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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Reflections on elections

Murray Bookchin is one contemporary thinker and writer who comes close to us on a number of key points. He stands for a democratic society of common ownership where there'd be no production for profit, no working for wages and no money and where the principle "from each according to their abilities, to each according to their needs" would apply, even if he doesn't call this socialism (though he might if you got him into a corner).

There are differences of course. For instance, whereas we still see the working class (in the broad sense of everyone obliged by economic necessity to sell their mental and physical energies for a wage or salary) as the agent of the revolutionary change from capitalism to such a society, Bookchin has come to the conclusion that the agent is the municipality or rather the federation of municipalities that have come to practise direct democracy (town meetings, citizens' assemblies, etc).

Bookchin himself is a wordy writer, but fortunately his views have been well summarised by Janet Biehl in The Politics of Social Ecology: Libertarian Municipalism. Although he now prefers to call himself a "social ecologist" or a "libertarian municipalist" he still regards himself as an anarchist. Despite this - and this of course brings him closer to us than to classical anarchists - he envisages both participating in local elections and a future society having a written constitution that would provide for, among other things, majority decision-making:

"It is highly unlikely, when libertarian municipalists demand that existing municipal governments surrender their powers to citizens' assemblies, that those governments will accede. libertarian municipalists should therefore run for local elective office themselves, so that ultimately they can change the city charter to create fully empowered citizens' assemblies at the expense of the State."

An anarchist who believes in contesting elections is indeed a rarity. In fact, many anarchists would regard this as a contradiction in terms and would, on this ground, deny that Bookchin really is an anarchist.

The standard anarchist argument against the revolutionary movement contesting elections, local as well as national, is that this inevitably leads to it becoming reformist; revolutionary MPs and local councillors, whatever may have been their original intention, end up merely administering capitalism at local or national level. This, they claim, can be seen from the history of, first, the European Social Democratic parties which once claimed to be Marxist and, more recently, of Green parties which said, as in Germany, that they were only going into parliament to use it as a tribune from which to proclaim the need for an ecological society. When, however, it comes to explaining why this happens they fall back on the lame explanation of "power corrupts".

We can agree that this is what happened to these parties but offer an alternative explanation: that such parties went off the rails because they advocated reforms of capitalism and not just its abolition. The originally Marxist Social Democratic parties had in addition to the "maximum programme" of socialism what they called a "minimum programme" of immediate reforms to capitalism. What happened, we contend, is that they attracted votes on the basis of their minimum, not their maximum, programme, i.e. reformist votes, and so became the prisoners of these voters. In parliament, and later in office, they found themselves with no freedom of action other than to compromise with capitalism. Had they been the mandated delegates of those who voted for them (rather than leaders) this could be expressed by saying that they had no mandate for socialism, only to try to reform capitalism. It was not a case of being corrupted by the mere fact of going into national parliaments but was due to the basis on which they went there and how this restricted what they could do. In short, it is not power as such that corrupts. It is power
obtained on the basis of followers voting for leaders to implement reforms that, if you want to put it that way, "corrupts".

Bookchin accepts the classic anarchist argument as far as participating in national elections is concerned. As Biehl argues for him:

"If history, from ancient times to the present, has demonstrated anything, it is the implacable fact that State power is corruptive: that an individual who takes State office is inexorably refashioned by that office into a creature of the State, regardless of his or her idealistic intentions."

His answer, as to how to prevent a revolutionary movement that contests elections going reformist, is that it should not contest national elections but should restrict itself to contesting local ones. Apparently power only corrupts beyond the local level. The trouble is that his mistaken explanation as to why the old European Social Democratic parties went off the rails--corruption through mere participation in state institutions--leads him to propose the same tactics, even if at local level only, that in our view led to these parties becoming openly reformist.

In his view, at this stage contesting elections can essentially only be an exercise in political education, of getting ideas across. We can go along with that. In fact it is why we contest elections today knowing perfectly well that we have no chance of getting elected. But then Bookchin and Biehl say:

"The electoral platform should consist of a series of demands that represent the aims for which the group is fighting - above all the radical democratization of the municipal government through the creation of citizens assemblies. But it is not enough merely to call for direct democracy; the platform should offer the steps by which that goal can be met. Indeed, it should make a series of clearly specified immediate demands, then place them in a radical context by tying them to the longer-term goal of fundamentally transforming society. For libertarian municipalism is a revolutionary movement, not a reformist movement, and it aims not to reform the existing system but to replace it with a liberatory one. In programmatic terms these immediate and long-term goals can be called respectively minimum and maximum demands. Minimum demands are those that are immediately realizable within the existing system; they are specific and general; they comprise concrete. Maximum demands, by contrast, are more the rational society that the group hopes ultimately to achieve."

Exactly the same division of their programme into a maximum and minimum one as the old Social Democratic parties, and which led to their downfall.

On at least one occasion Bookchin has put his money where his mouth is and put up candidates at local level - in Burlington, Vermont, in the US in 1989. The electoral programme of the "Burlington Greens" is reproduced as an appendix to Biehl's book. The programme begins by denouncing the grow-or-die nature of capitalism (referred to as the market economy) but, without even stating the full alternative (the so-called "maximum program, ") rapidly moves on listing some "stepping stones" to where they want to go:

"A community-controlled municipal financial resources and low-interest loans for the purchase and repair of homes and for the initiation of innovative ecological housing projects for low-income groups. Bond issues and changes in local tax structures, to provide for as much housing for the needy and elderly as is necessary. A direct network between farmers and consumers to foster local agriculture. Municipal acquisition of open land to be held in public trust for recreation, gardening, and
We can only describe this as a common-or-garden reformist programme.

