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About This Issue

DB 98 will be arriving late. Leading to this was a set of unfortunate circumstances including the loss of much of the content as a result of the so far unexplained crash of a disk that held much of the material for this issue. If any reader can explained why, after having accepted several articles, a disk should suddenly come up with the message that it is unformatted and ask whether I would like to format it, please let me know.
We begin with an article on NATO’s war on Serbia by a Greek libertarian socialist group Ta Paideia Tis Galarias (Children of the Gallery) who, like most people in our sector of the political spectrum, find the cause of the war in the needs of global capitalism. TPTG sees the war as the result of the ongoing class struggle in Kosovo and Serbia. Kosovo needed to be “cleansed” of its backward peasant agriculture to ready it for participation with Serbia in the global market.

Eric Chester’s article on the Danish general strike will interest readers who, like me, were not aware that Danish workers had been on strike, our masters having apparently decided that we would be happier if we remained ignorant of working class resistance to capital’s austerity measures. The

(To p. 17)
WAR, PEACE AND THE CRISIS OF THE REPRODUCTION OF HUMAN CAPITAL IN FORMER YUGOSLAVIA

If one leaves aside the left patriots (CP, various Marxist-Leninist organisations) who used the antiwar demonstrations, which they organised and led, as a vote-hunting tactic, all the "well-intentioned" anti-war protestors who dragged themselves to the spring demonstrations in Greece, failed completely. They failed, not in the sense of stopping the war—that was impossible and, anyway, it was primarily the duty of the Albanian and Serbian proletariat, who in the best of cases would have had the help of the proletarians of the countries which the mercenaries of NATO came from. They failed, and this is most important, to ask the fundamental questions about this war, which, we should not fool ourselves, has been going on in Yugoslavia for the last ten years. Questions like:

- What is the function of war in promoting the larger aims of a globalized economy?
- What role does it have in maintaining/ restructuring the dominant mode of production and the consumption of ideologies?
- In what way is it a means for the production and reproduction (i.e. the organisation and control) of labour power?
- How can we, as a class and not in disarray, react in such a way so as to create a community of struggle?

For someone to ask these questions, she must have sensed from her daily experiences in work, in consumption, in the kitchen, that the central social relation is the exploitative and hierarchical capitalist relation and that the whole organisation of this society revolves around the reproduction of human capital, i.e. the reproduction of the disciplined worker/consumer/parent/student.

Yet, how many of those who participated in previous years in the social struggles against lay-offs, wage cuts, the law 2525, expulsions of immigrants, etc, tried to reflect seriously on their own activities and on the inner connection of the various tactics which constitute the strategy of capitalist power? How many thought even once that lay-offs, the creation of unemployed failures through the abolition of the teachers' list of seniority and the new examinations or of students failures through constant exams(1) for example, are "mild" forms of "cleansing" a surplus, demanding population, and that the "harsh" forms of "cleansing" that Milosevic and NATO promoted may simply be the other, bloody side of the same coin? How many wondered if the devaluation of labour power by all means "in times of peace", corresponds to a savage, i.e. by bombs and ethnic slaughter, devaluation and even destruction of human capital "in times of war"?

For years now the "well-intentioned", anti-capitalist and anti-authoritarian political groups keep separating the problems we face into personal and political, into direct issues and issues of solidarity, into those that concern them and those which concern people who are "different" from them: immigrants, refugees, unappointed teachers, students, with which they "from the outside" can in the best of cases have the relation of an "active supporter to their just cause"; and in the worst of cases they choose a "social subject" whose suffering better suits their ideology. In such a way thousands of proletarians in Europe and in Greece have become the victims of anti-imperialist (read anti-American) ideology or of selective anti-nationalism, either gathering under the national flags of the left and shouting hackneyed and boring slogans like "Americans-you-murderers-of-the-people" or devoting themselves to a costless condemnation of the "Serb-fascists" which suited NATO's and NGOs' humanitarianism. The
winners of this anti-war/pacifist/humanitarian story are nation-states, i.e. the nationalisation of social struggles. And all that is left for those who took sides in this war, excusing either Milosevic, Simitis and NATO's leaders, or the KLA, is the bitter taste of delusion. Each one, according to their ideological hobbies, sought to find the "greatest victim" in this story and everyone was of course anti-fascist and democratic.

Meanwhile the "cleaning" goes on: yesterday it was unappointed teachers and students, today it is Serb proletarians, tomorrow it will be Albanians again and the war of capital against all of us bears up well.

In order to be clear about this war, having in mind the questions that we asked in the beginning and looking for what was the problem in Kosovo from the standpoint of capital, let's start with the Albanian moderate nationalist Veton Surroi, the publisher of the "Koha Ditore" in Pristina. He said in 1990:

"There is a problem here, in that the Kosovo village is backward and unproductive. Because it exists at a subsistence level, it has no distinct awareness of its own specific interest and is not the bearer of a new agrarian development. The strong trends of emigration into the cities and abroad also militate against this. The peasant himself does not know what to do with his land and there are no models elsewhere in Yugoslavia that he can follow...The Kosovo peasant does not produce for the market...Kosovo as a whole is overpopulated. The density of population is in fact the greatest in the country. Yet right now we are expecting new settlers! (2)

If we referred to the way in which the problem was posed by the Serb bourgeois intellectus or by the makers of the Rambouillet treaty which demanded that the "economy of Kosovo shall function in accordance with free market principles" we would not notice any serious differences from the Albanian politicians who propagate "civil society". What differs is the way in which every national or international capitalist faction tried to solve the problem for its own benefit.

The Serbian side, which was the one that was primarily demonised in the West, tried in the 60's to settle the problem within the context of dealing with the general crisis of capitalist reproduction in Yugoslavia, which, due to the continuous class struggles, had reached a turning-point. To deal with the problems of the high birthrate of the Albanians, of the adherence to the patriarchal agricultural family, of low productivity in the enterprises, it proceeded with a series of measures (which initially had the approval of the federal government):

-It relieved the Albanian "communist" party leadership, which had developed political-clenalist ties with the Albanian population, of its command so as to promote with greater ease the layoffs and the "restoration of the public sector to health"

-It drew up a long term plan of settling thousands of Serb refugees in the region so as to replace the patriarchal Albanian family with small and mobile agricultural households in certain areas which would form the basis of a future modernisation of agricultural production

-It aggravated the military and police repression in the whole region so as to thin out the population by forcing more and more people into immigration." (3)

This whole process which lasted 15 years was intensified even more in recent years because of the blocking of the restructuring of the labour and political-hierarchical relations in Serbia proper in the
relations in Serbia proper in the 90's. The war in Bosnia, the sanctions imposed by international capital and the fear of a new outburst of the class struggles, which could be contained temporarily through nationalist ideology, the remnants of the welfare state and the possibilities of working in the black market, had transformed the governmental gang of Milosevic from a neo-liberal reformist one into the political boss of a protectionist 'war' economy. By increasingly resorting to barbarism, the Serb regime created by itself the political terms of the failure of the policy of restructuring in Kosovo in the form of "ethnic cleansing". The resistance of the Albanian bourgeoisie, which had allied itself with the patriarchal family and had overshadowed the social conflicts with its nationalist language as far back as the 1951 uprising, increased by promoting its own agenda: internationalisation of the supposed ethnic conflict and political and military intervention of the international capital so as to allow them to take over the process of westernising the Kosovar society themselves. In order to achieve the definite nationalisation of the social question and to win the support of the international capitalist organisations, which had shown from the very beginning of the Balkan tragedy that they favour the creation of ethnically "clean" states in former Yugoslavia, a fraction of the Albanian bourgeoisie set up the national-liberation gang of the KLA. These bullies began their campaign in '96 with bomb attacks on camps for (sort) refugees from Krajina, they gradually upgraded the tension between the two communities and, after the savage military operations of the Serbs last summer, managed to complete their mission by attaching to the chariot of nationalism the scared and persecuted Albanian population who was by now forced once and for all to take sides in order to survive.

In early '98, NATO was still closer to Milosevic "solution" and branded the KLA as a "terrorist organisation", but after the meeting of Holbrooke with the leadership of the KLA guerillas in Yumik in June '98 things started to gradually change and former high officials of the State Department found themselves alongside the guerillas in the camps and in the negotiations at the Rambouillet castle. NATO did not of course fall in love with Albanian nationalism in one day. They gradually teach that Milosevic was an inadequate cop who could not create the preconditions for capitalist restructuring in his region, nor solve the so-called "Kosovar question" or reverse the downfall of his regime into a destabilising force. Their decision was to intervene under the veil of humanitarian ideology so as to kill many birds with one stone: -they sped up the thinning out of the Kosovar population by destroying traditional agricultural communities and producing a cheap labour reserve force (not to mention the disciplining of the Albanian workers and peasants through raligny them around their national leaders) -they terrorised the Serbian proletariat and destroyed the productive structures of Serbia, creating overnight thousands of sacked workers and a regime highly dependent on western financial help, and thus facilitating the transition to a market economy -they militarily supervised the Albanian labour force which demonstrated very bad behaviour two years ago -they created the preconditions for a Balkan "zone of free exchanges" by unblocking the process of deregulation.

