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ABOUT THE DISCUSSION BULLETIN

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

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

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

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WHY IS THE U.S. BOMBING YUGOSLAVIA?

By Dave Stratman

Millions of Americans are shocked, confused, or disgusted by the US-led NATO bombing of Yugoslavia. The bombing doesn't seem to make any sense. Military analysts have stated repeatedly that bombing alone will have little effect on Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic's ability to carry out the "ethnic cleansing" of Kosovo. Indeed, the NATO bombing has led to a massive increase in the number of ethnic Albanians fleeing Kosovo—just as predicted. In addition, far from weakening Milosevic, the bombing campaign has immeasurably strengthened his hand, so that a democracy movement which two years ago seemed close to overthrowing Milosevic has now been drowned in a sea of Serbian national unity against the U.S. and NATO. The U.S. bombing has given Milosevic something he desperately needed: an external enemy against which all Serbs can unite.

What's going on here? Why would the U.S. and NATO undertake a bombing campaign which has achieved the opposite of its stated goals?

THE HIDDEN HISTORY OF THE WAR

The most important facts for understanding the present situation have been carefully concealed by politicians and the media.

Since the mid-1980s, Yugoslavia has been the scene of a vast working class movement which threatens to overthrow the International Monetary Fund (IMF)-backed ex-Communist government. (Kosovo is an "autonomous region" and Serbia the largest of the six republics which formerly constituted Yugoslavia.) Since 1987, Slobodan Milosevic has been the IMF's strongman in Belgrade, trying to enforce IMF-imposed wage cuts and capitalist restructuring against massive worker resistance, and organizing ethnic atrocities and civil war in a desperate bid to forestall revolution.

In the face of widespread worker discontent about the lack of democracy and a 7-day student takeover of the University of Belgrade in June, 1968 (under the slogan, "Down with the Red Bourgeoisie"), Yugoslavia borrowed heavily in the 1970s and built up a huge debt to the IMF, which in 1985 topped $20 billion. Payback began in 1980. From 1980-84 the standard of living in Yugoslavia fell nearly 40%. In 1984 strikes centered in the Yugoslav republic of Macedonia broke out and spread to other republics.

Strikes and demonstrations continued to grow. In July, 1988 thousands of striking Croat and Serb workers "in a revolutionary mood" fought their way through police cordons and stormed Parliament. They called for "united action by the entire Yugoslav working class." In October, 30,000 workers bearing red flags and banners proclaiming, "Long Live the Working Class!" and "Down with the Fascist Regime" occupied the iron works in Titograd and forced the resignation of Montenegrin Communist officials, while in Belgrade 5,000 Serb workers fought their way into Parliament to demand the resignation of the government. Strikes and hyperinflation swept the country. In December, 1989 there was 2000% (two-thousand percent) inflation. Over 650,000 workers from several republics went on strike together.

In 1990 the Yugoslav government under Ante Markovic administered "shock therapy" to the economy, imposing more stringent capitalist restructuring designed by Jeffrey Sachs of Harvard (who also designed Russia's restructuring). The reforms at first seemed to be succeeding, but by the spring of 1991 they had collapsed in the face of massive worker resistance. Clearly some stronger medicine was needed to bring Yugoslav, especially Serbian, workers to heel.

DIVIDE AND RULE
The working class movement brought together Yugoslavs of every ethnic background. The movement was at least implicitly revolutionary and terrified the international elite, for if successful it might easily spread beyond Yugoslavia and spell the end of the smoothly-managed transition from communist to capitalist forms of elite rule in Eastern Europe. As the elite are aware, successful revolution and true democracy anywhere could lead to revolution everywhere.

As the working class movement grew, the Yugoslav ruling elite increasingly faced a stark choice: either smash the growing movement or go under. Rather than lose their grip on power, they decided to dismember the working class movement by dismembering the country. The dissolution of the former Yugoslavia in 1991 and the ethnic fighting and atrocities were parts of a carefully orchestrated elite strategy to divide and destroy the working class movement.

The six republics of Yugoslavia were united under a non-ethnic Communist government since the end of WWII. Slobodan Milosevic became chairman of the Serbian League of Communists in 1987 and later president of Serbia and Yugoslavia. He organized the "Milosevic Commission," which in 1989 called for market-oriented reforms, and he "urged Yugoslavs to overcome their 'unfounded, irrational, and...primitive fear of exploitation' by foreign capital." Milosevic moved to destroy working class resistance to IMF restructuring programs. With "near monopoly control" of TV, radio, and newspapers in Serbia, the Communist government under Milosevic began an intensive propaganda campaign to divide the working class into warring ethnic groups, claiming that Serbs, the largest ethnic group in Yugoslavia, were under attack by Croats and others in the republics beyond Serbia. In every republic, ethnic groups were bombarded with propaganda to set them against each other. Nationalist paramilitary groups were organized to carry out "retaliatory" atrocities. Serb nationalist thugs were armed in Croatia, while Croat officials armed their own groups. Nationalist parties were legalized and received increasing support.

Slovenia, the most developed of the republics, seceded from Yugoslavia in June, 1991. A 10-day war followed which "instilled a sense of discipline and national pride in the Slovenian labour force" and finally enabled Slovenian leaders to restructure the economy. Fighting broke out between Serbia and Croatia, and atrocities were carried out to stoke ethnic hatred. "The people carrying out these actions were generally not from the local area. It was not a case of people who'd lived side by side for decades suddenly deciding to kill each other. Neither was it an eruption of long-suppressed ethnic hatreds, as the media make out. It was a well-organized state policy." Croatia, Macedonia, and later Bosnia-Herzegovina also seceded. Serbia and Montenegro are all that remain of Yugoslavia.

Meanwhile the opposition movement continued to grow. In March, 1991 a half-million marched on Belgrade, demanding the ouster of Milosevic, and anti-government riots shook the capital. In April, 1991 700,000 workers in Serbia—one-third of the workforce—struck. In July, 1993 farmers blockaded roads and unions called a general strike. In August the government issued a 500 million dinar note—worth about $10. In September, 1993 the Bosnian Serb army mutinied. Thousands of Serbs avoided the draft or deserted. In 1992 only 10% of young Serbs drafted in Belgrade reported for duty. Whole villages conspired to hide their young men.

In winter, 1997 fifty consecutive days of massive demonstrations demanding the ouster of Milosevic shook Belgrade. According to a former Boston Globe reporter living there who fled once the bombing began, the same crowds are now in demonstrations organized by Milosevic against NATO, while the leaders of the democracy movement are all fleeing. "[NATO] had to know bombs would crown Milosevic emperor for life."

ELITE GOALS IN YUGOSLAVIA

To figure out the real goals of political leaders, sometimes it's necessary to look not only at what they say but at what they do. What have U.S. and NATO leaders actually done in Yugoslavia? Through the IMF they have imposed repeated wage cuts, devaluations, and massive
lay-offs. They brokered agreements producing massive dislocations of populations and the fragmentation of Yugoslav society. And now they are bombing people into the arms of someone people had been trying to overthrow.

Milosevic is actually the U.S.-IMF man in Belgrade. Bombing Kosovo and Serbia is a last desperate bid by the elite to smash the revolutionary movement and keep Milosevic in power. The targets are the solidarity and self-confidence of the working people of every ethnic group. They want to destroy the working class movement and divide Yugoslavs into warring fractions. Their goal is counterrevolution.

THIS MOMENT IN HISTORY

The actions of the U.S. and NATO are not signs of strength but weakness. Acting through the Yugoslav elite they tried to control working people with Communist rhetoric, with capitalist rhetoric, with threats, with police clubs, with bullets, with "restructuring," with ethnic atrocities, with civil war, and each time they failed. They rely now on massive military force because they lack sufficient moral or political credibility to achieve their ends by other means. They carry out these actions at great political cost: their actions expose them as utterly without morality.

The world elite are willing to pay this price because they know that much more is at stake than Yugoslavia alone. The last few months have seen neighboring Romania, where workers overthrew a Communist dictator in 1989, shaken by huge strikes and marches on Bucharest by miners and other workers. Neighboring Albania has been virtually without a government since a popular uprising in 1997. Russia, with its historic ties to the Serbs, is in the throes of strikes and complete disillusionment with capitalist reforms. NATO air strikes are no doubt intended to rally the people of these countries to their respective elites and to tell them also, "Keep in line or you'll get the same."

Now, when it seems at its moment of greatest power, the world elite is actually very weak. It has no ability to inspire, only to compel. People are bound to elite control not out of loyalty but because they see no alternative.

What is the alternative? We should build a worldwide revolutionary movement to overthrow elite power and establish true democracy, based on equality and solidarity and the social relations of working men and women of every race and nationality. This new world exists now, in the lives and struggles of ordinary people everywhere. Wherever men and women treat each other with love and respect, wherever people love their children and teach them to be considerate human beings, wherever people support each other in the face of attacks, where ever people stand up and fight for a better world, there reside the values and relationships which are the basis of a new society.

AFTERWORD: INVISIBLE WORKERS

To prepare this article I reviewed a number of current books on Yugoslavia. None of them mentioned the strikes. I also reviewed current left analyses. The struggle of the working class of Yugoslavia doesn't figure in most of them. (One anti-Marxist publication from the U.K., Wildcat No. 18, Summer 1996, had some good analysis.) The information in this article comes almost entirely from newspapers: The Guardian, The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, and The Boston Globe. The fact that years of massive working class struggle in Yugoslavia is invisible to scholarly writers and also to the left is a sure sign that we need a new way of seeing the world. DS (Full documentation for this article is at: http://users.aol.com/Newdem)

(From May-June 1999 New Democracy, P.O. Box 427, Boston, MA 02130)
A Socialist Labor Party Statement—

STOP THE WAR ON YUGOSLAVIA!

In the name of all that is decent and humane, the Socialist Labor Party calls upon the working class of the United States to demand a complete and immediate stop to the war on Yugoslavia.

The lie—and a monument to lie it is—that the U.S.-led NATO attack on Yugoslavia was prompted by a “humanitarian” desire to save the people of Kosovo from the savage “ethnic cleansing” campaign being waged under the direction of Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic is as cynical as it is false. The United States has callously and systematically turned its back on numerous conflicts, massacres and human tragedies all over the world. Its spokespeople have frankly admitted that the United States cannot “police” the globe and that it must pick and choose where it will use its military might to enforce its will.