So, although we share with Bookchin the view that revolutionaries should contest elections, we part company very rapidly when it comes to the programme on which to do so. While we advocate only socialism and nothing but (the so-called "maximum programme", if you like) Bookchin wants to seek a mandate on the basis of a programme of reforms of capitalism. In our view, this would lead to pure and simple reformism. People would vote for the immediate reforms of capitalism not the maximum programme of replacing it, and any "libertarian municipalist" elected to office would find themselves the prisoners of their reform-minded voters and would end up participating in the government of capitalism at local level, just like the other Greens Bookchin and Biehl criticise.

In any event, Bookchin is being inconsistent in advocating contesting local elections but not national ones and has provided no explanation as to why power at national level corrupts while power at local level doesn't, especially as local councils are part of the state's administrative structure and local councillors and mayors are little more than elected state functionaries.

Actually, we agree with Bookchin that power at local level doesn't have to corrupt. It is possible to envisage a movement at local level (as he does) that would be based on delegate democracy, where those elected to the local council would be the mandated delegates of those who voted for them, being accountable to them and subject to recall if they failed to carry out their mandate. But we go further. We can't see anything to prevent this applying to elected representatives of the revolutionary movement above local level too: why couldn't (in the US context) State congress members also be subject to such democratic control? And why not federal congress members too?

Because Bookchin does not believe this to be possible he proposes an unnecessarily dangerous strategy for getting rid of capitalism: confrontation with the state. He envisages that when sufficient municipalities have been won over to the cause of "libertarian municipalism" they should take on the capitalist state, defying it, refusing to implement its decrees and even forming local citizens' militias to defend themselves if necessary (decidedly, Bookchin's Trotskyist past is coming back to haunt him in his old age). Given that for such a scenario to succeed a majority of the population would have to support "libertarian municipalism", all this would be unnecessary. Being a majority they could use their votes not just to win control of municipalities but of States, regions and provinces and the national state itself.

At the very minimum this would prevent the forces at the disposal of the central state from being used against the local councils. But, more positively - since there is no reason to suppose that power necessarily corrupts - it would provide a framework for a less disruptive, more orderly transition from capitalism to a classless, stateless, moneyless, wageless society of common ownership and democratic control.

Bookchin's attempted distinction between local and central state level does not hold water. If power doesn't corrupt at local level - as it doesn't have to, if organised on the basis of mandated and recallable delegates - then it won't automatically at state level either. On the other hand, if, as we contend, "a reform programme corrupts" it will do so just as much at local as at central state level.

Bookchin's formula of only contesting local, but not national, elections on a reform programme is not the right one for avoiding reformism. The correct formula is contesting elections at national and local level but only on the basis of delegates being given an imperative mandate for the sole purpose of carrying through the formalities involved in winding up capitalism.

Adam Bulck

(From the August 2002 Socialist Standard, 52 Clapham High St. London SW4 7UN, England)
HOW TO GET EVERYTHING FOR FREE!

The time has come in the history of our species when it can get everything it wants for free. Yes, you heard me right, for free!

Technology has evolved to the point where there is no reason why food, clothes, housing, medical care, education, transportation, computers, books, CDs, digital connections, cannot be freely available to all human beings on the planet. It is time for such a change. And we are urging our fellow humans to organize to bring about this new world, which is no pipe dream, but a logical outcome of our technological progress as well as our desire to live a fuller, freer, life.

Many of us are used to campaigning for, or at least voting for, different politicians to run our political and economic affairs for us. We find that our lives do not change at all after each election. The leaders often do represent differences in how much money should be spent on the military, on the environment, on education, and the like but when we get right down to the nitty gritty we find our lives are fundamentally the same no matter who we vote for. We still have to work hard (some of us in more than one job) to raise enough money for our families and ourselves. Our lives are still ruled by the alarm clock, traffic congestion, budgeting, saving, praying for an economic miracle when we spend more than we earn, and by the stress that our working lives produce for us. Ever wondered why our lives are so similar no matter the outcome of the elections? The reason is that the market system itself, based on buying and selling, operates by its own laws. So when politicians say they are going to reform it for the better, they are not telling the truth. There is nothing they can do to stop recessions, or to significantly improve the value of our wage or salary, or to meaningfully reduce the prices of the things we need to live. In other words, the economy controls them - just the way it controls us.

You see, the companies that produce all the things we require must compete to save as much in production and to make as much from the sale as they can. The value of the things they produce is roughly determined by the amount of labor it took to make the things, including the costs of feeding and housing the employees (wages), of the rent, of the electricity, and other miscellaneous expenses. The value of our wage or salary is also determined by roughly the values of the educational and other living needs we possess that allow us to work five days a week for our employers. That can't be changed much. Our unions can work for small increments here and there, yes, but they can't work for, say, five times the value of our wages and what we would really like to earn to buy all the things that would make our lives fuller and less stressful.

It would therefore be true to say that money itself prevents us from having what we need. There is no technological reason we cannot have all the food and clothes and other important things we need to live absolutely for free—if the whole community owned the farms, food plants, clothing factories, and all other workplaces where wealth is produced. The only reason money exists is so that the owners of these places of work can generate profit to live off, the value above our wages and all other production costs from the revenue obtained from sale.

