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About This Issue

DB106 begins with Part 2 of John Spritzler's antidote for the conventional view that the German working class was culpable in the Holocaust. First he traces the rise of Hitler and the working class opposition to him as well as the economic conditions that led German capitalism to turn to Hitler as an alternative to revolution. Spritzler's conclusion that the present-day use of the myth of culpability is part of a general effort by our masters to convince us that we are unfit to govern ourselves because of deep-seated criminal tendencies sounds reasonable to me. How else do we explain the media's concentration on the kind of depraved human activity that justifies prisons, police, armies, the CIA,

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ABOUT THE DISCUSSION BULLETIN

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

In the DB the often antagonistic groups that make up this sector can debate and discuss the issues that divide them and gain some understanding of their history and future possibilities. Among the latter might be movement toward at least limited co-operation.

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

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NEW DEMOCRACY, JULY-AUGUST 2000

FACING HISTORY: HOW WORKING CLASS GERMANS FOUGHT THE NAZIS (Part II)

By John Spritzler

Editor's Note: Part I of this article (New Democracy, May-June 2000) shows that the high school curriculum on the Holocaust, "Facing History And Ourselves," lies when it teaches one million students a year that most ordinary Germans supported Hitler's rise to power and the Nazis' destruction of the Jews.

ANTISEMITISM: AN ELITE WEAPON

Facing History and Ourselves identifies human nature as the source of antisemitism and other prejudices. Its resource book begins with chapters devoted to this theme. One unit on stereotypes and prejudice cites a psychologist who writes: "[W]e tend to see others as representatives of groups. It's a natural tendency...But [it] has unfortunate consequences." The resource book's introduction quotes a former student: "This course made me look inside myself. I for one know that I have felt prejudice toward someone of some other group. These things are all a part of being a human being, but cooperation, peace and love are ingredients also."

Facing History's central theme is that bigotry stems from people's nature as human beings, but that people also have the potential to resist this impulse and to act morally and courageously. This central point, however, is wrong. Bigotry does not stem from human nature; it is fomented by elites who use it as a method of social control. Facing History's description of Nazi antisemitic propaganda divorces it completely from its role as an elite weapon against the German working classes. Facing History in this way deflects attention from the real source of the problem of bigotry and blames ordinary people instead.

The key fact that makes it possible to understand antisemitism in Nazi Germany is that Nazi antisemitic propaganda was designed to shift the focus of people's anger away from capitalists. This was a time when capitalists all over the world were in mortal fear of losing power to a revolutionary working class. The enormous unemployment and economic hardship caused by the Depression were leading millions of people to question the capitalist system. Taking advantage of the fact that the Bolshevik (Communist) government in the Soviet Union was notoriously anti-democratic, capitalists everywhere used the "Bolshevik menace" to rally followers against the working class in their own countries, whose revolutionary potential is what truly frightened them.

The Nazis used antisemitism to strengthen the forces opposed to working class revolution, or "Bolshevism." Nazis lumped Jews and "Bolsheviks" together, accusing them of being a single diabolical conspiracy against the German people. When people got angry at capitalists, the Nazis singled out Jewish capitalists and in the next breath blamed "Bolshevik" workers.

In the years leading up to Hitler's appointment as Chancellor, Germany was in the throes of the Depression and the world seemed to be falling apart. Record numbers of small merchants and artisans were driven into bankruptcy by banks and big business depriving them of cheap credit and large department stores underpricing them. When small businessmen and artisan associations denounced big business, the Nazis countered that blaming fellow Germans was a "Jewish-Marxist" sham. They said the real problem was that department stores could sell cheap Russian goods because Jewish Bolsheviks exploited Christian workers to benefit German Jews.

The peasants also were being driven into bankruptcy. Demanding "free trade," big business backed government policies that forced the peasants to dump their produce for low prices, and charged them exorbitantly for loans and supplies. Police seized the possessions of bankrupted peasants. Unlike all the other parties, the Nazis organized demonstrations and violent blockades against the police and authorities auctioning off peasant property. The Nazis railed against the "fertilizer Jews," the "grain Jews," the "bank Jews," the "stock exchange Jews" and the "commodity trading Jews," but also against "Jewish Bolsheviks" to blame city workers. A famous Nazi poster attacked the working class anti-Nazi street fighters by portraying one of them protecting a Jewish financier sitting on a bag of gold labeled "War, revolution, inflation—profits of eastern Jews." The poster asks, "Is this your battle against capitalism, Marxist?"

The conservative upper classes of Germany were the backbone of antisemitism. The newspapers and institutions they controlled spewed antisemitic propaganda, and their children disproportionately joined Hitler's SS troops from the beginning. Antisemitism was used to recruit and ideologically motivate elements of the population who could be used to carry out violence against opponents of the Nazi regime.

Antisemitism, however, was not the basis on which Nazis sought support among the general public. In fact, when it came to winning middle class votes, the Nazis actually had to downplay antisemitism. In *Germans Into Nazis,* Peter Fritzsche writes: "Germans do not appear to have voted for the Nazis because they blamed the Jews for their troubles... [A]nti-Semitism played only a secondary role in National Socialist [Nazi] election campaigns. It was not the main feature in electoral propaganda or in the pages of the leading Nazi newspaper, *Volkischer Beobachter.*" William F. Allen reports the same thing in the town of "Thalburg" just prior to the Nazi takeover: "Social discrimination against Jews was practically non-existent in the town...If Nazi antisemitism held any appeal for the townspeople, it was in a highly abstract form, as a remote theory unconnected with daily encounters with real Jews in Thalburg. Thalburg's [Nazi] leaders sensed this, and in consequence antisemitism was not pushed in propaganda except in a ritualistic way."

In the hundreds of pages which Facing History devotes to the subject of antisemitism in Germany, all discussion of the role of antisemitism as a weapon in the ferocious class war raging in Germany is conspicuously missing. Helping students understand the real origin and role of antisemitism is not Facing History's intent; its intent is to use the horror of the Holocaust to convince students that bigotry comes from human nature. The implicit message, and the reason Facing History gets support from wealthy and powerful people, is that the way to fight bigotry is not to help ordinary people succeed in their struggles against elite power, but rather to admonish people to rise above their innate prejudices.

THE MYTH THAT MOST GERMANS WANTED TO KILL THE JEWS

The Facing History and Ourselves text contends that the Holocaust is proof of the latent bigotry of most people. Supposedly the Holocaust could not have happened unless most Germans wanted it to happen. But, as we have seen, Germans were sharply divided over support or opposition to the Nazis, and even among the middle class attracted to the Nazis, antisemitism was not the basis for that attraction. The wealthiest Germans, on the other hand, bankrolled the Nazis, used antisemitism to deflect popular anger away from themselves and against working people, and used terrorism against Jews to intimidate opposition to elite rule. To carry out the Holocaust, the upper class needed only to cow most Germans into obedience; they neither required nor obtained

the agreement of most Germans with their genocidal goal.

Hitler was aware of the widespread opposition to his rule and knew he had to abolish elections altogether. He suppressed his opponents with his new governmental power and then held one last election on March 5, 1933.

On February 27 the Reichstag [Parliament] building erupted in flames. Hitler declared it a Communist crime. The next day, civil liberties for all Germans were suspended – for the duration of the Third Reich. Only the Nazis and their Nationalist allies were permitted to campaign for the election unmolested, while thousands of Communist, Social Democrat and liberal leaders were arrested and beaten.

In the midst of this Nazi terror, with Hitler already Chancellor and the working class parties effectively suppressed, the Nazis still captured only 44 percent of the total vote.

After the Nazis were handed the reigns of government by the German elite, they used that power ruthlessly not only against anyone opposing them politically, but also against anyone expressing solidarity with Jews. In *The Gestapo and German Society,* Robert Gellately writes, "When it came to enforcing racial policies destined to isolate Jews, there can be no doubt that the wrath of the Gestapo knew no bounds, often dispensing with even the semblance of legal procedures. It is important to be reminded of the 'legal' and 'extra-legal' terror brought down on the heads of those who would not otherwise comply...Sometimes they [those who wanted to aid Jews] were driven to suicide."

The Nazi "Final Solution," the plan to kill all European Jews, did not begin until 1941, well into the war period. The Nazis, and the German elite that put them in power, launched World War II intending to crush any possibility of working class revolution in Europe by enslaving virtually the entire European working class. They thought they could legitimize the slavery with racist ideology.

War is the most powerful weapon that ruling classes have for commanding obedience. In peacetime the Nazis would not have been able to convince sufficient numbers of people to kill innocent people just because they were Jewish. As "leaders of the nation at war," the Nazis declared Jews to be the nation's enemy, and made opposition to the genocide tantamount to treason. Germans were drafted into military and police units and given their genocidal orders.

Most of the drafted men who obeyed their commands did so for reasons that had nothing to do with wanting to kill Jews. These men were stationed as occupying forces in Poland, Russia, and other foreign countries, surrounded by hostile populations. Breaking ranks by refusing orders meant, at the very least, implicitly denouncing the only people who provided material support and social contact far from home. Outright disagreement with the German government's war aims meant declaring oneself a traitor. Few men, in such circumstances, could imagine refusing orders from their legal government in time of war to kill those declared to be the enemy.

Because the Gestapo terror and mass arrests had eliminated organized and visible opposition to the Nazi regime and its killing of Jews, individuals opposed to the killing felt more alone than they really were, and hence lacked the confidence to challenge the authorities. At the same time, Hitler knew how little support there was for the genocide, which is why he shrouded the Final Solution in secrecy and banned public discussion of it.

The notion that the Holocaust could only have happened because most ordinary Germans wanted to kill the Jews is not supported by the weight of scholarly evidence. Yet Daniel Goldhagen, the author of *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust,* advances this notion, and has received acclaim for it in the *New York Times, Time,* and other corporate media. Goldhagen makes fraudulent

use of historical evidence to argue for his thesis. For example, Goldhagen cites "ritual murder" accusations leveled against Jews as evidence for rampant antisemitism in Germany before the First World War. He writes, "...in Germany and the Austrian Empire, twelve such trials [for ritual murder] took place between 1867 and 1914." Goldhagen, however, omitted the remainder of the sentence which appears in his source; it reads "eleven of which collapsed although the trials were by jury." As Norman Finkelstein and Ruth Bettina Birn point out, honest use of the evidence by Goldhagen would have contradicted his thesis.

If Facing History approached the Holocaust from the perspective of asking why the working classes of Germany failed to defeat the upper classes, despite the fact that they outvoted the Nazis and fought them in the streets, then it would be a valuable course in our schools. Instead Facing History misleads students into thinking that there was no substantial fight against the Nazis, or even disagreement with them, and then cynically asks students to ponder what this means about the moral character of average people.

WHY DID THE NAZIS SUCCEED IN SEIZING POWER?

What, then, does explain the Nazi victory over working people in Germany? The answer is that Nazism could only have been defeated by a popular armed revolution, and there was no democratic model of revolution appealing to the majority of Germans and no revolutionary leadership committed to such a model. The Social Democratic Party had long since abandoned the goal of revolution and committed its considerable power to protecting the Weimar republic against Communist revolution. The German Communist Party offered only an anti-democratic idea of revolution which had already proved itself a disaster in the Soviet Union.