Why a War?
How does Washington decide what country to invade, what tyrant to support or what despot to depose? Why, for example, does the United States oppose the Kurdish people fighting for their independence from Turkey while it arms and supplies the same Kurdish people just across the border who are trying to break away from Iraq and Saddam Hussein?
The answer is simple. It is that the interests of the tiny class of capitalists who own the economy need “spheres of influence” all over the world. They need these spheres of influence and control to secure access to foreign sources of raw materials to feed their industries, and to protect and expand foreign markets in which to sell their wares and rake in their profits. They need these things because without them the capitalist system would collapse. These necessities of capitalism are the “national interests” that determine where and when American soldiers, sailors and pilots will be sent to kill or be killed in conflicts such as the present war on Yugoslavia.

Yugoslavia is one of those Eastern European countries that used to be called “communist.” Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the bureaucrats who controlled the state-owned industries and lands of those countries have been scrambling to keep control. Their squabbles lit the spark that ignited the “ethnic disputes” that led to Yugoslavia’s disintegration into five petty “nations” and to the wars in which unspeakable atrocities have been committed on all sides.

Who’s to Blame?
The United States and the European Union (EU) share responsibility for the chaos and human suffering that have descended on Kosovo. Their efforts to hasten the transition from Soviet-style “communism” to capitalism have placed enormous political and economic pressures on every country in the Balkans—on Bulgaria and Romania as well as on Albania, Yugoslavia and the four breakaway countries of Bosnia, Croatia, Slovenia and Macedonia. These pressures have led to massive layoffs for workers from what were state-run industries that are slated to be “privatized” once they are made profitable. The U.S.-dominated International Monetary Fund (IMF) is the source from which much of that pressure has come.

However, the transition from so-called communism to capitalism is not the only, or even the primary, source of concern for the U.S.-EU-NATO “alliance” now waging war on Yugoslavia. The strategic location of the Balkan Peninsula in relation to the rest of Europe, to Russia and to the Middle East overshadows every other concern. Indeed, it explains why Russian President Boris Yeltsin angrily rattled his country’s nuclear sword and threatened to forge a new military alliance with Belarus and Yugoslavia unless the war was stopped. It explains why cries for an all-out ground war are being heard through the mass media and from Capitol Hill. The stakes are enormous and could easily bring the world back to the brink of a nuclear holocaust that the end of the Cold War seemed to eliminate.

What’s at Stake?
American corporations sell more to and buy more from the countries that make up the EU than anywhere else. What threatens Eastern European capitalist interests threatens the interests of U.S. capitalism. EU countries such as Germany have huge investments in the Balkans, and their ability to export much of the wealth produced by the working classes of the EU depends on the markets of southern Europe. Apart from that, however, is
what may be called the ABC line of access to the enormous oil reserves of the Caspian Basin. That strategic line runs from the Adriatic Sea that washes the West Coast of the Balkan Peninsula across the Black Sea to the oil-rich Caspian Sea. Control over the Caspian oil fields may well depend on who—the U.S.-EU-NATO alliance or Russia—dominates Yugoslavia and the Balkans.

That is why the 50-year-old NATO military alliance that failed to intervene in the anti-Soviet rebellions in East Germany, Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia in the 1950s and 1960s has suddenly gone to war—not for "humanitarian" reasons, but in a struggle for control over markets, natural resources, human labor and strategic advantages that are indispensable to the ruling classes of the United States, the EU—and Russia.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and its stultifying system of bureaucratic state despotism did nothing to change these imperialist compulsions of world capitalism. Indeed, the Soviet collapse had precisely the opposite effect. It expanded the system of capitalist rapacity to embrace Russia, the former Soviet-style societies of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet states that border the Adriatic, Black and Caspian seas.

The threat to world peace is clear. Already the Pentagon wants to mobilize 33,000 National Guard reservists in preparation for an all-out ground war that President Clinton still insists won't be needed to protect U.S. and EU interests in the Balkans. Is that a risk that American workers want to take?

Workers Must Act!

Every day the American working class marches into the nation's industries and performs every useful service that makes our country the richest and the most powerful on Earth. To stop the war and prevent its spinning out of control, the American working class must take a stand. It must demand the complete and immediate cessation of hostilities against Yugoslavia and the total disengagement of all American forces in the conflict. But it must do more. It must act soon to prevent any recurrence of future conflicts by ridding itself of the capitalist system that has caused every major war of the 20th century.

The American working class is the only force capable of establishing a permanent and unbreakable world peace. But to establish that peace it must organize its political and economic might to declare its determination to end capitalism and to build a new democracy—an industrial democracy—based on collective owner-

ship of the economy. In short, genuine socialism.

The Socialist Labor Party's program of Socialist Industrial Unionism provides the strategy and the tactics the working class needs to consummate a peaceful transition from capitalism to socialism. It calls upon the working class to organize a political party of its own to express its will to abolish capitalism, and to organize itself in the workplaces of the country to enforce that decision by taking, holding and operating the economy in the name of society.

Only then can the working-class majority take control of its own destiny to ensure permanent economic prosperity, to uproot the cause of international conflicts, and to lay the foundation for international cooperation and a lasting peace.
Against "Social Europe"
No peace with capitalism!
No war but the class war!

Europe's "leftist" governments are responsible for an imperialist war of aggression.

They are also responsible for a social aggression which raises our cost of living, depresses our wages, cuts social spending and disposes of old and sick people.

Both aggressions are closely linked. It is no accident that "leftist" governments are in charge of them. Blair, Jospin, D'Almea or Schröder/Fischer - the capitalist states can only realise their goals with what is left of social democratic ideology, unions and citizens' action groups. And only greens and social democrats could have led an unprovoked two month war without hundreds of thousands of protesters taking to the streets.

NATO's intervention as global police is about the protection of capitalist exploitation - just like workfare against unemployed people and the "restructuring of the welfare state". The mass killing of human beings shows how far they are prepared to go in order to defend the system. Bombs and tanks, prisons and police - on the entire planet, their organised killings are supposed to give us a message: that it is useless to resist.

NATO is not helping anyone but itself!

NATO does not care about human rights any more than Milosevic does. It is only cynical if Clinton, Scharping or Fischer say they care about people in Kosovo while they care fuck-all when far more people are deported and murdered in Guatemala, Kurdistan or Ruanda - on the contrary, on those occasions they supply the arms. People who flee from oppression like in Kosovo or refuse to serve in the army are officially viewed as unwanted immigrants and deported back without mercy. The bombs on Yugoslavia are not directed against the Milosevic regime but against the people living there! With the help of NATO troops, the Balkans are being turned into a giant, militarised refugee camp.

The protection of the capitalist world order is at the centre of the war. NATO, Milosevic, Yeltsin etc. agree on that - it is their very basis for talks. NATO knew that its air strikes would escalate the expulsions and the killings. That was intended because despair, powerlessness and mutual hate are the foundations on which NATO and the various nationalist forces alike want to build a stable national order in the region.

This war is also about power between nations: * NATO countries want to expand their spheres of influence and secure themselves new oil pipeline and transport corridors. * The USA wanted this war (and others: Iraq is being bombed almost every day now!) in order to impose itself as the world's only superpower. * The "new" Europe would like to act as an imperialist stabilising power in "its" area. * The war is being used to legitimise giant increases of arms budgets and the development of new arms. Will that help capitalism overcome its crisis?

Let's not support the killers by worrying about the "social justice" of an unjust and barbaric system or by calling for a "social Europe"!

"Working time reduction", "guaranteed income", "minimum wages"... can barbarism be reformed?
The return to power of social democracy has raised many hopes of re-humanising capitalism. For example through "working time reduction", a "guaranteed minimum income" or "minimum wages". All these demands are being addressed to the state - just like the demand for NATO bombs as a response to oppression and deportations in the Balkans.

Today social democracy and the renegades of '68 are needed in order to create a social consensus: for a new "interior" social policy as well as for the protection of the capitalist world order by war and massacre. To that end they use the rhetoric of human rights just as they whine about unemployment. If we demand a working time reduction or a guaranteed minimum income capital's planners can actually tell us they are meeting our demands while they are really just stepping up exploitation.

What has Germany's glorious working time reduction since 1984 brought us but unlimited flexibilisation and lower wages (signed by the unions)? Today the ruling politicians offer a guaranteed minimum income to sell us low-wage jobs, limited contracts and self-employment.

One cannot fight the war and at the same time call for a "social Europe" - both are closely linked. War and nationalism have always been the midwives of the welfare state which serves to protect exploitation from class struggle.

At the EU summit, the war mongers will debate "social problems" and decide on initiatives for more employment or minimum wages. But they are only interested in exploiting us with as little trouble as possible. War is an extreme expression of capitalism's truth: for capital people are just a means to an end!

Let's not help prolong the barbarism of capital! There is only one answer to war, exploitation and poverty: the destruction of the capitalist work prison!

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ABOUT THIS ISSUE

We begin with several pieces that reflect the response of groups in our political sector to the latest example of capitalist barbarism: the war in Yugoslavia. Except for Dave Stratman's article from New Democracy, which is the basis for the ND leaflet (not published in his issue), all were intended for mass distribution and demonstrate the position and analysis each group wished to present to workers. The ND article is a think piece directed to its largely union-oriented readership. It provides historical background, the most striking aspect of which is the assertion that a major cause of the war was the growing inter-ethnic working class rebellion against the austerity imposed by Western capital and enforced by the Yugoslavian state apparatus. The article's solution is for workers to establish "true democracy." The Socialist Labor Party's leaflet will, I think, give Internationalism a new slant on the DeLeonist response to the war. The current issue of Internationalism criticizes DeLeonism and well as the IWW for their failure to oppose the war on a timely basis. Except for an unfortunate statement that seems to limit revolutionary potential to American workers, the leaflet is well reasoned and provides a revolutionary alternative to capitalism. The Wildcat flyer, I'm informed, is the translated version of a leaflet produced by the German group, not the British Wildcat. Internationalism's leaflet was produced by the International Communist Current, of which it is the U.S. section. It seems to depend for its effect even more than Wildcat on high intensity rhetoric. Like the other leaflets in this issue, it names
Capitalism is War, War on Capitalism

Once again, Yugoslavia is being laid to waste. But these are not the “inter-ethnic” massacres that have been going on since 1991, thanks to the great powers’ providing weapons and support to the different nationalist cliques.

