to all."

What is our typical approach in describing the stakes in the class war? Well, since labor activists almost never talk openly about the class war, it is difficult to answer that question. But I think it is fair to say that we have generally gone along with the game plan of the capitalists. That is, we never say that capitalism is the enemy, and we never say that much more is at stake in a strike than the obvious contract issues. We aren't in the habit of looking beyond the obvious issues to ask what's really motivating the strikers.
Instead we take a defensive approach. We try to minimize our goals rather than maximizing them. We say that what we want is "only fair" or "reasonable." In so doing we are agreeing with the capitalists that the class war is just about money. We fail to express the nobility and heroism of people's struggles. We never get to the living, human heart of the matter.

The future of our children and the direction of our society depend on the outcome of the class war. Will our society be one of increasing inequality and desperation, where the greediest prosper and many working people are crushed? Or will it be one in which people support each other and work freely together to build a better world?

It is precisely because the stakes in the class war are the goals and direction of human society that it is ultimately winnable. Explaining what the class war is about will be a tremendous source of power for the working class movement. A movement which explains the real issues in the class war can reach into the deepest recesses of people's feelings and their most powerful motivations. Such a movement will be able to reach an extraordinarily wide range of people, not limited by our workplace or gender or the color of our collars or the color of our skin, or even by the flags our rulers use to divide us. Such a movement can reach deep enough to unite all working people in a struggle to achieve our most profound goals as human beings.

EXPOSING THE AFL-CIO

The working class has not been defeated by corporate power. It has been betrayed by institutions which are supposed to be its own. Look at any of the crucial battles of the last twenty-five years and the pattern of AFL-CIO betrayal is the same:

*The defeat of PATCO in 1981 marked the turning of the tide of class war against workers. The PATCO strike was defeated when the leaders of the Machinists and other unions critical to shutting down the airports ordered their members to cross the air controllers' picket lines.

*The United Food and Commercial Workers international leadership worked hand in glove with Hormel to defeat Local P-9's strike in 1985-1986. AFL-CIO leaders lined up in opposition to the strike. When P-9 voted not to settle with Hormel, the International put the local into receivership and organized a new election among the "permanent replacements."

*The UAW did nothing to organize support for the 17-month long Caterpillar strike which ended on December 3, 1995. The Voice of New Directions [a reform organization within the UAW] of January, 1996 quotes a CAT activist: "It was apparent the International Union was retreating because strike rallies weren't being held, no new strategies were being implemented, even the Strike Bulletin was discontinued." The membership rejected the proposed settlement by an 81% to 19% margin. According to the Voice, "At those plants most active in the strike, the no vote was even larger: 97% in Peoria, 93% in Decatur and 94% in York. Yet in spite of these totals, the International forced the strikers back to work." [my emphasis]

*Newly-elected AFL-CIO president John Sweeney failed to deliver promised aid to the Staley workers, who had been locked out for nearly three years. Instead the International leaders of the Paperworkers Union (UPIU) forced the local to vote again on a contract they had already rejected and campaigned hard for acceptance.

*On April 2, 1996 the six unions striking the Detroit newspapers and the Detroit Labor Council formally
requested that Sweeney call a national labor march on Detroit in support of the strike. Sweeney ignored the request for months. Then, instead of mobilizing a national labor march on Detroit, Sweeney and nineteen other AFL-CIO officials, politicians, and religious bigwigs, plus two strikers, let themselves be arrested at the gates of one of the struck papers.

These examples refer only to strike situations. Much more disastrous for the labor movement have been the day-to-day AFL-CIO policies of "teamwork" and "jointness," and other forms of labor-management cooperation, whereby the union struggles to win its members to a pro-capitalist ideology which contradicts the heart and soul of unionism. The ideology of class collaboration has been used to great effect by the union leadership to undermine the power of the rank-and-file and force them to accept the dictates of management.

I'm not saying anything new here. In a recent article Stoughton Lynd writes, "New AFL-CIO president John Sweeney talked about blocking bridges before his election. Since his election he has continued the UAW's AFL-CIO pattern of shadowboxing with corporate America." Lynd describes as "post-election class-collaborationist rhetoric" Sweeney's recent speech at the National Press Club, when Sweeney declared, "We can no longer afford the luxury of pretending that productivity, quality and competitiveness are not our business." (IMPACT, June 1996)

But somehow the meaning of the UAW's and the AFL-CIO's treacherous history gets lost by the labor reform movement—or rather, its meaning is denied. For example, the Voice of New Directions article cited above which describes the UAW forcing the CAT strikers back to work after they had overwhelmingly rejected the settlement, laments the UAW's "miscalculation" and "mistakes" and "errors" that caused the strike to fail.

One such mistake it cites: the union made a prior agreement with the company that exempted from the strike the critical workers who made CAT replacement parts! In fact the UAW didn't make mistakes in the CAT strike: it wanted the strike to fail, and did everything in its power to sabotage it. Sabotaging the strike was how the UAW carried out its agenda of controlling workers on behalf of Caterpillar.

Labor activists cannot move forward unless we clearly acknowledge the fact that the union leaders have a different goal from the members. The goal of the leaders is to accommodate the owners and to control the members on behalf of the company. Sabotaged strikes, undemocratic elections processes, encouraging "teamwork": these are not mistakes or oversights; they are just some of the methods the leaders use to undermine rank-and-file power and to control workers on behalf of capital. The unions are contested terrain, but as long as they are controlled by the class enemy, they function as an arm of management.

Labor officials have long since made their peace with capitalism, if they ever were at war with it. They believe in the capitalist system, their ties are with the capitalist class, and they fight for capital's goals. They are not our friends and cannot be persuaded to be our friends. They are the enemy within. The only difference between them and the corporate leadership is that the union leaders are in disguise.

FIGHTING TO WIN

Think for a minute about how we must appear to the friends and co-workers we are trying to recruit to the labor reform movement. We say to them, "Yes, the company is powerful and it's mean, and it's part of a system that we can't name, but it runs the country—and the leadership of the union can be guaranteed to let us down in a clinch. So we want you to join us so we can get better union leadership to fight the company. We aren't going to try to win this fight. We'll still let the owners of the company have all the power that matters in society. We just want them to be more fair."

This invitation to join us in a losing fight is about as inspiring as a dead cat. Unless
our movement has the explicit goal of revolution to break the power of the ruling class and create society on a new and democratic basis, we are doing nothing but asking people to join us on a treadmill. And they don’t seem to be interested.

The only way to change the direction of the unions is through a mass movement of working people who are very clear about the goals they want for their unions and for their society. The only way to appeal effectively to masses of people actively to join this struggle is to build a movement for victory over the capitalist class, victory in the class war. Any other strategy is doomed from the start. To be practical, we have to be radical.

One of the reasons that it’s harder now to build a movement than it was in the ’60s is because people understand more now. It’s clear now that the problem is the system, and not just a matter of changing a particular policy, getting a new politician in office, or getting a better contract.

People are not likely to get involved in a movement unless its analysis of the problems and its solutions ring true. If people in their hearts feel that the system is the problem and we are saying, “No, the problem is some particular officials” and the “solution” is to elect us to union office, how are they to take us seriously or to see us as truly different from the union officials we seek to replace? Or if people believe the system is the problem and we say, “We just need to be more militant” or “We just need to get a better contract,” or “We just need more democratic union elections,” why should they see us as different?

And they’ll be right not to trust us, because either we think the problem is the capitalist system or we don’t. If we do and we’re not telling people, then we’re being dishonest and don’t deserve people’s trust. If we don’t think capitalism is the problem, then we haven’t been paying attention.

The only meaningful outcome of working class success in the class war is revolution to destroy capitalism and create a new society. By openly declaring our goals to be victory in the class war, we will change the whole nature of the game. For the first time, we’ll be able to put the capitalist class on the defensive.

Far from isolating us or making people think that we’re not serious, declaring our goals to be winning the class war and the creation of a new society without wage slavery and bosses will for the first time demonstrate to people that we are serious about democracy and that we want a real break with things as they are. We’re not just aiming to replace one bunch of union officials with another, and we’re not going to consign ourselves to permanent “reform caucus” status. We’re fighting to win. If we’re not fighting to win, we should get out of the game.