The problem was not that the Nazis reflected the real values and goals of most Germans. The problem was that the Marxist leaders of the working class parties, the Social Democratic and Communist parties, failed to champion the revolutionary aspirations of the majority of Germans.

If the Marxists had provided leadership for ordinary people's revolutionary goals, history might have been very different. The Social Democratic Party (SDP), however, which controlled the major trade unions, acted like a special interest group and only bargained for trade-union concessions, rather than mobilizing the working class for social transformation.

In these years (that is, 1929-33) the German Communist Party did espouse workers' revolution (this changed in 1935), but the anti-democratic model of Soviet-style revolution could hardly have been expected to gain majority support. In the USSR at the time, having crushed the Workers' Opposition within the Communist Party, the Stalin leadership was consolidating its power, destroying any lingering illusions that the Bolshevik Revolution could lead to a promising new world.

THE LESSONS OF THE HOLOCAUST

The real lessons of the Holocaust are that bigotry is generated by elites as a means of social control and that there is no limit to the horrors the ruling class will impose to stay in power. Until people overthrow elite rule and create real democracy, elites can and will commit mass murder.

Facing History talks about applying the lessons of history to our own lives. But the process should go in the opposite direction. We should use the experiences of our own lives, about which we have real knowledge, to try to understand historical events about which we have only the words of others.

The lesson of our everyday experience and

the lesson of real history truthfully told is that ordinary people are the source of what is best in our world—caring relations of commitment to each other, trust, equality and solidarity. Left to themselves, regular people try to make the world better—without racial, ethnic or religious bigotry and without elite domination. This is exactly why the elite work so hard to make people mistrustful of each other. To Germany's elite in the 1930s and '40's, antisemitism seemed like a good way to create this mistrust. Antisemitism had a long history and a sophisticated, "scientific" aura based on new racial theories of "eugenics." Germans in respectable universities were taught that these were progressive ideas that would lead to a better society. Without this progressive facade, antisemitism would have remained a relic from the past.

Today crude forms of antisemitism and racism are largely discredited, so new kinds of propaganda are used. The goal of the propaganda is always the same—to blame ordinary people for problems that are in fact caused by the elite. The difference is that now the progressive facade is not about protecting society from people of this or that race or religion, but protecting it from the majority of people who supposedly have an instinctive tendency towards bigotry, and who supposedly lack the moral fortitude to do what is right.

Facing History And Ourselves is simply the newest, most sophisticated form of propaganda designed to do exactly what antisemitism was meant to do—convince us that ordinary people are the problem and elite rule the solution in creating a humane and just society.♦

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and a repressive government to keep us in line. One more thing in connection with the Hitler era: I'd like to recommend to readers the document by one Tim Mason, "The Workers' Opposition in Nazi Germany." Published in the late 70s, and online at <http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/Lobby/2379/Mason.htm> , this 18-page article defines working class of resistance to the Nazis, which the author defines as employing the tactics of political groups, the kind of activity guaranteed to bring down repression by the Gestapo. Contrasted to this is opposition, which used the traditional weapons of industrial workers: strikes, slowdowns, sabotage, boycotts and was regarded by the authorities as a labor problem and as such handled much less severely.

Next KK-Collectivities comments on Aufheben's analysis of capitalism's efforts to solve the problem of unemployed and "recalcitrant" workers, something it did here with so-called "welfare reform." In part KK's remarks center around the nature of that recalcitrance and especially the role of self organization of workers in that respect. Kevin Glover writes to dispute Derek Devine's DB104 letter, which questions the idea that the IWW is an anarchist organization. Here it seems to me that Kevin places himself at least partly on the same territory as the SLP and the DLSC, neither of which seems willing to accept the idea that an anarchist group is one that sees its purpose as that of advocating anarchism and that since the IWW doesn't agitate for anarchism, it isn't anarchist.

The four center pages of this issue consist of a New Union Party flyer designed to convince the reader that a socialist society is a workable possibility. The two-page centerfold chart was designed by the DeLeonist group, People for a New System, and first published in their journal a few years years ago. Both the New Union Party and the De Leonist Society of Canada have adopted its addition of a geographic/community dimension to socialist industrial unionism, the bedrock of DeLeonist theory. To date the mother of all us DeLeonists, the SLP, hasn't commented on this departure from orthodoxy except that the chart in its large SIU leaflet–which, if all goes well will be in DB107–continues to show the new society as organized on a strictly industrial basis.

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[The letter below by the Faridabad, India group, Kamunist Kranti/Collectivities, is a comment on Aufheben's contribution to the pamphlet *Stop the Clock!* The essay, "Unemployed Recalcitrance and Welfare Restructuring in the U.K. Today," was reprinted in DB105. A review and excerpts from *Stop the Clock!* appeared in DB104.

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Dear Friends,

Thank you for sending "Stop The Clock!". We would like to share some of our responses to your article, "Unemployed Recalcitrance and Welfare Restructuring in the UK Today", and open discussions with you and other friends on a range of issues.

On progress/gains for wage-workers

Referring to your discussion of the 'gains' of social democracy in post-war UK for workers, we take your point to be that in the context of present developments, Europe is witnessing a "reversal of the social democratic 'gains' of the past." These gains according to you are a range of phenomena associated with social democracy -- "free health care, universal welfare system, social housing" (p.13), "continually rising real wages", "trade union rights", "full employment", "wealth redistribution through taxation", etc.

The question we would like to raise here concerns what we can use as criteria for measuring 'progress', 'reversal', 'strength', 'weakness', etc. of wage-workers. Elsewhere in the preamble, you make reference to the present 'weakness' of the working class ("when the working class is weak - as we are now"). We hear such phrases quite often in current milieus and from various tendencies across the spectrum (consider such titles as *Which Side Are You On? Trying to Be for Labor When It's Flat on Its Back* by T. Geoghegan, 1992). We wish to ask in what sense you mean 'weak'. Have there been times in which the working class was 'strong', or even 'stronger'/less weak' than now, and if so, in what sense, where, and when? How do we measure this strength or weakness?

For example, with regard to alleged "rising real wages" for workers under post-war Fordism/welfare-state capitalism, we wish to discuss how such a claim is to be interpreted. Do 'rising real wages' represent improvements for wage-workers?

While not disputing the desirability in the abstract of higher wages for wage-workers, we ask: what have been the correlated processes which have occurred with alleged increases in real wages? -- Increased work intensity? The breaking up of communities (p.13)? Increased tension and depression? Wage-work by both husband and wife? Lesser number of children? Old-age homes for grandparents? Wage-work by students? Wage-work by children? Eighteen and be on your own, we can't support you! The valorization and acceptance of wage-work as a virtue?

Refrigerators, cooking gas, washing machines, flat-system of housing, TVs, cars do not necessarily mean

better conditions for wage-workers. Rather, they denote the necessity of more wage-work for wage-workers' upkeep. For example, refrigerators mean not less but more wage-work that is imposed by the accumulation of capital on both female and male partners. The time-saving refrigerators become necessities as more and more women are pushed into wage-slavery. Even as domestic slavery continues partially or completely.

A note on regions

A question arises for us as to your use of regional or national terms when describing capital and/or wage-workers. At times you use the term "UK capital" (pp.12-13) and "the UK working class" (p.14) - are these usages deliberate? These usages ascribe a nationality to capital and wage-workers, whereas we see a continual and an increasing mobility of both. In fact, it seems more necessary to us to think in terms of wage-workers-in-confrontation-with-capital in multiple, overlapping spatial contexts, e.g. laborhoods, districts, towns, cities, mega-cities, regions, nation-states, continents.

On history and its periodization

With respect to history and 'historical events', how do you assess 'strength', 'weakness', 'progress', 'reversal' for wage-workers' lives with respect to 'historic' events, some of which you refer to - Fordism/Taylorism, the world wars, birth of new nations, economic booms and recessions, the Thatcher/Reagan era, neo-liberalism, etc.? How have these events affected wage-workers' lives at large in the spaces under consideration in your article (UK, Europe, America, 'the Western bloc'), and in spaces beyond these?

In what sense can we say that the second world war was "the" turning point for "UK capital and the working class this century"? We tend to see the last two hundred years as a more or less continuous intensification of the pace and magnitude of work and the progressive deterioration of wage-workers' social worlds and daily lives, across the world. We see multiple, perhaps innumerable turning points which punctuate this narrative of decline and deterioration of wage-workers' life-worlds.

With regard to wars and their outcomes, to what extent have they acted as 'turning points' in this longer history of processes of work intensification, the instrumentalization of human relations, and wage-workers' ongoing struggles against these processes? Wars seem to have done little to impede these processes, and may indeed have given them a vigorous boost, or have aided their transfer or diffusion to other spaces (as you suggest in your discussion of the effects of the second world war on Fordism). But it seems to us that workers have engaged in ongoing daily resistances to work intensification, Taylorism, automation, regardless of or in spite of wars, national victories or defeats, wars' effects on 'union power', and so on.

Revolutions in the twentieth century as well seem only to have (willfully) intensified the pace and magnitude of work, violence perpetrated on wage-workers, the rupturing of workers' relations and worlds, etc. (e.g. Russia under Lenin and Stalin, China under Mao, Vietnam under Ho, Cambodia under Pol Pot, etc.). In all of these 'revolutionary' situations, wage-workers have also resisted these processes.

You seem to be giving a very special place to Fordism and Fordist/Taylorist production relations. We feel it necessary to ask: from the standpoint of wage-workers, what was new and significant about Fordist production relations in comparison to earlier, pre-Fordist mass production regimes? When discussing 'post-war Fordism', you refer to a regime of policies and practices which have been elsewhere termed 'the golden age of capitalism', 'cooperative capitalism', 'welfare state capitalism', etc. But it seems to us that

We are also concerned with the usage of terms and imageries of 'unity', 'solidarity', and such. The dominant meaning of these terms to us implies an oppressive unity of wage-workers in which autonomy, individuality, differences of experience, perspective, and world-view are sacrificed to the 'unity' which is in turn used to control wage-workers through a hierarchy of mediators, leaders, representatives. It is vital to ask what forms of repression, both horizontal and vertical, these terms imply and require.

When you speak of the breaking up of "working class communities" or of "old networks of mutual aid and solidarity" (p.13), or of "discreet acts of solidarity" (p.16) between Jobcentre workers and JSA applicants, it seems that you are gesturing to the more non-oppressive and potentially more emancipatory forms of association amongst wage-workers, and we would like to open up discussions and exchanges on precisely these sorts of relations which we witness all of the time but rarely draw attention to in dominant leftist discourses. These relations and activities seem to us to be of prime importance and are foundational for workers' emancipatory struggles. As to emancipatory self-activity and alternative imagery. In your preamble, you write that the contributors share "the conviction that working class emancipation will come from working class self-activity not from mediators such as trade unions which seek accommodation with capital and the state". Do you wish to say that all trade unions seek such accommodation, or just certain trade unions? Was the alleged 'strength' of the miners in the seventies produced through their self-activity or through the activities of mediators such as trade unions? Wage-workers engage in all sorts of activities, some of which are emancipatory, some of which affirm the status quo, some of which are self-destructive. It is in this complex field of activities that we must look for emancipatory possibilities. Let us discuss in detail the kinds of activities we are to term emancipatory'.