In this wideranging campaign -whose success will always be at stake since new expressions of social antagonism will always reappear- the Greek state participated politically and militarily in every move of NATO, as one of the 19 cowboys that it consists of. Hoping for a large piece of the pie of the reconstruction of Serbia and Kosovo, it put aside its outdated pro-Serb bollocks while, at the same time, showing great tolerance towards the manageable anti-American demonstrations of the left patriots. In this way, inside Greece it preserved the profile of a neutral pacifist who seeks a "diplomatic solution only", as if wars created by capital
are meant to last eternally and that a "diplomatic solution" would not be THE "solution" that would allow the continuation of the exploitation of the proletariat by "peaceful means". Greece's share in the feast is at stake at the moment (the Greek state has "managed" to get Thessaloniki appointed as the centre of the European Service for the Reconstruction of Kosovo), but so far the privileged deals of the Greek capitalists—-the mediation of the Greek state—with the Serb nomenklatura seem to be blocked, since the latter faces its potential breakdown, or, in any case, its radical transformation.

From the beginning of this war our small group of people kept the only position that fits those who wish to believe that they are against capital and the state: we kept away from the nationalist demonstrations of the left, we refused to play the game of selective anti-nationalism (turning against either the "Serb-fascists" or the "Albanian crutches of NATO") and we tried with our minimal forces to project the proletarian internationalist response to the war. For that purpose we organised, along with a small number of comrades, some autonomous actions and we primarily addressed Albanian immigrants, not in order to blame the Serb proletarians or the Serb bosses specifically (as the autonomist anti-fascists did), but to speak the language of proletarian internationalist solidarity with them. It is a fact that we were isolated since we did not follow either the dominant pro-Serb (but also short-lived) nefarious activities, nor the harrowing pro-national-liberation, pro-Albanian exhortations (either clearly stated or disguised under the cloak of "struggle for dignity"). It was however a consciously chosen isolation which, to say the least, protected us from being ridiculed by following the cynical cruelty of either pro-Serb or pro-Albanian nationalism.

(1) See our texts "Days of June 98: Days of Class Struggle in Greece" and "Heavy Burden on Young Shoulders: The School Occupations in Greece in 1998-99".


(3) This plan, which supposedly does not obey to the "normal" capitalist logic, was called "ethnic cleansing" by western media and the most modern version of the anti-fascist crusade was built around the objective of the eradication of this "monster". The humanistic bourgeoisies of Europe and America have a past of a glorious bloody epic of ethnicides and liquidations of those redundant or insubordinate peoples starting from Columbus expeditions and going on up to the present but then again this is the very role of the antifascist-antiracist ideology: to obscure the bloody reality of capitalist expansion, shifting the responsibility for the suffering this expansion causes on to some "devilish men".

This text was included in an anti-war brochure published by the group The Balkan Interior Enemy in Athens in June 1999. The authors can be contacted at: Ta Pedie Tis Galarias (The children of the gallery), P.O. Box 76149, Nea Smirf 17110, Athens, Greece.
The Danish General Strike

BY ERIC CHESTER

The globalization of capital has brought in its wake a devastating attack on wages and working conditions. Throughout the world, workers are organizing in defense of basic rights and a decent life. Indeed, the last several years have seen a series of bitter confrontations as working people seek to defeat and reverse the corporate onslaught. In Detroit, Liverpool and Melbourne, union activists have fought militant battles to prevent the introduction of strikebreakers. Strike committees have been able to mobilize impressive demonstrations of solidarity across the narrow boundaries set by craft, industry and the nation state.

Yet virtually every one of these conflicts has found the working class on the defensive, hoping to reverse the tide of battle, and to return to a prior equilibrium in class relations. This defensive, and limited, strategy is bound to fail, no matter how militant the response. Last spring, the working class of Denmark pointed to a way out of this downward spiral of concessions and defeats. Hundreds of thousands of workers joined in an 11-day general strike to obtain a set of demands that formulated a way forward, not just a return to the past. All of this in a country where unions are centralized, and where union demands have been consistently subordinated to the political expediency of the social democratic party. Only when Prime Minister Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, a social democrat, brought the force of state power to bear did the strike end.

The Danish strike also highlighted the acute difficulties that must be overcome if the radical left is to rebuild a significant presence within the working class movement. In the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the resulting rapid disintegration of pro-Soviet communist parties, left-wing tendencies that had previously been marginalized now have a genuine opportunity to present a radical alternative to a wider audience. At the same time, mainstream social democracy has abandoned any pretense of a reformist path to socialism. With these historic events setting the context, new networks of rank-and-file militants become possible. The Danish strike provided a crucial testing ground for such a scenario.

Denmark - like the other Scandinavian countries, Sweden and Norway - has prided itself on having developed one of the most advanced welfare states in the world. During the heyday of the welfare state thirty years ago, the Danes enjoyed full employment. high wages, socialized medicine and a graduated income tax that narrowed some of the vast inequalities generated by a capitalist market economy. Recent years have seen Denmark trapped in a downward cycle, one that we know all too well in the United States. Transnational corporations have changed the rules of the game, shifting many of their investments to the Third World. In Denmark, more and more workers hold part-time jobs, while long-term unemployment continues to grow, real wages keep falling, and income differentials continue to widen. The welfare state is being whittled away, while corporate profits balloon.

In Denmark, collective bargaining is centralized. Most workers are members of an industrial union, which in turn is affiliated to the central trade union federation. Since the turn of the century, the leaders of the central union federation have developed an interlocking network of links to the social democratic party, the government party for most of the last five decades. Every two years the top bureaucrats in the union federation negotiate a pattern agreement for the private sector. In the off years, local plants negotiate local addendums to the national contract, but these are limited to adjustments in the wage scale. There is also a national agreement for the public sector, which is negotiated in the alternate years to the private sector national agreement. In the spring of 1998, the private sector
contract expired, opening up another round of negotiations.

To understand last spring's general strike, we need to look back to 1985, when a three-week general strike shut down both the public and private sectors. Ultimately, the government stepped in and ended the strike, with little or nothing gained. Yet the primary demand, a shorter work week, was later implemented in many workplaces through locally negotiated contracts. Denmark was already experiencing high unemployment in the 1980s, so the demand for a shorter work week was viewed as a vitally important way of creating new jobs. Unfortunately, as a 37 hour workweek was slowly introduced throughout the economy, employers responded by speeding up the pace of work and switching to part-time employees. The employers' offensive undercut the impact of the shorter work week, so that the next decade saw profits continuing to increase, with unemployment and underemployment persisting at intolerably high levels.

Early this year a network of shop floor militants began organizing, hoping to build a broad coalition of activists prepared to move beyond the cautious timidity of the union leadership. In the postwar period, the Communist Party had constituted the most effective opposition force within the central union federation. As it fissured over the last few years, many of the most respected shop stewards left the Communist Party and began drifting toward social democracy. With a vacuum on the Left, union militants from the two socialist parties to the left of mainstream social democracy, the Red-Green Alliance and the Socialist People's Party, began working together to rebuild a dissident caucus. Seeing 1998 as a year of rebuilding, opposition forces decided to build a broad coalition, one that would encompass even shop floor activists who remained within the orbit of the social democratic party. This broad coalition would build grass-roots support for a program of action that could provide a focal point for militancy.

The result was the program of the sixes, a radical set of demands that would capture the imagination of the Danish people. As formulated by militant* within the transport union, the program of the sixes demanded a sixth week of paid vacation, (Danish workers have already won five weeks of paid vacation), an across-the-board increase of six kroners in the hourly wage rate (about U.S. $8.85), and a six hour day. Winning these demands would not only have put a significant dent in the unemployment rate, and in the bloated profits of the corporate bigwigs, but it also would have pointed the way toward a different kind of society - one that placed a premium on the quality of life, rather than one that focused on an everincreasing supply of consumer goods.

Under pressure from the rank and file, the central trade union federation reluctantly accepted the program of the sixes as one component of its overall bargaining package. Still, union leaders set a significant increase in corporate contributions to pension plans as the highest priority in the coming negotiations. After months of talks, the union brass came back with the usual regrets, insisting that they had negotiated a contract that represented the best possible deal in difficult circumstances. Although the tentative settlement with the employers federatie—included a significant increase in the pay rate, it did virtually nothing to limit the work week and open up more jobs. The only concession along these lines established an additional day of paid vacation, Christmas Eve, a holiday already taken by many workers.

The ritual of collective bargaining within a centralized welfare state seemed to be proceeding along routine paths, but this time, for the first time in decades, the rank and file rebelled. With a resounding 55 percent no vote, the proposed contract was rejected, and on Monday, April 27, the strike was on. Needless to say, the official union structure provided little in the way of leadership. Instead, a combination of shop floor militants and local union leaders stepped in to
organize a strike of 500,000 workers. The strike leadership was based in Copenhagen, Denmark's capital and its largest city. A coordinating committee made up of the presidents of several of the largest union locals in the metropolitan area constituted the executive committee of the strike, while a nationwide coordinating committee of shop stewards provided the essential link to the shop floor. More than 800 activists attended the tumultuous meetings of the shop stewards council, which met at moments of crisis to determine basic policy.