Although our culture likes to think of itself a possessing many classes (e.g., the middle class), that is really a lot of nonsense. There are only the class of people living off rent, interest and profit, and the class (most of us) who lives by working for wages or salaries (a fancy word
wages that are paid once or twice a month instead of every week). So the wealth accrues to the population in only those two ways, the vast majority of us only earning wages or salaries. While there are always failing businesses whose owners fall into the work class, the capital class tends to make the most money, while the work class tends to make the least. That is always how it is going to be, as long as money exists. No politician can do a thing about that. Even in the countries our media incorrectly call "socialist" or "communist" like the old USSR, or England under the Labor government, or China or Cuba today, the laws of value still apply. Most people in those countries are work people who are paid wages that they must budget all their living expenses out of, while a small clique lives abundantly. Although, theoretically, one can become President, the Prime Minister, or some other fancy name for Head of State even a Manager or Chief Executive Officer for some giant multi-national, living off high salaries and million-dollar bonuses, we all know the chances of that happening!

The truth is that real socialism or communism has never existed. It means a society in which the means of producing wealth are owned "socially" or "in common. Obviously if the state owns the railroad that does not mean all the people do, unless they get to ride it for nothing. The government owns the Post Office in the United States but you still have to pay for stamps, don't you? Government ownership in countries such as ours merely means that the capital class decided that there were industries that the could all benefit from, or share the expenses for, as a class like the post office, most roads, state hospitals or the military. But in countries like China where the government owns most of the industries, there is a whole class of bureaucrats who live off the fat of the land, just like here.

Our revolutionary movement - one of ideas, no violence - consists of working people from around the world who feel that the time is ripe for us as a species to finally own the means of producing wealth collectively. In such a society we would no longer need money. Everything really would be free, but that obviously doesn't mean it would work if we were all hoarding ten times more than we needed. But we believe that hoarding behavior is more likely to occur in an economy of scarcity rather than one of abundance. For example, in today's American economy, most of us can afford basic foodstuffs like bread, so we don't store 600 loaves at a time in our freezer, do we? That is because we know we can always get more in the supermarket. Real socialism or communism will be like that. Knowing that we can get what we need for nothing, we will hoard much less (if anything) than we do even now in our cluttered homes where today we keep every piece of rubbish we bought in case we need it again and would have to pay dear money for it a second time! When wealth is held in common, we believe that without the impediment of financial cost limiting efficiency and progress, our society will be able to recycle at an almost 100% capacity. Greenbacks prevent us from having a truly green society. The beautiful visions of ecologists remain pure pipe dreams as long as we inhabit a world in which the economy commodifies nature and in which the most idealistic reforms are going to cost money. The class-based money economy remains the true obstacle to all other technological and social advances that we could have today, to the type of society of peace, abundance, ecological balance, and creativity that we find is achieved on Earth only in Star Trek The Next Generation. Make it so!

A planet-wide society based on private or state property is also divided into nations. It causes war, terrorism, starvation, child labor, ecological devastation, racism, sexism, shoddy goods or waste through planned obsolescence that the market requires companies too produce
for their economic survival - and totally useless industries that squander our planet's resources while not producing anything, such as those industries that revolve around advertising, selling, buying, banking, ticketing, investing, brokering, insuring, militarizing, policing, governing, managing. Think of the millions of wasted buildings, or the vast supply of wasted energy, resources and human lives that are entailed in these useless occupations - useless from the point of view of producing wealth, although, of course, the market system requires them, and that is one reason it is so wasteful. When we own the means of producing wealth as a community, we won't need those industries anymore because goods and services will be free. So we will require far less resources and energy than we do now to produce much, much, more. We will probably only need to work about a day or two at most per week to produce a lot more wealth and get everything we need. But since we are not a lazy species (except when forced to work or do anything else), we will probably choose to work more (though there will be no law saying we have to, since without property even law itself will be redundant). We will probably want to spend the remaining five days of the week in athletic, creative, intellectual, social, sexual, scientific or other pursuits, depending on our talents and interests.

Imagine actually being happy and secure in our world. We have the technology to liberate our lives, yet we find ourselves working many more hours each day for our masters than the feudal peasants did to support theirs. Our amazing technology is rapidly developing into the future, yet our social organization based on working people and employers, buying and selling, money, and nation-states, is from the primitive past and is still around today, holding us back! Capital society is only a few hundred years old. Before that, most of humanity lived in feudal societies with kings and queens, in slave-based economies, or in tribal systems (some of which did possess relatively communistic organizations, but they could not prevent the advance of capital society and the turning of their common land into a vast commodity or into production sites for other commodities). And while capital society helped to abolish feudal privilege and slavery, and to usher in our scientific progress, it also caused destruction on an unimaginable scale. Why, in the last century alone, hundreds of millions of lives were lost to war and starvation, and that doesn't even count the billions who were either unemployed or employed in totally useless occupations or living in squalor.