One cannot say that a struggle is 'emancipatory' without knowing what kinds of self-activity gave rise to the struggle and how self-activity is affected/transformed by that struggle. Militant struggles have too often been experienced by wage-workers at large to be engineered struggles serving purposes antagonistic to wage-workers' interests. The results of struggles in the name of higher wages, lower work load, lesser intensity of work, more security of employment have been: increased work load, higher intensity of work, increasing casual workers/contractors' workers/temps, and retrenchment of workers. It is not a rare occurrence that more money can be fought for and won in a manner which actually undermines wage-workers' self-activity. This happens when higher wages for one section of wage-workers are gained at the cost of lower wages or retrenchments for other wage-workers; when the cost of higher wages is higher workloads/speed-ups; when wage-workers are transformed into spectators/patients of the machinations of leaders; when wage-workers get caught up in various illusions about the capacity of existing institutions or organizations or leaders or styles of opposition to deliver on their desires, demands, hopes.

In this regard, we see the kinds of wage-workers' disillusionment and descent into hopelessness which we are regularly witnessing in Faridabad and elsewhere to be extremely promising. We cannot say that these disillusionments will necessarily be followed by ways of thinking, seeing, and acting which are less illusioned, less dangerous, less destructive for wage-workers, but we do see such disillusionments and disenchantments as openings, fissures through which emancipatory trajectories are also emerging.

Critiques of imageries of catastrophic revolutionary upheavals seem to us to be indispensable to -
1. Regard the self-activity of wage-workers to be of prime importance.
2. Bring the routine regularity of these activities to the fore with their capacity to make the present

wage-workers' conditions have only worsened through these periods of alleged 'progress' of capital, nations, economies, etc.

On dangerous imagery

We are concerned about certain dangerous imageries and vocabularies for thinking, seeing, and acting with regard to wage-workers' struggles. You write that wage-workers in UK have been 'co-opted', 'contained', 'bought off', that they are 'weak', insufficiently 'militant', that UK has "moved from the country leading the industrialized world in terms of strikes and worker 'bloody-mindedness' to one having the lowest level of strikes and the most cowed workforce" (p.14). You speak of the difficulties of generating participation in campaigns surrounding the dole, that "recent unemployed struggles remain weak and individualized" (p.73).

When speaking of wage-workers' past 'strength', you refer to "[w]orkers' demands for more money and less work" from the late sixties into the seventies, the 1974 miners' strike, and so on. You refer to the miners here as "the strongest section of the UK working class" (p.14). In what sense were the miners "the strongest section of the UK working class"? (p.14) We are asking: what are the criteria for judging strength or weakness? Is the level of strikes a guide to the 'strength' or 'weakness' of wage-workers? Is 'militancy' a synonym for wage-workers' strength? What is meant by "intense class conflict" (p.12)?

We seek these clarifications as the dominant meanings these terms have acquired have mixed up the acts of wage-workers with steps engineered to hamper wage-workers from acting and/or with steps to utilize wage-workers' energies for state-capitalist revolutions. We gather that wage-workers at large are walking out of arenas that transform them into audiences and are breeding grounds for leaders. Wage-workers at large are shunning strikes, demonstrations, mass meetings, pitched battles wherein they become spectators to their own slaughter. It is this that has engendered "intense class conflict" wherein each wage-worker at each place and at all times, tries various methods, individually or in coordination with co-workers, in confrontations with accumulated labour. It is this shift in workers' attitudes and strategies that has forced representatives of capital and labor to attempt such large numbers of strikes engineered to pull wage-workers into suitable arenas in which they can be dealt with. And in turn, it is the experience of this phenomenon that has made it increasingly difficult to organize strikes. Representatives of capital have to increasingly resort to lock-outs to push wage-workers (as pulling through strikes is more problematic) into suitable arenas to deal with them. Strikes and lock-outs have thus become two sides of the same strategic coin. An attempt to come to terms with 'intense class conflict' can be seen in our pamphlet, "Self-Activity of Wage-Workers: Towards a Critique of Representation and Delegation."

It seems necessary to us that we extend our recognition and valorization of wage-workers' "culture of refusal and recalcitrance" (p.2) to the arena of 'militant', 'organized', 'collective action' itself, and ask what might be the motives of wage-workers in avoiding such modes of activity. Isn't low militancy but a further, perhaps even more sophisticated, expression of the culture of refusal and recalcitrance, based on lessons learned from experiences with strikes and other 'militant' protests? Not to consider this possibility is to risk countering dominant imageries of workers as 'lazy' when they don't work with workers as 'apathetic' when they don't strike. It seems to us that wage-workers instead are increasingly seeing work as well as heroism, bravery, militancy, strikes, etc. as sources of danger and trouble, and refuse/resist these through their own steps, their own self-activity.

system unworkable.

3. Take up alternative, emancipatory alternatives as a matter of routine issues that take on an everyday flavor amongst billions of people globally.

For such emancipatory trajectories to emerge, we feel it extremely necessary to share the understandings and experiences of wage-workers' activities. We are especially interested in the question of how wage-workers in small affinity groups seek (successfully or not) to coordinate their activities with each other, without the use of representatives, delegates, mediators. (Perhaps this is what you mean by the challenge of dole-workers to "compose themselves" (p.19)). We also seek exchanges on experiences of wage-workers' routine forms of associating with each other in ways which are non-repressive and non-instrumental, no matter how fragile or ephemeral such relations might be (e.g. in friendships, families, factories, laborhoods, etc). We would very much welcome exchanges and discussions with you on these questions, based on your experiences with wage-workers in the UK and your perspectives on struggles elsewhere in the world.

With greetings,

KK/Collectivities

Dear Frank, DB Readers

I'd like to speak about Comrade Derek Devine's attempt last issue to portray the I.W.W. as historically bereft of anarchist influence. Get yer crucifix out, Derek, because I'm gonna use the A word some.

First of all, the I.W.W. from its inception was crucially influenced by anarchists. At the founding convention a delegation was sent to visit the graves of the Haymarket Anarchists thus acknowledging a continuity of ideals in the union with these fallen comrades. It might also be noted that the Anarchist Thomas J. Hagerty was vital player in the formation of the I.W.W. and was one of the major architects of the Union's industrial principles. He was also the principle author of the 1905 Preamble which drew some of its essential ideas from the Chicago Anarchists as well as that of the French anarcho-syndicalists.

Derek claims that "prior to 'syndicalism' being defined as pro-anarchist with the formation of the I.W.A.-A.I.T., the I.W.W. considered itself superior to European syndicalism for three main reasons." Before we look at these, it merits pointing out that the I.W.W. was created in 1905, a good 20 yrs. subsequent to the formation of the first I.W.P.A., of which the Haymarket martyrs were members. Syndicalist ideas date back to the days of the 1st International and anarchists were quite an integral part of their practical manifestation. In the 1890's the French Revolutionary Syndicalist C.G.T. of which a considerable number, important in its conception were ... Anarchists. Derek is probably referring to the Second International Congress of Anarcho-Syndicalists of 1922 which was formed to counter the Leninist vanguard party-dominated Red Trade Union International. No matter though. The term"syndicalist" was not a term hijacked by Anarchists, and had been used by revolutionary unionists of different stripes before the birth of the One Big Union.

1) "The I.W.W. was not anti-political, or pro-anarchist and therefore open to all workers." This is correct, but neither was the I.W.W., after-1908, pro-political. It's methods were and still are direct action. Neither was the I.W.W. anti-Anarchist any more than it was or is anti-Marxist, and this is readily palpable in much of the Union's art which incorporates Marx's saying, "Workers of the World Unite You Have A World to Win" , or for instance, references in Ernest Riebe's Mr Block cartoons to

anarchy. This diversity has always been present in the I.W.W..

2) "Industrial Unionism was considered to be a more class conscious form of organization than the local, autonomous, spontaneist forms of organization favored by syndicalists." -as if the I.W.W. never engaged in any spontaneous strike activity.

Industrial Unionism, defined by Webster's as "a labor union that admits to membership workmen in an industry irrespective of their craft or occupation," is a term which Derek is quite fond of. He cites one critic as stating that the term anarcho-syndicalism is misleading and gives the wrong impression of the I.W.W.. This is no doubt of relevant concern , but might it not also be pointed out that the term Industrial Union may also conjure up misleading images akin to A.F.L.C.I.O. type union conceptions-aligned with the U.S. Democratic Party of capital, thus giving the impression of the union as pro-political?

4 People use different terminology to refer to the I.W.W., and certainly the non-political aspect of the union and it's emphasis on direct action has anarchist attributes. When people use such terms as "syndicalist," "Industrial Union", or "anarcho-syndicalist they .are using symbols in order to describe, or represent, however inadequately, a basic idea of unionism, and it should also be added that anarcho-syndicalism is a form of Industrial Unionism.

' The crux of the matter is that the I.W.W. does not rule out the use of the ballot box by its members, but I don't think that the term Industrial Union adequately conveys this message. It is however an integral aspect of the union, whatever terminology is used to refer to the I.W.W.. On the note of a more class conscious union a quote from Fellow Worker Thomas Hagerty:"The workers must so organize in proportion to capitalist concentration in industry irrespective of trade or tool, that, when they shall have acquired a sufficient class conscious majority in every industry, they may be able to take over and collectively administer the machineries of production and distribution in the cooperative commonwealth.

3) "The I.W.W. sought to build a class conscious majority and repudiated the syndicalist reliance on a vanguard minority who would goad the masses into action when the situation was ripe." Is this really a fair depiction of syndicalism? Just numerically speaking, syndicalist unions in the early quarter of the 20th century in Italy had some 500,000 members, Germany close to 250,000, and Spain near 2,9000,000 anarcho-syndicalists-hardly indicative of vanguardist activity. These were people who believed in organizing too.

The idea that the I.W.W. is pro-anarchist, or that it is not inclined to industrial organization is as preposterous as the notion that it should dissolve itself into the I.W.A. But what of the concept of the "narrow political ghetto" Derek speaks of? Speaking from a numerical standpoint, once again, Derek's W.F.A. inhabits, at this point, a much narrower political ghetto than the anarcho-syndicalist movements do, which are in fact growing somewhat. Be that as it may, in my opinion, Derek's thoughts have some validity as far as the anarchist bent on total abstinence from voting goes. But it is not only Anarchists who consign themselves into narrow political ghettos. The concept applies equally as well to other groups in the libertarian socialist milieu. Anarchists are correct to shun participation in electoral campaigns when it comes to the parties of capital, reform socialist, or Leninist authoritarian parties, but I believe we have a blind spot when we totally rule out the possibility of utilizing a libertarian socialist party as an integral part of a comprehensive revolutionary movement to attain a classless, stateless, free society. However, if Anarchists are somewhat dogmatic on this point, it is also fair to point out that the various libertarian parties currently in existence also have their quirky theoretical and methodological stipulations which consign them to their own narrow political ghettos. They all have good ideas, but they all have notions which preclude the working class solidarity necessary to galvanize a comprehensive revolutionary movement. For instance, while Leninist parties such as Worker's World stay pretty well on the Cutting

edge of a multitude of struggles, engaging in direct action, and filling people's minds with the state capitalist agenda, the W.S.M. remains anti-direct action, and shies away from "single issue" politics as reformist, when in actuality, this aloof and abstract stance misses valuable opportunities to build bridges of class consciousness thus bringing more to our side by showing the link of single struggles with their common source, capitalism.