Today, it is the NATO “democracies” that have unleashed a rain of fire on the populations of Serbia, Montenegro, and Kosovo. For let there be no mistake: under the bombs, there are not just military targets. There are soldiers who never asked to be there, workers and peasants in uniform. There are the civilian populations, women, children and the old, who have the misfortune to live next to military bases, refineries, and arms factories - in other words working-class families for the most part. And there are the impotent and terrified populations forced into exile in their thousands.

Once again, capitalism is showing us its real face: an endless barbarism, where the great powers’ prodigious technology is at the service of death and destruction.

Gone are the illusions in a new “era of peace” that they promised us after the collapse of the Eastern bloc! The end of the so-called “socialist bloc” and the end of the Cold War have not ended military conflict. On the contrary! Since 1989, military tensions and slaughter have not stopped spreading: in Iraq, in ex-Yugoslavia, in the republics of the ex-USSR, throughout the African continent, in Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, etc.

This is the reality of the “New World Order” so feted by the great democracies after the fall of the Russian bloc: an ever-bloodier chaos unleashed now in the heart of Europe.

World capitalism in all its forms, whether “democratic” or “totalitarian” bears war within itself.

Milošević, Clinton, & Co: gangsters and assassins every one!

During “Operation Desert Storm” in the Persian Gulf in 1991, all the governments of the “Western democracies” told us that their war was “clean”, “surgical”, intended to defend “international law” and eliminate the “butcher of Baghdad”.

HYPOCRITES!

This “clean” war left hundreds of thousands dead. To this day, the civilian population is still paying the price for this dreadful slaughter, an Saddam’s dictatorship still reigns over Iraq. Our rulers claim to be fighting dictators: to do so, they crush under their bombs the populations oppressed by these same dictators.

As for “international law”, this is the least concern for the great democracies of Europe and America. Today, it is clearer than ever: NATO’s bombardment of Serbia, without even the fig-leaf of a UN mandate, demonstrates clearly that the world’s leaders care not a jot for their “international law”!

All these imperialist scoundrels claim to be upholding “the law”. True - but what law? THEIR law: the law of the jungle, the law of the strongest, gangster law. The law of capitalism.

Just like Saddam Hussein, Milošević is a bloodstained dictator of the worst kind. But he has nothing to teach the great democracies. They have never hesitated to torture and massacre on a grand scale in Hiroshima, Korea, Vietnam, Algeria, and Iraq...

These so-called defenders of the oppressed plumb the depths of cynicism when we think that most of the regimes led by dictators like Milošević (Pinochet, Saddam, Kabila, Mobutu & Co.) were set-up, supported, and armed by those who today are denouncing their crimes.
The parties of the left: spearheads of military barbarism

The left-wing parties - Labor, Socialists, Greens, etc. - all claim to defend the oppressed and exploited, to be champions of "human rights" and apostles of peace. Today, most of the governments taking part in the slaughter are led by these same left parties. In government, the left loyally defends the economic interests of capitalism, constantly attacking the workers' living conditions. In government, the left participates fully and without a qualm in capitalist military barbarism behind the "democrat" Clinton.

Blair, Schroeder, Jospin and the others are the rightful heirs of those socialist leaders who sent the workers off to die in the trenches in 1914, and then led the slaughter when the proletariat tried to overthrow capitalism as in Germany 1919.

Capitalism is ever more chaos and bloodshed

Make war to preserve peace. War to defend the values of humanitarian democracy. The lie is as threadbare as it is revolting! The ruling classes unleashed the slaughter of World War I claiming that this would be "the war to end war", in the name of "civilization". Twenty years later, the bloodshed was even worse. The Allied victory in World War II was supposed to be the victory of democracy over Nazi barbarism, but since 1945 the wars have not stopped, and have claimed as many victims as the world war itself.

All the blood-stained scoundrels taking part in the conflict between Milosevic and NATO are the worthy representatives of the system that rules the planet. A system which, even in the richest countries, reduces to poverty and throws into the street tens of millions of human beings, and which plunges into a living hell three quarters of humanity given over to famine, disease, and endless massacres. A system which today is creating a mind-boggling chaos.

By unleashing their frightful military might, the US godfather and its European accomplices claiming to be combating chaos and preventing the massacre of civilians. Nothing could be more untrue! The result of Operation Allied Force" can only be still more killing visited on the Albanian populations that they claim to be protecting, a war spreading through the Balkans, a bloody chaos unleashed in Europe.

The NATO forces can kill as many as they like in Serbia. As in Iraq, this new "humanitarian" crusade will not produce any "new world order".

Wars are not caused by "diplomatic error" or the "illwill" of the world's leaders. They are capitalism's only answer to its insurmountable economic crisis. It is the crisis that is sharpening the rivalries between nations.

The more the crisis deepens - as we are seeing today - the more capitalism will wallow in blood, and the closer war will come to the developed countries.

What else are we witnessing today? For the first time in 50 years, the great powers have unleashed open and massive war on the soil of Europe. And it's not over yet. The future will be bloodier and more barbaric than the past.

Only the workers' class struggle can put an end to capitalism's barbarism

Today, like yesterday, the civilian population and especially the workers are the first victims of imperialist war. In Serbia, as in Iraq, it is workers' in uniform not the government's men who will serve as cannon-fodder. If NATO troops are used, it is working-class families who will weep for their dead children.
But the working class is not just war's first victim. It is also the only force that can really combat capitalist barbarity.

It was the working class in Russia in 1917, and in Germany in 1918, that forced the ruling class to put an end to World War I.

And if the workers were unable to prevent or put an end to World War II, it is because they were beaten down by the Stalinist counter-revolution, terrorized by fascism, or enrolled under the banners of the left parties in the "Popular Front" or the "Resistance".

Because the world working class, ever since the massive strikes of May '68 in France, has developed its struggle and refused to submit to the logic of capitalism, it has been able to prevent a Third World War from being unleashed.

Every faction of the ruling class wants to hide their own strength from the workers:
  * by making believe that war and peace depend only on diplomatic negotiations between world leaders,
  * by making believe, with their campaigns about the "death of communism", that the proletarian revolution can never lead to anything but Stalinist dictatorship,
  * by diverting the workers' anger and alarm onto the rotten ground of illusions in a "peaceful" capitalism.

"Pacifism" has always been the warmongers' best ally. The slaughter won't be stopped by demonstrations demanding negotiations and calling for governments to show "wisdom". This we have already seen before both World Wars, during the Vietnam-war, and during the Gulf War.

All these masquerades have been a means to turn the working class away from the only struggle that really can stand against war, and put an end to barbarism for good: the massive and united struggle of the whole exploited class against the enemy class, the class of exploiters and murderers.

By refusing to accept the sacrifices that the ruling class wants to impose in order to finance its wars, by refusing to bear the brunt of the system's economic crisis, the workers can gain the collective strength to refuse the ultimate sacrifice: that of their lives in imperialist war.

By refusing to let themselves be intimidated by the display of force by the great powers, the workers will be able to overcome their own feeling of impotence, and regain confidence in their own ability to play a decisive role in the future of humanity.

By developing their own massive struggle in defense of their interests as an exploited class against the decline in their living conditions, by forging their solidarity in the struggle, by becoming aware of how serious are the stakes in the present situation, the workers in every country will be able to put an end to capitalism and all its barbarity.

THE WORKERS HAVE NO FATHERLAND!

WORKERS OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!

CLASS WAR AGAINST THE WAR OF IMPERIALIST BANDITS!

CAPITALISM MUST BE DESTROYED BEFORE IT DESTROYS HUMANITY!

International Communist Current leaflet distributed in Germany, Belgium, Spain, USA, France, Britain, India, Italy, Mexico, Holland, Sweden, Switzerland, Venezuela.

(from Internationalism, POB 288, NY NY 10018-0288)
What kind of Anti-War Movement can stop Bomb and Missile Terrorism?

The NATO/US bombing terror continues throughout Serbia/Kosovo plastering both military and civilian targets alike. The big European powers and the USA are for now anyway still united in their efforts to eliminate the Serbian state capitalist regime from becoming a serious regional competitor for markets, valuable minerals, oil and military spheres of influence. Ethnic cleansing in Kosovo has only been stepped up since the NATO/US bombings began. The high stakes for profiteers means hell for Balkan workers.

Many of those who oppose the big powers militarist bomb terror are aware of the need to actively build an effective mass anti-militarist movement here at home. But what principles should guide a bona fide mass social movement? On this score, there is much disagreement amongst the anti-war activists. The Los Angeles Workers' Voice group holds that there must be NO illusions sown supporting ANY institutions, their lackeys and apologists that support or cover-up for capitalist military/political terror against the workers. This means clear exposure of outfits like the United Nations (UN) as well as NATO which must be openly opposed as organizations of the profiteers and exploiters. The UN since its minions in the peripheral capitals willingly bow. From the UN partition of Palestine in 1947 to its blasting into Korea in 1950 to its crocodile tears following the US invasion of Vietnam in the 60s to the mid 70s with ZERO UN sanctions against the USA's ethnic cleansing and chemical warfare against the Vietnamese, the UN listened to its masters voices. No problem for the UN either when Russia invaded Czechoslovakia (1968) and Afghanistan (1979). The UN twiddled its thumbs as the US invaded Grenada (1983) and Panama (1989) and supported death squads in El Salvador but authorized US Marines & French Foreign Legionnaires to help as UN "peacekeepers" to restore capitalist order in Lebanon in 1983-4.

But the UN feverishly stepped in to support the US led Persian Gulf Oil War of 1991 against Iraq. It served well as a military/political clearing house for the "allied" powers. Afterward the UN imposed a deadly economic embargo on the masses of Iraq, today responsible for 600,000 mainly civilians dead and 4,000 Iraqi children still are dying from the effects of the UN embargo each month. Today, the UN members would never lift a finger to punish the NATO bomb terrorists over the Balkans. This is but part of the track record of the lying and hypocritical UN. No bona fide anti-war movement could unite with such a den of labor skinning thieves. But some around the movement have a profession of tooting the UN's horn. Outfits like the Americans for Democratic Action (ADA), the "Communist" Party-USA (CPUSA) and the Committees of Correspondence (CoC) sow all sorts of nauseating illusions in the UN. Their apologetics can only serve to put a damper on movement building and demoralize honest activists.