It is now time for us to harness our technological progress and use it for the common good. You think we are going to achieve critical social, spiritual and technological advancements in a society based on wage-labor, or in which we do not produce important inventions or innovations because they are too expensive, like we do today in our society of strife and want? If we did bring about a society of common ownership, we could abolish world hunger in months, poverty in weeks, and war immediately. We could organize our society democratically to produce all the goods and services we need, producing to meet needs rather than for sale. Using our computer technology to record needs and the use of world resources, we could live in a society without poverty of any kind and with relatively less stress (the psychologists tell us we function at our best with moderate stress, presumably not the extreme stress our lives in capitalism produce which has created the entire mental health industry in the first place!). With employment abolished, we could spend more time in stimulating activities that will feed rather than starve the human spirit. When the health of our ecosystem returns, and the quality of our food improves, when we live more in harmony with our planet and with ourselves, will our mental and spiritual health not also greatly blossom?
These ideas have been around for the last 150 years or so, and they have been growing slowly but surely, largely in the industrialized areas of the world. Most recently, this understanding has been healthily spreading in Russia, India and in many countries in Africa. More and more humans are awakening to the promise of a world that can truly be called theirs. They are awakening to their own power, and they a demanding the world for themselves. This is the unfulfilled religious dream of a “brotherhood of man” (and of woman!) that we believe can only be realized by political organization, rather than by prayer. Many scientific ideas have taken entire generations, even millennia, to be accepted, such as the idea that we are not at the center of our solar system. We do not know when our ideas of liberation from the market system will begin to spread like wildfire across the lands. But we believe that the experience of our lives forges our ideas, and that the more people live in this violent and unsatisfactory social world the more these revolutionary ideas will be accepted as common sense and be seized upon. We invite you to consider the carefully, not as followers but as fellow citizens. And when you are ready, we invite you to join us. Change occurs as quickly as an idea travels. Speed the day!

To learn more about world socialism, visit our international website at www.worldsocialism.org

(From p. 2)

About This Issue

DB115 begins with an especially interesting article from the Socialist Standard, interesting because it involves not only the question of the post-revolutionary state but also a group we have always counted as a part of the spectrum of non-market, anti-state groups that the DB serves: Social Ecology, the libertarian municipalist group led by Murray Bookchin. The article is actually a review by Adam Buick of The Politics of Social Ecology: Libertarian Municipalism by Janet Biehl, a longtime member of Social Ecology. The review turns on Buick’s rejection of Bookchin’s explanation for the decay of social democratic governments: that they are corrupted by state power. Biehl’s book is available from AK Distribution.

Next come two leaflets. The first is a general leaflet pushing the socialist case as envisioned by the World Socialist Movement (WSM) and designed for mass distribution to a general working class crowd. The leaflet by New Internationalist was written for and distributed at a rally of members of an education union and deals with the issues that caused the protest but ends with what amounts to a call for revolution.

Daniel De Leon edited The People for over a decade before the SLP began advocating socialist industrial unionism and became involved in the IWW. This essay is a sample of his work at that time and is taken from an anthology of “socialist” works used in a college course. Someone sent it to me and I lost track of who it was. De Leon also figures largely in the essay by Dallas Reynolds, whose critical attitude toward the SLP came into full bloom during the heyday of the dissenting DeLeonists in the early 1970s. When it was first reprinted in the DB in 1984, I expected a strong reaction from the more orthodox DeLeonists among the subscribers, but no replies were forthcoming.

In the first of this crop of letters Robin Cox takes to task Charmian Skelton for her criticism of Pieter Lawrence’s article in DB114. It strikes me that Lawrence’s suggestion meshes well with what some of us DeLeonist regard as a distinct possibility: that our class will anticipate the revolution that abolishes capitalism worldwide by abolishing it in their workplaces. Adam Buick writes to contradict Richard Lloyd’s DB114 letter in which he seeks to refute the idea that the Communist Manifesto ends with a list of measures that are distinctly state capitalist.

(to p. 11)
How About A United Struggle Against School Site Cuts and Layoffs?

The LA Teachers, preK-12, and other school site employees face big uphill battles. Vicious cuts, totaling several hundred million dollars per year will both directly and indirectly attack the education of the students in the classrooms and our livelihoods. The political lieutenants on the LAUSD School Board have received their marching orders from the Republican and Democratic "bi-partisan" politicians. The Demopublicans in turn have gotten their orders of the day from the ruling class-- "Our capitalist democracy is going into deeper crisis and We the very Wealthy demand that the working class and their children pay even more dearly to bail out our profit system."

The Board is playing good cop-bad cop with us. Genethia Hayes got $800,000 in corporate money to win her seat. Caprice Young and Mike Lansing received nearly $500,000 each to win their Board seats. The other 5 members of the Board have also had their palms greased by corporate loot, if only to a lesser degree. Whether the cuts come by 4-3 vote or 7-0 votes the brutal cuts are being ordered up because the schools are geared into the needs of the market system. The system is splitting workers out into unemployment offices and onto the streets in droves to help the corporate "bottom lines", their sagging profit rates. Investment in educating working class youth is not deemed necessary because now it will not help to bring in high enough profit rates. This is what democracy (for the rich) looks like!

Two years ago the state of California had an $11 billion budget SURPLUS. But after the energy corporation bosses got to operate their "deregulation" program through bribes, hoarding and price-fixing, exacerbating the "energy crisis", this SURPLUS has been cleaned out, and now California has a near $23 billion budget DEFICIT! The "bi-partisan" Demopublicans in the Legislature "deregulated" the energy corporations giving them license to hoard supplies and fix prices almost unanimously back in 1996 with AB 1890, etc. By year 2000, the budget surplus was just "manna from Heaven" for the corporate energy giants like Reliant, Duke, El Paso, PG&E, etc, and lets not forget Enron. Gov. Gray Davis received over $1,300,000 from Enron in 1998-1999 alone. The State Legislators received collectively tens of millions more.