THE LEGACY OF MARXISM

The things I am proposing seem so obvious in a war—name the enemy, explain the stakes, expose the traitors, fight to win—that the question has to be asked, “Why aren’t we doing these things now?”

While the answer to this question is complicated, I think there is one key factor that has had a profound influence on how we see the political possibilities of our situation. This factor has prevented our taking the steps we must to achieve our goals.

Labor activists by and large are still dominated by the legacy of Marxism. This legacy has two critical effects. One is that we hesitate to challenge capitalism openly for fear of being called socialists or Communists. (Some activists do in fact subscribe to these philosophies, which makes their situation doubly difficult.)

The other is that the Marxist legacy has left us with a low estimate of people. Even many labor activists who do not consider themselves Marxists are still much influenced by Marxist assumptions about people.

Let me explain what I mean here. Marx aimed to create a “science of revolution” based on supposed laws of economics and history which operate independent of human intentions. To create his science, Marx accepted certain capitalist assumptions about human beings; in particular, he accepted the capitalist idea that “each individual seeks
only his particular interest" (Marx's emphasis). Marx believed that workers and capitalists have the same values and that, like capitalists, workers are motivated primarily by self-interest. Marx believed with the capitalists that history is driven by economic development, which in turn is driven by greed. Unlike the capitalists, however, Marx maintained that greed leads not to permanence but to revolution, as workers driven by economic desperation revolt against the system.

But working people in fact do not have the same values as capitalists. The class war in an important way is a struggle over different value systems and different ideas of how human beings should relate to each other. On the one side is the owning class, which values competition and inequality and control from above. On the other side is the working class, which values solidarity and equality and control from below. The values of solidarity and equality are not unmixed in working people's lives, but whatever relationships of commitment and trust and mutual support people have in their lives, they have created these by a struggle against a capitalist culture which is profoundly hostile to them. Solidarity and equality are the bases of unionism. These values do not drop from the sky, and they do not come from union officials or organizers or from "economic conditions." They are rooted in the social relations of the working class. It is only on the basis of working class values that working class movements can be formed.

The assumption that working people seek only their own self-interest has made the labor reform movement blind to the values which are central to people's lives and actions. Because we are convinced that workers have only their own personal interests at heart, we don't raise large social goals that go beyond self-interest and call upon people's deepest values. Because we are convinced that people think with their bellies, we don't raise big ideas or tap into the huge reservoir of class understanding and experience that workers represent. The failure of the labor reform movement to name the enemy or explain the stakes in the class struggle or expose the AFL-CIO or fight to win—the failure, in short, to be a revolutionary movement—are deeply rooted in the negative view of working people which labor reformers have inherited from Marxism.

To build a new labor movement, we have first to see working people with fresh understanding and respect. A new understanding of working people will open up a whole new world of revolutionary possibilities.

IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGY

The strategy of labor reformers and activists seems mainly to be to attack the corporate-union alliance, while they work to achieve a measure of democracy in the unions and run for union office. Meanwhile they call on various union officials, such as Steve Yokich of the UAW or John Sweeney of the AFL-CIO, to do their job.

The reformers attempt to carry on the fight within a union structure which is almost totally controlled by the class enemy. They accept the capitalist idea that the fight is merely about how to "divide the pie." They never really expose labor officials. They accept the wage system, and merely try to get a better contract within a system that is controlled by capital. In short, the reformers do not name the enemy, they do not explain the stakes to people, they do not expose the real goals of the AFL-CIO, and they do not fight to win the class war. Their efforts can never succeed in making more than the most incidental changes.

Because labor reform movements are so obviously inadequate to the task, the reformers fail to attract the massive numbers of working people who are disgusted with the direction of the unions and whose participation in a movement to change the direction of the unions is absolutely essential if we are to win. It is high time that we abandon the losing strategy of labor reform.

I believe that our real power to change the direction of the labor movement lies in the fact that most people share the dream of a better world. The only way to realize this
these struggles have workers at other plants or other industries gone on strike themselves as a means of spreading the struggle against the class enemy. Thus the workers at Hormel or Staley were basically left to go it alone.

The Detroit newspaper strikers, for example, need more than our financial support and refusal to buy scab papers if they are to win, and the attack on these workers is an attack on all working people. The strikers should call on other workers to help build a general strike in Detroit, spreading as far as possible. This general strike should aim at building a working class revolutionary movement, as well as at the immediate goals of the strikers.

3) Build a culture of struggle: Most class struggle does not declare itself or even recognize itself, but consists of small or informal activities that seem so natural that they often go unnoticed. The first step in building a culture of struggle is to recognize resistance to capitalism for what it is. When people support each other on the job, that is struggle. When they confront the boss or refuse overtime or pace their work or refuse to cooperate with Quality Circles or "joint" discussions or confront the foreman on the floor or the leaders of their union: all of these and a thousand other things are part of a culture of struggle that strengthens people's ties with each other and their confidence in their ability to act together.

This resistance to capitalism is implicitly revolutionary. We should point out its significance and makes its meaning—that people reject capitalist values and culture—explicit.

Workers in the U.S. are perfectly capable of undertaking massive strikes such as those that shook France in December, 1995 and the general strikes in London, Ontario and Hamilton, Ontario in 1996. To do these things, however, we first need a movement which exposes the class enemy, rejects the "leadership" of the AFL-CIO, and builds a culture of solidarity and struggle. As we build a culture of struggle, workers' ability to stage solidarity strikes and general strikes will grow.

4) Apply union values to all areas of life: Capitalism attacks people in every area of life, not only in the workplace. For example, our children are under ferocious attack at school, as the education system becomes "lean and mean" to prepare them for downgraded jobs in a "competitive" economy. Who will defend the children of working people if we don't?

The vast majority of people in our communities can be won to a movement that opposes the devastating effects of capitalism and seeks to create a truly democratic society.

5) Prepare ordinary people to take power in society. We can do this in part by building a democratic movement, which will give us experience in real democracy. But we need to do more. We should organize discussions of what life is like under capitalism and what life should be like. What is work like under capitalism? What should it be like with revolutionary democracy? How is industry organized now? How should it be organized with power in the hands of working people? How is society organized and governed now under capitalism? How should it be governed with revolutionary democracy?

None of these things requires any special talent or ability. They rely mainly on communicating with other people—reaching out to them and talking with them. The key to success lies in the our message of struggle and hope.

With a revolutionary strategy, every activity that we plan or undertake should have the long-term goal of revolution. The measure of success of every struggle should be, "Has the struggle and the way we have conducted it helped build the self-conscious revolutionary movement? Have the participants grown in their self-confidence and their confidence in other working people? Have the people affected in any way by the struggle gained new understanding of capitalism? Have we learned new things about what true democracy should be like?"
The most important factor in the ability of people to effect change is their confidence in themselves and in the values and worldview which they represent. Our message is that working people over share certain values and that in these values lies the salvation of the world.

When millions of working people understand that the working class is the collective source of all that is of value in human society and that only the values and ideals of the working class can offer a promising future to human society, that is when they will make a revolution.

NOTE: This paper is still a draft. It needs now to have the input of more people to make it an effective document. Please write us at the above addresses, or call Dave Stratman at (617) 524-4073.

(From p. 2)

Monroe Prussack’s letter suggests that he now has mixed feelings about De Leon and the socialist industrial union program. William Hewitson’s “musings” about taxes remind me that our rulers have few tools as useful in mystifying our class than the matter of taxation. Next we have two articles on anarchism. John Zerzan briefly describes what he sees as the evolution of anarchism into an anti-technological/forward-to-the Old Stone Age movement. The review from Rebel Worker describes a debate during the 1920s over “what is anarchism?” that included neither mention of neo-primitivism.

“The Parable of the Water-Tank” was sent here in the form of a leaflet published by the New Union Party, which apparently reprinted it from an IWW leaflet. The parable comes from one of Bellamy’s major books—I think from Equity, the sequel to Looking Backward. At any rate the article is the first of three designed to encourage revolutionaries at the end of the twentieth century. The people in “a very dry land” learned the lessons taught by the agitators. Bill Blum marshalls considerable evidence to suggest that popular loyalty to capitalism is paper-thin at best. His article came off the internet and was given to me some time ago. I have since read his book mentioned at the end of the article. Unfortunately it is similar to so many others that describe social evils in great detail without, in Dave Stratman’s phrase, “naming the enemy.” John Spritzler’s article also demonstrates the power of the people to change things when they no longer “consent” (as in the Declaration of Independence’s “Governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed.”) Last is a very encouraging description by Howard Zinn of just how people without “leadership” were capable of abrogating the capitalist state’s laws of property—not a revolution, but taking the first steps. As usual we end with some notes, announcements and short reviews.