Even as this is being written, the W.S.P.U.S. is voting on whether or not a person can advocate any type of violence (a nebulous term,possibly even precluding self defense) and be a member. De Leonists seem to be of this same bent, totally fetishizing nonviolence and legality. De Leonists have even gone so far as to play down the importance of recent protest events, totally missing their relevance in movement building. Certainly the shop floor is of paramount import, but so are the streets, especially at this crucial stage.

The W.F.A., Derek Devine's conception talks a good game too, but Derek often expresses anti-Anarchist sentiments. Will such sentiments become the sentiments of W.F.A. as a whole, and how will this pan out at some crucial point in the future in the event that solidarity is required between syndicalist and W.F.A. unionists internationally?

My point is, that we are all in our narrow political ghettos, to the extent that we don't practice real working class solidarity and mutual aid-to the extent that we remain tied to our ideological straight jackets and fail to get solid with fellow travelers.

In my opinion we need a strong libertarian socialist party which neither fetishizes violence, but doesn't cower from direct struggle either. One which is not afraid to get its hands dirty, and which will gain the respect of the working class by struggling alongside it. Such a party is a must in order to create a comprehensive revolutionary movement. Even if the ballot initiatives fail, these endeavors will help to project the idea of Libertarian Socialism into the mainstream mind, helping to build a majoritarian movement In that direction. It remains to be seen what the aforementioned parties will do. If none can fit the bill, then I strongly recommend a new one be created that means business.

SOLIDARITY

Kevin Glover

(from p. 7)

Ron Young's DB104 article criticized Ed Stamm's assertion that some demonstrators' use of violence in last year's anti-global trade demonstration in Seattle deprived the authorities of their civil rights. It provoked. the letter from Lynn Olson defending Stamm and accusing Young of making a personal attack on him. It also accuses me of violating the DB's rule against publishing such attacks. The rule dates back about ten years to a situation when two readers decided to carry on a personal feud via letters in the DB complete with some vile name calling. I don't think that Young's article reached the level of intensity that can be termed a "personal attack" unless any criticism of a person's position on a subject can be so termed, in which case discussion is rendered impossible. Whether Young's article was 'well reasoned' depends on how you define civil rights. Did Clinton and his cohorts abroad have a civil (legal) right to bomb people in Yugoslavia? Yes. Does my criticizing their action and calling it mass murder constitute a personal attack?

The De Leonist Society of Canada continues an ongoing debate with supporters of the Socialist Party of Great Britain on the matter of economic versus political organization. I wonder whether the roots of this debate lie in the environments of the revolutionary socialist groups in 1906 Great Britain, the SIUists being stronger in industrial Scotland while the political party-oriented SPGB was centered in London, the economic and political capital of the British Empire. Clearly the matter of economic versus economic/political organization can't be settled by our debates at this stage but will be sorted out on the spot when our class will be forced to decide.

(to p. 19)

Some Basic Elements in the Form and Substance of

Economic Democracy

Where Those Who Do the Work Do the Deciding

How would a New System Change Our Lives? Let Us Count The Ways ...

One of the most beneficial changes in the new system would be the bottom line motive for production of any kind, be it services or hard goods, would be different than what it is today.

In the present system, houses, food, the clothes we wear, as well as the cars we drive, are not produced for us to use, per se, rather, these are selected for production because of the profits they bring to corporate owners. This certainly explains shoddy goods, unhealthy foods and flaw-ridden, unsafe cars.

Shortcuts in production save money and enlarge profits while safety features make production more expensive and less competitive, hence, less profitable. In each industrial and service workplace, this same mentality determines the product and the service. Recalls of autos because of shoddy parts and hurried production schedules, contaminated foods being removed from store shelves because of sloppy processing designed to shortcut health standards, and homes being built of cheap materials which translate into high profits; all this no more in a system set up for the health and well being of ourselves and the whole society. That's a most significant difference between the new people-first way, and this old capitalist way of profits first..

With the profit motive out of the way, all kinds of wonderful things become possible. Society's ownership and democratic operation of the industries and services means humane work-place conditions; shorter hours, greater buying power, and, most important, decisive input by **community and workplace consensus** as to the variety and quality of goods and services we need and want.

The idea of community and workplace control of how goods and services are produced means that we, as consumers and producers, will, for the first time in history, no longer be victimized by inferior services and products. We will be able to set the tone for our individual lifestyles.From this new system comes the opportunity to embrace several careers in a lifetime. The possibilities are mind boggling.

New Ideas Mean A Better Life

"People must make decisions in those areas where they are competent, set up communication between interrelated areas of competence, and work cooperatively together throughout the whole thinking and decision-making process." ..**Alvin Toffler**

In the new system, a completely new set of ideas would be at work in our communities and in our workplaces. **We, the People**, in our communities and at our places of work,would be empowered, by constitutional legislation, to elect administrators, managers, foremen, school principals, and community reps to industrial councils, and any other positions needed to coordinate the most sensible management of our communities and workplaces. It's a common sense idea. After all, who best knows our job needs, supplies, time and logistics, but the folks who work each day on that job?Who knows best the kinds of goods and services we need and want, but those who will use them?

. In terms of day-to-day impact on our lives, our jobs at our workplaces, probably have as much affect on our life outlook as any other organized institution. Unfortunately, it's also at the place of work where we suddenly lose our rights as citizens in a democratic society. The bureaucratic, industrial management system's pecking-order control becomes the environment. Our social status suddenly drops down to that of a serf on the Lord's fiefdom. This is most apparent and especially true in a large corporation. As a class, workers are on the bottom rung of the production ladder with little or no say in what corporate management has already decided. Not so in the new system.

New Role for Management

Economic democracy extends into every aspect of the needed industrial process. For example: Management decisions are be performed by the social groups affected by them. This means that every workplace could have regular department meetings to decide how best to meet the goods and services quotas established in local, regional and national caucuses involving all levels of community and industrial representatives. In this regard, We the People retain the power to decide what balance to have between democracy (referendums) and representative democracy (councils of elected managers).

Compare This System to What We Have Today

Here is one plan to consider as a replacement for capitalism. It is not a blueprint, rather a guideline for a new industrial organization. In this model political boundaries are replaced with industrial spheres of citizen interaction.

We vote not for political representatives from states; instead, for industrial representatives from our workplaces to coordinate our production activities with other workplaces in the same industry, and through town hall meetings, give direct input at the community level.

The new system organizes our mines, laboratories, schools, energy, communications, food, and other socially necessary industries in which we plan, produce and distribute goods and services needed for a stable and secure local and national community.

The new system forms a democratic partnership between our communities and our industries.

It works like this:

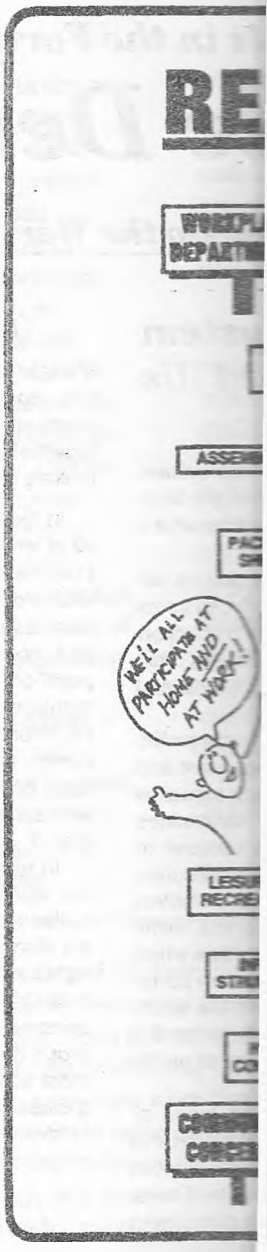
From our households and in our communities we determine our needs and wants. These are collated by elected local community councils and shared with communities that have similar local and regional needs and services.

From our places of work, we vote in our departments to elect supervisors, managers and administrators who act primarily as coordinators between interdependent job functions. They are elected to the job because they have experience in that particular type of work. Who better to coordinate a complex function than someone who has worked in and knows the process? They are not bosses. They have no hire-fire powers. Such decisions are left to department and workplace councils.

Departments interact by the direction of an elected **Workplace Council.**

Each workplace in a specific region, along with other plants connected to the same product, elect reps to form a **Regional Industrial Coordinating Council** which serves to cooperatively interact in the production process.

The **National Industrial Coordinating Council** is composed of representatives elected by workers in their respective local workplaces to coordinate the work of all the regions involved in the same service or industry.