Today, Gov. Davis has the gall to tell us to just keep voting, work harder, and get shafted, "...When there are hard years, we have to do what everyone in the private sector does--tighten their belt. " Oh really, Governor? Is that why corporate CEO (Chief Executive Officer)pay soared over 20% in year 2001 to a median of over $10.3 million/yr in the 267 largest US corporations? (USA Today, 3/25/02) These bosses have really tightened their belts, so that's why they get nearly 400 times the pay of an average worker!

The State Legislature may be about to pull yet another fast one on us. Now they want to judge Proposition 98 basic school funding percentages. The Schools may no longer get 40% of the total general funds/yr, but only 35% instead. (LA Times, 4/16/02, Pg. 139).

The unions are of course loyal to the wages system and do not want to 'rock the boat.' They accept the bosses' propaganda that workers must sacrifice, ("United We Stand!") for eventual economic recovery. They think cuts-layoffs might some day be rescinded. Up to now, they have not bothered even to demand taxing the rich a bit more even to soften the cuts because they know full well that any capitalist 'recovery' means the workers/students must be shafted first. The only tax increases the Governor and Legislature
propose are increased taxes (user fees) on workers.

Don't we, the rank and file, have to take the initiative to have meetings, to educate and organize for mass actions, to spread the struggle on a working class basis? We possess the potential collective power to challenge both the rules and the rulers' profit system itself. To advance, and prevent more routs, don't new political and industrial organizations need to be built up?

New Internationalist/ Journal of US Workers' Voice/$2-copy/
Box 57483, Los Angeles, CA 90057 6/1/02

(From p. 9)

Joshua Freeze takes issue with Mouvement Communiste's criticism of the Global Justice (anti-globalism movement) for its failure to emphasize the underlying capitalist cause of global problems. Some time ago Mouvement Communiste sent the DB an essay introducing the group, which is one of several left communist organizations in the non-market part of the political spectrum.

Next Ron Cook attempts to straighten out Charmian Skelton on the subject of post-revolutionary education. "Internationalists' Discussion List" is taken directly from the Summer 2002 issue of Red & Black Notes. <intdiscnet@yahooogroups.com> joins the WSM's <WSM_Forum@yahooogroups.com>, the SLP's SLP-Houston@yahooogroups.com>, and the Communism List's <Communism@lists.econ.utah.edu> as internet forums aimed at spreading the ideas of non-market socialism.

"Connexions" raises a statistical point about the proportion of slaves to free men in classical Rome. Does anyone remember where in Marx or Engels writings alternative stats are given? Jan Pole, a WSM supporter, wrote the next essay, which first appeared on the Communism List. I was especially taken with it because it clashes with the idea that is rampant among Grand Rapids Greens and anarcho-communitarians that our efforts should be directed to creating a network of self-supporting market oriented communities. They argue that small scale capitalism is a less destructive virus than the large corporate variety. Next is the flyer for an "open conference" for anarcho-syndicalists interested in organizing the U.S. movement. As usual we end with some announcements, notes, and short reviews.

Finances

So far as the DB is concerned the recession is over. We have seen two successive months of improved business and that would seem to confirm this view.

Contributions: Carl Heck $7; Joe Tupper $20; Richard Evanoff $10; Lila Holmdahl $12; Frank Girard $22; Jim Plant $10; David Lieberman $2, Monroe Prussack $10. Total $93. Thank you, comrades.

BALANCE June 26, 2002 $ 229.61

RECEIPTS

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(Top p. 22)
A Re-Declaration of Independence

Declaration of Interdependence by the Socialist Labor Party

Daniel De Leon, New York City (1895)

WHEN IN THE COURSE OF HUMAN PROGRESSION, THE DESPOILED CLASS OF WEALTH producers becomes fully conscious of its rights and determined to take them, a decent respect to the judgment of posterity requires that it should declare the causes which impel it to change the social order.

More truly can we say of our plutocracy than our forefathers did of the British crown that "its history is one of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these states." Let the facts speak.

The foundation of the Union was coeval with the birth of the modern system of production by machinery. No sooner was the federal Constitution adopted than the spirit of capitalism began to manifest its absorbing tendency and corrupting influence. Every new invention was looked upon, not as a means of promoting the welfare of all, but as an instrument of private profit. Every tract of fertile land belonging to the states was appropriated by individuals, regardless of the rights of future generations. Every public franchise of any value was given away to "enterprising" persons and companies.

Thus was already formed in those early days, a privileged class, whose wealth was derived from the labor of others; this growing monopoly of the means of production and exchange, by placing a steadily, increasing number of disinflicted workers in its dependence for employment, strengthened its hold upon the public powers, which it used more and more unscrupulously for its own aggrandizement.

Even such a public calamity as war was turned by that selfish and unpatriotic class to its own enrichment. By their labor alone the working people not only provided their own sustenance but supplied the means of supporting armies, recruited from their own ranks. Yet, from the fact that the instruments of production were the private property of individuals, the product itself was also the property of those individuals, who stood between the people and their government. For that part of the product which was required to carry on the war, the nation, therefore, became indebted to capitalists, who availed themselves of the public needs to exact exorbitant prices, further increased by the depreciation of the currency or of the interest-bearing bonds in which the war supplies were paid for, and which would some day have to be redeemed at par. In other words, during and after a war the capitalist class cost to the country several times as much as the enemy. So did the promises and purposes of the Revolution immediately prove abortive. While the fundamental law declared that the Union was formed "to establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty," free scope was given to an economic system replete with injustice, pregnant with the seeds of domestic strife, destructive, of every true element of happiness, and fatally tending to class tyranny.
Under that system men, proclaimed free and equal, were soon made to realize that they were only labor power in human form, to be sold in the market for what it could fetch, and to be consumed in the production of wealth for the exclusive benefit of those who already had wealth. Under that system the value of a man, and, therefore, his remuneration, were not to be measured by the extent to which his industry and intelligence benefited his fellows. They were to be gauged by the necessities of his competitors on the "labor market"; so that, as the competition increased, the tendency of his wages was constantly downward, until it reached the minimum required to keep alive his flesh-and-bone machine while it was hired to an employer, who thus became the absolute owner of the net product, or, "surplus value," created by that human machine.