BULLETIN MATTERS

The past few month’s have witnessed a transition by the DB from the neolithic tools used hitherto. In November the DB acquired the use of the Gestetner 5305 printer/copier, which speeds up the process of reproducing copies from ten a minute to sixty or more, thereby cutting the time I must spend down in a cold basement watching the Minolta grind out an issue and coping with paper jams. I think the Gestetner’s copies aren’t quite so sharp, but they seem to be legible. More recently I bought a new modem, which a subscriber here installed so that the DB now has internet access as well as an address through which readers can send E-mail: fgitard@iserv.net. This may be a partial solution to a problem some DB subscribers have noted: my failure to respond in a timely manner to letters. A subscriber who suffers from the same malady as I regarding correspondence tells me that he finds that

(To p. 16)
Dear readers

The memory of Daniel De Leon is dominated by the thought that he originated the idea that Socialist Industrial Unions can be started under capitalism and become the structure of Socialism once the people mandate that they want Socialism at the ballot box. In the current issue of the People I enclosed a quote from a De Leon editorial written in the people May 3, 1902. There also follows a footnote from the present editor of the People that explains why De Leon advocated industrial government from 1904 till his death in 1914.

"The specter of monopoly or capitalism can never be laid for the simple reason that monopoly is no specter but a tangible monster. No incantations can dispense with the monster. It must be lassoed and the lassoing can be done only by the class conscious workingman who organized under the banner of the Socialist Labor Party, marches to the capture of the public powers for the purpose of nationalizing the monster. Once nationalized the monster will be docile handmaid to man. It will have been stripped of its fangs and claws, its monopolistic character, and as public property will instead of producing social nuisances as today will be a source comfort to all."

"In 1902 when the editorial was written, De Leon had not yet developed the concept of industrial government. He was therefore still handicapped by the jargon of a period that conceived of socialism as coming through “nationalization” of industry. By 1904 De Leon's thinking had advanced to the point where he could project the structural form of socialist administration by industrial instead of political or geographic and the concept of nationalization was also drooped. That is, instead of the Socialist Labor Party capturing the public bower and “nationalizing” the industries, the SLP would dismantle political institutions and after turning the reins of government over to the Socialist Industrial Union, disband. Simultaneously, the industrially organized workers would take possession of the industries, socialize them and administer them through democratic industrial union councils."

The history of this country of the world made it possible for the SLP to gain from the term industrial unionism. For the most part people associated the AFL craft unions with unionism and they wanted the majority of workers who the AFL excluded to be eligible for union membership. During the great depression when the CIO was founded, the CIO was referred to as an industrial union. It course the SLP exposed the AFL and the CIO as capitalist unions that must sell out the rank and the file because they support capitalism as well as the “sacred” contract. Times were better for the growth of the SLP because workers were more militant than they are now. Now many industrial jobs have left the country and workers are not militant in the face of deteriorating conditions because they have a greater fear of cheap foreign labor taking more of their jobs.

Since the reconstruction of the world after World War II protective tariff have been reduced or eliminated because capitalism has become more international as has banking, communications, transportation, culture, religion and education. What is left of corrupt top heavy union are not capable of organizing workers internationally to resist the deteriorating conditions all workers face. The workers power today is more political and moral than industrial as it was when De Leon was alive. More and more people in the working class are not productive workers because we live longer and retire earlier. With the political government we have today we can all vote regardless of our participation in industry. With an industrial government older people could tend to be considered a drain on society because they are not necessary to industrial government and they consume but do not produce.

At least now senior citizens have political power that politicians must respect. In my estimation Daniel De Leon was a great socialist thinker if we keep in mind what he said before he started to advocate socialist industrial unionism. If he were alive today he would have wanted us socialists to adapt our thinking to the times. On our minds is the strength of the idea whose time has come.

Fraternally yours,
Monroe Prussack
Musing about taxes and such....12.27.1996.

There are, basically, two classes of people in the world...employers and employees, which produces an antagonism of interests...the employee wants more wages or salaries and the employer wants more profits...the capitalistic system of economics demands that if one gains the other must lose.

The employer owns all the means for producing and distributing all the wealth of the world...he also spends whatever it takes to get his politicians into office where they make sure that the laws are enacted in their favor...the government belongs to the ruling regime, the employers...through his government he controls all expenditures...the military, the tax structure, the education system, etc...he owns the media, radio, T.V., satellites...he censors just about everything.

When you receive your pay-check from your employer, you will notice that the government has removed quite a chunk before you have a chance to spend it...when you do start to spend it, you will be obliged to pay a sales tax...and of course, there are many more taxes, permits, licenses and the like...if you failed to pay your property taxes for example, you would likely end up in the street.

Nevertheless, I can offer another scenario...during wage negotiations the main topic of concern is the "cost of living"....it matters little whether the cost of food, rent or taxes has increased, the employer must pay the increase so that we can pay our bills and get to work on time.

I can look back 60 years, so I can assure you that at that time the employee paid very few taxes....over the years taxes have steadily increased....through their government they can impose taxes at will, to keep your buying power under their control....they can also control the inflation of the dollar, to a degree, so that if the inflation rate is 5%, your buying power is reduced the same amount.

My philosopher says that everything is relative...the father is the cause of the baby and the baby is the cause of the father being a father...the boulder is both stable and mobile...in relation to the ground it is stable, in relation to space it is orbiting the sun with the rest of us...we pay taxes and we do not pay taxes.

There is a simple solution to this world antagonism...instead of just a few folks owning everything, we should do away with capitalism and and establish "common ownership" of the wealth of the world...we would have no need for money since we would have free access to all our needs...use your vote and the ballot-box to do the job...a very small effort to do a mighty big job...

for more information, contact the following socialist parties,

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52 Clapham High Street, PO Box 440247
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WHAT IS ANARCHISM?

For decades an unwritten but universally-observed rule required that media avoid using the terms anarchism or anarchist. Such reference would tend to give legitimacy to a doctrine that was anathema to the powers that be. Under this ban only very odious references to these terms could be made. Namely, any breakdown of authority had to be portrayed as resulting in a completely awful situation; for example, the "anarchy" that allegedly reigns, from time to time, in places like Bosnia, Somalia, Beirut, etc.

But lately this has changed somewhat, at least in Eugene. The dreaded A-word has been used several times in the past couple of years and, even though generally applied in a pejorative sense, its political meaning is at least somewhat acknowledged. This usage has mainly occurred by reference to the late great Icky's Tea House in the Whiteaker district, and its coterie of anarchists. It was these anarchists who established a sort of haven for some of society's undesired, who held a benefit for Ted Kaczynski in May '96, who were harassed by police for their activist ways, etc.

For many an unanswered question remains: just what is anarchism?

Most simply, anarchy means "without rule." This implies not only a rejection of government but of all other forms of domination and power as well. This anti-authoritarian principle is generally thought to be grounded in autonomy for the individual. But how is such an outlook fleshed out? Disagreement begins here among anarchists.

Some eschew virtually all organization, as invariably tending toward bureaucracy and manipulation. This tendency emphasizes critique and/or direct action over organization; and it sometimes includes a rejection of the increasingly massified industrial society we find ourselves in.

Others see in mass organization the only realistic hope to achieve a potent anarchist presence. This tendency generally has no basic dispute with modern technological society, and confines its opposition to the strictly capitalistic aspects of society. The most well-known anarchists, Noam Chomsky and Murray Bookchin, fall into this category.

Both points of view, I think, recognize the huge social fact of class division. But as a leftist-dominated leftism has been declining in the world, so has its influence within the growing anti-authoritarian milieu. Two developments have become rather clear over the past ten years or so: (1) opposition to the status quo has become increasingly "anarchist," and (2) anarchists are becoming increasingly critical of technological civilization itself and its hollow refrain of Progress.