From the start, there was a general agreement that the strike could only be effective if the entire private sector came to a halt. Thus, all private sector workers were called out on strike. Union activists visited workplaces that had been previously unorganized to convince the workers to join the strike and to demand union recognition. As the strike widened, and became more effective, local committees of shop stewards issued permits for the provision of essential goods to those in dire need.

The most militant public sector workers, such as city bus drivers, began agitating for a shutdown of their workplaces, seeking to extend the action and make it a genuine general strike. Although some of those within the radical network of shop stewards supported this position, the majority of stewards were convinced of the need to limit the action to the private sector. Public support for the strike remained high throughout the 11 days, and most of those on the stewards council believed that a disruption of schools, hospitals and public transit would needlessly antagonize the broad public, while also inducing the government to move more quickly in terminating the strike.

This decision proved to be a mistake. Some of the momentum of the strike was lost, with little gained as the government soon decided to intervene anyway. More important, limiting the scope of the strike reflected and reinforced the tentative nature of the action. The strike had forged beyond the bureaucratized routine of Scandinavian collective bargaining, but those leading the strike were still unprepared to challenge the fundamental assumptions of the social democratic welfare state.

As the action proceeded, the strike leaders emphasized the demand for a sixth week of vacation. This represented a considerable dilution of the program of the sixes, but the stewards council insisted that this demand be obtained without being linked to any counterbalancing concessions. As a result, the negotiations taking place at the national level remained stalled, with the employers federation refusing to budge. After ten days, the strike remained solid, with industry at a total standstill. At this point, business executives began to issue public threats that they would redirect their investments to other countries unless the strike was immediately ended. The government had sought to remain aloof from the conflict, since the social democratic politicians were anxious to avoid taking a position, one that was bound to antagonize their working class base.

With the strike at a stalemate, the social democratic government decided it had to either move quickly to end the strike or confront the consequences of massive capital flight. On Wednesday, May 6, Prime Minister Rasmussen announced that he would present legislation the following day bringing the strike to an immediate halt. Everyone would be back on the job the following Monday, or else. After a brief discussion, the parliament voted on Thursday, May 7, to terminate the strike. The government's emergency legislation passed by an overwhelming vote, with only the left-wing parties in opposition.

Under the emergency legislation, workers received two extra days of vacation, one of them being Christmas Eve. In addition, parents of children younger than 14 could take three extra child care days, although these days would be compensated at a substantially lower scale than the standard pay rate. Only those who worked at the same job for more than six months would be eligible for these
additional days off. These provisions fell far short of the strike demands, even as diluted during the strike. Furthermore, the limited gains were balanced by significant losses as employers were authorized to reduce their payments to company-based pension plans. For more than 75,000 workers, a significant minority of the workforce, the government-imposed settlement was actually worse than the original agreement negotiated with the employers federation. These workers, many of them construction workers, have bargained industry-wide pension plans, but work on a transient basis for any specific employer. In presenting his strike-breaking as measure to the parliament, Rasmussen emphasized that the final cost of the package was equivalent to the deal that had been rejected by the workers when the strike first began. In both cases the estimated cost to employers came to 4.5 percent a year.

The shop stewards council convened the morning after Rasmussen's speech, immediately prior to the vote taken by the parliament. Everyone attacked the government's plan as a betrayal of the working class movement. Some of those within the radical network, especially within the transport workers union that had originally formulated the program of the sixes, urged a continuation of the strike in spite of the government's determination to end it. This, of course, would have brought Denmark to the brink of a total confrontation. Most of the stewards did not believe that the union base was prepared to engage in such a confrontation. The council agreed to stay a final decision until it could evaluate the turnout for a demonstration at the parliament building that took place while the legislators were discussing and approving the emergency measure. When 2,000 people showed up at the rally, the shop stewards leadership decided that there was just not enough enthusiasm to proceed further, and the strike was ended.

The Danish strike broke new ground in the current period of givebacks and defeats. Danish workers did not just fight to defend what they had already won, they presented a radical program pointing to the future. We should do the same. Yet the Danish experience vividly demonstrates the narrowing possibilities for winning meaningful victories within the constraints of a globally integrated capitalist economy. The Danish workers shut down that country's entire industrial production, and yet the employers' federation remained unyielding. Indeed, as the strike continued the threat of massive capital flight loomed nearer, bringing the strike to a halt. There is no way to win and defend fundamental reforms within this system, not even by militant industrial action. Only by definitively breaking with the world economy will it be possible to transcend the power of the corporate giants. The choice is clear, either the total transformation of the market economy, and the construction of a new society based on cooperation, equality and workers control, or the acceptance of a continuing downward slide in the living standards and quality of life of most of the world's population.

Although the government-imposed settlement fell far short of the strikers' demands, morale remains high within the union movement. In the months since the strike has ended, workers in key industries have fought to incorporate parts of the program of the sixes into their local contracts. Workers at the huge Carling brewery have signed a contract making the three extra days of paid vacation available to the entire workforce, not just to those with younger children. With the extra two days granted in the national contract, the Carling workers now enjoy a sixth week of paid vacation. Needless to say, this demand remains unmet for the great majority of Danish workers, who continue to experience a job market characterized by high unemployment and the rapid growth of part-time jobs.

Even more significant than the victories won by the most well-organized workers at the local level is the renewal of a dynamic community of shop floor militants. Thousands of young activists were radicalized during the course of the strike, and are ready to work with other radicals and socialists in developing a strong grass-roots network that can challenge the social democratic policy of accommodation and concession.
With all of its promising features, the Danish strike also presents the revolutionary left with challenging questions that need to be addressed. Syndicalists have usually insisted on the need for an independent, alternative union structure, rejecting any presence within the dominant union federations, whether they are led by social democrats or by narrowly focused business unionists. Yet in Denmark a rank-and-file network of radicals and militants succeeded in overcoming the lethargy of the union bureaucrats to launch a strike that paralyzed the country and brought the economy to the brink of crisis. This would suggest the validity of a policy of working within and outside of the mainstream unions, a position that the Industrial Workers of the World adopted, at least in theory, some time ago.

This is not to deny a potentially vital role for independent revolutionary unions. Such unions can provide a setting for radicals to formulate and articulate an alternative perspective, while consolidating networks of rank-and-file activists. Nevertheless, in most industrialized countries the great majority of the organized working class remains trapped within the bounds of the mainstream union federations. It is therefore essential for revolutionaries to work within these structures, creating opposition caucuses that can challenge the official ideology of cooperation and collaboration with friendly employers and sympathetic social democratic politicians.

Syndicalist theorists have frequently insisted that the workplace is the crux of class conflict, with other settings of minor importance. This argument has implications for both the short-term analysis of capitalist society and in the projection of a revolutionary transformation of society. For the short-term, the IWW posed the argument with its slogan that "Direct action gets the goods." The Danish strike allows us to evaluate this claim in the light of a global economy.

Although the Danish workers mobilized a solid, sustained and effective general strike of the corporate economy, the gains of the action proved to be extremely limited. The reality is that the globalization of capital has drastically restricted the limits of reform within the bounds of a corporate economy. Neither direct action nor legislative victories are likely to lead to significant reforms. Indeed, there is every reason to expect that without a revolutionary transformation of society the working class of the industrialized world is likely to experience one defeat after another.

This leads to the more future-oriented issue of revolutionary strategy. Syndicalists have frequently insisted that a general strike will sound the death knell of capitalism. Once the corporations and their minions see that working people will no longer work for the crumbs being offered, the system will collapse and a new world will be born. Well, the Danes went a long way along this projected scenario, but the system failed to collapse. Indeed, once the corporations threatened to leave, the state immediately mobilized its forces for a direct assault on the strike. This may not be a message we wish to hear, but it has to be said anyway. A revolutionary transformation of society can not be achieved solely at the point of production. The power of the state has to be confronted and overcome. To do otherwise is to court disaster.

The Chilean experience of 1973, during the final days of the Allende regime provides a possible guidepost. With the established order falling into chaos, workers in the largest factories linked up with neighborhood activists to create a parallel regime. The cordones acted as a pre-revolutionary formation, suggesting a way forward toward a society truly governed by the working class. A general strike is purely passive. It must be followed by measures that assert the rule of the working class in critical urban neighborhoods and rural zones.

For revolutionary socialists, the Danish experience raises another difficult, but crucial, question. When the left-wing socialists within the shop stewards movement decided to create a coalition that included those who continued to maintain their ties with the social democratic mainstream, they made the final outcome an inevitability. There could be no doubt that the government would ultimately
intervene to end the strike, and that the social democrats within the shop stewards council would be unwilling to confront, and embarrass, the social democratic government. Thus, the task for the future requires a quantum jump, creating a network of shop stewards and rank-and-file militants that is prepared to catalyze a general strike organized in support of a program of fundamental social change, and to continue the strike in the face of government repression. Without such a commitment, the Danes will return to ritualized collective bargaining with a new twist, one where a brief general strike provides a safety valve for popular discontent.