All of society's industries
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Coordinating Council,
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This cooperative indus
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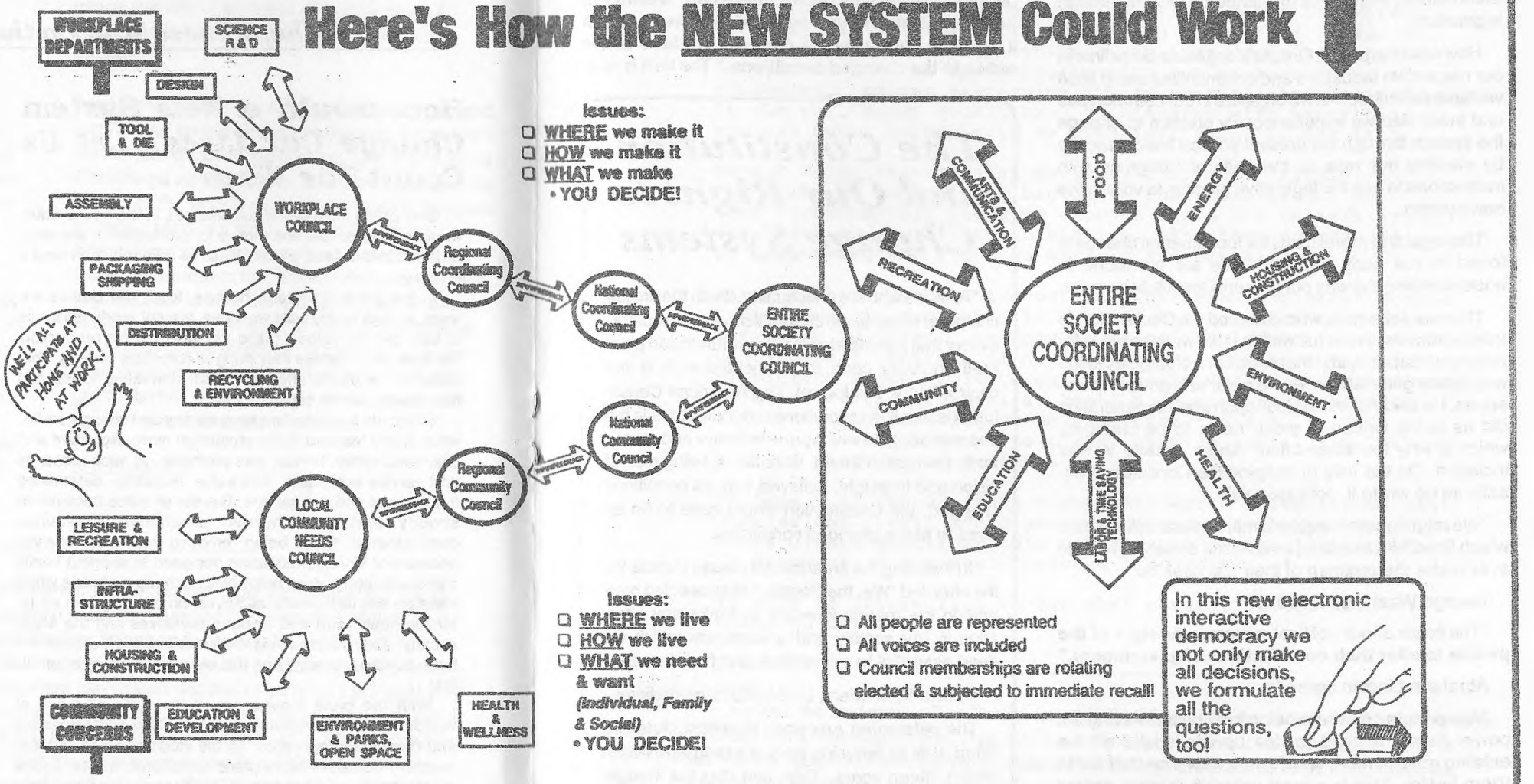
REAL DEMOCRACY:

Where the constraints of wages, commodities for sale and profit no longer apply and where production is socially owned and based on our needs & desires . . . we already have the human skills, knowledge & technology . . .

Here's How the NEW SYSTEM Could Work



All of society's industries similarly organized are coordinated in the All Society Coordinating Council, whose functions are to unify the resources and capabilities of all national production in order to meet society's requirements as formulated on the local community level.

This cooperative industrial plan has no need for politicians because there are no political separations, no artificial boundaries which divide us into counties and states. In this interactive, democratic, industrial union, The Regional Council replaces County government; the National Council replaces State government, and the All Society Coordinating Council supplants the U.S. Congress.

Priorities and policies agreed upon by the local communities will be Constitutionally-mandated to each council representative on each level of industrial organization.

All record keeping and council meetings are electronically available to all individuals and councils so every level of council deliberations is subject to constituent scrutiny.

Instant recall of council members who are not performing according to the agreed upon policies and priorities will serve to insure that community and workplace voices are accurately represented and carried out on all levels of community and industry government.

This basic plan represents a new and different concept of social interaction and responsible industrial government. For the first time in history WE will have the power to determine our own societal well-being rather than give it away to disconnected political representatives and corporate CEO's.

In the new system of social ownership WE can sensibly address problems and set priorities to clean up the air and waters, produce clean and healthful foods, manufacture safe, attractive and durable housing and transportation, and other important products and services such as health care and retirement facilities without the profit market standing in our way, and use the technology we have created to minimize the work week to a few days and the work day to a few hours, and allow for flexible career changes.

Sounds incredible? No! The only thing holding us back is our own lack of knowledge and initiative to make it happen. WE have all the tools available for our immediate use. Our class has built a modern industrial network capable of producing an abundance of products and services that can eliminate most of our present social ills in an amazingly short time.

The Legal Question

Our Constitution, the law of our land, makes it possible to have such a system. Article V, the amendment clause, enables us to change the system through legislation.

How can it happen? First, WE organize ourselves in our respective industries and communities along lines we have described. As we organize in our communities and industries we simultaneously prepare to change the system through the present political ballot process by electing our reps to the halls of Congress with instructions to use the legislative process to vote in the new system.

The legal and moral basis for fundamental change is found in our early traditions. We are not alone in understanding the way our present Constitution works.

Thomas Jefferson, who authored the Declaration of Independence, knew full well that his writings were for people of that time, and that conditions change as to the way future generations would order and govern themselves. He said WE musn't look upon what his generation did as being written in stone never to be changed, which is why the amendment clause, **Article V,** was included. On the folly of keeping the Constitution exactly as he wrote it, Jefferson said:

"We might as well require a man to wear still the coat which fitted him as a boy, as civilized society to remain ever under the regimen of their ...ancestors."

George Washington added:

"The basis of our political system is the **right of the people to alter their constitutions of government."**

Abraham Lincoln agreed:

"Any people anywhere being inclined and having the power have the right to rise up and shake off the existing government, and **form a new one that suits them better.** This is a most valuable, a most sacred right — a right which we hope and believe is to liberate the world."

Lincoln went a step further:

"This country, with its institutions, belongs to the people who inhabit it. Whenever they shall grow weary of the existing government, **they can exercise their Constitutional** right of amending it (Article V), or their revolutionary right to dismember or overthrow it."

Perhaps James Madison, the Father of the Constitution, came closest to understanding how our present form of government established over 200 years ago, would not be desirable for future generations when he declared that the time would come when **"wealth will be concentrated in the hands of the few,"** and that it would be necessary **"to readjust the laws of the nation to the changed conditions."** The time is now.

The Constitution and Our Right to Change Systems

"To those who are unacquainted with the unique character of our basic charter it may seem contradictory that a political party of revolution can plant itself squarely upon the Constitution. It is not contradictory; it is logical. The American Constitution is, itself, a revolutionary document. It is the first ever adopted which provided ways and means for its own amendment. Its authors, being men of vision and foresight, believed that, as conditions changed, the Constitution would have to be altered to fit the changed conditions.

"In inserting the amendment clause (Article V), the afforded "We, the People," of suceeding generation the means whereby to make any alteration in our society and government which we deed essential to our welfare and happiness.

"Article V, in effect, LEGALIZES revolutions.

The celebrated American Humorist, Artemus Ward, tells an amusing story of a man who was in prison fifteen years. Then one day the thought struck him. He recalled that the door was not locked, opened it and walked out a free man. Article V of the American Constitution is the open door to liberty for the American workers. It gives them the Constitutional right to unite their majority and demand that private ownership, with its evil brood of war and poverty, give way to collective property and progress."

Eric Hass

NEW UNIONIST
1821 University Ave W
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St Paul MN 55104

In DB 104 Ronald Young, in "Anarchist Principles in a Capitalist World" criticizes Ed Stamm's position on the right to the freedom of expression and then continues to accuse Ed of a variety of faults.

The "right" that Ed was describing is the right to express verbally, in writing or in speech, an opinion, a viewpoint, a belief, a concept, an attitude, an idea or an hypothesis ---however much we may disagree with the expression of that viewpoint. Ed was expressing the responsibility outlined in the well-known quotation: "I disagree with everything you say but I defend with my life your right to say it."

Ronald Young describes an entirely different "right"---- the right to exploit and brutalize the human race. He then confuses this right to express ideas and beliefs with the right to exploit and brutalize. And then accuses Ed of supporting the right to exploit and brutalize.

After confusing these two entirely different "rights" Ronald Young uses his confusion to justify his unjustified personal attack on Ed Stamm. He accuses Ed of "Leninism", of honoring hierarchical control, of self-defense as coercion and oppression, of blaming State violence on the people defending themselves, of being "...a reformist at best, a counter-revolutionary at worst, masquerading as an anarchist." and "...a part of this continuing attempt to thwart genuine social revolution." And all without any evidence.

On page 2 of the DB Frank Girard states: "...we assume that submissions...will avoid personal attacks." And on page 12 Frank Girard describes this unwarranted personal attack on Ed Stamm as "...a well-reasoned discussion..."

It will be interesting to see what personal attacks these comments may arouse.

Lynn Olson

(from p. 14)

Early in the next article, Ron Young contends that if put into operation the LTV system would deteriorate into a rationing system. And that is exactly what I believe it was designed to be in 1875 when Marx proposed it: a mechanism to contend with the age-old problem of scarcity, which the market system handled by half starving the working class. Marx and the German Social Democratic Party were as ignorant of the productive possibilities 125 years would bring as we are of the level production will reach in 2125. I suspect that a post-revolutionary society will go to free access as soon as our class recognizes the real productive potentiality of a socialist society.

Message 6 is one of the letters in the 49th digest of messages in the website of the Houston, Texas section of the Socialist Labor Party. An SLP supporter wrote to both the SPGB socialist forum and the Houston website on the subject of labor time vouchers. Adam Buick responded on the WSM forum and then, after reading the SLP response, wrote an expanded version to the SLP website. It is reprinted here with his permission; names have been changed to protect the innocent.

Question 8 from the SLP's "questions and answers" pamphlet is included to present the closest

(to p. 22)

Dear DB:

DB104 certainly contains a "mouthful" of opinions on how workers should unite if they want Socialism, prompting us to again venture into the debate.

First, as regards Adam Buick's sally against The De Leonist Society of Canada--his allegation that we shortchanged the Socialist Party of Great Britain (and its Companion Parties) vis-a-vis their declared principles of working-class revolutionary organization. Did we indeed "get it wrong"? On the contrary, with an eye upon the SPGB's **DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES**, we remain confident that we "got it right" when we concluded that "the SPGB's call upon workers is a call which has working-class political organization, not political **AND** economic organization as its aim." Buick asks, "What's the point?" The point is of course a **fact** that he appears unwilling to accept, namely, that the passage "...the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government..." is not a DLSC invention but is a **principle** enunciated by the SPGB!

Nor does Buick lend support to his allegation by attempting end runs around the said **DECLARATION**, thus:

(1) His recounting of the 1906 members' meetings "at which our position (workers should organise both politically and economically to end capitalism, but with political organisation being the more important; and that in the meantime Socialists should join the existing unions) was thrashed out..."

(2) In his comments to Frank Girard: "What they [selected passages from past **Socialist Standards**] showed is that the SPGB holds that, to carry out the socialist revolution, workers should organise themselves economically (to keep production going) as well as politically (to take away state power from the capitalist class)."

What now can be said about this turn of events? First, that long before the 1906 British conference, the American attempt to "bore from within" the existing unions had failed to convert these into revolutionary bodies. It should also be observed that the 1906 avowal that workers should organise themselves **on the economic field** (as well as on the political field) appears to have been nothing more than a flash in the pan. For one thing, it obviously failed to win inclusion as a principle in the Party's **Declaration of Principles**. For another, far from taken up in the Party's pamphlets, the **revolutionary** economic issue appears conspicuous by its absence from this medium. Merely consider the front-cover blurb of the pamphlet **TRADE UNIONS**, to wit: "A SOCIALIST ANALYSIS OF THE USES AND LIMITATIONS OF TRADE UNIONS, AND THE NEED FOR REVOLUTIONARY POLITICAL ACTION FOR SOCIALISM." Whatever happened to revolutionary **ECONOMIC** action?