It is no accident then that these same outfits are also groveling to enlist support for the liberal Democratic Party warmongers such as Senators Dianne Feinstein, Ted Kennedy and Barbara Boxer, etc. They wish to cover up the imperialist-pacifist program of the left-Democrats, that is, pacifism in words, imperialist hawks in deeds and put over a happy face on the Democrats and Republicans bi-partisan militarism. Any bona fide anti-war movement must rely on the power and dedication of the ordinary activists at the base, not the big names, or Hollywood celebrities. It should expose the role of the capitalist world economy and its nation state competition as the main social and material basis of these horrific modern wars. There should be calls and plans to educate and organize to oppose the rule of today's economic royalists, the monopoly capitalist class and the barbarism: war the profit system creates.

Los Angeles Workers' Voice, Box 57483, Los Angeles, CA 90057
Visit the Internationalist Web: http://www.ibrp.org 4/22/99
(Within a year of a series of nuclear explosions, the governments of India and Pakistan have brought their people once more to the brink of a war. The war in Kosovo must now be supplemented on our daily television diet with the 'threat of war' in the and mountains of Kargil, in Indian administered Kashmir. What follows is a subjective and personal attempt to come to terms with and reflect on the threat of yet another war in South Asia.)

THE LINE OF CONTROL: Reflections on the State at War in South Asia and the World.

The echoes of distant battles accompany dinntime in New Delhi and in Lahore. Families are sitting down to dinner and the State has laid on the entertainment. They are playing a game on television and the game is called war. Sometimes they call it a 'heroic stand in distant mountains', sometimes they call it 'the holy war of liberation', sometimes they call it 'flushing out infiltrators, and maintaining the line of control' and sometimes they call it 'near war'. This 'near war' is a distant noise. Not as close as it is in Belgrade, not too far either. Just conveniently within earshot, and amplified by Ministry of Defence briefings. See how dignified and calm all the generals look. Observe how their voices quiver with emotion when they talk of brave airmen downed in battle. Look at the light in the eyes of our statesmen, the sudden swagger in their gait. Notice the bravado in their voice and the flourishes in their rhetorical turns of phrase. See what good television it makes for, how good it is for the ratings of news programming. A boom time for advertisers: more cricket, more war, more patriotism, more advertising. A dress rehearsal perhaps, or a high altitude masquerade, that prepares us for the real thing, if and when it comes, falling from the sky in bright hot flashes.

Nothing like a little war in the neighbourhood to warm up an impending election, or to help the ruling classes close ranks, 'in the national interest'. The mandarins of the illusory left, the demagogues of the right and the lacklustre gentlemen of the liberal centre of South Asian politics march in step and stand together at attention and prove that when it comes to militarist posturing each is as good as the other. Nothing like a little chance to bomb and be bombed for our scientists and diplomats and generals and journalists and bureaucrats to back slap each other and rediscover yet again the joys of power, expertise and the opportunity to address us on television for free. Nothing like a skirmish in the mountains to remind us how much we, the people of India and Pakistan need to learn to love our nuclear weapons, and work harder at believing that they protect our lives. Nothing like the image of an infiltrator to justify a little more state terror in our backyards. There is nothing quite as convenient as an occasional 'air strike', to maintain the lines of control that cut through each of us. The collateral damage, as of now, is only limited to the empty space inside our heads. And there is always more, and yet more television to help us get over that.

Between the cricket world cup and the Nato briefing on Kosovo. Those who rule us in India and Pakistan have decided to give us a snowbound gladiatorial. If 'they' can have Kosovo, we must have Kargil too. Look at the fun that Clinton and Blair and Milosevic and Yeltsin are having. Look at the great lines that the speech writers are conjuring for them. Why should our own Vajpayee and Nawaz Sharif be left with nothing to do backstage. They tried a 'bus ride' to an illusionary peace, now they are on a mountain trek to a fancy dress war.

These words are written out of desperation, out of lack of sleep, because the headlines tomorrow morning might just spell out the word "WAR", and it won't be in fancy dress any more. We are the angry mute audience of a farce that, one way or another, is bound to end in disaster. If there is a real war then we have to sit it out and watch our cities go up in flames. And worry each day as to whether or not the mad idiots who rule us might think that as crowded countries, a short sharp nuclear conflict might be the best state funded population control measure since vasectomy.

If there is no 'real' war, and the current stalemate in the mountain endures (as it has for more
than a decade on Siachen), then an easy victory by the state over citizens is to be had without the actual expenditure of a full-scale war. The inventories of armaments are left intact, but war hysteria gives the rulers enough excuses for demanding more sacrifices from each of us. The mountain skirmish is only a ritual that makes possible the tightening of the real 'lines of control' that define and limit the autonomy of each one of us vis-à-vis the state. If diplomats gather and pious agreements are negotiated and interpreted in each capital as proof of 'Victory', then the atmosphere of jingoist celebration, amid the carefully and constantly fuelled threat of further armed conflict is enough to generate the means necessary for even greater arbitrary state intervention in our lives. For greater militarism, for even more obstacles in the way of the peoples of the states of India and Pakistan to understand that their real enemies are not each other but their rulers. That in each state, war, or the threat of war, is the primary means by which the rulers control and administer us. This is the real 'Line of Control', the device that ensures the we stay in line, and under control. That ensures that we never see the state for what it is, a naked apparatus of violence and power in all our societies. That ensures that the only way to secure peace is to destroy the forces that begot war - State Power and its armed expressions.

This is not something that the people of India and Pakistan can even dream of doing on their own. War and the threat of war in South Asia are but one expression of a general phenomenon. Capitalism, which engenders the state and which maintains armies is global in a way it has never been before. The wars and armed conflicts in Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Africa, South Asia and the rising levels of discontent, violence and unrest in each state are symptoms of a world-wide crisis. More people are in prisons, more people die as a result of everyday violence, more people are dehumanized each day by the increasing load of work. The state of war is a generalized and universal condition in the late twentieth century. The world is at war with itself and we are in the middle of the fighting. This is the last world war. We, the people who never make the decisions to send troops into battle are already at the front and the war is going on us in us, around us and through us. We are the soldiers, we are the ammunition and we are the collateral damage of everyday life under capitalism in the late twentieth century. The news briefings are the rituals that point to the sacrifice that is demanded from each one of us.

The hounds of war are amok, and baying for blood.

—from p. 9

the enemy: capitalism; unlike the others it devotes much space to the historically treasonous role of democracy. The leaflet of Los Angeles Workers Voice concentrates on the nature and future of the anti-war movement and condemns the U.N., social democrats and liberals. Netimers Anonymous and friends in India have provided us with an analysis of the Indian/Pakistani conflict that blames it on the need to control the working class of the subcontinent.

The article from Socialist Studies continues a discussion of elections begun a few issues back and I answer briefly. Mike Ballard sent us the internet continuation of a debate begun in DB94 with A. Smeaton. I think Smeaton might withdraw one of his objections to the IWW’s strategy—that individual workplace occupations could be smashed by the police and military—if he reads accounts of the wildfire speed with which the potentially revolutionary sit-down strike movement (1932-33) spread, forcing capital to institute the social democratic reforms of the New Deal.

The De Leonist Society of Canada provides further evidence to support its characterization of the IWW as an anarchist organization. My letter questions the value and accuracy of their source. Adam Buick’s

(to p. 17)
REVOLUTION WITH THE BALLOT BOX

Discussion Bulletin is a journal published in the U.S.A. It's De Leonist contributors have had a lengthy debate as to whether the working class can use the ballot for revolutionary ends.

Socialists take exception to the term "parliamentary cretinism" used by one contributor to the discussion. Likewise when the idea of using the electoral road was described as being similar to a belief in Santa Claus.

Maybe the Socialist Party of Great Britain does not fit into Discussion Bulletin's definition of "real revolutionaries" but we share the view that debate and discussion require that both sides be heard" (DB 91), and it seems to us that, so far, our side of the argument has not been put.

Many of the contributors argue that workers could end the class struggle by means of a General Strike, a lockout or an occupation strike. But this is surely the most naive position possible. How many times have state forces been used break a strike?

The state exists primarily for one purpose - to defend the interests of the capitalist class. That is why even neutral governments have armed forces. These nations may not use their forces against other states but, if necessary, they would certainly use armed force to defeat workers taking industrial action. As a writer in DB argued: "the workers ... can never possess the weapons or military organisation to defeat the armed forces of the state on their terrain of violence" (DB 91).

Consider the call by another contributor to "abolish the class state". This writer argues against the use of the ballot on the grounds that the capitalist class will "pick up the bayonet" if their rule is actually threatened by mass working class activity (DB 91). So, it seems that the capitalists would resort to dictatorship and violence against a Socialist democratic majority at the ballot box, but do nothing if confronted by a lockout or a General Strike. To put it mildly, we find this assumption rather implausible.

In order to achieve anything, you need to have the power to do it. To abolish the state you need first to gain control of it - you need political power. Just how are the working class supposed to abolish the state if they do not first gain control over it? Way back in 1848, Marx and Engels had a clearer view:

Political power, properly so called, is merely the organised power of one class for oppressing another ... every class struggle is a political struggle.

The machinery of government, with its armed forces, its police, its judiciary and jails - all this exists primarily to protect the interests of the capitalist class. But, as we all know, their preference is for us to consent to our exploitation. This is cheaper for them, less messy and much, much less bothersome. However that consent or consensus is only possible so long as the majority of workers, not just in America but world-wide, continue to believe mistakenly that capitalism is "the best of all possible worlds", and that socialism/communism was what failed in Russia. But when ideology fails, the capitalist class has state force at its disposal. If they can, they will use it. That is why it is essential for Socialists to gain political power to ensure that the state forces cannot be used against the Socialist movement.