Under that system the toiling masses, hungry and despised, turned the wilderness into a garden, the stones, the clay, the trees into resplendent cities, the ore and the coal into new organs of motion, through which human strength, speed and skill were multiplied a thousandfold, the lightning itself into an obedient messenger; they built factories, ships, docks and warehouses; constructed railroads, bridged rivers and pierced mountains; then descended into their nameless graves, leaving all in the hands of their despoilers, to further oppress and degrade the inheritors of their misery.

Under this system society, so called, became a worse pandemonium than it had ever been. Each looked upon his neighbor as a legitimate prey or a dangerous antagonist. The laborer viewed with dismay, the appearance of another laborer, while the employer of both plotted the ruin of a rival employer. And this horrible struggle for life among the weak, for dominion among the powerful, ever more intense as the means of life became greater and as the dominion of man over nature grew more extensive, was glorified by sophists as the providential law of human progress!

From this state of anarchy emerged at last the plutocracy of our day. How and at what cost we shall now see.

For a century or more anarchy reigned supreme in all the branches of production. At times, without definite or approximate knowledge of actual conditions, but stimulated by a reckless desire for gain, every "captain of industry" went on "rushing business" to the utmost capacity of his means and credit until the market was "overstocked"; that is, until he found by the event what he might have learned before by a timely use of common sense, namely:

1. That since, under the wage system the people can only buy back a portion of their product, the profit-making class must depend on itself alone for the consumption of the remainder.

2. That insofar, then, as the overproduction, so called, consists of such necessaries as the wage-earning masses require, it must either be sold at a great sacrifice or remain in store until the workers engaged in the production of things exclusively used by the said profit-making class can gradually absorb it.

3. That in the meantime the production of necessaries must stop and the adventurous "captains" who have incurred obligations beyond their means are necessarily bankrupted.

4. That a large number of the very people who purchase those necessaries from retailers are consequently thrown out of employment, and that the current stock of those traders is thereby
converted into an overstock, with the inevitable result of widespread failure, reaching at last the industries affected to the production of capitalist commodities.

And then must the strange spectacle be afforded, of a whole people—with the exception of a few drones for whom the sun of prosperity never sets—reduced to the utmost destitution in the midst of the plenty of their own creation; men, women and children starving, apparently, because there is too much wheat and meat; ragged and shoeless, apparently because there is too much clothing and footwear; idle, and therefore miserable, actually because there stands between them and the idle machine, as also between them and busy nature, a paper wall of private ownership, stamped "sacred" by the hand of imposture.

At such times those social functions only which have escaped individual covetousness—those public services like the post office, education, and other departments of national, state and municipal administration which have remained socialized—are entirely free from the general paralysis, insofar at least as their working force is involved. And although tainted with the corruption that capitalism imparts to government, they shine in the night of economic chaos as vivid illustrations of individual security and public benefit in social cooperation. By the contrast of their normal activity with the intermittent palsy of all the capitalized organs of the social body, they plainly show that individual suffering is the natural punishment inflicted upon men for their disregard of the fundamental law of social existence—the law of interdependence—or solidarity.

Every such crisis reduced the number of capitalistic combatants and left the survivors stronger than formerly. It also left the wage-workers weaker in proportion.

The time at last came when the powerful had more to gain by combination among themselves than by internecine war. They became class-conscious, and, therefore, interdependent, as against the individualistic and, therefore, turbulent class from which they had now emerged. The era of capitalistic competition was fast passing away, to be succeeded by the era of plutocratic concentration.

In all the chief branches of production the Trust made its appearance, spreading its devilish tentacles in the corresponding channels of distribution.

The effects of this new movement were multiple and ominous. They may, in part, be enumerated as follows:

First—Simplification of administrative methods and consequent reduction of the clerical force.

Second—Application of labor-saving machinery and processes on an unprecedented scale of magnitude and efficiency.

Third—Consequent increase of productive power without a proportionate increase, and in many instances with an actual decrease, in the number of employees.

Fourth—Reduction, at first, of the wholesale price of the product to the point where the smaller competitors still in the field must abandon it, and subsequent enforcement of a monopoly price by the victorious combination or "trust."
Fifth—Hence destruction of the middle class at an accelerating rate (which, since 1889, has reached an annual average of 11,000 failures), and consequent displacement, partly temporary, chiefly permanent, of the labor previously employed by the bankrupted firms.

Sixth—Therefore, decreased competition among capitalists, increased competition among workers.

Seventh—Steady fall of the wage rate; that is, curtailment of the purchasing power of the masses, resulting in a lesser increase in the production of necessaries than in the number of the population.

Eighth—Enlargement of the purchasing power of the capitalist class, resulting in a prodigious development of the industries affected to the production of luxuries and to the creation of new capital, yet insufficient to absorb the labor displaced by mechanical, administrative and other improvements in all the industries.