There is at the same time another aspect to the issue which should be made clear. Thus the question is not merely a matter of tactics (the working class should unite on the **economic** field as well as on the political field) but is also a matter of **form** (a scaffolding upon which workers would be able to build a working-class, classwide industrial union). And here, in his comments to

Girard, Buick discloses an SPGB policy which we would deem lamentably shallow, thus:

> "Precisely how workers organise themselves economically will be up to them and there is no reason to suppose that they will follow the SLP blueprint [the Socialist Labor Party's **Socialist Industrial Union** plan formulated by De Leon] as to how they should organise."

It should of course go without saying that if workers decide to organize themselves it will be "up to them" to decide **HOW**! However, how are they to resolve the question of **HOW** unless they have plans to choose from? We hold that it is the duty of political organizations flying a socialist flag to have plans for socialist reconstruction constantly on hand for workers' consideration. For what is the alternative? Is the working class to find itself planless in the throes of a socialist political victory thus helpless to defend itself against the "mercy" of an outvoted capitalist class? (Incidentally, we should note that the DLSC voice is not the only voice that has been raised to uncover this weakness in the SPGB's platform! Quoting from Girard's **"Reply to Adam Buick"**: "In fact, to my mind, failure to have any plan for the socialization of production is the major flaw in the SPGB plan for socialism.")

Moving ahead now in an attempt to deal with the difficult question of the **State**. Thus:

(1)--What's to be made of Buick's assertion:

> "If Frank chooses to call any democratic organisation on a geographical basis a 'state' that's his right. Obviously it's not our definition, but he ought to be consistent and also accuse the DLSC of wanting to continue with the state since they too (correctly) see that a democracy based on geographic constituencies can exist independently of the state."

--and Girard's reply:

> "Adam...attributes to me the belief that any territorially based political entity is a state. And certainly SLP study classes of my day [and our day] implied as much. The social organization of society on an industrial basis advocated by the SLP was contrasted to the geographically based economic systems (slavery, feudalism, capitalism) that succeeded the tens of thousands of years during which our species lived under the kinship-based structure of primitive communism."

What a dilemma! What an apparent contradiction! How could the State (a "territorially based political entity" which through long historical ages has served in one form or another as a **ruling-class** instrument)--how could this entity seemingly defy logic by serving as a shell for socialist political democracy? How indeed? The conundrum seems solved with the realization that the social or anti-social nature of a State is not a question of the intrinsic quality of the State's "machinery" but a question of **who is in control of the said machinery?**

(2)--Connecting the foregoing to Buick's previously-quoted rendering to the effect that "...the SPGB holds that, to carry out the socialist revolution, workers should organise themselves economically (to keep production going) as well as politically (to take away state power from the capitalist class)." At the risk of belaboring the point that we have stressed time after time: How can workers "keep production going" let alone "take away state power from the capitalist class" if the capitalist class remains in control of the industries and services? To reaffirm what we said in our October 13, 1999 response to C. May:

> "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 indispensible for socialist victory--an integrally-organized Socialist Industrial Union of workers prepared upon a socialist political mandate to immediately **TAKE, HOLD, and OPERATE** the nation's industrial complex for society-as-a-whole!"

The De Leonist Society of Canada
P.O. Box 944, Station F
Toronto, Ontario M4Y 2N9

Sincerely,
THE DE LEONIST SOCIETY OF CANADA

(from p. 19)

thing to an official position of the SLP on the matter of LTVs available to DeLeonist spokespeople in the post WWII period. What bothers me most about it is that I never before noticed the contradiction in the first paragraph, which seems to say that money will be abolished but that LTVs will serve as money and be exchanged for goods and services. We always denied the charge that LTVs were just another form of money. John Ahrens' letter takes issue with SPGB writers who, he claims, have influenced the SPGB and presumably the WSM to disregard its earlier position that the political state will die out gradually after the revolution and adopt the view that it should be abolished immediately, the belief also held by the DeLeonists.

As usual we end with some notes, announcements, and short reviews.

Finances

For the DB there has been no evidence of an economic recovery although to date we have not had to downsize the staff or cut wages. I have decided to forego my annual bonus this year, though. Costs continue to rise. Our post office box rent rose from $40 a year to $55, first class postage went up one cent to 34 cents, and our monthly bank service charge is now $9 instead of $7.

Contributions: Pat Murtagh $10; Joe Tupper $20 for the abolition of capitalism; Mardon Cooper $2; John V. Craven $7. Total $39. Thank you, comrades.

BALANCE	December 24, 2000	$ 374.32

(to p. 30)

Labor-Time Vouchers and Compulsory Work: A Continuation of Capitalist Oppressions

And now for an anarchist communist perspective on the whole sordid mess of labor-time vouchers and compulsory work. While Marx's critique of the dynamics of capitalism may have been on the mark in many ways, his ideas concerning the actual transformation from capitalism to communism leave much to be desired. Marx the philosophical visionary was, unfortunately, a rather inane social revolutionary strategist.

Marx Not An Infallible Prophet

The entire labor-time voucher (LTV) concept is fraught with all sorts of pitfalls. First, it would entail the creation of a huge plodding bureaucracy to manage the entire mess—from keeping track of individual labor-hour credits to cutting the "checks" to determining the "value" in labor hours of each product and service. Second, the inherent inequalities built into the system, which Marx himself confesses to in The Gotha Program, would soon deteriorate into a multi-level rationing system leading to more built-in disparity between various categories of workers than the system of rationing used by the Bolsheviks (which at one time consisted of as many as 14 different rationing categories).

Marx didn't live to see the Russian revolution and how easily some of his revolutionary ideas degenerated into counter-revolution. On the other hand, the anarchist communist Alexander Berkman was an eyewitness to the degeneration that occurred in the early days of the Russian revolution. His take on what happened under the Bolsheviks is a harbinger of what can and will happen under a disparate LTV system:

> Such methods were unjust and vicious: they immediately created material inequality and opened the door to misuse of position and opportunity for speculation, graft, and swindle. They also stimulated counter-revolution for those indiferent or unfriendly to the Revolution were embittered by the discrimination and therefore became an easy prey to counter-revolutionary influences. (The ABC of Anarchism, Chapter 12).

This is the opposite effect of LTVs from the one expected by the DLSC of "safeguarding" the new social order. I will return to this position of the DLSC in a moment, but would first like to address some of the other points discussed.

LTVs Originate From a Capitalist Mindset

The positions posited by Frank, the DLSC, and even Dmitriy Fomin, revolve more around semantics than actual substance. First, Frank's distinction between exchange function and exchange principle attempts to get around the fact that under the LTV system there is an exchange taking place within a market context. The distinction is made that there are no individual owners, buyers, or sellers and therefore this isn't a "market." Frank states that"the individual producers in a socialist society ... will simply be taking their rightful share of the social product, not buying it." He goes on to say, "They, as part of society, are already the owners" (DB105,pg. 21). How so? If I'm already the owner then to whom am I presenting my LTV in order to receive goods and services from the "common store"? In this case, being a part of communist society I am part owner of the social product. An owner is entitled to his part in proportion to how many other owners there are, not according to how many hours he worked. It goes without saying that in a non-market society there will still be an exchange of goods and services. How else would the metal fabricator obtain toilet paper? But such exchanges do not involve "equal value." But that's not what's happening with LTVs. If the LTV system is not a market system then it's at least a veiled attempt at instituting a system of compulsory labor. We then see how easy it was for Marx's theories to degenerate under the Bolsheviks. More on compulsory labor in a moment. Otherwise, if I am an "owner" of a portion of the social product in the strictest sense then I'm automatically entitled to my portion.

The problem here is that in The Gotha Program Marx himself seems incapable of breaking free from a capitalistic, monetarist perspective. When he writes about "Communist society ... as it is

just issuing out of capitalist society," he is saying that all of us will naturally retain a capitalist mindset until it gradually fades away through succeeding communist generations. Thus, the need to mimick certain capitalist features such as equal-value exchange. This is, of course, complete nonsense. Under the first phase of communism, according to Marx, the ownership has changed from individual to collective (more on the concept of "collective" in a moment), but there still remains a medium used for equal-value exchange. The medium has merely shifted from money to LTVs. Though we now have what is referred to as the "common store," we must still "buy" what we need, exchanging labor time for an equal value in products and services. Here's what Marx says:

> ... with this cheque he [the worker] draws from the common store as much of the means of consumption as costs an equal amount of labor. The same quantity of labor that he has given to society in one form, he receives back in another form. (Workers' Literature Bureau, Australia ed. 1946).

Whether or not this constitutes a market in the strictest capitalist sense is besides the point. It still simulates market activity in so much as the worker is required to make a payment for the goods and services he receives. Marx has merely substituted one form of worker slavery for another where the capitalist (and also Bolshevik) credo still holds true: "Whoever doesn't work, doesn't eat." In appearance the form has changed, but in essence it remains the same.

I won't bother to discuss the convoluted process required in determining the "value"of each product or service in labor hours, or what strange apparatus could be used to "deduct" labor hours for the "social fund." The whole idea is absurd. But I will put forward the comments Berkman makes concerning the use of labor-hours as a standard for determining the value of something:

> Value is what a thing is worth.... What a thing is worth no one really can tell. Political economists generally claim that the value of a commodity is the amount of labour required to produce it, of "socially necessary labour," as Marx says. But evidently it is not a just standard of measurement. Suppose the carpenter worked three hours to make a kitchen chair, while the surgeon took only half an hour to perform an operation that saved your life. If the amount of labour used determines value, then the chair is worth more than your life. Obvious nonsense, of course. ("ABC", Chapter 5).

Marx Does Enunciate a Two-Phase 'Transition' in The Gotha Program

Concerning the "first phase" and "higher phase" of communism which Marx writes about, the DLSC injects the Leninist terminology into the picture in an attempt to make the case that there is not a two-phase transition enunciated by Marx in The Gotha Program. Sure, Lenin ran his scam using the word Socialism to describe the first phase (which Russia supposedly had entered) and Communism to describe the higher phase (which Russia would attain to in some distant future).

While Lenin used this terminology to cover-up the fact that Russia was neither socialist nor communist (which I agree both mean the same thing), this does not detract from the fact that Marx does describe two phases of communism. Marx, in his discussion on the "proceeds of labor," takes us first to a system of LTVs (or cheques), which mimics a market system. Then, only after "all the springs of social wealth flow more abundantly" does he make the "transition" to the higher phase of communism where the social product is distributed "to everyone according to his needs!" Thus, society passes from a market system (or pseudo-market if you prefer) to a free access system, which amounts to a transition from one fundamentally different system to another. Changing the names of the phases doesn't change this fact. A hog by any other name still smells the same.