It is unsurprising, given its fundamental orientation, that a philosophy of anarchy would find the current, approved political spectrum unattractive. Conservatives call for removing restraints on a system or social machine that is producing more social and environmental disasters every day. Liberals equal this masochism by tinkering slightly with that system, thereby attempting to re-form and legitimize it. More and more people are losing faith in a business-as-usual, paycheck and price-tag arrangement of life that amounts to a gathering assault on humanness and the destruction of nature.

Until very recently it was completely denied that there is a war going on, with the very survival of the individual and the natural world at stake. The blackout on this fact seems to be lifting a bit; public use of the word "anarchist" is a start, a small recognition of what can hardly be covered up any longer.

For myself and, I think, many other anti-authoritarians, a new message, a new paradigm is overdue. There is more to be challenged than we once thought. The roots of the current crisis go very deep. This season's disaster in Southeast Asia, where the flames of domestication join the poisons of industrialism, is an all-too-vivid case in
point. The planet is fast becoming a place of horrors, on the personal, Prozac-for-everyone level as on the ecological plane.

Nearness is being lost, and is a very big part of the solution: nearness to each other, nearness to nature. It may be that our only real hope is the recovery of a face-to-face social existence, a radical decentralization, a dismantling of the devouring, estranging productionist, high-tech trajectory that is so impoverishing.

This has been a thumbnail version of the anarchist challenge as I see it. Thanks for listening.

John Zerzan

(From p. 12)

E-mail involves much less commitment than the type-a-letter/address-an-envelope method.

Finances

Expenses were high for this issue, mainly because the annual non-profit mailing fee came due. This is an $85 charge that enables us to mail the DB in bulk to U.S. addresses for $0.199 a copy. Around 210 copies of each issue go out through bulk mail, and I figure that the cost amounts to slightly more than $0.36 per copy as opposed to $0.55, the standard first class rate. The savings have gradually declined over the nearly fourteen years the DB has existed. Income during the past two months has been rather lower than usual, not enough to cover expenses, but we have such a surplus from a couple of earlier issues that we can live on our fat for a while.

Contributions: Joe Tupper $40; Ron Gerkins $6; Willy Eckert $7; William Hewitson $17. Total $70. Thank you, comrades.

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Fraternally submitted,

Frank Girard
for the DB
Review

Constructive Anarchism: The Debate on The Platform

Rebel Worker Pamphlet No. 8
Published by Monty Miller Press
PO Box 92, Broadway, Sydney
2007 Australia  A$5.00

This pamphlet from Monty Miller Press in Australia gathers together some of the early documents that emerged in the anarchist movement in response to the publication in 1926 of The Organisational Platform of The Libertarian Communists. The Platform, as it was to become known, was written and produced in Paris by the Dielo Truda (Workers’ Cause) Group, among whose members were Nester Makhno, Ida Mett, and Peter Arshinoff. Makhno, Arshinoff and Mett were by that time in exile in Paris from the repression and persecution that had followed the Bolsheviks’ rise to power in Russia. All had fought and participated in the Russian Revolution.

Though written with this in mind, the Platform did not seek to address the specific problems experienced in Russia. Rather it concerned itself in the main with the realities of the then existing anarchist movement. The opening paragraph described its predicament as follows:

"It's very significant that in spite of the strength and incontestably positive character of libertarian ideas...and...the heroism and innumerable sacrifices borne by the anarchists in the struggle for libertarian communism, the anarchist movement remains weak despite everything, and has appeared very often in the history of working class struggles as a small event, an episode, and not an important factor."

It went on, in the next paragraph, to pointedly state:

"This contradiction...has its explanation in a number of causes, of which the most important...is the absence of organisational principles and practices in the...movement."

As the other documents in this pamphlet show The Platform became, almost immediately, a subject for debate. Though written by persons who, undoubtedly, had the best interests of the movement at heart, it nevertheless became an object of scorn and was attacked. Maximoff, another Russian exile and author of the longest (and most long-winded) reply to the Platform (included in this Monty Miller edition), was careful to use words such as 'childish' and 'primitive' in his descriptions of the arguments made by the Platformists. In doing this he hardly served his cause well, and his contribution, to my mind, is by far the weakest, and of little value even now. The other two main 'views' (also included here) are that of Malatesta, the Italian anarchist (then imprisoned by Mussolini), and that of another grouping of Russian exiles among whom was Voline. Though both Malatesta and thus group did oppose the main thrust of The Platform, they did so in a well-intentioned and informative way.

So what were the issues that The Platform raised, and why were they so contentious?
Though the Platform was written with a practical agenda in mind, it is concerned throughout with questions of a theoretical nature, and with the implications of these. These theoretical questions have either not been addressed adequately in the anarchist movement in the past or they have not been addressed at all. One of the key questions is this: If, as anarchists, we are primarily concerned with achieving a free socialist society, then how can we proceed towards achieving this aim without abandoning our libertarian character? Since organisation is indispensable to achieve any real results, how do we preserve libertarian politics in an organisation and at the same time move forward?

Such a question is far from moot. And the question, moreover, is of importance not just to anarchists but to all libertarian socialists. Revolution raises special problems for libertarian as opposed to authoritarian socialists, a point that has become plainly obvious with the defeat of the two key revolutions of this century: Russia and Spain.

The Platformists were committed anarchists. As such they were concerned with an issue that almost always comes to the fore in any revolutionary situation. This is the relationship between the revolutionary minority and the mass of people. Firstly is such a distinction valid i.e. between the revolutionary minority and the large mass of people? The Platformists say yes. How is the relationship to be described? Would it be possible to ignore it? If not what is important in it, relative to the overall aim of a revolution: freedom?

There are other questions too: What ideas do people take into a revolution with them?

Does everyone overnight become spontaneously anti-authoritarian or must a struggle ‘to win hearts and minds’ take place even within a fully fledged revolution? How should anarchists deal with profoundly authoritarian ideas that also appear to be revolutionary (Leninism)? Should it ignore such ideas? Should it confront them? If anarchists confront them, is that method of action in itself authoritarian, and counter productive to the spirit of the revolution?

These questions are crucial issues of revolution, according to the Platformists - and they are right of course. The issue of preserving the libertarian character of revolution while at the same time putting in place a new means for economic and social administration is the main problem not yet solved in any revolution, this century or any other. Mass movements constantly throw up forms of grass-roots democracy that could indeed be the basis for a new society: the Factory Committees in Russia, the collectives in Spain, etc. Yet, time and again, these forms of revolutionary organisation have been over run before their existence has been consolidated and extended.

Perhaps because of their experience in Russia, the Platformists were unashamedly pro-anarchist. One of their key conclusions (in the Platform) goes as follows:

"More than any other concept, anarchism should become the leading concept of revolution, for it is only on the theoretical base of anarchism that the social revolution can succeed in the complete emancipation of labour".

The basis for this claim, that was in effect to become a key contention of the Platform is that anarchist ideas articulate crucial
aspects of revolutionary method: in terms of advocating self-management, in terms of linking means and ends, and in terms of advocating participatory or grass-roots democracy. For these reasons, the Platformists argued, anarchist ideas are the most advanced ideas of revolutions (or to put it another way the practical tools necessary to win revolution). This claim - by no means trivial - earned the Platformists the ignominy of being described as 'Bolsheviks', or 'bolshevised-anarchists' - slurs without parallel in the anarchist movement (it must be said).

How is this central assertion of the Platformists - that "anarchism should become the leading concept of revolution" - to be judged? Is it un-anarchist? Is it arrogant? Is it a recipe for authoritarianism? Though Malatesta, Voline and others accepted that the Platformists were 'sincere' in their polemic and, to a point, honest about the state of the anarchist movement, they nevertheless saw in this claim of the Platform's an attempt to 'lead the masses'. This remains a central issue in the dispute - even today.

It is rarely said - except by the obtuse - that the Platformists were consciously authoritarian; such a reading of their efforts cannot, in any case, be borne out. What is more usually claimed however is that the Platformists were 'enamoured with' or perhaps 'unduly affected' by authoritarian notions - perhaps because of their 'close encounter' with Bolshevism during the Russian Revolution. We cannot know for sure - not now anyway. However, what we can know - or, at least, can still discover - is what was at issue in the debate in the past. This is illuminating to say the least! Today, in some quarters, the Platformists are often dismissed as 'want-to-be leaders'. Yet this was not where Malatesta took issue - he accepted that anarchists should take the lead. The question, as Malatesta saw it, was not whether to lead, but rather how you should lead - a fairly important distinction in the argument. Malatesta posed two 'alternatives': Either we "provide leadership by counsel and example leaving people themselves to.... quite freely adopt our methods and solutions..." or we "can also lead by taking command, that is, by becoming the government..." He asked the Platformists, "In which manner do you wish to lead?"