A comment

Contrary to Fellow Worker Chester's argument, syndicalists have never rejected "any presence within the dominant [business] union federations." Indeed, the French syndicalist movement was originally built precisely by working within (and for a short time leading) those unions. Most syndicalists today believe that strategy was mistaken, diverting attention from building truly democratic, revolutionary workplace organizations into campaigns for official posts. But even so, where an existing union is entrenched in a workplace it can not be ignored. Sometimes it must be fought, sometimes it can be worked within to build rank-and-file struggles. But in any event, ultimately we must build unions organized along anarcho-syndicalist principles - unions controlled by their members, committed to direct action and solidarity, and fighting to build our power on the job not merely to wrest better conditions from the bosses (important though that is) but also to wrest control altogether.

The temptation to side-step the need to build revolutionary unions can be a strong one, given the myriad resources available to those willing to work through approved channels. But ultimately those channels do not lead where we are trying to go. Indeed, Chester's own account makes clear the limitations of the strategy he advocated. When one chooses to work within the business unions, one inevitably comes up against the entrenched power of the officialdom, as well as the inertia of often well intentioned activists who have been focused on short-term objectives and proper channels for so long that their vision has become constricted. It is one thing to work with our fellow workers who find themselves inside such structures; it is quite another to conduct our struggle within those confines.

But once the decision was taken to work primarily within the social-democratic Danish unions, it was quite impossible to escape the dilemma FW Chester laments. Anarchosyndicalists have always stressed the dangers of separating one's long-term objectives from the strategies employed here and now. Working within mainstream union structures may sometimes seem to hold out the possibility of winning immediate battles that otherwise would be difficult to sustain. But there is always a heavy price to be paid, and even where such strategies are successful in winning the immediate issue, they do not build the groundwork for future struggles, and for the ultimate expropriation of the ruling class. If we do not build revolutionary unions, we will never be able to break out of the defensive posture the labor movement now finds itself in for long.

Finally, there is nothing intrinsically passive about the general strike. In fact, IWW literature traditionally described the general strike as the looting of the capitalist class from the means of production-in essence, the act of expropriation. The problem, of course, is developing general agreement that we don't need bosses, and building our capacity to dump them off our backs. That, in a nutshell, is why anarcho-syndicalists stress the need to build revolutionary unions.

--Jon Bekken

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International Liquidity Crisis and Class Struggle—First Approximation

Loren Goldner

[Note: The pages below are the concluding paragraphs of Loren Goldner’s paper with the above title. Most of his essay deals with the consequences, already being seen in Southeast Asia at the time it was written—October 1998—of the tightening of world capital markets and a rush into cash and near-cash assets, i.e. into liquidity. It is rather technical economics which will interest some readers. They can obtain pages 1-5 from Collective Action Notes website: <http://www.geocities.com/CanarioHill/Lobby/2379>. For most of us the more interesting part is Goldner’s assessment of the response such a worldwide event (in effect a replay of the 1929 crash and resulting depression) would have on the working class. The final two pages or so go into some detail about his ideas of the possible nature of a revolutionary working class reaction to a global meltdown. —fg]

...I will conclude with some ways in which I think the perspective outlined above [pages 1-5 of the essay] will become the practical concern of a movement to end capitalism.

"Economics", i.e. what Marx called the critique of political economy, only takes us so far. The question of the action or inaction of the working class in the crisis has everything to do with what happens in "economics". I doubt that anyone will deny that the American working class's mainly supine acceptance of a 20% fall in living standards and a 10-20% increase in the work week and other assaults on the "total social wage" since 1973 have been central in capital's "restoration of profitability", the booming stock market, and a major upward redistribution of wealth now 30 years in the making. But while America is the extreme case among workers in the "advanced capitalist" world, no other working class has been notably more successful in fighting austerity. Most resistance up to now has been defensive, attempting to hold capital to the "old rules" of the postwar boom and the "gains" of that era, rather than posing the working class as the basis of a completely different kind of order. December 1995 in France and the battles of the past 2 years in South Korea are, to my mind, clear examples of such defensive battles. As such, they cannot achieve much in the long run, except forcing the capitalists to regroup for another attack. To become a "class for itself" rather than a "class in itself" (a class for capital) the working class movement has to point the way to a new society, embodied in its own movement first of all. To do so will require programmatic formulation for a transition out of capitalism, which can hopefully be short, but which will not be instantaneous. It is of course impossible to foresee a thousand contingencies in how this will come about, but certain problems will have to be confronted immediately no matter what the contingencies. Our task is obviously not to run capitalism better than the capitalists; it is to end capitalism, meaning first of all the wage labor system. My hope in beginning this discussion of liquidity is to zero in on more precise appreciations of the conjuncture as well as to see more concretely, from a strategic point of view, how the working class can become the ruling class. This involves program, among other things.
Thirty years ago, programmatic questions seemed clear. The struggle was against "bureaucracy": liberal democratic Keynesian, Social Democratic, Stalinist, Third Worldist. The working class would occupy the means of production, impose Soviets, and Soviet democracy, as the "free association of the producers" would replace the market and the state in regulating production and reproduction. "Vanguardists" (principally coming from variants of Trotskyism and ex-Trotskyism) and "ultra-lefts" mainly coming from variants of councilism might disagree about the role of the "party" in getting to "all power to the Soviets" (not to mention its role in the demise of the old Soviets) but virtually all agreed on the "goal" as direct management of production and reproduction by the producers, summed up perhaps in the formulation "nationalization under workers' control". In this lyrical "1968" atmosphere, the "abolition of wage labor" and of commodity production might be tacked on as a laundry list by orthodox purists (who would ever say they were "for" wage labor?) but their centrality to an understanding of communism was moot. Against "bureaucracy", the solution was: "democracy", Soviet to be sure. At its worst, this "syndicalist Utopia" barely went beyond the idea of the working class "democratically" managing the society that the capitalists managed "bureaucratically".

The question of "international liquidity" and related matters were of increasing interest during the post-1968 assault on the old "worker fortresses" (Detroit, Manchester, Renault-Billancourt, Alsace, the Ruhr, Turin-FIAT, etc. the sites of so many "1960's" worker upsurges) through robotics, high-tech "cottage" decentralization, outsourcing, and relocation of mass production to low-wage "Third World zones which has, by now, largely decimated the core of the "classical" means of production which American and European workers were supposed to seize and place under the control of Soviets. Today, particularly in the "advanced capitalist" world, so many wage workers perform unproductive labor in the spheres of "fictitious capital" (banking, insurance, state and corporate bureaucracy, advertising), so much production goes into socially destructive sectors (arms production, law enforcement, office construction, prisons) there are too many "workplaces" which should not be placed under "workers' control", but simply abolished. Too many proletarians have been expelled from the old production process, or will never arrive there, because the assault on the global wage bill has produced a world-wide "rationalization" movement and "race to the bottom" which, to this day, workers have been virtually powerless to combat. In the same way as "the limit of the capitalist mode of production is not in production, or at best is a very elastic one" (vol. 3), more than ever before, the problem of class struggle today cannot limit itself to the point of production. It is rather from a "vol. 3" "total social capital" viewpoint, the reproduction and valorization of capital as a whole, that the ultimate vulnerability of the system and a renewal of "programmatic imagination" beyond "nationalization under workers' control" emerge into view. And this "vol. 3" viewpoint leads straight to (among other things) the question of international liquidity, for it is exactly there, where "money comes to its concept" that the total capital is reproduced and valorized.

Imagine, to conclude, a concrete example: the South Korean mass strikes of January 1997 and subsequently, following the November 1997 collapse of the Korean economy. The basic demand of all these struggles was: "save our jobs". It is a familiar battle cry which has been heard all over the world in struggles big and small, for the past 20 years, most recently in the defeated Liverpool dockers' strike, the temporary standoff of the Australian dockers' uprising, a thousand (mainly losing) battles against plant closings, "downsizing", "outsourcing", relocation and the
Imagine, instead, workers in a country such as Korea, on any other major industrial country, going beyond a dual power factory occupation and/or general strike, imposing themselves as the sole power and saying, in effect: "to hell with these jobs, many of them socially useless and others positively harmful. We repudiate Korea's foreign debts and call on workers of other countries to repudiate theirs. We repudiate the international dollar standard and invite workers in all countries to join us in its abolition. We will replace it with a "Bretton Woods" of the world working class which will establish a global program for a transition out of capitalism, as rapidly as possible. The world today has a productive capacity to abolish wage labor everywhere, and therefore the capitalist law of value as the regulator of production and reproduction. This cannot be achieved in any single country or small group of countries but only on a world scale. We call for the abolition of all socially useless and socially harmful work (both of which exist only to reproduce capital) and the freeing of labor from those spheres for socially useful work. This will make possible any further improvements in the productivity of labor, as deemed socially necessary, and therefore further free humanity from the need of "value relations" to regulate exchange. We propose to rebuild the world from top to bottom to place creative activity, and not the accumulation of capital, as the goal of social life".

To paraphrase someone 130 years ago, "let them inscribe on their banner not "save our jobs" but rather "abolish our jobs, and with them the wage labor system".