In several of the letters published in Discussion Bulletin on this subject there is a significant common thread: it is failure even so mention the necessity of class consciousness as a precondition for any successful Socialist revolutionary movement - perhaps this is taken for granted? An exception was a reply to Internationalism (DB 91) where the writer noted De Leon's view of union leaders as being "without the understanding of economics and history that education in the socialist movement brings", which explained their becoming cynical, self-serving or looking to "cooperation with the masters".
But the same writer argued "... electoral efforts during the 1870's and 80's showed that through its control of the state, capital could count out socialist candidates or use their wealth to corrupt them if they were elected. Surely, if these "socialist candidates" had understood their class position and class interests, and had been elected on a Socialist ticket by a class-conscious majority of workers, as delegates with a mandate for Socialism and no immediate demands, this could not have happened.

So the Socialist Party of Great Britain argues that you cannot achieve Socialism without socialists. To achieve Socialism we need first to ensure that the majority of workers are class-conscious, determined to end class exploitation, and to do so democratically. The lessons to be learnt from the electoral experiences of the 1870's and 1880's - not to mention the long history of so-called Socialist parties in this century - is that you do not achieve Socialism by means of reforming capitalism.

The use of the ballot by Socialists is not merely for legitimization purposes - although being able to demonstrate the strength of support the Party has, by the number of votes cast, could be useful. The main reason for advocating the electoral road is that, unless the working class gain control of the state and, with it, the coercive forces which the capitalist class would need to defend their class interests, these forces would inevitably be used against the revolution, to crush it.

One reason that the electoral road is rejected by many of the writers in Discussion Bulletin is their misreading of the "lessons of history." The various revolts and revolutions which they cite - eg. Russia in 1905 and 1917, Chile, etc. - are irrelevant to this discussion. None of these were situations where the majority of the working class were Socialist.

Likewise, the failure of the parties of the Second International was because of they attracted support on the basis of their "immediate demands", putting Socialism at the tail of their agenda.

The Socialist Party of Great Britain has only one aim: by abolishing the class system, to establish a society based upon the common ownership and democratic control by and in the interests of the whole community of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth.

Such society will necessarily have to be democratic, consequently it can only be brought about democratically. And to disregard the probability of the capitalist class putting up some sort of resistance, using state forces to protect their class interests, would surely be suicidal folly. Hence the need to use the electoral system.

(From Socialist Studies No. 31, 71 Ashbourne Court, Woodside Park Road, London N12 8SB, U.K.)

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(from p. 15)

article comments on an example of a phenomenon that has been appearing more frequently of late: Capital's more reflective thinkers are beginning to question the consequences of the unregulated free market. Internationalism's letter taking the DB to task for sins of omission reached PO Box 1564 just in time for inclusion in this issue. My response follows. As usual we end with some notes, announcements, and short reviews.

Finances

I think the continuing drop in the DB's income arises from the fact that few subs expired during this period. In any event we still have an encouraging bank balance despite the rising cost of postage, the DB's primary expense now that we do the printing here. One major accounting problem has always been the occasional large check sent for a renewal. Despite a suspicion that such checks are partly intended as donations, I must apply them to the writer's subscription. The result is the extension of some subs extended far into the future and the possibility that some subscribers are wondering why their names aren't listed among the contributors.

(to p. 21)
The Discussion Continues ... Mike Ballard Responds to A. Smeaton’s Critique

In "DB"#34, A. Smeaton wrote:

I explained the pitfalls of the IWVW's path to a revolutionary society. As I outlined in my article, this view of the struggle that seeks a separate victory in each workplace engenders isolation and concentrates militant energy into an endless series of isolated actions.

To which Mike Ballard replies:

The IWVW seeks victories in as many workplaces as its strength allows. One can mentally separate these battles but, in reality, they are all part and parcel of the concrete, historical movement towards freedom. I would maintain that workers have to be class conscious enough to recognize this movement and keep their eyes on the prize, so to speak; but I also acknowledge the potential for burnout and alienation on this long and, hopefully not, endless march to social revolution.

A. Smeaton continued:

To quote Marx in the context of today’s unions is to place Marx’s comments in a modern context in order to justify entryist tactics that are in essence the same as those of the trotskyists or ex-stalinists (great lovers of democracy)only giving the IWVW a democratic veneer.

Mike Ballard replies:

I don't know what "entryist" means.

I quoted Marx specifically to show the historical continuity of the notion of workers using their unions to fight the day to day struggles with their employers, while not forgetting the ultimate goal of the class struggle—the abolition of the wage system. My purpose in quoting Marx was not to justify "entryist tactics", unless the above is what the phrase means. The IWVW is a grassroots, democratic organization. It is ruled by its members. This is not a "democratic veneer". Those who see it thusly are merely projecting an empty abstraction.

A. Smeaton continued:

The ultimate goal being to organize all workers into a separate Industrial Union and to wage actions separately. I think I stated this very clearly in my article "Syndicalism and Revolution". {In DB91}

To which Mike Ballard says:

Yes you did; but it must be remembered that our goal is to organize one big democratic union of our class. This union is and will be differentiated from AFL-CIO outfits because of the principles embedded in the Preamble to our Constitution e.g.: class solidarity— an injury to one is an injury to all; recognition of the class struggle and the determination ultimately to win the class war by abolishing the wage system. To the extent that any worker is class conscious s/he IS SEPARATE from those workers who have not yet become conscious of their class interests, even though both levels of consciousness exist within the working class as a whole. Wobblies do not separate themselves from their class or its struggle however many workers are bamboozled into believing themselves to be mere individuals, separate from their sisters and brothers, with no class interests— "Oh Mr. Block, you were born by mistake...." This is part and parcel of reified thinking patterns which are endemic under the rule of Capital. The point is
to overturn this bassackwards point of view through a concrete praxis involving education, agitation and class conscious organization.

A. Smeaton continued:

When it comes to ridding ourselves of this turn of the century political baggage, the IWW is certainly not alone. It is not that unions don't challenge wage slavery but that they cannot and will not.

To which Mike Ballard replies:

The IWW is a union which has always challenged wage-slavery and it will continue to do so as long as I am in the organization. That the AFL-CIO accepts the rule of Capital is a major reason justifying the IWW's existence.

A. Smeaton went on:

Radical unionism is almost exclusively confined to union organizers alone. In this respect they complete the task of the trade union apparatus by lending them more practical potential than they are capable of.

And Mike Ballard observed:

Wobblies are interested in supporting class struggles. Solidarity should be classwide, if it is to be truly effective. If certain workers, organized in an AFL union, need solidarity in their struggle for a higher standard of living then, we see no contradiction in supporting them in that struggle while at the same time reserving our right to criticize the deficiencies of craft unionism, unionized scabbing and so forth. We get to the root of the problem and THAT separates us from those who don't understand the nature of wage-slavery. We are not interested in legitimizing business unionism. We are able to separate our hostility towards class collaboration from the pursuit of our class interests. The movement towards freedom from wage-slavery, "the path to a revolutionary society", if you will, is sort of like a road with a lot of chuckholes. One has to remain critically aware and avoid as many blowouts as possible on the way, while keeping a viable spare in the trunk. Furthermore, as Wobblies think that the social revolution will have to be the work of the class conscious proles themselves, it stands to reason that we ALL think of ourselves as that movement's organizers.

A. Smeaton observed:

If a real movement is not attempted in the workplace, outside of structures like unions or electoral politics, militants will never be in a position to define themselves as different from the rest of the official left.

And Mike Ballard replied:

The class struggle is real, if not always rational. It takes place wherever workers are. Wobs certainly make their best efforts at "real movement" in the workplace. In some of those workplaces proles are in biz unions; in some they aren't. Some workers vote; some don't. Class conscious workers should always be in a position to articulate their critique of social relations in theory and practice. If they shun large areas of the daily life of the working class, they merely abstain from struggle. That doesn't mean that revolutionaries have to join the Democrat Party. That doesn't mean that we have to pimp for the biz unions. That means that we have to engage in the class struggle wherever we find ourselves as class conscious workers--THAT is our defining characteristic.
A. Smeaton continued:

Also, I stated that a revolutionary society by its very definition cannot be one that destroys the planet. To place "living in harmony with the earth" in the preamble of the IWW is to fall victim to a Fordist notion of the working class or at the least is simply a redundancy. Most of us are aware by now that the very existence of the planet is jeopardized by the capitalist class.

To which Mike Ballard replied:

While I'm convinced that fellow workers like A. Smeaton are aware of the environmental consequences of the continued rule of Capital, I don't think that the notion of the ever increasing commodification of Nature and that activity's growing incompatibility with life itself on the planet is widely grasped yet among the proletariat. Even among left proletarians this proposition has not been fully digested. The same is true for wage-slavery, for that matter. If this weren't the case, we would be witnessing mass movements against Capital in the name of "living in harmony with the Earth". It is true that more and more workers are becoming conscious that something rotten is destroying the Earth. Most often though, their desires to correct the situation are diverted into the dead ends of population control, consumer recycling and such. Perhaps this is a "Fordist notion of the working class". If so, I plead guilty as charged.

A. Smeaton then observed:

Wobs voting for the Green Party and Dennis Peron? What happened to "organizing on the job where you are robbed"?

Mike replied:

Nothing. We still do that 100% of the time while on the job. What I said was that some Wobs vote, some don't. It takes all of 2 minutes to vote. There are 526,600 minutes in a year. That's about .0004% of the time, some Wobs devote to voting in a year. I don't believe for a minute that any individual Wob thought that s/he was doing anything more than tweaking Dan Lungren's nose a bit by voting for the medical marijuana supporting Peron in the Republican Primary. In any case, the IWW remains independent of political parties and anti-political sects. Individual Wobs are free to do what they like vis a vis voting, as they always have been.

A. Smeaton continued:

As to the support of IWW members for the struggle in Chiapas, it is one of national liberation that seeks little for workers in the rest of Mexico. Leaders like Comandante Marcos have sold out their supporters for the promise of a new reformed electoral democracy.