Despite many efforts and many letters on the subject (in particular between Malatesta and Makhno) this question could not be clarified to either side's satisfaction, in part because there was an additional issue for dispute - this was the issue of organisation principles (which in themselves make up a significant part of the original Platform document). In his letter of reply to Makhno, Malatesta stated (Document 3):

"...it is clear that to attain their ends the anarchist organizations must, in their constitution and operation, be in harmony with the principles of anarchism, that is, they must in no way be polluted by authoritarianism..."

A statement that was in effect to become the nub of the debate: did the organisational form that the Platformists propose contradict basic anarchist ideas?

The Platformists were without any doubt intensely focused in their objectives, and it was this as much as any experience in Russia that was to mark out their proposals about actual organisation. As they saw
it, The General Union Of Anarchists - the title they chose for their organisation - should be a collective body of anarchists in spirit as well as in operation; the GUA should clearly distinguish between collective activity and individual acts of rebellion (indeed it should have no part in the latter, they argued); and it should seek to operate efficiently and democratically. In single-mindedly adopting this framework the Platformists - in effect - rejected the notion that efficiency, democracy, and a unity of theory and practice were an anarchist idea and incompatible with anarchist organisation. They said: we can be efficient and effective, and we can be libertarian, at the same time - there is no contradiction. The debate, oddly enough, still rages.

There is a final matter that is not touched on in this Rebel Worker publication, though it is, of course, central: this is Spain. Written ten years before the events of the Spanish Revolution, the Platform appears on first reading to be contradicted by what was to occur there. Indeed the Platform's opening description about the 'state of the anarchist movement' appears in sharp contrast to the mass movement that was then emerging in Spain, and that was to flower in '36. Moreover the 'mass' nature of the Spanish anarchist movement and its broad basis in the working-class seem if anything to be the antithesis of what the Platformists were arguing was the norm. How are we to view the Platform against the example of Spain?

As the Monty Miller Press Introduction points out, there were certain aspects of the Russian anarchist movement that marked the Platform, in terms of its overall prognosis. Anarcho-syndicalism which had only shallow roots in the Russian working-class was already by 1926 deeply embedded in Spain. Anarcho-syndicalism was, by virtue of its membership, organisationally driven and clear in terms of its objectives. It succeeded because of this. However if wrong in an important way about Spain, the Platform was right in a crucial way. The eventual outcome of the revolution of '36 clearly brought home the very deficiencies the Platform had underlined: make anarchism the leading ideas of the revolution or lose. It was a choice the CNT-FAI could not make in the end.

The importance of the Platform as a document of revolutionary anarchism has become lost in invective over the years. It is a poor reward we have Makhno, Archinoff and Mert! Monty Miller Press are to be commended for this reissue, but also for including the various replies and letters that followed on its heels. The debate is important still, and lest we forget why, consider, on this the anniversary of 1937 - the year of the defeat for the Spanish Revolution - the conclusion of Jose Peirats, the anarchist historian aligned with the CNT. In Anarchists in the Spanish Revolution he says:

"Anarchism is largely responsible for its own bad reputation in the world. It did not consider the thorny problem of means and ends. In their writing, many anarchists conceived of a miraculous solution to the problems of revolution. We fell easily into this trap in Spain. We believed that once the dog is dead, the rabies is over. We proclaimed a full-blown revolution without worrying about the many complex problems that revolution brings with it."

The Platformists, it has to be said, would probably have agreed.
"Go to, ye silly people! Why should we give you of the water we have gathered, for then should we become as ye are, and perish with you. But behold what we will do unto you. Be ye our servants, and ye shall have water."

And the people said, "Only give us to drink, and we will be your servants, we and our children." And it was so.

**WAGES AND PRICES**

Now, the capitalists were men of understanding, and wise in their generation. They ordered the people who were their servants in bands, with captains and officers, and some they put at the springs to dip, and others did they make to carry the water, and others did they cause to seek for new springs. And all the water was brought together in one place, and there did the capitalists make a great tank for to hold it, and the tank was called the Market, for it was there that the people, even the servants of the capitalists, came to get water. And the capitalists said unto the people:

"For every bucket of water that ye bring to us, that we may pour it into the tank, which is the Market, behold, we will give you a penny; but for every bucket that we shall draw forth to give unto you that ye may drink of it, ye and your wives and your children, ye shall give to us two pennies, and the difference shall be our profit, seeing that if it were not for this profit we would not do this thing for you, but ye should all perish."

And it was good in the people's eyes, for they were dull of understanding, and they diligently brought water unto the tank for many days, and for every bucket which they did bring, the capitalist gave them every man a penny; but for every bucket that the capitalists drew forth from the tank to give again unto the people, behold, the people rendered to the capitalists two pennies.

And after many days the water-tank, which was the Market, overflowed at the top, seeing that for every bucket the people poured in they received only so much as would buy again half-a-bucket. And because of the excess that was left to every bucket, did the tank overflow, for the people were many, but the capitalists were few, and could drink no more than others. Therefore did the tank overflow.

And when the capitalists saw that the water overflowed, they said to the people: "See ye not the tank, which is the Market, doth overflow? Sit
UNEMPLOYMENT

But when the people no more received the pennies of the capitalists for the water they brought, they could buy no more water from the capitalists, having naught wherewith to buy.

And when the capitalists saw that they had no more profit because no man bought water of them, they were troubled. And they sent forth men into the highways, the byways, and the bazaars, crying, "If any thirst let him come to the tank and buy water of us, for it doth overflow." For they said among themselves, "Behold, the times are dull; we must advertise."

But the people answered, saying, "How can we buy unless ye hire us, for how else shall we have wherewithal to buy? Hire ye us, therefore, as before, and we will gladly buy water, for we thirst, and ye will have no need to advertise."

But the capitalists said to the people: "Shall we hire you to bring water when the tank, which is the Market, doth already overflow? Buy ye, therefore, first water, and when the tank is empty through your buying, we will hire you again."

And so it was because the capitalists hired them no more to bring water that the people could not buy the water they had brought already, and because the people could not buy the water they had brought, the capitalists no more hired them to bring water.

And the saying went abroad, "It is a crisis."

And the thirst of the people was great. For it was not now as it had been in the days of their fathers, when the land was open before them for everyone to seek water for himself, seeing that the capitalists had taken all the springs, and the wells, and water-wheels, and the vessels, and the buckets, so that no man might come by water save from the tanks, which was the Market. And the people murmured against the capitalists and said: "Behold, the tank runneth over, and we die of thirst. Give us, therefore, of the water, that we perish not."

But the capitalists answered, "Not so. The water is odour. Ye shall not drink thereof unless ye buy it of us with pennies." And they confirmed it with an oath, saying, after their manner, "Business is business."

But the capitalists were disquieted that the people bought no more water, whereby they had no more profits, and they spake to one another saying, "It seemeth that our profits have stopped our profits, and by reason of the profits we have made we can make no more profits. How is it that our profits are become unprofitable to us, and our gains do make us poor? Let us therefore send for the soothsayers, that they may interpret this thing unto us." And they sent for them.

Now the soothsayers were men learned in dark sayings, who joined themselves to the capitalists by reason of the water of the capitalists, that they might have thereof and live, they and their children. And they spake for the capitalists unto the people, and did their embassies for them, seeing that the capitalists were not a folk quick of understanding, neither ready of speech.

And the capitalists demanded of the soothsayers that they should interpret this thing unto them, wherefore it was that the people bought no more water of them, although the tank was full. And certain of the soothsayers answered and said, "It is by reason of overproduction." And some said, "It is glut." But the signification of the two words is the same. And others said, "Nay, but this thing is by reason of the spots on the sun." And yet others answered, saying, "It is neither by reason of glut, nor yet of spots on the sun, that the evil hath come to pass, but because of lack of confidence."

TRANQUILLITY

And while the soothsayers contended among themselves according to their manner, the men of profit did slumber and sleep, and when they awoke they said to the soothsayers, "It is enough. Ye have spoken comfortably unto us. Now go forth and speak comfortably unto the people, so that they be at rest and leave us also in peace."