However "Utopian" such a scenario sounds, it is in fact the "necessity" of today, if the working class is to go beyond a "class-in-itself" stance, however militantly demanding that capitalists "play by the (old) rules", to become a "class for itself", posing itself as a new ruling class of a new kind of society. Were it to occur today, in a single country, it would in all likelihood become a "Paris Commune" of our time, perhaps bloodily defeated, but also sending shock waves through history as the Paris Commune has. It would kill off the almost omnipresent ideological belief today that "there's no alternative to liberal democratic capitalism and the market" just as the liquidity crisis of this year has killed off neo-liberal triumphalism. If the world working class does not eliminate the circulating bubble of fictitious "hot air", it will pay the terrible cost of its "Chapter Eleven" proceedings under the hegemony of capital.
Upon perusing DB97 it became obvious to us that neither C. May nor Charmian Skelton of the Socialist Party of Great Britain understood our criticism that "The SP of GB doesn't go far enough!" We were of course illustrating, or attempting to illustrate, the De Leonist argument that political power per se (i.e. political power without economic power to ENFORCE THE FIAT OF A SOCIALIST POLITICAL VICTORY) could not be expected to win the day for Socialism! Our point vis-a-vis the SPGB should now be clear. Whereas De Leonism advocates both political AND industrial working-class unification, the SPGB appears to limit its concern to the political field, thus in our opinion "doesn't go far enough!"

There are at the same time two closely related points that have cropped up along the way—points that apparently also call for clarification. Both involve the use of figurative language. Thus when we spoke of "the weight of public opinion" in the context of a socialist political victory, we had assumed the reader would broadly construe the context to include a parliament of elected political representatives. And when in his 1905 address De Leon used the 1896 U.S. presidential election campaign to illustrate "the futility of the ballot alone," we assumed that he did not envisage a scenario wherein Capitalists en masse could personally deactivate the machinery and processes of production and distribution, but rather that he pointed to the very real capability of the said capitalist class, if still in control of industry, to abort a socialist revolution by ordering a shutdown of some sectors of production and distribution that are vital to the life of the nation.

May quotes Clause 7 of the SPGB's Declaration of Principles as follows:

"That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organize consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic."

Asserting that "Within the political programme of the SPGB's Object and Declaration of Principles there is all a working class needs to establish Socialism," he asks: "So where, then, is the problem?" Where indeed? Analysis of its principles and program reveals that the SPGB has overlooked hard evidence that the prerequisite to control of political power is control of economic power!

As we see it, the key question here for Socialists is how control of industry can be taken away from the capitalist class. Regrettably,
the SPGB appears to date to discount what De Leonists hold indispens- 
able for socialist victory—an integrally-organized Socialist Industrial 
Union of workers prepared upon a socialist political mandate to imme- 
data Take, Hold, and Operate the nation’s industrial complex for 
society-as-a-whole!

* It seems to be a truism that we are creatures of habit. Certainly 
in our own case, old habits of thought had to be laid to rest in our 
perceived necessity to update De Leonism by providing for political as 
well as industrial democracy. By the same token, could we not hope 
that the Socialist Party of Great Britain might before long update its 
socialistic program by affirming that the working class must not merely 
unite “consciously and politically” but also consciously and indus-
trially?—the latter to form the “organized forces” which Marx foresaw 
would serve the working class as an economic “lever” by which they 
could emancipate themselves from the wages system. We need scarcely 
add that our own call upon workers to unite on the industrial field as 
well as on the political field stems from our conviction in the truth 
of De Leon’s dictum: “Without political organization, the labor move-
ment cannot triumph; without economic organization, the day of its 
political triumph would be the day of its defeat.”

Sincerely,

THE DE LEONIST SOCIETY OF CANADA

(from p. 2)

Lowering of the state welfare safety net is a world-wide phenomenon. Chester, a DB subscriber and an 
IWW member, describes the eleven-day long event and the sellout by the Social Democratic Party and 
its union movement in the face of global capitalism’s new weapon: the threat to leave the country and 
find a cheaper work force. Jon Bekken’s “comment” relates to Chester’s views on the problems of 
revolutionaries working in solidarity with militants in a union movement tied to the capitalism’s social 
democratic political arm.

Next Loren Goldner speculates on the response of workers when the air escapes from the great bubble 
of inflated values we see at its most obvious in the stock market. Goldner sees both the workplace and 
the working class so changed at the turn of the millennium as to challenge the familiar formulations 
of the revolutionary goal. The Remaking of the American Working Class, a book by Goldner, whose 
article on Kamunist Kranti appeared in DB 95, is available on the Collective Action Notes website
<www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/Lobby/2379>.

The DeLeonist Society of Canada’s letter continues a discussion with Charmian Skelton of the 
Socialist Party of Great Britain on the necessity organizing workers industrially in the socialist 
industrial union mode advocated by DeLeonists and the IWW. Both the DLS and the SPGB 
(Ashbourne Court group) arose from dissension within existing revolutionary parties (The Socialist 
Labor Party and the Socialist Party of Great Britain respectively) on questions of program, analysis, or 
tactics and the exit of a faction from the old party to form a better revolutionary organization. The 
next pages present the World of Free Access Movement, the most recent attempt I have seen to form 
such a new group—based apparently on a modification of SPGB ideas.

(to p.29)
Object and Political Outlook of the World of Free Access (WFA) movement.

Object

The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the earth’s natural and industrial resources.

Political Outlook

1) The present social system is the global Business – system.

2) Within this system there is a conflict between the interests of Business and the interests of the vast majority of people.

3) This antagonism between Capital and Wage – Labour cannot be resolved within the business – system.

4) Liberation from the business – system necessarily entails the abolition of wage – labour, Capital and money. This system would be replaced by a world of free access to all goods and services.

5) That this liberation can only be achieved by the democratic will of the majority.

6) Where circumstances are favourable the WFA will organise politically using the electoral process to conquer the powers of government. The WFA is committed to working in industrial organisations to encourage the growth of a movement to transform society.
Introducing the 'World of Free Access' movement

Subject: The WFA is a single, global political organisation whose parties in different countries have united around a common object and political outlook.

Formation Date: January 2000.

Object: "The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the earth's natural and industrial resources".

Enlarge Object: The WFA seeks the end of all forms of private ownership of the means and instruments of producing and distributing wealth. Instead, production will be for human use. There will be no trade or commerce. Freed from the profit - system we as people will decide what needs to be produced. These decisions would be made at a local, regional and global level.

Political Outlook
1) The present social system is the global Business - system.

Pause/Enhance Outlook: Everything that is produced and distributed today has a price tag on it. Goods are produced primarily for the purpose of selling and generating profits on the world market. This is the business of business.

2) Within this system there is a conflict between the interests of Business and the interests of the vast majority of people.

Pause/Expand Outlook: The Business - system (Capitalism) is a system of power relationships. In this social system the means of wealth production and distribution are owned and controlled by a small class - the capitalist or business class. Wage and salary earners (the working class) are the employees of the Business - class. Anyone who does not have to seek employment for themselves or their dependants in order to live is a member of the capitalist class and can live off rent, interest and profits without working at all.

3) This antagonism between Capital and Wage-Labour cannot be resolved within the business - system.

Pause/Enlarge: As long as wage-slavery exists relative poverty must continue to be the condition of the majority. It is impossible to have fair commerce or a humanised business-system. All mainstream political parties and most of the fringe ones claim that it is possible to solve some of Capitalism's problems while leaving the business-system intact. We totally reject this viewpoint which suggests that you can reform the business-system to benefit the people. The WFA points to the utter failure of all parties and governments everywhere to reform away any of society's "problems" - Unemployment, Wars, Homelessness, Hunger, Environmental decay etc.

The WFA asserts that governments do not control the global economy and that it's absurd to believe that any government can manage the buying and selling of goods within Capitalism's casino. The WFA does not campaign on single-issues or advocate measures of government control or intervention in the economy.

The WFA is not unsympathetic to sincere attempts to reform capitalism's ills or improve education, healthcare etc. But, a desire to make things fairer is not really enough. The WFA attempts to re-direct this indignation which many people feel, and which often takes the form of single-issue campaigns, towards getting rid of the root cause of the problems and that means the ending of the Business-system.

4) Liberation from the Business-system necessarily entails the abolition of Wage-Labour, Capital and money. This system would be replaced by a world of free access to all goods and services.
The precise mechanisms to be used for such a change are not crucial at this stage and it is conceivable that in different parts of the world the majority-consciousness may find different forms of expression. A growth in such a radical consciousness will find expression in political parties and new forms of economic/industrial organisations. The WFA is committed to working in any economic organisation that defends conditions in the workplace and we are committed to propagating our ideas of change on the industrial front. While we do not advocate the formation of a new economic organisation to replace trade unions at present, a more class-conscious form of organisation will be required if/when radical ideas become more widespread. This does not mean that the WFA has a 'blueprint' for change or a desire to create an industrial wing of the WFA.