Ninth—Introduction of the contract or "sweating" system wherever practicable; so that, by abandoning an insignificant portion of his fleecings to a contractor, or "sweater," the capitalist may relieve himself of all the care and odium incident to the superintendence of wage labor, while securing at the same time from every wage slave in his direct or indirect employment the highest degree of efficiency and the most merciless intensity of toil.

Tenth—Consequent widening of the distance between capitalist and laborer, until both have become actually invisible and personally unknown to each other, although mutually felt across the dividing chasm, not as interdependent human beings, but as brute forces in constant opposition, the weaker of which (namely, labor) must yield more and more to the stronger (namely, capital).

To all these effects, already, well developed, may be added a still more portentous one, now in course of development, as follows:

Growing insufficiency of the domestic markets to meet the enlarging capacities, and practically unlimited possibilities, of domestic production. Therefore, international competition; that is, huge masses of national labor hurled against each other in the international conflict between mighty capitalists for supremacy in the world's market. Logically, in the end, the trusts are to become international and capital will lose entirely its national character, while any sentiment of patriotism remaining in the workers will have been used to stimulate competition among them, prevent their international organization, and thus reduce them, all over the world, to the same level of misery and degradation.

Of course, all the social and political evils already developed by the capitalistic system in its primary stage of competition were further intensified by the first effects of plutocratic concentration. With the steady growth of enforced idleness and destitution, ever more productive of disorganization, ignorance and immorality, came naturally a greater servility of the politicians to a class now possessed of overwhelming economic power, thoroughly united and determined to compel obedience. "The perversion of democracy to the ends of plutocracy" went on unchecked.
by any consideration of statesmanship or by any crude manifestation of public discontent. The powers of government so long used legislatively to confer privileges upon the capitalist class were at last used arbitrarily, and even murderously, to establish the absolute dominion of the plutocracy. And, blind to the true cause of its sufferings, lacking in the knowledge and spirit of interdependence, hopelessly divided against itself, the multitude stupidly sanctioned at the polls the economic despotism and political corruption which its own venal misleaders affected to denounce in bombastic phrases at public assemblies.

Of those misleaders, the most effectively treacherous were prominent in the organizations of labor, which it was their disgusting function to keep from uniting politically against the political machines of the plutocratic class. It was, indeed, plain enough that thus united, and only thus, could organized labor rally to its standard the masses of the people, and by one strike at the ballot box, costless and bloodless, achieve the emancipation of the working class. Therefore, "No politics in trade unions," was the cry of those traitors; and it was reechoed by every thoughtless man, who, proudly holding in his left hand a full-paid union card, with his right voted himself and his fellows into slavery on election day.

But throughout the civilized world the wage workers are asserting their interdependence—the natural dependence of every man upon his fellows, of every nation upon all other nations; and under the banner of international socialism millions of them are now marching to the conquest of the public powers.

They recognize that the social body is an organism, and, as such, is subject in its life, health and development to the general law which governs organic nature; that the more highly it is developed, the more interdependent are all its members; that the very extent of this mutual dependence of parts determines the amount of freedom and the degree of perfection with which they respectively perform their natural functions, ever so diverse, yet all tending usefully and harmoniously to the common end.

They realize also that the capitalist is no more a legitimate member of the social organism than a parasite in the human body is a necessary part of the organ upon which it feeds, and upon the proper working of which all the other organs depend for support and vigor. And they are determined to expel him.

The class struggle has reached its climax. With the triumph of the united toilers over their combined despoilers will end class privilege and class rule.

Americans fall in line! Onward to the Cooperative Commonwealth!

To the industrious the tools of industry, to the laborer the fruits of labor, to mankind the earth.
[The article below by Dallas Reynolds is a reprint from DB7. It was originally sent to the DB by Ben Perry. He got it from the April 1971 issue of the SIU Discussion Bulletin, the now-defunct periodical of expelled Socialist Labor Party members and other dissenting SIUists. Reynolds wrote it as an antidote to the DeLeonistery he considered one of the less desirable features of the SLP. He was apparently on a demystifying crusade, for that issue of the SIUDB also contained two other articles with the same theme: "DeLeon and Lenin" and "Workers' Councils or Socialist Industrial Unions." Reynolds—the son of Verne L. Reynolds, a prominent SLP member of the twenties and thirties, a presidential candidate and national organizer for the party—was himself a national organizer for a time. He left the party in 1958. Under the name of Mack Reynolds he became a well-known and prolific science fiction writer, often using socialist ideas in his novels. He died in Mexico in December 1982. —tg]
is noteworthy that most of the signers of the call for the Chicago convention were members or sympathizers of the SP, and they included such SP diehards and DeLeon-haters as A. M. Simons, Ernest Untermann and others besides Eugene V. Debs, Mother Jones, and William D. Haywood. Also present was Frank Bohn, more or less by a fluke. He was an SLP speaker making a tour and was invited to attend at the last moment. He defected later to the SP.

At the Chicago conference they issued a manifesto which contains the SIU concept; that is, they called for "...one great industrial union embracing all industries...the economic organization of the working class, without affiliation with any political party."

Later, at the First Convention of the IWW, in June, 1905, this was amplified and in the Preamble to the Constitution we find, "Between these two classes (the working class and the employing class) a struggle must go on until all the toilers come together on the political as well as on the industrial field, and take and hold that which they produce by their labor, through an economic organization without affiliation with any political party."

This, the IWW, was the first SIU ever to be formed. The second was the WIIU, the so-called Detroit IWW, backed by the SLP after the original IWW in 1908 had fallen into the hands of anarcho-syndicalists and repudiated the political clause.