But the soothsayers, even the men of the dismal science — for so they were named of some — were loath to go forth to the people lest they should be stoned, for the people loved them not. And they said to the capitalists:

"Masters, it is a mystery of our craft that if men be full and thirst not, but be at rest, then shall they find comfort in our speech, even as ye. Yet if they thirst and be empty, find they no comfort therein, but rather mock at us, for it seemeth that unless a man be full, our wisdom appeareth unto him but emptiness." But the capitalists said, "Go ye forth. Are ye not our men to do our embassies?"
THEIR MESSAGE

And the words of the agitators which they spake to the people were on this wise:

"Ye foolish people, how long will ye be deceived by a lie, and believe to your hurt that which is not? For behold, all these things which have been said unto you by the capitalists and the soothsayers are cunningly devised fables. And likewise the holy men, who say that it is the will of God that ye should always be poor and miserable and athirst. Behold, they do blaspheme God and are liars, whom He will bitterly judge, though He forgive all others. How cometh it that ye may not come by the water in the tank? Is it not because ye have no money? And why have ye no money? Is it not because ye receive but one penny for every bucket that ye bring to the tank, which is the Market, but must render two pence for every bucket ye take out, so that the capitalists may have their profit? See ye not how by this means the tank must overflow, being filled by that ye lack and made to abound out of your emptiness? See ye not also that the harder ye toil and the more diligently ye seek and bring the water, the worse and not the better it shall be for you by reason of the profit, and that for ever?

THE REMEDY

Then the agitators spake unto the people of the way.

And they said: "Behold, what need have ye at all of these capitalists, that ye should yield them profits upon your labour? What great things do they whereby ye render them this tribute? Lo! it is only because they do order you in bands and lead you out and in and set you tasks, and afterwards give you a little of the water yourselves have brought and not they. Now, behold the way out of this bondage! Do ye for yourselves that which is done by the capitalists — namely, the ordering of your labour and the marshalling of your bands, and the dividing of your tasks. So shall ye have no need at all of the capitalists, and no more profit to them any profit, but all the fruit of your labour shall ye share as brethren, every one having the same; and so shall the tank never overflow until every man is full, and would not wag the tongue for more, and afterwards shall ye with the overflow make pleasant fountains and fishponds to delight yourselves withal, even as did the capitalists: but these shall be for the delight of all."

HOW TO APPLY IT

And the people answered: "How shall we go about to do this thing, for it seemeth good to us?" And the agitators answered: "Choose ye discreet men to go in and out before you and order your bands and order your labour, and these men shall be as capitalists were: but, behold, they shall not be your masters as the capitalists are, but your brethren and officers who do your will, and they shall not take any profits, but every man his share like the others, and there shall not be any masters and servants among you, but brethren only. And from time to time, as ye see fit, ye shall choose other discreet men in place of the first to order the labour."

And the people hearkened, and the thing was very good to them. Likewise seemed it not a hard thing. And with one voice they cried out, "So let it be as ye have said, for we will do it!"

THE END OF ALL THINGS

And the capitalists heard the noise of shouting, and what the people said, and the soothsayers heard it also, and likewise the false priests and the mighty men of war, who were a defence unto the capitalists; and when they heard they trembled exceedingly, so that their knees smote together, and they said one to another, "It is the end of us!"
Howbeit, there were certain true priests of the living God who would not prophesy for the capitalists, but had compassion on the people; and when they heard the abounding of the people and what they said, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy, and gave thanks to God because of the deliverance.

And the people went and did all the things that were told them of the agitators to do. And it came to pass as the agitators had said, even according to all their words. And there was no more any thirst in that land, neither any that was a-hungered, nor naked, nor cold, nor in any manner of want: and every man said unto his fellow, "My brother," and every woman said unto her companion, "My sister," for so were they with one another as brethren and sisters which do dwell together in unity. And the blessing of God rested upon that land for ever.

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(From p. 32)

shows the influence of the Dutch and German left communists like Pannekoek and Gorter who rejected the Lenin/bolshevik style of organization soon after the Russian Revolution. Over the years this position evolved into a rejection of what he calls “self willed” or “voluntary” organization in toto. Revolutionaries should not be building organizations. That task should be left to our class, which will organize spontaneously to the degree and for the period of time that events demand organization. Nor should efforts be made to make them permanent, for such organizations, perpetuated beyond the time needed, tend to be influenced by the institutional norms of capitalist society and become authoritarian. 18 pages, $1.50/75 pence from Collective Action Notes, PO Box 22962, Baltimore, MD 21203.

Socialist Studios is the journal of the Ashbourne Court (or reconstituted) faction of the Socialist Party of Great Britain. Expelled a few years ago, they carry on agitation toward the same goal as the main body and espouse the same principles. Socialist Studies 25 and 26, 20 half-A4 pages, contain articles that differ little from those in the Socialist Standard published by the SPGB (Clapham) except that they tend to concentrate on theoretical matters. Numbers 25 and 26 include articles on the falling rate of profit and on the limitations of trades unions. Write for a free copy to General Secretary, 71 Ashbourne Court, London, N12 8SB England.

In The Anarchist Movement in Japan John Crump has summarized in pamphlet form his earlier book, Hatta Shazo and Pure Anarchism in Interwar Japan (226 pp, St. Martin’s Press, 1993), reviewed in DB66. Anarchism’s late beginnings in Japan reflected the country’s isolation and the tardiness of the Japanese ruling class in embracing capitalism and industrial development. But when the drive to industrialize came, the ferocity with which the peasants were impoverished and driven from the land and into the wage slave market certainly exceeded that of the earlier movement in the West. That the first mass resistance occurred under the auspices of anarchists reflected the influence of a rebel, Kotoku Shusui, who observed contacted both the IWW and Kropotkin during a visit to the U.S. Returning to Japan, he was able to split the nascent social democratic party he had helped organize and to set on foot an anarcho-syndicalist movement which advocated direct action. In three chapters, “1906-1911,” “1912-1936,” and “1945 to the Present,” he follows the development of Japanese anarchism through organizational splits and savage repression. With 41 pages plus notes and bibliography, published in 1996 by Anarchist Communist Editions, it is number 8 in their pamphlet list. L1 ($2) from ACF c/o 84b Whitechapel High Street E1 7QX England

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For several years now, prominent American economists have been advising the governments of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union on the creation and the virtues of a free-enterprise system. The U.S.-controlled World Bank will not bestow a loan upon any country that does not aggressively pursue a market economy. Before his return to Haiti could become a reality, Jean-Bertrand Aristide had to guarantee the White House that he would pursue the same. We refuse to remove our embargo against Cuba unless they end their socialist experiment and jump on the capitalist bandwagon.

It would, consequently, come as a shock to the peoples of these countries to realize that, in actuality, most Americans do not believe in the free-enterprise system. It would, as well, come as a shock to most Americans.

To be sure, a poll asking@ somethin@ like: "Do you believe that our resounding "No!" But, going above and beyond the buzz words, is that how Americans really feel?

Following the 1994 earthquake in Los Angeles came the cry from many quarters: stores should not be raising prices so much for basic necessities like water, batteries, and diapers. Stores should not be raising their prices at all at such a time, it was insisted. It's the California way and it's not the American way, said Senator Dianne Feinstein. More grievances arose because landlords were raising rents on vacant apartments. How dare they do that? people waited.

The question arises: Haven't any of these people taken even a high-school course in economics? Haven't they learned at all about the Law of Supply and Demand? Do they think the law has been repealed? Do they think it should be? Even members of congress don't seem to quite trust the workings of the system. They periodically discuss measures to contain soaring drug prices, and are considering the possible regulation of the ticket distribution industry because of alleged abuses. Why don't our legislators just allow the "magic of the marketplace" to do its magic?

Calvin Coolidge, our revered hard-president, left us these words to ponder: "Civilization and profits go hand in hand." Yet our First Lady has lashed out at the medical and insurance industries for putting ahead of the public's health. "The market," she declared, "knows the price of everything but the value of nothing." The unions regularly attack companies for skimping on worker safety in their pursuit of higher profit. Environmentalists never sleep in their condemnation of industry putting profits before the environment. Lawyer bashing has become a veritable American sport. But how can the system conceivably function as it was designed to without the diligent pursuit of profit? Not merely profit, but the optimization of profit. Surely an attorney like Ms. Hillary knows that corporate officers can be sued by stockholders for ignoring this dictum.