Wide-Angled Vision

Delete: Big business; small business; all business; Employment, wages and money; Trade; Exchange values; Commerce, Nation states and national flags; Reformism; Governments; Civil wars, regional wars and all wars.
Save: A 'World of Free Access'; production for use; an end to all forms of poverty; Economic democracy - genuine democracy; Peace; Everything without cost; Limited work and lots of leisure; an end to cheap and shoddy goods; a world-community; the end of all forms of discrimination.

For more information on the 'World of Free Access' movement and an application form to join contact - D. Devine, 115 Henderson Row, Edinburgh, EH3 5BB.
The 'World of Free Access' Movement.
Application for Membership

The 'World of Free Access' is a political party. Our Object and Political Outlook are printed on the other side of this application form. Membership of the WFA is based on agreement with the object and the general outlook.

Please complete this form using block capitals and send it, with the appropriate dues payment, to the address given at the bottom of the form.

Surname .................................................................

Forename ..............................................................

Address ........................................................................

..............................................................................

Post Code .................................................................

Telephone No: ............................................................

Occupation ............................................................... Dues total enclosed ............

Union (if any) .............................................................

Signature ................................................................. Date ........................................

- Membership dues (Britain / N. Ireland) are Five pounds per year waged and Two pounds per year non-waged. Membership dues are payable on an annual, calendar year basis only, i.e., there is no part-year payment.
- Dues are low and they will be used for the general administration of the organisation and publicity etc. New members will receive a membership card, a copy of the provisional constitution/rules of the WFA and a copy of our 'pilot' publication.
- Please make cheques/p.o.'s payable to “World of Free Access” and send to: D.Devine, 115 Henderson Row (1F1), Edinburgh, Scotland. EH13 5BB.
- The WFA is recruiting now. It will be formally launched as a new political party on 1 January 2000. Dues payments are for the year 2000.
Dear DB:

In reply to your DB96 letter: As we see it, your persistent effort to defend the IWW's political defense has become a grasping at straws, the "backbone" of which you advance in your introductory blurb thus: "The DeLeonist 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."

As to your suggestion that our source (the SLP publication, Daniel De Leon, the Man and His Work) is questionable—may not be an accurate rendition of the SLP's involvement in the IWW. We think the shadow you thus cast upon SLP reportage is too serious a matter to be left hanging in the air and would therefore ask that you show us where in your opinion the said source is inaccurate.

Turning to your letter and your charge that "the trouble with the book [Daniel De Leon, the Man and His Work] is that it selects what it chooses to record and makes no effort to be objective." In what way is it not objective? Do you perhaps mean that it has not been even-handed in its condemnation of the IWW for its abrogation of the political stance upon which it was founded? Has failed to report what you seem to advance as an extenuating circumstance which should soften the severity of the censure which it meted out to those who led the anti-political revolt? Quoting you as follows:

"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."

"Everything"? This is indeed news! You and we are evidently in far, far different ball parks! But suppose the said triumvirate did not really know what they were doing, were motivated solely by a desire to improve "the fortunes of the union"—solely, presumably, by a simple, unalloyed desire to increase the IWW membership. What then? Should these three be excused for their anti-political action on the grounds that they suffered from myopia? We think not. As well say they were the most innocent of men who ever led a revolutionary labor movement to its destruction.

As to the facts which we marshalled as evidence that the elimination of its political clause transformed the IWW into an anarchist organization—we are appalled by your peremptory dismissal of "most" of these facts as "irrelevant to the debate." An especially glaring case in point is your sweeping rejection of "dictionary definitions of anarchism" and your filling of the vacuum thus created with your own version, to wit, that "the major principle of anarchism [is] the abolition of the political state." But this is a very incomplete statement of anarchist ideology. A spade remains a spade. As every student of De Leonism and
the IWW will know--there is a watershed that divides De Leonism from anarchism. De Leonism insists that to overthrow Capitalism and the political state, workers must come together on the political as well as on the industrial field. Anarchism derides the political element of the equation.

(Incidentally, as to your point anent dictionary definitions of Socialism, we of course recognize this and said as much in our reply of December 15, 1993 to Harry Banks of the former De Leonist Society of the U.S.A. Quoting as follows:

"Speaking generally, we have no reservation in agreeing that much caution must indeed be taken in the use of dictionary definitions of sociological terms. At the same time we do not think a taboo should be placed on all such. In practice, therefore, we have rejected some as either ambiguous or unscientific while employing others that appeared faithful to our context."

Of a piece with your foregoing efforts to dress anarchism in civilized clothes is your statement: "Unlike anarchists, though, both the IWW and DeLeonists advocate the organization of production through a system of socialist (or collectivist) industrial unions." Here, too, your penchant for likenesses shortchanges the fundamental difference between De Leonism and the IWW--the civilized approach of the former, the uncivilized approach of the latter.

There is one paragraph in particular where you seem to outdo yourself in your efforts to put a good face on the IWW. Thus:

"Nothing in the IWW's constitution precludes its members from joining a political party including a De Leonist one nor from advocating the political [and industrial!] 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 [remains] the same."

But try tho you will, the thing will not wash. Can you not see that the very facts which you elicit in support of the IWW are facts which, upon reflection, militate against it? A union that professes a revolutionary goal, yet opens its doors to one and all irrespective of their political persuasion, can hardly qualify as a revolutionary union! What is more, tho the IWW may profess the same goal as De Leonism (the organization of production through "collectivist" industrial unions), its anarchist arsenal for the winning of it casts it outside the orbit of civilization therefore utterly beyond kinship with bona fide Socialist Industrial Unionism. For these reasons the IWW is widely recognized as being an anarchist or, more descriptively, as an anarcho-syndicalist, union.

In our opinion your attempts to prove us "simply wrong" about the IWW are, with one exception, merely a play of smoke and mirrors that does away with the anarchist character of the post-1908 IWW by simply ignoring it. That exception is your legitimate concern as to the "accuracy" and "objectivity" of our source--the SLP publication, Daniel De Leon, the Man and His Work. Under this circumstance we felt obliged to look beyond the SLP for corroboration of its findings. Two such sources came readily to hand. The first is The Origins of American

"Trautmann and St. John were not De Leonists. They agreed with De Leon only on the need for a revolutionary union; they saw no need for socialist political action: they were American anarcho-syndicalists.... At the 1906 [IWW] convention it was settled that the IWW would remain a revolutionary union. It remained to be settled whether the IWW would be a Marxist or an anarcho-syndicalist union. Two more years were required to settle that issue. In 1908 De Leon and his followers were excluded from the IWW and the 'anti-politicals' under St. John assumed undisputed control."

Quoting from The Socialist Labor Party, 1876--1991:

"The IWW Split

The growing 'direct action' wing of the IWW, hostile to political action, tried and failed to defeat De Leon and remove the Preamble's political clause at the 1907 IWW convention. A year later, the anarcho-syndicalists were better organized. Recognizing that they had a fight on their hands in the IWW, the SLP saw to it that its members and friends paid their back dues, and De Leon, Rudolph Katz and other SLP members were elected as delegates. In the West, an 'Overalls Brigade' of unskilled and unemployed workers was recruited, apparently to pack the convention. They were the prototypes of the militant, 'horny handed,' anti-intellectual wobblies that the IWW has since come to symbolize. Many of these newly-minted members knew little about the issues except for the alleged need to get rid of De Leon. The SLP, on their side, derided the 'bummery' and condemned what they saw as a dangerous trend toward glorifying physical force. The SLP felt it necessary to provide bodyguards for De Leon.

After considerable debate, De Leon was denied his seat on the basis of credentials never previously questioned. Clearly a pretext, it saved the anarcho-syndicalists from having to face a master of debate and parliamentary procedure. The SLP promptly left the convention and organized a rival IWW which became known as the 'Detroit IWW.' The original far better known 'Chicago IWW,' whose constitutional preamble no longer mentioned politics, became increasingly well known for militant strikes, free speech fights, and often violent repression by company and government police."

But while the foregoing surely vindicates the SLP record of the IWW debacle, it is puzzling to us to realize that the leniency which you presently accord the IWW is conspicuous by its absence in your above short history of the Socialist Labor Party. Have you had "second thoughts"?
If there is one sentence in your letter that would seem to typify your present attitude toward the apolitical IWW, we think it would be this one: "By dropping the political clause from the Preamble the IWW just no longer endorsed a political strategy for revolution."

"JUST no longer endorsed..."? MERELY no longer endorsed? That is, the act of "dropping the political clause" was an act of little consequence? We do not agree. We cannot see the matter in a roseate light. It seems clear to us that the aforesaid act was an act which, lifting the lid of a Pandora's box, released a swarm of anti-social forces bent on the destruction of the fledgling IWW. As to the nature and conduct of these forces, the testimony of Olive Johnson (contemporary with De Leon until his death in 1914) should serve to dispel any lingering misapprehension that the anarchist IWW was or could ever become the focal point for unification of the working class upon the economic field. Quoting Johnson as follows:

"When the I.W.W. in 1908 'settled' the question of its relation to politics by striking from its preamble 'the political clause,' it settled the question in a manner economically and historically unsuited to the conditions under which it is working and organizing, and that initial wrong has born a litter of evil consequences, so dark and foreboding as to constitute a positive danger to the wage working class of America. In view of the events of the last decade the clear, sound, and warning words of Daniel De Leon contained in these pages ring like a prophecy...."