LTV Schemes Represent Continued Worker Oppression

As I previously stated, I see the entire LTV scheme as a veiled (or perhaps not so veiled) attempt at instituting a system of compulsory labor. In The Gotha Program, Marx seems to be most concerned with initial scarcities of products that could result soon after the new communist society "is just issuing out of capitalist society." I make this assumption because of what Marx says in his

concluding remarks on the subject:

> In the higher phase of Communist society, ... when, with the development of all the faculties of the individual, the productive forces have correspondingly increased, and all the springs of social wealth flow more abundantly—only then may the limited horizon of capitalist right be left behind entirely, and society inscribe on its banners: "From everyone according to his faculties, to everyone according to his needs!"

While it's possible that after the upheaval of the social revolution the forces of production may be disturbed to a point that requires temporary rationing of scarce items, I fail to see the benefit or necessity of carrying forward some of the most unsavory aspects of the capitalist wage-slave system, chief among them compulsory labor. Berkman puts it succinctly when he says:

> The social revolution, it must never be forgotten, is not to alter one form of subjection for another, but is to do away with everything that can enslave and oppress you. ("ABC", Chapter 9).

According to Berkman:

> [The Bolshevik system of compulsory labour] was impractical because it required an army of officials to keep tab on the people who worked or didn't work. It led to incrimination and recrimination and endless disputes about official decisions. ("ABC", Chapter 12).

This brings us back to the DLSC's position concerning the need to "safeguard' the new social order," and what I said earlier about LTVs degenerating into a compulsory labor system. The DLSC says:

> If you throw labor vouchers overboard, how then will you prevent the aforesaid slackers [the old parasite class] from continuing to take what they want from society untroubled by the necessity of having to work for it? (DB 105, pg. 21).

In other words, the DLSC stands by the Bolshevik-established principle that "whoever doesn't work, doesn't eat." And one of the ways that the Bolsheviks arrived at this principle is very possibly Lenin's reading of Marx's The Gotha Program and its pronouncement that "The same quantity of labor that [a worker] has given to society in one form, he receives back in another form." Yet the Marxists are always shaking their heads about how Lenin misinterpreted and twisted what Marx wrote. It could be that in some instances, as this shows, Lenin was following to the letter what Marx said.

Once again, Berkman, who was there as an eyewitness, has something to say about this:

> A rational community will find it more practical and beneficial to treat all alike, whether one happens to work at the time or not, rather than create more non-workers to watch those already on hand, or to build prisons for their punishment and support. For if you refuse to feed a man, for whatever cause, you drive him to theft and other crimes—and thus you yourself create the necessity for courts, lawyers, judges, jailers, and warders, the upkeep of whom is far more burdensome than to feed the offenders. And these you have to feed, anyhow, even if you put them in prison. ("ABC", Chapter 12).

Which goes to answer the DLSC's question, "how then will you prevent the aforesaid slackers ... from continuing to take what they want ...?" To a large degree you won't. But a system of free access also won't allow the emergence of robber barons and greedy hoarders. A system of free access has never been alleged by anarchist communists to mean back-up to the warehouse and empty it out. Through compulsory labor schemes, however, you will only drive some people into stealing the necessities of life and helping in the fomenting of counter-revolution. In the process you will continue to re-create many of the same oppressive institutions, as Berkman points out, that now function to repress workers under capitalism. And in doing that, just what kind of social revolution did you actually achieve?

Frank's Garden Revisited

Frank's garden analogy is wrong in that it uses a "collective" garden as opposed to a "communal" one. Collectives occur in market economies and consist of a "collection" of individuals who are

basically involved in some type of "employee-owned" enterprise. But that's not what communism represents. Under communism, it's not a matter of simply changing "ownership" from individual to collective (though most industrial unionists seem to subscribe to such myopia), but requires a fundamental change in the relationship, the social relationship, between the "common owners." The garden becomes a communal operation and the relationship of the workers to one another changes from disconnected individuals bound by a contract to each being a member of the same extended family—the family of communist society. This may sound simplistic but is a distinction of fundamental importance.

If the relationship of the workers is one of family, then the method used to determine how much of the social product each receives would be according to need, not to the amount of labor-time invested. Most people wouldn't allow their relatives to go naked, hungry, or homeless just because they may be "slackers" or didn't work hard enough. Anarchists communists believe that the social revolution entails a complete re-evaluation of our relationship to work. Part of this consists in reducing necessary work to the absolute minimum, something that runs contrary to a system of consumption based on labor hours worked. If some people don't want to work we need to understand why and deal with it in an egalitarian manner, not through compulsion.

I tend to agree with Frank that "the problem of scarcity ... has been solved planet-wide" (DB 105, pg. 21). People aren't starving, naked, and homeless today because of a scarcity of resources. The problem arises from capitalism's drive for profits which dictates that even abundant resources be provided only to those people who have the money to pay for them. If, on the other hand, the "garden" has a limited quantity of produce that won't meet the needs of each family member, then the practical thing to do is ration equally or "in proportion" to each person's needs. Berkman presents us with the anarchist communist perspective:

> ... when the social revolution attains the stage where it can produce sufficient for all, then is adopted the anarchist principle of "to each according to his needs." .... But until it is reached, the system of equal sharing, equal distribution per capita is imperative as the only just method. It goes without saying, of course, that special consideration must be given to the sick and to the old, to children, and to women during and after pregnancy.... ("ABC", Chapter12).

Conclusion

As I previously stated, there's more to communism than simply changing the ownership of the means of production. To achieve the social revolution requires a complete realignment of many of our social relationships and a complete re-evaluation of every aspect of our lives, including how and why we consume our resources the way we do. This goes beyond merely reconfiguring the means of production and then everything else will just fall into its rightful place.

Marx believed that we must first go through a transition period, which is best described as pseudo-capitalism, where we must mimic and/or retain certain aspects of capitalist society until the "old ways" fade from our minds. Maybe he's right to a certain extent. The early days of the social revolution may require some rationing on our part. But we can still move ahead to anarchist communism without having to resort to coercive means such as compulsory labor and the continuation of the capitalist principle of equal-value exchange. To say that we cannot immediately proceed to a full-fledged free access,egalitarian system because of our residual mindset is a cop-out that sounds amazingly similar to Lenin's scam that communism in its complete form will always be somewhere in the future.

Marx found himself incapable of escaping completely from a capitalistic mindset and believed the rest of us would act accordingly. Not so. We can take the time now to educate ourselves about how an anarchist communist society will function. But that takes a willingness on our part to break free from the old ways of exploitation. The task at hand is formidable but not insurmountable.

Ronald A. Young, #625541, 8500 N. FM 3053, Overton, TX 75684-6008.

MESSAGE: 6, Digest Number 48, <SLP-Houston@yahoogroups.com>

Date: 29 Jan 2001
From: Adam.BUICK@cec.eu.int
Subject: Labor Vouchers

Apparently I've been corresponding with you guys by proxy, but Sam has shamed me into entering the lions' den to face you myself. So here's a considered criticism of the proposal for a labour voucher economy. Please excuse the English spelling (though I'm writing from Brussels, Belgium). As I understand it, the basic idea is that people's entitlement to consumer goods and services should depend on the number of hours they work. In return for working so many hours, they will receive a voucher entitling them to withdraw from the distribution centres goods up to an equivalent labour-time value. It's a simple idea at first sight, but implies one thing which is not at all simple: setting a labour-time price for all consumer goods and services.

Working out how much labour time vouchers to give to a producer will be simple enough. It would just be a question of measuring how many hours and minutes they work. I imagine that these days they wouldn't be given a paper voucher but an account at a labour-time "bank" and a plastic card. There are some problems here, one of which Paul's Human Nature Objector wouldn't like at all: everybody's contribution would be measured simply by the time they spent at the workplace, regardless of their particular skill or even of how hard they worked. The Human Nature Objector rushes in here of course to protest: "In that case, why would anyone train to be a machine-setter when he or she could get the same for being a simple labourer? Why work hard when you won't get any more than the slacker on the next machine or digging the next ditch?" Another problem will be who will verify this presence at work and just how detailed will it be (will time be deducted for arriving late, going to the toilet, going out for a smoke, etc?). Presumably there'll be some control by the local industrial union, but what's to stop them all conniving together to exaggerate the hours put in by all of them (that would be "human nature", according to the Objector). So the local industrial union would have to be controlled by the regional industrial union, and already the bureaucracy is beginning to build up.

But this will be nothing compared to the bureaucracy that will be needed to fix centrally the labour-time price of every single consumer good and service. In the SLP model, presumably this will be done centrally by some Central Labour-Time Accounting Office in Washington DC which will make the old Gosplan in Moscow look like small fry. There are theoretical problems as well as practical. What would go into fixing the labour-time price? You can ignore the different contributions of skilled and unskilled labour when calculating entitlement, but not when calculating the labour-content of a product. A product produced by a skilled worker in an hour contains more labour than one produced by an unskilled worker: an hour of haircutting does not produce as much labour-time value as an hour of watch-making. And then, what will be taken as labour time?. Actual labour-time? Average actual labour-time? Or socially necessary labour-time? Actual labour-time would be the easiest, or rather the least complicated, but if adopted this would encourage slow working, since the more time spent making something the higher would be its price. Average actual working time would get round this problem but would involve a huge amount of statistics gathering and calculations. Socially necessary labour time would be out as this cannot be calculated in advance but can only be established, as Marx pointed out, on and through the market. To encourage productivity, the solution would probably be to fix the labour-time price slightly below average actual labour time. But the theoretical problems are not over yet. Charles quoted from an old SLP publication that estimated it took 90 hours of labour to produce an automobile. But is this, the amount of labour from start to finish or just the amount of labour added at the final stage of production?

It makes a great difference. If it's the former, ie including past labour, the amount of labour-time vouchers issued to workers is going to be less than the total labour-time prices of all goods and there'll be a problem of "underconsumption". So, it'll have to be the latter. Or, alternatively, only consumer goods would have to be taken into account, and then what about those who only make producer goods that go into other producer goods. I'm not saying that a solution couldn't be found to this problem, but I don't know of any SLP study which suggests one.

But there are other problems. If both "underconsumption" and "inflation" are to be avoided, the face-value of the total number of labour vouchers issued must exactly equal the total face-value of all the consumer goods in the distribution stores. But what about those who can't contribute anything to production, because they are old or sick or handicapped or nursing children? They'll have to be given vouchers, but this will have to come out of the vouchers given to those who do show a presence at workplaces. That means they will no longer be getting "the full value of their labour"; they'll be a deduction from it. The easiest way would be to do this directly at source but another would be to raise labour-time taxes. And what about collective services like hospitals? And where will the resources to expand the means of production comes from? As I said, solutions to all these problems are imaginable on paper, but would the end result be something we could recognise as socialism? The only detailed study I know of is the "Fundamental Principles of Communist Production and Distribution", produced by some Dutch Council Communists in 1930 which can be seen at <www.geocities.com/Athens/Aegean/6579/ > This is written from a different angle than the SLP, and in fact was put forward to avoid the charge of excessive bureaucracy and centralisation, but it ends up proposing what amounts to a decentralised, market economy based on a circulating labour money; what the DeLeonist Society of Canada has described as "market socialism". Is that a term you'd go along with?