No less a champion of free enterprise than Sen. Robert Dole recently said, in his attack upon the entertainment industry, that he wanted "to point out to corporate executives there ought to be some limit on profits. ... We must hold Hollywood accountable for putting profit ahead of
common decency."

And where is the appreciation for our supposedly cherished ideal of greater "choice"? How many of us welcome all the junk mail filling our mailboxes, or having our senses pursued and surrounded by omnipresent neighborhood of the national chain to smother and drive out our favorite friendly bookstore, pharmacist, or coffee shop, squawking about how "unfair" it is that this "predator" has marched in with hobnail boots and the club of "discount prices". But is it not a textbook case of how free, unfettered competition should operate? Why haven't the good citizens taken to heart what we're all taught? That in the long run competition benefits us all. Of course, the national chains, like other corporate giants supposedly in competition, are sometimes caught in price-fixing and other acts of collusion, bringing to mind John Kenneth Galbraith's observation that no one really likes the market except the economists and the FTC.

The citizenry may have drifted even further away from the system than all this indicates, for society seems to have more trust and respect for ... dare I say it? ... "non-profit" organizations than for the profit-seeking kind. Would the public have been so generous with quake relief if the Red Cross were a regular profit-making business? Would the IRS allow it to be tax-exempt? For an HIV test, would you feel more confident going to the Public Health Service or to a commercial laboratory? Why does "educational" or "public" television not have commercials? What would we campaigns selling a New and Improved God?

Pervading these attitudes, and frequently voiced, is a strong disapproval of greed and selfishness, in glaring contradiction to the reality that greed and selfishness form the official and ideological basis of our system. Where is all this leading to? Are the Russian reformers going to wind up as the last true believers in capitalism?

The ironic dilemma confronting liberals and those on the left is that because the mass of the American people are not aware that their sunny attitudes constitute an anti-free enterprise philosophy, they tend to go on believing, as they've been carefully taught to believe, that government is the problem, that big government is the biggest problem, and that our salvation cometh from the private sector, thus feeding directly into the conservative agenda. Those who believe that our society is faced with problems so daunting that no entrepreneur is ever going to solve them at a profit, and that there are needs that no church bake-sale proceeds will ever meet, carry the burden of convincing the American people that they don't really believe what they think they believe; and that their complementary mindset - that in government everything is stacked up has built up an incredible military machine, landed men on the moon, created great dams, marvelous national parks, an interstate highway system, the peace corps, student loans, social security, insurance for our bank deposits, the EPA, the National Institutes of Health, the Smithsonian, and much more; in short, our government has been quite good at doing what it wanted to do or what was politically expedient, including many things that labor and other movements have made it do, like establishing worker health and safety standards and requiring food manufacturers to list detailed information about ingredients.

As the Gingrich revolutionary machine tries to steamroll its way through the American media and the American mind, one of the prime tasks of the resistance is to somehow remind the American people of what they've already learned but seem to have forgotten: that they don't want more government, or less government, they want government on their side.

Residents of Tepoztlan, MEXICO, DRIVE OFFICIALS OUT OF TOWN
By John Spritzler

What Happened?

Residents of Tepoztlan, Mexico, a town of 13,000 people near Mexico City, have been engaged for the last 10 months in a remarkable effort to establish democracy in their town. Their story has been barely reported in the US media, but not for lack of information on the news services. We found four reports: an A.P. dispatch filed September 4, 1995; Sam Dillon's September 10 report in the New York Times; Carl Hiaasen's October 26 report to the Miami Herald; and David Welna's report to National Public Radio, aired April 22 on "All Things Considered."

The story begins with a resort golf course and industrial park, which, according to Dillon, the Mexican corporation Grupo KS and the North American GTE corporation wanted to build on Tepoztlan's western periphery. Residents opposed the "members-only country club available mainly to wealthy outsiders and foreigners" which would cover an archeological site that some felt was sacred ground, and which would cause water shortages and threaten 28 species of animals in a national forest. But "Mayor Alejandro Morales Barragan...loved the idea," wrote Hiaasen, "and saw no need to consult the town's 13,000 residents. Big mistake." According to Hiaasen, "Plans moved ahead. Bulldozers roared..."

"Furious and frustrated, the people of Tepoztlan took action, in fact they took hostages." 3000 angry residents crowded the main plaza and stormed the town hall. According to the AP, "villagers armed with rocks, knives, and sharpened sticks took seven officials hostage." Hiaasen added "Riot police retreated after a brisk stoning. Cars were torched, streets strung with barbed wire." NPR said that "locals then erected a large stone barricade on the main road leading into Tepoztlan." Hiaasen reports that "For days the protesters—merchants, environmentalists and peasant farmers—stood firm. Once Mayor Morales resigned, the hostages were freed."

Next, according to Hiaasen, "The repudiated mayor has been replaced by an improvised town council, which promises to rescind building permits for the GTE-Grupo KS project. Meanwhile, Mexican authorities have temporarily halted construction...Tepoztlan remains barracaded. Citizen volunteers patrol the town square."

NPR reported, "The people organized their own elections for a new mayor...The insurgent mayor is 40-year-old Lazero Rodriguez, a wood carver by profession. Unlike many Mexican politicians whose main allegiance is to their party patrons, Rodriguez says the only people he has to obey are the ones who elected him. He says with a touch of pride that not only does he not belong to any political party, he's not even a registered voter." The new mayor told NPR "I have never voted in my life. Official elections in Mexico simply have no credibility."

NPR also reported that "the installation of the new authorities last October was a raucous affair. A joyful crowd gathered outside the town hall which had been sealed by state authorities...as two local locksmiths worked on picking the locks...Jose Maria Medina, a leader in the town's so-called 'golf war' was ecstatic as he watched the big doors to the town hall swing open."

Medina told NPR, "Our town is going to take control of our life."

NPR added "At the gas station outside town where the local police moved their offices, no police have been seen for months. So local youths, who would often spend their free time drinking before the rebellion, became self-appointed traffic cops. And neighborhood watch committees have kept the town virtually crime free." One resident told Hiaasen, "Actually, the public services work much better now."

Hiaasen concluded: "While I wouldn't suggest that insurrection is the best way to deal with
unwanted malls and high-rises here in the United States, there's something refreshing about the emphatic manner with which the Tepoztlanians have made their feelings known. The next time somebody wants to put in a golf course, you can bet the new officeholders will ask the public first, not last. Which is the way it ought to be, everywhere."

While the golf club and industrial park developers have cancelled their plans, the Mexican state government has attacked Tepoztlan's democratic movement with threats and violence. The latest news from NPR is that the State Attorney General, Carlos Peredo, has issued arrest warrants against the townspeople, even though a newspaper poll found most residents supported self-rule. The State has cut off all funds for Tepoztlan, but the residents in turn are now withholding their state taxes. In early April, according to NPR, hundreds of people from Tepoztlan travelled in a caravan of buses to a ceremony honoring the revolutionary leader Emiliano Zapata when police in an ambush opened fire, killing one man and wounding dozens more.

Can the Tepoztlanians Succeed?

What will eventually happen in Tepoztlan? Will the people prevail over the police and army of the Mexican Government? There are huge forces arrayed against the people, including the U.S. government. Tepoztlan's former mayor is a member of Mexico's Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), the party of former President Salinas. During the NAFTA negotiations both Bush and Clinton praised Salinas and his PRI party for making Mexico more market oriented, more pro-American, and "more democratic."

Our knowledge of the struggle in Tepoztlan is very limited. We do not know, for example, whether the townspeople have deepened their struggle from one of ejecting the town officials to one of transforming all relationships in the town, including economic relations, in the same spirit of democracy from the bottom-up. We can imagine, however, that people who have already taken such courageous and powerful actions to deal with one set of issues must have reflected and discussed much on the meaning of their actions for other parts of their lives and their society. Whatever the explicit goals of their movement, we believe that the Tepoztlanians' uprising is at least implicitly revolutionary. It implies that all of society should be shaped by true democracy. It is in the revolutionary potential of their situation that their salvation lies.