"It was not long before the evil influence of the anarchist within the ranks of the I.W.W. began to manifest itself. The half-baked 'Socialist' elements, shaving off from the S.F., proved plastic and easily molded material by their more cunning cousin. The struggle was on within the ranks between Socialist Industrial Unionism and Anarcho-Syndicalism. How much the 'honest anarchist' was aided in this struggle by the agent provocateur, the industrial or political spy, shall probably never be known. Certain it is that the work of the latter was great. The I.W.W. was a beam in the capitalist eye from the beginning. Attacks were centered upon it, and as was only natural, the element of anarchy was instantaneously detected as the new organization's weakest spot...."

"From that time [1908] till within a few years ago the syndicalist I.W.W. has been enough in the public eye so that its escapades are pretty generally known. Utter scorn of the ballot and its 'civilized method'; advocacy of 'striking at the ballot box with an ax'; staged 'free speech' fights which really constituted a mass intrusion upon the 'sanctuary' of the jail; sneers at 'laws' and 'legal methods' bet instantaneous appeals to the law when trouble arrived; strikes that were deliberately turned into local riots; open advocacy and practice of sabotage, destruction, vengeance and criminal anarchy, if necessary; the glorification of theft and murder; constant appeals to the standards and the tactics of the brute and the savage!--such was the brief, adventurous, and sensa-
tional career of the I.W.W., aided in its downward march by
the industrial spy and the agent provocateur." --Olive M. Johnson,
in her 1921 Preface to the pamphlet As to Politics, by Daniel De Leon.

As to what value are the foregoing sordid revelations, we would
reply that their value is beyond price! For without sound knowledge
of the past, how are workers to prepare intelligently for the future?

* * *

In conclusion, Frank, let us say that while we have crossed swords
with you thus far, there is one of your views with which we are in
total agreement! This is the opening sentence of your concluding para-
graph, thus: "I believe DeLeonists should re-examine the idea that
workers will organize in SIUs prior to a revolutionary situation."

Indeed, we are tempted to think that if the bona fide Socialist
Labor Party had found an opportunity to reexamine this issue in depth,
it might well have been able to better defend itself against the re-
formist/revisionist tendencies that in the latter 1970s surfaced against
it. Be that as it may, however, there seems no doubt that whereas the
bona fide SLP had consistently emphasized the revolutionary goal,
"GRADUALISM" (the idea that workers will organize in SIUs prior to a
revolutionary situation) in the hands of the revisionists witnessed
relegation of the goal to a distant future together with substitution
of wage consciousness (organization for "something now") in place of
class consciousness (education for winning the revolutionary goal).

For the record we should add that following the founding of the
Canadian De Leonist Society twenty years ago, one of the first things
we did was put that gradualism idea under the microscope. As a result,
and with an eye on economic and political developments over past decades,
it became quickly apparent to us that genuine Socialist Industrial
Union organization in advance of the ferment of a revolutionary situa-
tion could no longer be considered a viable tactic. For this reason we
have embraced the hard-won lesson of the IWW fiasco: Educate first,
organize afterward!

Sincerely,

August 26, 1999

THE DE LEONIST SOCIETY OF CANADA

Reply to the De Leonist Society of Canada

This exchange with the De Leonist Society of Canada began with my questioning the DLS's
characterization of the Industrial Workers of the World as an anarchist organization on the grounds
that at the 1908 Convention it had removed the so-called political clause from the Preamble to its
constitution. I argued that most of the IWW faction that opposed De Leon and the SLP members of the
IWW did so for practical, not ideological reasons. They perceived the influence of the SLP and De
Leon as a deterrent to the IWW's growth. By 1908 it had become clear that the IWW was not gaining
members at the expected rate. Except for the Western Federation of Miners, already existing radical
industrial unions like the Brewery Workers had not affiliated nor had the needle trades. Also a
significant part of the leadership of the Western Federation of Miners, which comprised over half the IWW membership, favored disaffiliating.

The source of some of the opposition to De Leon and the SLP clearly originated among a small vocal anarchist faction in the IWW. Anarchists—Lucy Parsons, for example—had been in the IWW from its founding. To understand De Leon’s relationship with the real anarchists in the IWW, read the discussion published in the SLP’s Daily People from November 1906 to February 1907. This was collected and published in 1907 by the SLP as a pamphlet, As to Politics. These anarchists were ideologically anti-political. They did not include the organizational opportunists like Ben Williams, Vincent St John, and William Trautmann who engineered the action that packed the 1908 convention, deprived De Leon of his seat as a delegate, and provoked the walkout of the DeLeonist delegates.

I believe another source of the anti-De Leon/SLP opposition was hostility inherited from the split in the SLP that produced the reformist Socialist Party in 1900. A case in point provides evidence for this view and illustrates what I regard as a flaw in SLP historiography and partisan political history in general.

Briefly, IWW member Fred Thompson in his official history, The I.W.W.: Its First Fifty Years, asserts that a personal feud between De Leon and James Connolly of the SP over economic theory resulted in De Leon’s filing charges against Connolly at an IWW General Executive Board Meeting in New York in 1907. Because of the delays caused by these charges the IWW supposedly lost 12,000 longshoremen at the port of New York who had been all but organized by Connolly. An author of the SLP symposium, Daniel De Leon: The Man and His Work, mentions the same incident except that there is nothing about charges against Connolly nor the 12000 longshoremen, De Leon just appearing before the GEB to “enlighten those who needed enlightenment.” Strangely enough, neither Paul Brissenden nor Melvyn Dubofsky, two academic historians, mention this incident involving the loss of 12000 potential members who would have more than doubled the size of the IWW at the time. I’m not an expert on official accounts of IWW history nor on the objectivity of Brissenden and Dubofsky, but I can cite further examples of questionable SLP history including a pamphlet on “early efforts toward socialist unity” which manages to avoid mention of De Leon’s speech “Unity” as well as the 1917 Unity Conference with the SP. The fact is that partisan history is always questionable.

Now back to the main question: Did the elimination of the political clause transform the IWW into an anarchist organization as the DLS argues? To prove their case, it seems to me that they have to show evidence that the IWW advocates anarchy. To my knowledge no IWW literature or journals advocate anything more anarchistic than the stateless industrial union social organization that DeLeonists advocate. Both the DeLeonist and the IWW brands of revolutionary industrial unionism propose that working class build a stateless post-revolutionary society on the basis of industrial constituencies which will organize production and distribution. Certainly there is no anarchy here beyond what De Leon himself advocated in Socialist Reconstruction of Society.

Furthermore, the SLP’s official stance regarding legality and the niceties of the democratic process was not a matter of great concern to many members, at least at the local level. I can remember back in the 1940s and 50s when, as a young member, I asked my mentors in the Detroit section what the SLP would do if our class decided to take over the industries on a day other than the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November and being assured that the party would favor such action—presumably without concern for where that placed us in the relation to the “orbit of civilization.”
As to my statement that the IWW "just no longer endorsed a political strategy for revolution," I'd like to point out that there is a great difference between not endorsing a political strategy and opposing a political strategy. The fact is that the IWW did not oppose political action by its members. IWW members continued to be SP members, including Bill Haywood among others. Consider the IWW preamble as it exists today without the political clause:

PREAMBLE

The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of the working people and the few, who make up the employing class, have all the good things of life.

Between these two classes a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organize as a class, take possession of the means of production, abolish the wage system, and live in harmony with the Earth.

We find that the centering of the management of industries into fewer and fewer hands makes the trade unions unable to cope with the ever-growing power of the employing class. The trade unions foster a state of affairs which allows one set of workers to be pitted against another set of workers in the same industry, thereby helping defeat one another in wage wars. Moreover, the trade unions aid the employing class to mislead the workers into the belief that the working class have interests in common with their employers.

These conditions can be changed and the interest of the working class upheld only by an organization formed in such a way that all its members in any one industry, or in all industries if necessary, cease work whenever a strike or lockout is on in any department thereof, thus making an injury to one an injury to all.

Instead of the conservative motto, "A fair day's wage for a fair day's work," we must inscribe on our banner the revolutionary watchword, "Abolition of the wage system."

It is the historic mission of the working class to do away with capitalism. The army of production must be organized, not only for everyday struggle with capitalists, but also to carry on production when capitalism shall have been overthrown. By organizing industrially we are forming the structure of the new society within the shell of the old.

Knowing, therefore, that such an organization is absolutely necessary for emancipation, we unite under the following constitution:

I don't see anything here that a DeLeonist can't agree with.

As to the idea that elimination of the political clause put the IWW "outside the orbit of civilization" because it replaced the civilized method of the ballot to accomplish the revolution by "its anarchist arsenal," I would suggest that this is simply the factional rhetoric produced by DeLeonists during the split just as the Chicago IWW used Socialist Party rhetoric to demonize De Leon as a would be dictator etc. The fact is that there is no evidence that the IWW officially advocated violence. Unfortunately, as we all know, our rulers are only too eager to smear labor unions and revolutionary organizations with such accusations and use them as an excuse to use violent means of repression. The active organizing of the IWW, especially in agriculture and logging, during the first world war
made them the target of both police violence and political repression—the so-called “criminal syndicalism” laws. The imprisonment of IWW members, the police and employer-organized violence and murder they endured did not result from the IWW’s anarchism but from the lawlessness of the ruling class that obeys laws only when it is convenient to do so.