And Mike replies:

One can demonstrate solidarity with the oppressed without becoming ideological drones of any particular leadership. It seems axiomatic to me that revolutionary workers, human beings who understand the dynamics of oppression, would make concrete attempts to overturn oppressive social relations wherever they encountered them. Solidarity with the dispossessed in Mexico is nothing new for Wobblies. Joe Hill was helping out south of the Rio Grande in his time; I doubt whether he was in any politikster's pocket. Some Wobs today are helping indigenus proles today. Whether yesterday or today, Wobs will always be pointing out the necessity for the workers themselves to move towards the abolition of wage-slavery and further, for the elimination of all forms of oppression. That's what social revolution is all about in my humble opinion.
A. Smeaton then finished his piece in this way:

I still maintain that cooperative job shops fall into the role of small businesses and foster a small business mentality in the IWW. They thus isolate potential revolutionaries from the workplace. Although I am willing to debate this (with? my insertion, MB) any wobs who care to discuss these issues, I cannot join a rudderless organization that is too concerned with organizing the perfect union than agreeing on and following a course of action, which I guess would be too "leninist" or totalitarian or something. In this respect as standard collective (democratic) decision-making process is used as a cover to relinquish any responsibility for any unity of theory or united action. What remains of the IWW, for the most part, is a coalition of regional activists.

Mike replies:

A. Smeaton is not alone in his critical stance towards the co-operative movement. I would venture to say that many Wobs would agree with the thrust of FW Smeaton's critique. The fact is that most Wobs, at the moment, don't agree with this critique as it applies to co-ops which have done away with the employee/employer relation. This is why our Constitution appears the way it does. Our democratic decision making principles are neither a "veneer" nor a "cover" for irresponsibility vis a vis "unity of theory or united action". We democratically self-manage our union because, among other things we are doing in the IWW, we are attempting "to build a new society within the shell of the old". We steer our own ship; our principles are our rudder. We do not buy the notion of needing an all knowing "helmsman to sail the seas". Our crew elects a General Executive Board (GEB) every year to help get us through troubled waters. Of course, the whole GEB or any member thereof can be recalled at any time by the membership. A. Smeaton is quite correct in saying that we are a "coalition of regional activists". But, of course, we are more than a phrase. Our diverse composition lends proof to the notion that we are not a perfect workers' union, neither are we so idealistic as to think that perfection is possible among humans. Primarily, we are a union of principle, democratically organized, class conscious wage-slaves who have inscribed on our revolutionary banner, "ABOLITION OF THE WAGE SYSTEM!" Won't you and other "DB" readers lend a hand?

For the works!
Mike Ballard
X334260

(from p. 17)

Contributions: Joe Tupper $20, Ken Smith $12, Doug Fuda $4. Total $36. Thank you, comrades.

BALANCE May 2, 1999 $356.34

RECEIPTS

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(to p. 25)
Dear DB:

We have studied your reply to ours of January 30, both of which you published in DB 94, and we are having difficulty with your judgment that "To say /as we did/ that the elimination of the political clause in the preamble /of the IWW constitution/ made the IWW into an anarchist organization is simply wrong."

Were we indeed wrong? Was De Leon wrong? Perhaps the problem here is a matter of definition of terms. We take our meaning of anarchist from Webster's as follows:

Anarchist: "one who believes in, advocates, or promotes anarchism or anarchy; esp: one who uses violent means to overthrow the established order."

Anarchy: "a state of lawlessness or political disorder due to the absence of governmental authority."

As we see it, therefore, the IWW's elimination of the political clause was a barefaced repudiation of civilization's peaceful means of settling social disputes—was an out-and-out anarchist act.

You would have it that the De Leonists left the IWW in 1908 because of "far more complex reasons than the removal of the political clause," suggesting for one thing "a falling out between the leadership of the SLP and that of the IWW." But leaving personalities aside, what remains complex about the said falling out? We are reminded of our school days when we were given complex arithmetical statements for reduction to their lowest common denominators. So here, the lowest common denominator stands out front and center as a corrupt, unprincipled attack against the political clause.

No doubt some who participated in the nefarious work of ridding the IWW of its political credentials were dupes, pure and simple. Not so the chief actors in the drama; some of whom you attempt to exonerate thus: "Trautman, St. John, and Edwards were not anarchists. Nor, in any real way, were the overall brigade." But the SLP record, much of which was stenographically reported, paints a far different picture!

As for the Trautmann, St. John, and Edwards trio; whatever their original attitude toward the political field may have been, there is no doubt that by 1907 unscrupulous acts marked their behavior. Thus:

"No sooner had the delegates returned from the third convention than a most malignant 'colic' had the I.W.W. in its grip. The germs of this "colic," barely discernible at the third convention, had multiplied rapidly.

"Wm. E. Trautmann, the general secretary-treasurer; Edwards, the editor of the Industrial Bulletin; St. John, the general organizer, and most of the members of the General Executive Board all showed signs of having turned a somersault, or that they were about to turn one. Trautmann began to find fault with the Daily People...A fellow who was Trautmann's right hand man in the office, who answered all correspondence and was the secretary de facto (by ap-
pointment-of-Trautmann) wrote nasty letters about De Leon. This fellow was Otto Just, a suspended member of the Socialistic Labor Party. Edwards published letters in the Bulletin written by Pat Quinlan and James Connolly, wherein the S.T. & L.A. was attacked and De Leon slurred..."

"All the efforts of De Leon to preserve harmony in the I.W.W. were unavailing. St. John, Trautmann, Edwards, and the majority of the five members of the General Executive Board turned over night, so to speak, against the fundamental principles of industrialism as laid down in the I.W.W. preamble. They no longer recognized political action as necessary."

--Daniel De Leon, The Man and His Work

As for the Overall Brigade: here, too, the record denies your plea. You say that these fellows were not anarchists "in any real way," but what was real? As it turns out, the Brigade was a bully-boy gang organized by the Chicago anarchist crew in order to help them steamroll the defenders of political action. Our view is that by aiding and abetting the anarchists, the said Brigade itself became a real anarchist outfit! Turning to the record:

"The Industrial Union Bulletin was [by 1908] really no longer the journal of industrial unionism but became the mouthpiece of the men in Chicago who sought to overturn the fundamental principles of the I.W.W. As the time set for the holding of the fourth annual convention drew nearer, the contents and tone of the articles in the Industrial Union Bulletin became more and more hostile toward political action in general and toward the Socialist Labor Party in particular, and the inclinations toward Anarchistic methods were pronounced.

"Finally, it was announced that the 'Overall Brigade' was coming in force from the Far West to attend the convention....

"While the 'Overall Brigade' was on its way to Chicago, Executive Board Member Cole, in a letter published in the Industrial Union Bulletin, dared De Leon to come to the fourth convention of the I.W.W. De Leon did come, the open threat of Cole and the implied threat of the 'brigaders' notwithstanding. When De Leon did present his credentials from several New York locals, the very same fellows who had dared him to come closed the doors to him when he arrived. De Leon's seat in the convention was contested and his credentials were rejected on flimsy pretexts.

"De Leon was given the floor to state his case, and he did state it in his characteristic fashion. The 'Overall Brigade' were seated all in a row on one side of the hall, a tough looking lot. Vincent St. John was in the chair, with sinister alien, wielding the gavel and everything else that could be wielded to keep De Leon out of the convention....

"St. John had his physical force well organized to back up his arguments....Such remarks as, 'I would like to get a punch at the pope,' was overheard in the hall among the 'Overall Brigaders,' but not loud enough to reach De Leon's ears...."
"De Leon told them whither they were drifting—to
slumism, to Anarchy, to the movement's destruction...."

"A sufficient number of other delegates were not seated
under other preposterous pretexts as to give the 'Overall
Brigaders' full control of the convention. It was all the
work of a miniature steam-roller such as is frequently used
at the conventions of capitalist political parties. Being
in possession of all the books of the organization it was
an easy matter to disqualify delegates that were not wanted
by setting up the claim that the locals which they represen-
ted were in bad standing, and seat all those who were
wanted. How many of the delegates who were seated represen-
ted mixed locals existing merely on paper, only those in
possession of the books could know, namely, the general
officers, Trautmann and St. John. They guarded that secret
well."

--Ibid.

There can be no doubt that the capture of the fledgling IWW or-
ganization by the anarchists within it, and the scuttling by them of
the political clause, was one of the most deplorable chapters in the
history of our class. The damage that was thus done to the socialist
and labor movement is incalculable. In workers are to make another
serious attempt to challenge the capitalist class by setting on foot
a true, class-conscious economic organization, they will need above
all to heed De Leon's warning to beware of the anarchist!

Sincerely,

THE DE LEONIST SOCIETY OF CANADA

Dear Readers,

It seems to me that the task of the De Leonist Society in this search for truth is to prove that as a result
of the removal of the political clause from the preamble of the IWW constitution in 1908 the IWW
became an anarchist organization. I would argue that most of the facts the DLS adduces above are
irrelevant to the debate. Among these are the following:

1. Dictionary definitions of anarchism (Consider such definitions of socialism.)
2. The character flaws of the IWW leaders who engineered the events at the 1908 convention
3. The uncivilized behavior of the "overalls brigade" including threats to "get" De Leon
4. The "steamroller" tactics and dishonest behavior of the IWW administration during the convention
5. The advocacy of "physical force" by spokespeople for the anti-political faction

Proper evidence would be statements from IWW literature—and best of all from the organization's
constitution—characterizing itself as anarchist. But such evidence doesn't exist to my knowledge. What
can be found are a lot of rhetorical calls in IWW literature for "direct action" along with a revolutionary
strategy that calls for the general strike to bring capitalism to heel. A most telling evidence may be the IWW’s advocacy of the major principle of anarchism, the abolition of the political state. The trouble with this as evidence is that the DeLeonist program of socialist industrial unionism also calls for the abolition of the political state. Is DeLeonism anarchist? Unlike anarchists, though, both the IWW and DeLeonists advocate the organization of production through a system of socialist (or collectivist) industrial unions. This is the sort of government over things instead of government over people that Engels envisioned.

The DLS’s choice of Daniel De Leon: The Man and His Work as a source is understandable. Certainly De Leon and the SLP rarely got a good shake from labor historians, most of whom were influenced by DeLeon’s political opponents in the IWW, SP, and CP. But the trouble with the book—like the problem with Fred Thompson’s equally partisan, The IWW: The First Fifty Years—is that it selects what it chooses to record and makes no effort to be objective.