Even on the basis of what little we do know, we can say that the Tepoztlanians' rebellion has significance far beyond its borders. By rejecting a luxury golf course and industrial park and the jobs they would bring, Tepoztlanians have shown that they have nobler aspirations than the capitalists' obsession with "economic development." Their militant takeover of the town demonstrates how people with confidence in each other can change the world on a scale they would not otherwise dream of. By first sweeping away the old mayor and police and then holding truly democratic elections they showed that their vision of real democracy requires overthrowing elite rule, not reforming it. With town youths directing traffic, and ordinary people dealing successfully with crime and running public services better than before, the townspeople demonstrated that ordinary people, left to themselves, can solve the problems that the elite either cause or have no intention of solving.

The Tepoztlanians are not alone in their rebellion. According to NPR, hundreds of other towns in Mexico have thrown out the local authorities, and there is an armed Zapatista rebellion in the southern state of Chiapas. More important than the uprisings which have already taken place is the fact that the vast majority of people in Mexico—the millions of small farmers and working people—share the same grievances and the same implicit goals and values which motivated the Tepoztlanian's uprising. It is only on the basis of these widely-shared revolutionary goals that the people of Tepoztlan can link up with people all over Mexico—and around the whole world—in a movement able to win decisively.
The following excerpt is from Chapter 15, "Self Help in Hard Times" of Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States*:

People organized to help themselves, since business and government were not helping them in 1931 and 1932. In Seattle, the fishermen's union caught fish and exchanged them with people who picked fruit and vegetables, and those who cut wood exchanged that. There were twenty-two locals, each with a commissary where food and firewood were exchanged for other goods and services: barbers, seamstresses, and doctors gave of their skills in return for other things. By the end of 1932, there were 330 self-help organizations in thirty-seven states, with over 300,000 members. By early 1933, they seem to have collapsed; they were attempting too big a job in an economy that was more and more a shambles.

Perhaps the most remarkable example of self-help took place in the coal district of Pennsylvania, where teams of unemployed miners dug small mines on company property, mined coal, trucked it to cities, and sold it below the commercial rate. By 1934, 5 million tons of this "bootleg" coal were produced by twenty thousand men using four thousand vehicles. When attempts were made to prosecute, local juries would not convict, local jailors would not imprison.

These were simple actions, taken out of practical need, but they had revolutionary possibilities. Paul Mattick, a Marxist writer, commented:

All that is really necessary for the workers to do in order to end their miseries is to perform such simple things as to take from where there is, without regard to established property principles or social philosophies, and to start to produce for themselves. Done on a broad social scale, it will lead to lasting results; on a local, isolated plane it will be . . . defeated. . . . The bootleg miners have shown in a rather clear and impressive way, that the so-much bewailed absence of a socialist ideology on the part of the workers really does not prevent workers from acting quite anticapitalistically, quite in accordance with their own needs. Breaking through the confines of private property in order to live up to their own necessities, the miners' action is, at the same time a manifestation of the most important part of class consciousness—namely, that the problems of the workers can be solved only by themselves.
AK Press Distribution's 1998 Catalog is now available and bigger and better than ever--167 pages to 1997's 143. It includes eight new book titles, among them A Cavalier History of Surrealism by Raoul Vaneigem and the first English translation of No Gods No Masters, Daniel Guerin's two-volume history of anarchism, 304 and 288 pages, $16.95 each. Besides magazines, videos, stickers, audio tapes, it has 19 categories of books. This has to be the ultimate anarchist—and radical, for some basic Marx is included—catalog. Free from AK Press Distribution, PO Box 40682, San Francisco, CA 94110—or E-mail: akpress@akpress.org or AK Distribution, PO Box 12766, Edinburgh EH8 9YE Scotland. Email: ak@akedin.demon.co.uk

Reflections on Marx's Critique of Political Economy, published in Faridabad, India, and reviewed in DB86, will soon be available from DB at no cost. Drop us a card or email us: fgirard@iserv.net

Socialism and Democracy, No. 22, Fall 1997, contains an excellent 45-page article, "Market Mysterification in Capitalist and Market Socialist Societies" by Bertell Ollman. In it he points out the role of the market in concealing the daily robbery of the working class and contrasts it to the open and obvious exploitation in economic systems as well as in the Soviet union. Much of the article addresses the issue of so-called market socialism, the ideological darling of leftists who have found it a welcome substitute since the loss of the "actually existing socialism" of the U.S.S.R. $8 from 122 West 27th Street (10th floor) New York, NY 10001.

The Second Best of Subversion, 43 A4 pages, L.50 ($3.00) from Subversion, Dept. 10, 1 Newton Street, Manchester M1 1HW England. "The Second Best of Subversion is a selection of articles, reviews, and correspondence from Subversion number 11 to 20 covering roughly the four years from autumn 1992 to autumn 1996." The articles are classified into theme-related sections including "Workplace Struggles," "What Is the Working Class?," "Capitalist Strategies of Control," and others, among them "Something About Ourselves." This opens with an article titled "The Revolutionary Alternative to Leftwing Politics, which begins: "The Left has not failed and that is one of the greatest disaster ever to befall the working class. Most people think the Left is the movement of the working class for socialism (albeit riven by opportunism and middle-headed interpretations on the part of many in its ranks). Nothing could be further from the truth...."

The 1998 catalog of "Books for an Endangered Plant from Charles H. Kerr, Publishers of Anti-Establishment Literature since 1886" 8 tabloid pages, free from 1740 Greenleaf Ave., Chicago, IL 60626. As befits a publisher headquartered for over a century in Chicago, a city that contained at one time or another the headquarters of nearly every radical group in the U.S., many of the books relate to radical history and biography. Among the current titles are two books on the Haymarket affair, four if you include a new biography of John P. Altgeld and his book Reasons for Pardoning the Haymarket Anarchists, Carwardine's The Pullman Strike, Upton Sinclair's The Flivver King: A Story of Ford-America, and several books on the IWW as well as publications related to surrealism, one of the major interests of Kerr's current caretakers, Penny and Franklin Rosemont.

Crash & Burn, issue 2, Spring 1997, 8 regular pages stapled; for a copy send two stamps to Leif Fredrickson, Maildrop 1818, 124 Raymond Ave., Poughkeepsie, NY 12604. C&B concentrates
on the cultural and highly personal anarchism I associate with Bob Black (one of the writers in this issue) and periodicals like Anarchism and Fifth Estate. A major interest in this issue is “culturicide,” a necessary act to gain real freedom according to C&B.

Internationalist Perspective, Nos.27-31/32, 1994 through Winter 96/97. After an interruption of some years the DB received these four issues of the English language journal of a group expelled from the left communist ICC (International Communist Current). Besides a response to the ICC’s accusation of “parasitism” the double issue Winter 96/97 contains the first two parts (“The Inevitable Fall in the Rate of Profit” and “The Immanent Barrier to Market Expansion” 38 pages) of a projected four-part series on “The Roots of the Capitalist Crisis.” The analysis in the first installment takes note of Paul Mattick’s thinking as well as recently published views of Kamunist Kranti. Single issues 28 pages, double 45; Four issue sub $5 from IP, 551 Valley Road, #131, Montclair, NJ 07043 (make checks out to “cash”) and £3.50 from BM Box 8154, London WC1n 3XX, Great Britain (make checks out to “Perspective”)

Socialism: A Religious Issue (A New Look at Jesus and His Teachings), 15 pages, no price given — from the Mahanaim Institute, PO Box 1191, Tomball, TX 77377. After listing the social problems confrontin people in this last decade of the twentieth century, the author, who seems to have a good working knowledge of Marxism, asserts that, “The capitalist economic system itself is the cause of our socio-economic ills.” Unfortunately when it comes to the obvious solution—abolishing capitalism—the author fails to recognize that the economic system where “[T]he workers will receive the profit from their labor directly, because they themselves will own the factories, corporations, and businesses in which they work” will be capitalism, which can’t be rendered worker-friendly by simply placing ownership of capital in the hands of our class. Perhaps the next edition will consider the possibility of collective (social) ownership and the abolition of the profit system entirely.

Some Thoughts on Organization is Henri Simon’s pamphlet on revolutionary organization—or more accurately non-organization. Although the introduction speaks of its having been published first by Cienfuegos Press in 1979, I’m sure I saw my first copy in an A4 mimeographed edition published by London Solidarity in the mid seventies. Simon’s pamphlet

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