I don't think that either the SLP's centralised model or the Dutch Council Communists decentralised model would amount to the abolition of the wages system. In the end, they retain this, the only difference being that workers would be paid in labour-money rather than conventional money as today. This incidentally was pointed out by the anarcho-communist Peter Kropotkin in an article in 1880 that later became Chapter 13 of his "The Conquest of Bread". This chapter, which makes some telling points against the labour voucher system (especially that, production being socialised, it is just not possible to measure an individual worker's contribution to production), can be found at: <http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist_Archives/kropotkin/conquest/ch13.html> I only need add that my view is (1) that the exact method of distribution in the early days of socialist society has to be left to those around at the time to settle through whatever democratic institutions they set up and in the light of existing circumstances, and (2) that free access/free distribution should be the goal to be attained as soon as practical. I'm not saying that we should necessarily go over to free access from Day One, but we should try to as quickly as possible and, until we can, some combination of free distribution with rationed access to any goods that might be in temporary short supply would be better than labour vouchers. Sorry for being so long-winded but I wanted to present a proper criticism and explain why I used the terms "currency crankism" and "seems to be dogmatic" in relation to your scheme. Thanks for listening.

Adam

[The question and answer below are taken from the 1967 printing of The SLP pamphlet *Socialism: Questions Most Frequently Asked and Their Answers*. Written by Eric Hass, it was withdrawn from circulation in the late seventies but remains, so far as I know the SLP's official word on labor time vouchers except for relevant material in De Leon's *Fifteen Questions About Socialism*, first published as a pamphlet in 1914 and now either withdrawn or out-of-print. fg]

8. How will people be compensated for what they do under Socialism? Will there be money?

There will be no money under Socialism. With the abolition of private ownership of the means of production and production for sale and profit the need for money as a medium of exchange will disappear. With the establishment of a system of production-for-use, labor-time vouchers, which the worker may exchange for goods and services, will take the place of money.

Accordingly, under Socialism the worker will receive a labor-time voucher from his union showing that he has worked a certain number of hours. This time voucher will entitle him to withdraw from the social store as much as he contributed to it, after the necessary deductions are made for replacement of wornout equipment, expansion of production, schools, parks, public health, etc.

Since under Socialism the means of production will be collectively owned (as they were cooperatively produced in the first place) "deductions" for maintaining and replacing them actually will not be deductions. And since the schools, parks, medical services, etc., will be for the use of all, neither will these really be deductions. In short, since the workers under Socialism will collectively own the tools of production, the social services, and everything else, making deductions for their maintenance and/or replacement, etc., simply will be providing for themselves, exactly as they will be providing for food, shelter, clothing, etc. Thus the workers will receive directly and indirectly all that they produce. Marx explained the use of labor time vouchers as follows:

". . . Accordingly, the individual producer gets back -after the deductions-exactly as much as he gives it. What he has given to it is his individual share of labor. For instance, the social labor day consists of the sum of the individual labor hours; the individual labor time of the single producer is the fraction of the social labor day supplied by him, his share of it. He receives from the community a check [or voucher] showing that he has done so much labor (after deducting his labor due to the common fund), and with this check he draws from the common store as much of the means of consumption as costs an equal amount of labor. The same quantity of labor that he has given to society in one form, he receives back in another form." - ("The Gotha Program.")

Dear DB,

In #105 of the DB, Bill Martin of the SPGB along with Adam Buick and others shows a lack of political understanding by their conference resolution passed in 1984: "This conference confirms that socialism will entail the immediate abolition of–and not the gradual decline of–the state." To me, Marx and Engels had a better understanding of the political process with their view of the "withering away of the state."

The only immediate abolition (by parliamentary means) will be the end of capitalist political power and control of the state, which will be taken over by the socialists in power. The SPGB's Declaration of Principle #6 explains that. And again (to my way of thinking) there is no role to play for the SPGB, or any other political socialist party, after victory at the polls,–except for them to ward off any interference or threats while the socialist workers go about the business of democratically building a socialist system of society. I have held these views for over sixty years. If I am mistaken, I stand to be corrected.

Sincerely, J. Ahrens (2559 Gravely St., Vancouver, BC, V5K 3J5 Canada)

(from p. 22)

RECEIPTS

Contributions	$ 39.00
Subs and Sales	39.00
Total	$ 78.00

DISBURSEMENTS

Postage	$ 137.00
Bank Charges	18.00
Printing	36.29
Postage Due	7.80
PO Box annual rent	55.00
Total	$ 254.09

BALANCE February 20, 2001 $198.23

Fraternally submitted,
Frank Girard

(from p. 32)

a list of books for sale $2 (USA), $3 (Canada), Free to Prisoners, $2500 to cops – from Green Anarchy, PO Box 11331, Eugene, OR 97440. <greenanarchy@tao.ca>

Educate Agitate Organize. " News from the Boston-area IWW Education Workers" #4 Summer 2000. This two-page flyer provides readers with a long rundown on the struggles of education workers in–I'd guess–every country on earth with a CNT union in the education industry, among them France, Sweden, Morocco, Spain and Italy. Along with this is a caledar of events in Boston. Free from EWIU 620, PO Box 391724, Cambridge MA 02139. <ibekken@bari.iww.org>

–fg

NOTES, ANNOUNCEMENTS, AND SHORT REVIEWS

Socialist Internet Forums. Readers with internet access will be interested in the debates among supporters of the "Impossibilist" strand of non-market socialism. Both the World Socialist Movement (The Socialist party of Great Britain and its branches worldwide) and the DeLeonists: the Socialist Labor Party and unattached DeLeonists participate. To reach the WSM forum: <WSM_Socialism_Forum@yahoogroups.com> To reach the DeLeonists: <SLP-Houston@yahoogroups.com> WSM is much the larger and older; its most recently posted digest (group of messages–14 in this case) is No. 595 (2/24/01). SLP-Houston, established quite recently, sent out its 63rd digest, numbering 4 messages on 2/24/01. Topics range widely. A major topic recently has been that labor time vouchers (witness a message borrowed for this issue of the DB.

Chain Reaction #5, ("Unshackling Captive Minds") is rapidly becoming a major voice in the struggle of imprisoned members of the working class in Texas. Describing itself as abolitionist, not reformist, its writers employ a more intense tone in their call for revolution, reflecting, I suppose, both its anarchist orientation and the desperation that imprisonment creates. This 30-page issue contains articles on imprisonment as a manifestation of fascism, repression in prisons, and prisons as a control mechanism used against the whole working class. In my estimation one of CR's best characteristics is its willingness to name the enemy: capitalism. Active in CR are two frequent writers for the DB, Ron Young and Gulf Coast Red.. $2 from South Chicago ABC Zine Distribution , PO Box 721, Homewood, IL 60430.

Clamor: A Loud and Continued Uproar (No. 1, Feb and 4, Aug-Sept, 2000) is a glossy, bimonthly, 88-page anarcho-cultural review of U.S. culture. These two issues suggest a liberal/radical political stance comparable to that of *Z Magazine* or perhaps *The Nation*. The only name I recognized among the contributors was Peter Werbe of *Fifth Estate*, but *Clamor* differs from *Fifth Estate* in not endorsing the primitivism I associate with FE. Among the articles in these two issues are an interview with Howard Zinn, "Who Controls the Future Controls the Past," an essay on "The Ethics of Owning Your Own Business," "Support the Anti-Voting League," and "Reclaiming Radical History in the Labadie Collection." Back issues and single copies $4, $20 for a 6-issue sub from Clamor Magazine, PO Box 1225, Bowling Green, OH 43402. <clamormagazine@hotmail.com>

Kate Sharpley Library has been a very active publisher of anarchist historical material for the past several years besides maintaining an archive of such literature The DB recently received the following note: "This is to let you know that the Kate Sharpley Library now has a base in the United States.

We have a huge archive of newspapers, pamphlets, journals, private letters, manuscripts and ephemera to do with the history of anarchism. Our aim is to encourage comrades to use our resources as much as they can. We are affiliated with no institution and run totally on a volunteer basis. We receive no grant of any kind and can only rely on you to support history the lost anarchists, those ordinary people who made up the movement. Unheralded and unsung (even in so-called "histories" of anarchism) their story needs to be told.... We publish a regular bulletin and a host of pamphlets. Finally, please buy our pamphlets. You can get them from us or AK Press in Oakland. We send all our material free to prisoners.

In Solidarity and Friendship, **Kate Sharpley Library, PBM #820 2425 Channing Way, Berkeley, CA 94704** <kslaw@earthlink.net>

AK Press 2001 Catalog is now available from 674-A 23rd Street, Oakland, CA 94612 E-mail <akpress@akpress.org> and in the UK. from PO Box 12766, Edinburgh, Scotland EH8 9YE E-mail

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<ak@akedin.demon.co.uk> This year's catalog is bigger and better than ever: 172 pages with an average of perhaps 20 items to the page. Besides listings of "gear" as well as videos, audio tapes, pins, posters, and bumper stickers, seventy-five of these pages list non-fiction with sections devoted to such writers as Howard Zinn - 7 titles; Karl Marx - 4; Rosa Luxemburg - 6; CLR James - 8; Larry Gambone - 11; Sam Dolgoff - 6; and Noam Chomsky no fewer than 36. This issue also includes three pages of magazines, Nothing from our political sector as far as magazines are concerned although "Situationism" lists over a page of titles.

Charles H. Kerr Publishing Company has published its 2001 catalog. Now 114 years old , CHK was the premier radical publishing house in the first two decades of the last century. It published the first edition in English of the three volumes of *Capital* shortly after the turn of the century. Labor history buffs will recognize some of the authors it lists: Gene Debs, Mother Jones, Elisabeth Gurley Flynn (before her transfer of allegiance to the CP), Walker C. Smith, and William Trautman and events like the history of the Pullman strike, as well as recent titles: David F. Noble's *Progress Without People: In Defense of Luddism* and *Eagle Forgotten: The Life and Times of John Peter Altgeld.* Kerr is also the major publisher of Surrealist literature in the U.S. This catalog–like AK's above– is worth getting just to see the amazing variety of books and pamphlets available. Charles H. Kerr, 1740 West Greenleaf Avenue, Chicago, IL 60626 <info@kerrpubco.org>

Green Anarchy is the most recent publication from the Free Commune of Eugene, home of the black-clad primitivists. Issue no. 4, Spring 2001 is an unpaginated 16-page tabloid with no inhibitions about advocating direct action to make a point or to help get it across to the powers-that-be. In that connection several pages are devoted to such actions both here and abroad. One, titled "ECODEFENSE!!!" describes recent actions and gives readers the addresses of three major groups: North American Earth Liberation Front, North American Animal Liberation Front, and Genetix Alert. Surprisingly, in my estimation, several pages are given over to anarchist theoretical writing by, among others, Bob Black, whose article is entitled "Anarchism and Other Impediments to Anarchy." All this and Prisoner News and

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