Nothing in the IWW’s constitution precludes it members from joining a political party including a DeLeonist one nor from advocating the political road to revolution of DeLeonism nor from participating in elections. By dropping the political clause from the Preamble the IWW just no longer endorsed a political strategy for revolution. The goal remain the same.

Everything I’ve read about the 1908 IWW convention and the events leading up to it suggests that the triumvirate that engineered the removal of De Leon and the SLP from their prominent role in the IWW acted from the belief that by doing so they were advancing the fortunes of the union, not from any anarchist ideological motives. They believed that the bitter political battle that resulted from the 1900 split in the Socialist Labor Party that brought the reformist Socialist Party into existence was being carried over into the IWW and was interfering with efforts to win over unions in which SP members were influential. Time showed that they were wrong. The IWW never made any important inroads into the pure and simple unions, but then the Detroit IWW wasn’t a success either.

I believe DeLeonists should re-examine the idea that workers will organize in SIUs prior to the revolutionary situation. In fact, the consensus among Detroit SLP members used to be that our class would take over the means of production when events forced them to and might legitimize its actions later through the ballot.

---Frank Girard

(from p. 21)

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**BALANCE**

June 24, 1999 $256.05

Fraternally submitted,

Frank Girard for the DB
A Capitalist Criticises Capitalism

By Adam Buick

"The global capitalist system... is coming apart at the seams" So declared arch-speculator George Soros before a U.S. Congressional enquiry on 19 September last year. He has since expanded on this in a book entitled The Crisis of Global Capitalism. What has he in mind?

By "global capitalist system" Soros doesn't mean what we would understand by the term, i.e. capitalism as a world-wide system of production for profit, but the more restricted sense of present world financial arrangements which allow the more or less free movement of capital throughout the world:

"The global economy is characterized not only by free trade in goods and services but even more by the free movement of capital. Interest rates, exchange rates, and stock prices in various countries are intimately interrelated, and global financial markets exert tremendous influence on economic conditions. Given the decisive role that international financial capital plays in the fortunes of individual countries, it is not inappropriate to speak of a global capitalist system" (Introduction).

It is these arrangements—this single world financial market—that he is saying is in danger of disintegrating, which of course would not at all be the same thing as the collapse of capitalism that has sometimes been mistakenly predicted by some writers in the Marxist tradition.

Unstable system

Soros, following, consciously or not, a distinction made by one school of anti-imperialist thinkers in the 1970s and 80s, divides the "global capitalist system" into a centre (US, Western Europe, Japan) and a periphery (Asia, Latin America, Russia, East Europe, Africa). Under this system capital flows from the centre to the periphery and back, supposedly to the mutual benefit of both. He sees the danger of disintegration coming from countries on the periphery taking steps to stop the free flow of capital in a bid to avoid the negative effects of the system's instability on their economies and populations:

"To put it bluntly, the choice confronting us is whether we will regulate global financial markets internationally or leave it to each individual state to protect its own interests as best it can. The latter course will surely lead to the breakdown of the gigantic circulatory system, which goes under the name of global capitalism" (p. 176).

So what Soros means by the "breakdown" or "disintegration" of global capitalism is not the collapse of the world-wide system of production for profit based on the exploitation of wage labour, but only states coming to adopt measures that impede the free movement of finance capital.

Soros does not believe this to be an inevitable process. As the quote above makes clear, he thinks it can be stopped if appropriate measures are taken at international level; global institutions must be created to lay down some basic ground rules for the operation of global capitalism.

For Soros is no free marketeer. In fact part of his book is a devastating attack on those he calls the "market fundamentalists", the followers of Von Mises, Von Hayek and others, who advocate that market forces be given complete free rein and who came into intellectual prominence in the time of Reagan and Thatcher. Soros levels two charges at them. First, that they think that markets have an in-built tendency towards creating a stable situation through supply and demand being in balance, while this is not the case. Second, that they preach that the market is the best way to regulate all human activities.

Writing from his own experience, admittedly not of the real economy but only of financial markets,
Soros challenges the equilibrium theory:

"Market fundamentalists have a fundamentally flawed conception of how financial markets operate. They believe that financial markets tend towards equilibrium. Financial markets are characterized by booms and busts and it is quite amazing that economic theory continues to rely on the concept of equilibrium, which denies the possibility of these phenomena, in face of the evidence. The potential for disequilibrium is inherent in the financial system; it is not just the result of external shocks" (Introduction).

The external shocks which the market fundamentalists invoke are usually, of course, government interventions of one sort or another. According to them, if governments just stood aside and let the magic of the market operate, there would be no slumps just continuous, smooth growth. But there is no evidence for this. Throughout the 19th century British governments pursued a policy of laissez-faire yet slumps still occurred on a regular basis.

The fact is that the market system does have a built-in tendency towards creating booms and busts rather than stability and smooth growth. As Marx pointed out, this applies to the real world of market-oriented production and not just to financial markets. Soros is even prepared to give Marx some credit here:

"...the capitalist system by itself shows no tendency toward equilibrium. The owners of capital seek to maximise their profits. Left to their own devices, they would continue to accumulate capital until the situation became unbalanced Marx and Engels gave a very good analysis of the capitalist system 150 years ago, better in some ways, I must say, than the equilibrium theory of classical economics" (Introduction).

He claims, however, that thanks to "countervailing political interventions in democratic countries" Marx's "dire predictions did not come true". That is based on a misunderstanding of Marx's view. The "dire predictions" that Soros mentions were not, as he seems to assume, that the unregulated profiteering of capitalists would lead to the collapse of the capitalist system but simply that their competitive struggle for profits meant that steady, smooth growth was impossible and that growth proceeded by means of booms and slumps.

Capitalism has not collapsed because it was never going to, not because of government intervention Marx didn't foresee. And government intervention has not been able to eliminate the boom/slump cycle which Marx saw was an unavoidable feature of capitalism.

Creeping marketisation

Soros sees himself as continuing the political philosophy of Karl Popper. As expounded in books such as _The Open Society and Its Enemies_ Popper argued against the idea of trying to establish a "perfect" society in favour of accepting permanent improvement by piecemeal social engineering, by which he understood capitalism with a political structure involving elected institutions, the rule of law and pluralism, i.e. more or less what the West has had for years.

For Popper the main enemies of his "open society" were the totalitarian ideologies of fascism and "Marxism" (which, for him, was not just Marx's own views but those mixed up with Lenin's and Stalin's). Soros adds a third which he says has come into prominence since the collapse of "communism": uncontrolled capitalism. Hence the subtitle of his book "Open Society Endangered", though he had already expressed this view in a famous article "The Capitalist Threat" that first appeared in _The Atlantic Monthly_ in February 1997 and which was widely reproduced.

Soros sees the danger coming from the penetration of market values into all aspects of life, leading to social disintegration. "Monetary values", he writes, "have usurped the role of intrinsic values and markets have come to dominate areas of society where they do not properly belong" (p. 206). He is in
fact quite forceful in his criticism of this aspect of global capitalism:

"The functions that cannot and should not be governed purely by market forces include many of the most important things in human life, ranging from moral values to family relationships to aesthetic and intellectual achievements. Yet market fundamentalism is constantly attempting to extend its sway into these regions, in a form of ideological imperialism. According to market fundamentalism, all social activities and human interactions should be looked at as transactional contract-based relationships and valued in terms of a single common denominator, money. Activities should be regulated, as far as possible, by nothing more intrusive than the invisible hand of profit-maximising competition. The incursions of market ideology into fields far outside business and economics are having destructive and demoralizing social effects."

(Introduction).

"A transactional society undermines social values and loosens moral constraints. Social values express a concern for others. They imply that the individual belongs to a community, be it a family, a tribe, a nation, or humankind, whose interests must take precedence over the individual's self-interests. But a transactional market economy is anything but a community. Everybody must look out for his or her own interests and moral scruples can become an encumbrance in a dog-eat-dog world. In a purely transactional society, people who are not weighed down by any considerations for others can move around more easily and are likely to come out ahead" (p.75).

Soros does not realise just how fundamental a criticism of capitalism this is. Although he rightly says that "a purely transactional society", in which the only links between people would be monetary, "could never exist", the market fundamentalists are equally right to insist that the logic of capitalism is to work towards this—they are just crazy in thinking that this nightmare situation is the ideal form of society.

Soros's mistake is to think that you can have capitalism and somehow keep its money-commodity relations from spreading everywhere. The history of capitalism is the history of the continuous spread of such transactional relationships—i.e., the market-into more and more fields of human activity. It is a process that cannot be stopped within capitalism as growing marketisation is just as much a feature of capitalism as capital accumulation, indeed the two go together.

Soros, however, is a supporter of capitalism:

"I want to make it clear that I do not want to abolish capitalism. In spite of its shortcomings, it is better than the alternatives. Instead, I want to prevent the global capitalist system from destroying itself" (Introduction).

We doubt whether he has given serious consideration to the alternative of a global society based on the common ownership of the world's resources and production directly to satisfy human needs. Not that we would really expect him to. Some of his fellow-capitalists already think he has gone too far in his criticism of their system.

(From the April 1999 Socialist Standard, 52 Clapham High St., London SW4 7UN England)

(from p. 32)

But its content seems to have been written largely by the editor. "The Wacky Platform of the... Anarchos-Statist!" should resonate with the thinking of Chomskyan anarcho-syndicalists. The editor's "Afterthoughts of ARA" demonstrate an eminently sensible critique of what has become a sort of ritual summer gathering and face off between the KKK and assorted radicals, this time in Beloit, Wisconsin. Also interesting is "Anarchist Manifesto" by A.A. Borovoi (Moscow, 1918), apparently a personal exposition on anarchism written over eighty years ago. Unfortunately the editor provides no information on the source. All this and much more for $1 from BS! Publications, PO Box 8214, Rockford, IL 61126.

(to p. 30)
Revolutionaries Must Denounce Imperialist War in Yugoslavia

As we looked through the May-June issue of Discussion Bulletin, we were dismayed to discover that there was still no mention of the imperialist war in Yugoslavia in the publication. This we believe is an extremely serious error. War and Revolution are the two most crucial historical watershed moments for the workers movement. How revolutionaries respond at such moments determines the class nature of organizations. It is crucial that defenders of proletarian internationalism unequivocally denounce the imperialist butchery waged in the name of "humanitarianism," particularly here in the U.S., the world's major imperialist power and the main protagonist in the war.