Now to the sources you quote: It would be interesting to know what Herreshoff means by a “Marxist” union and how, in his opinion, a “Marxist” revolutionary union differs from an anarcho-syndicalist union. As to Ben Perry’s and my book, I don’t see any difference between the position the two of us took at the time we wrote it and the ideas I have been expressing in this debate with one exception. During the intervening years I have done some further reading on the subject and feel I have a better understanding of the motives of Trautmann, St. John, and some of the SLP’s other opponents. Certainly Ben and I didn’t have any hostile feelings toward the IWW in 1991—nor do I now. In fact, last January when nine people here—most of them members of the local ecumenical anti-capitalism group I helped to organize a few years ago—needed a tenth to qualify as a general membership branch of the IWW, I joined them. So far as I am concerned the IWW has the same objective as the SLP. Both are essentially propaganda groups and I’m willing to help them or the SLP or the New Unionists or the De Leonist Society of Canada in their efforts to help working people to understand the class struggle.

(from p. 17)

The DLS answers my defense of the IWW against the charge that the removal from the preamble of its constitution of the “political clause” transformed it into an anarchist organization—and I reply. As usual we end with some notes, announcements, and short reviews.

Finances

We did very well financially since the last report, partly because of the longer time period of the report and partly because of a great increase in contributions. There is nothing new in connection with finances except that the ever increasing cost of the annual non-profit bulk mailing permit comes due in December and the post office box rent in January.

Contributions: William Stough $2; Joe Tupper $40 (for the abolition of capitalism); Tom Tully $2; Phillip Colligan $7; Karl Heck $7; Fred Whistler $4; Tom Dooley $15; John O'Neill $100; Harry Siitonen $7; Monroe Prussack $2. Total $186.

BALANCE August 26, 1999 $374.26

RECEIPTS

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DISBURSEMENTS

| Postage         | $130.00 |
Bank Charges 14.00
Printing 36.29
Postage Due 10.50
Total 190.79

BALANCE October 31, 1999 $470.47

Fraternally submitted,

Frank Girard

NOTES, ANNOUNCEMENTS, AND SHORT REVIEWS

Days of June 98 / Days of Class Struggle in Greece and Heavy Burden on Young Shoulders. These two small pamphlets (12 and 8 pages respectively) come to us from the Children of the Gallery a group in Athens, Greece, which produces occasional pamphlets in English. The former deal with the struggles against educational law 2525, which abolished the seniority-based “Education List” of unappointed teachers (numbering 130,000) and replaced it with a testing program. The resulting school occupations and riots involving teachers, teachers, and parents in twenty Greek cities during June 1998 was apparently a continuation of resistance against a series of actions by a rightwing Greek government attempting to rescind measures made a couple of decades earlier by a social democratic government to open up education to the working class. The net result had been a surplus of university graduates, 68 percent of whom worked in the public sector. Some idea of the seriousness of the problem from the point of view of capital was the socially dangerous number of unemployed and unhappy university graduates. Teachers for example had to wait ten years for a job to open up. The solution has been Education Law 2525, designed to limit the upper levels of education via testing. Much of the pamphlet details the usual role played by the unions and the political left: the Communist Party and the social democrats. Available (no price given) from TPTG, PO Box 76149, Nea Smirni, Athens, Greece.

When Insurrections Die by Gilles Dauve considers the failure of our class to move at promising moments during the past eighty years or so. He locates the cause of lost opportunities in Russia 1917/39, Spain 1936, Germany 1933, Italy 1922, and elsewhere in leadership decisions to defend the state against “fascism.” Dauve argues that bourgeois democracy is just a way station on the road to the repression we call fascism. Supporting the democratic state as a bulwark against fascism is a delusion. Capital is only too happy to hold the power of the state with the consent of the governed if that is possible. But it is willing, if necessary for maintaining its power, to call on the services of a Hitler or Mussolini or— in the more complex situation in Spain in 1936—a Stalinist dictatorship aided by the anarcho-syndicalist CNT.

As for the revolution, the author seems to emphasize that success requires that our class act to take possession of the means of production as well as mount the necessary insurrection, by which I hope the author meant such action as is necessary to destroy the state:

“What distinguishes reform from revolution is not that revolution is violent, but that it links
insurrection and communication."

Forty-three pages, free from Antagonism Press, BM Makhno, London WC1N 3XX. Antagonism Press has a website <www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/Lobby/3909> from which it is possible through links to reach the article on the Zapatistas written by Reeve and Deneuve, first published in Anarchy #46 and mentioned in this department in DB94.

Some Thoughts about On-Going Discussions in Ultra Left Milieus by Henri Simon and A Journey to Iraq by the Internationalist Communist Group are the two most recent publications of Red and Black Notes, the most prolific of English language publishers of councilist literature now that Collective Action Notes seems to have opted for the internet publication as opposed to hard copy. The Red and Black introduction to "Some Thoughts..." provides us with some much needed background on the meaning of the term "ultra-left." It derives from Lenin's 1921 pamphlet Left-Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder, written at the time of the formation of the Third International when Lenin was trying to organize the revolutionary parties and factions of the social democratic parties worldwide as an international support group for the Russian revolution. Along with this policy went a twenty-one point program that effectively intervened in the programs of the groups.

Opposition to the official Bolshevik control of the International centered in the leftwing of the Italian, German, and Dutch socialist movement and in the British and U.S. Socialist Labor Parties as well as the IWW and European Syndicalist groups. These were labeled "ultra left" by Lenin. They all still exist although in reduced circumstance. The "ultra-left" label has stuck in the case of the German-Dutch strand and the Italians although developments since the mid-1920s have created major ideological differences between the two and flaring sectarian hostilities among the Italians.

Simon's pamphlet discusses the problems revolutionary groups have in developing meaningful activity in a world in which the working class, the workplace, the processes of production, and capital itself are changing at what seems to be breakneck speed. He is especially interested in the common perception that our class is quiescent, that it has lost its militancy in protecting what it perceives as its class interests, and he devotes some space to countering the idea. The essay was first published in the councilist journal Exchanges (No. 80/81) in the mid nineties.

A Journey to Iraq, described as "A Comrade's Testimony," recounts the trip to northern Iraq (Kurdistan) by a supporter of the International Communist Group. The purpose of the trip, which took place immediately after the Gulf War, was to meet with Kurdish revolutionaries who the ICG believed shared political positions with them. Much of the pamphlet is in the form of a daily journal in which the author records his impressions of the revolutionary activity of the Kurdish "proletariat." One problem is that Kurdistan has a relatively primitive social organization. One infers that at least among the more prosperous, clan loyalties play an important part. But the division between rich and poor is sufficiently developed so that a proletarian faction has developed that can see through the nationalism and the ambitions of clan leaders of the resistance to the Iraqi state. According to the Red & Black Notes intro, "This account first appeared in Communism #7 (April 1992), the English language review of the ICG...[and includes] a vivid account of workers' councils established at the end of the war." In addition to detailing the struggles of these councils, the article provides a chronology of the events which led up to them and reports of political discussions in Kurdistan. In the appendices of this pamphlet, several leaflets and slogans used by the Shuras (workers' councils) have been included. Some of these raise questions about the goals of the Shuras. Consider "16. Long live self-determination of the Kurdish Nation."

Some Thoughts about...$2 and A Journey to Iraq $3 plus $1 postage from Red & Black Notes, POB 47643, 939 Lawrence Avenue East, Don Mills, ON M3C 357, Canada
The Remaking of the American Working Class: The Restructuring of Global Capitalism and the Recomposition of Class Terrain, by Loren Goldner is now available on the CAN website, <www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/lobby/2379>. Goldner is circulating the essay, written in 1981, for comments and criticism in preparation for “a complete rewrite and update.” He suggested that DB readers might be interested. Personally I find it very hard going, in part because it uses the specialized vocabulary of the economics profession or a faction thereof. But like my experience with the first part of “International Liquidity and the Class Struggle...” I understand enough to know that I want to read more. Consider this from the preface to the 1999 edition:

“The core of the “economic analysis of the text, the global circulation of fictitious capital and its ravaging effects on the real world, has today reached proportions which, in 1981, even I would have considered impossible.”

As I understand it “fictitious capital” refers to capital derived from credit. Before I conclude this I should admit that it is being written by someone who (1) printed off only 48 of the essay’s 70 pages before the printer failed, (2) studied only Volume I of Capital, the SLP holding that Volumes II and III were not really holy writ, having been reconstructed from Marx’s almost illegible notes, and (3) has read only the first seventeen pages and, as I said above, found those tough going. I, for one, earnestly hope that Goldner will produce an abridgment accessible to the Marxism-challenged. The 70-page essay is free to anyone who has access to the internet and a printer.

--fg