We cannot imagine why you have not referred to the war in your press. Certainly you have received publications and documents from various groups, including the ICC leaflet, and articles in Internationalism, the New Unionist, the Industrial Worker, and even the otherwise moribund SLP paper. You could have reprinted something to open up a discussion as to how revolutionaries should respond to the war. The war in Yugoslavia is the most crucial development at the imperialist level in the entire decade of the 1990s. No longer are imperialist conflicts confined to the peripheral countries; now the bloodshed has been unleashed within the European continent for the first time since World War II, and Germany has taken an active military role in Europe for the first time since World War II. The bourgeoisie trumped up an incredible campaign of "humanitarianism" to justify its bombardment and terrorizing of civilian populations. The various stripes of Trotskyism, Maoism, Stalinism once again displayed their counter-revolutionary nature by choosing sides in an imperialist conflict, some supporting the Yugoslav bourgeoisie, some endorsing the Kosovar bourgeoisie's claims to independence. Working class militants must be clear on the real imperialist conflicts that underlie the war, intervene actively within our class to expose this war, denounce NATO, the Yugoslav and Kosovar bourgeoisies, and urge workers to respond by intensifying the class struggle.

Yet for some reason, Discussion Bulletin ignored the war. We recall that DB responded in a similar abstentionist way to the Gulf War in 1991, when you at first considered printing a sampling of leaflets against the war, but then decided not to. Avoidance of facing the difficult conjunctural issues facing the proletariat is in the final analysis an irresponsible attitude for those who would claim to defend the interests of the working class. If for some reason you disagree that a revolutionary intervention against the war is necessary, then we urge you to defend such a view in an open debate, rather than simply turn a blind eye toward the war.

Internationalism, POB 288, NY NY 10018-0288
Dear Readers,

With this issue I hope the DB has redeemed itself in the eyes of Internationalism. The decision to include examples of leaflets from our political sector on the Yugoslavian War came after David Stratman's article was selected to lead off this issue. It is unique in explaining the course of events in Yugoslavia in relation to the class struggle there. The leaflets were published to show the similarity of the basic assumptions held by the various groups about the capitalist cause of the war and the revolutionary solution.

As to Internationalism's criticism of the Discussion Bulletin, it seems to me that they fail to recognize an important difference between the purpose of the journals of the different groups and the DB. The former are aimed at the working class in general and seek to raise their consciousness. The DB on the other hand has no such mission. Readers of the DB don't need a denunciation of the war. By and large they have all arrived at the same conclusion about the roots of this and all wars in the twentieth century. The detailed analysis in Internationalism's leaflet reflects just one of many minor differences in approach to the agitational task of educating our class, although, given the total circulation of the revolutionary press and the nature of the subscribers, we are mostly preaching to a tragically small choir.

I have a little trouble understanding the use of the term "moribund" to characterize the SLP's *The People*. My guess is that after the IWW's *Industrial Worker*, it has the largest circulation of any U.S. journal in our political sector. Thousands of copies of the SLP leaflet in this issue taken from the lead article in the April issue of the *People* were printed and distributed.

The DB would welcome an analysis by Internationalism and anyone else of the journalistic response to the war by the left wing press including that of the Stalinists and Trotskyists. I don't regard the failure of the DB to inform its readers of the 1991 Gulf War and its capitalist roots as abstentionist. One more thing: I noted the article in the current issue of Internationalism condemning the IWW and the DeLeonist press in general for what I assume they regard as "abstentionism" in regard to Yugoslavia. Since later issues of the journals have carried articles on the war, can I assume that they and the DB are now in good odor among internationalists?

--Frank Girard

(from p. 28)

Organization and Spontaneity, a Red & Black Notes Pamphlet, contains articles reflecting the resurgence of council communism in North America. In the introductory title article Neil Fetté critiques the revolutionary left and presents the basic ideas of council communism. "Organizations and Individuals" is a paragraph by Anton Pannekoek from the Radical Review, January 1918, a short-lived journal published by independent DeLeonists immediately after the Russian Revolution. Also included in the pamphlet are "The Impotence of the Revolutionary Party" by Sam Moss, which the DB published a few issues ago, and the "Echanges et Mouvement Presentation Pamphlet: What is Echanges et Mouvement as a Group?", which introduces the major journal of contemporary council communism, unfortunately published for the past few years only in French. Sixteen standard size pages plus wraps, $2 from Red & Black Notes, PO Box 47643, 939 Lawrence Ave. East, Don Mills, ON, M3C 3S7 Canada.

--fg
Encyclopedia of the American Left has been published in a new, much expanded (1000+ pages) edition by a most prestigious academic publisher, Oxford University Press. Edited by labor historians Dan Georgakis and Mari Jo and Paul Buhle, the last of whom once served a term in the SLP, this edition like the first gives space to movements, groups and individuals identified with the DB’s political sector. Among these are the World Socialist Party (the U.S. branch of the Socialist Party of Great Britain), Council Communism, the IWW, the Detroit IWW (WIIU), Socialist Trades and Labor Alliance, Workingmen’s Party, Proletarian Party, and Anarcho-Syndicalism. Names associated with the revolutionary libertarian socialism that are listed in the index or are the subjects of entries include Joseph Dietzgen, Murray Bookchin, James Connolly, Daniel De Leon, Louis Fraina, Arnold Peterson, August Spies, Lewis Henry Morgan (two and a half pages), Paul Mattick, Moses Baritz and Adolph Kohn, and a host of others. I still fail to understand Paul Buhle’s insistence that the SLP was founded in 1877 instead of 1876 under the name Workingmen’s Party of the United States. Also, the author of the entry on the WPUS apparently didn’t differentiate between Dennis Kearney’s anti-Chinese Workingmen’s Party of California and the WPUS, which were entirely unrelated. The major difficulty for most DB readers will be the cost. It exists only in the cloth edition, and the price listed in the catalog of the Charles C. Kerr Co. (1740 Greenleaf Ave., Chicago, IL 60626) is $125.

Anarcho-Syndicalist Review is the new name of the Libertarian Labor Review. It has been transformed into a quarterly and continues the numbering of the LLR. The name change was made to distance the LLR from the capitalist libertarians, but it has also been transformed visually: a slick color cover, and better quality paper. Besides the usual “Wobbles” and “International News” departments this issue has two important articles: one a new interview with Noam Chomsky on what he calls “expanding the floor of the cage”, his term for reformism. It continues the discussion of the views he expressed in a Progressive magazine article reprinted in the DB and discussed by readers a couple of years ago. The other is an excellent article by Eric Chester on the eleven-day Danish General Strike in the spring of 1998. Totally blacked out by the news media here, it was organized and run largely at the local level outside the purview of the upper level union bureaucracy. It was amazingly successful, but eventually the Danish social democratic government stepped in and forced a settlement because of the threat of corporate flight. Chester also draws lessons about the future of unionism and revolution in this period of global capital. Also in this issue are articles on syndicalism and ecology, several pages of international news and other attractions too numerous to mention. $15 per year plus $2 for foreign subs from PO Box 2824, Champaign, IL 61825.

Aurora describes itself as the “Broadsheet of the Internationalists.” Printed on a 12 by 16 inch sheet, it is published by International Bureau for the Revolutionary Party, one of the heirs of the Italian left opposition to the Communist Party of Italy. It is produced in several languages. This English language edition has articles on Iraq, global trade disputes, the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia, and the minimum wage. To date the DB has received only issue No. 1, April-May. The broadsheet is free. British readers can obtain copies from PO Box 338, Sheffield S3 9YX, U.K. In the U.S. from Internationalist Notes, Box 1531, Eau Claire, WI 54702 and Los Angeles Workers Voice, Box 57483, Los Angeles, CA 90037.

Marxism Revisited is the pamphlet edition of the five papers presented at a Socialist Party of Great Britain seminar last year. The papers, all designed to combat the idea that Marxism is outdated since
the collapse of the USSR, include “Who the hell was Karl Marx,” and “The fetishism of commodities (or is Nike cooler than Adidas)?” The author of a fifth paper, “Was Marx ever a Leninist? (Did Lenin really distort Marx?),” argues that Lenin’s interpretation of Marxism depended on a distinction between “proletarian” revolution and “socialist” revolution, found in the Communist Manifesto. There Marx considered the possibility that the bourgeois revolution impending in Germany would be followed by a “proletarian” political revolution that would enable the working class to gain political power and chip away at the privileges and position of the capitalist class. Such a view implies a transition period to socialist revolution. Lenin drew on this aspect of the Communist Manifesto to create the policies that came to be called Marxism-Leninism. Much of the paper deals with the thinking of Marx and Engels as the post 1848 events in Germany played themselves out. Especially interesting is the author’s account of the basis in Marx and Engels for the revolutionary terrorism that Leninists embarked on shortly after the revolution. “Has the modern market superseded Marxian economics?” examines the prevailing economic wisdom in the light of the East Asian economic disasters and Marx’s thinking on such subjects as the effects of technological improvements on employment and the rate of profit. 43 pages, $2.50/£1.50 from The Socialist Party of Great Britain, 52 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7U England.

Active Transformation describes itself as “A Direct Action Anarchist Paper.” The 12 tabloid pages of the January/February 1999 issue (Vol 2, issue 2) contain articles on immigration, Matt Shepard, landlords, prisoners rights, and the renewed bombing of Iraq (“Forget Clinton/Impeach the Whole Rotten System”). The major article on immigration (the first of two parts) examines the role of the state and capital in controlling the movement of people across national borders and its effects on the people involved. AT is apparently published for free local distribution. Available from PO Box 11508, Detroit, MI 48211 and PO Box 6746, E. Lansing, MI 48826.

Burning Sensation provides still further proof of a long-held suspicion that anarchist publishers have more fun than the rest of us. Dated “Spring-summer-fall, 1999”, issue # 3 of this 20-page pamphlet size magazine is several cuts above most of the xeroxed efforts of budding anarchist editors. For one thing it eschews four-letter words and a writing style of white-hot intensity to express disgust for the system.

(to p. 28)