DeLeon was a delegate to the first convention, along with 13 others from the Socialist Trades and Labor Alliance. He was active in the convention, speaking many times, but nowhere does he use the term industrial unionism, although others did, and although there were admirers of his at the convention besides his own fellow delegates of the ST&LA, nobody singled him out for crediting the basic idea upon which the IWW was founded, neither then nor in later IWW conventions. It simply never occurred to anybody to do so. For that matter neither was any other individual so singled out.

The ST&LA, of course, was not a SIU and ended when it merged in 1905 into the IWW.

Industrial unions were not unknown as far back as the 19th Century. On page 125 of The First Convention of the IWW Delegate Trautmann cites a worker who had belonged in Europe to industrial unions for eleven years previous to the founding of the IWW. Daniel DeLeon did not seem particularly wedded to the term. In such pamphlets as As to Politics, written in 1907. he never uses it, nor does he in Abolition of Poverty, published in 1911, nor Fifteen Questions published in 1914 shortly before his death.

That his comrades of the time did not think in terms of DeLeon having formulated the SIU concept is particularly to be found in the Daniel DeLeon, the Man and His Works symposium on page 50, where Henry Ku s, former National Secretary, says, The formation of the IWW regardless of what has happened in after years, must be considered one of the most important events in the history of the American labor movement... by virtue of the ideas it has formulated and crystallized during the few earlier years of its existence. Never before, had the idea of industrial unionism been so clearly formulated..." No mention of DeLeon originating it.
'In fact, the term "Socialist Industrial Unionism" is fairly recent. The writer can not find it in earlier SLP pamphlets. It didn't evolve until along in the 1920's. Nor did the term "DeLeonism." In the Manifesto of the SLP to the Working Class of America, 1921, DeLeon's name is mentioned only four times and largely in passing. One mention is a little joke he told. The adulation, which came later, probably started with the deluge of Petersen biographical pamphlets on his idol, and about the same time, probably, the term DeLeonism came into general use.

In the National Convention Report of 1920, there is no mention of DeLeon in the National Platform, and no mention of him in the "Principles of the SLP" at the end of the NC report. His name is mentioned half a dozen times, largely in passing.

In the National Convention Report of 1924 we find the first reference to Socialist Industrial Unionism that I have found in the literature, a quotation from a 1923 editorial in the Weekly People, and Lenin is quoted as giving DeLeon credit for creation of the "Revolutionary Industrial Union idea." DeLeon is not mentioned in the National Platform, but the SIU is.

In the National Convention Reports of 1928 and 1932, DeLeon is not mentioned in either the National Platforms or in the acceptance speeches of the candidates. But from then on his name is everywhere in the literature. Present-day "progressive DeLeonists" who credit him with the origin of SIU usually seem to think that the ST&LA was a SIU in embryo; however, Petersen himself in the preface to The Burning Question of Trade Unionism says, "The ST&LA, however, never had at one and the same time both a clear conception of the full requirements of true unionism and a membership strong enough to put these principles into practice."

Others think that the What Means This Strike speech heralded the first presentation of SIU, but once again, in the introduction, Petersen writes, "On page 24 of this pamphlet DeLeon speaks of the workers bringing the government under their control, implying that the state would be controlled by workers in their interest and that that would be socialism. State ownership is not socialism; Industrial Union administration is... The same erroneous implication is found on page 25... The reference to 'shop organizations' on page; 29 must now be read as 'socialist industrial organizations' in order to render the argument valid. The same applies in a measure to the language employed on pages 30 and 31... The IWW until 1908 represented Socialist Industrial Unionism in its true, though incomplete and undeveloped form."

So it would seem that not even his most ardent admirer considered DeLeon clear on SIU at the time he delivered this speech.

No, a great fighter against opportunism in the American labor movement, DeLeon was. A great editor of the first real American revolutionary newspaper, he most certainly was. But the discoverer of the concept of SIU, he seemingly was not. It was evidently the discovery of a whole group of radicals of the time, in combination, and first saw the light of day in the manifesto issued in January 1905 calling for the first convention of the IWW and in that convention itself, held in June of 1905.
This writer is of the belief that students of DeLeon's place in the American radical movement should read the first convention report of the IWW. In passing, it might be pointed out that though Eric Hass (Editor of the Weekly People 1939-88) in the #4 issue says, "...(the SLP) ... could not develop a mass following because in all the years of the SLP's existence there has been no revolutionary situation ...", on page 148 of the IWW convention report, DeLeon says, "When that strike (coal miners' strike) was in progress for eight months, had this organization (the IWW) that we hope to launch here in Chicago been in existence, the revolution would have been accomplished in 1903."

Dallas Reynolds

(From p. 32)

This issue also announces a new KSL publication, Looking Back after Twenty Years of Jail: Questions & Answers on the Spanish Anarchist Resistance by Miguel Garcia. "Miguel Garcia was one of the survivors of the libertarian resistance which refused, either at the end of the Spanish Civil War or World War Two, to give up the fight for freedom. 16 pages — L1.50 (US $3.00 p.p.) from KSL, PMB 820, 2425 Channing Way, Berkeley, CA 94704 (for those enclosing dollars). Or KSL, BM Hurricane, London WC1N 3XX.

This issue also contains a list of all 47 books and pamphlets KSL sells.

Back in the Beginning of Things by Dave McNeill is the most recent example of the work of Tony Laffan in rescuing from the black hole of history the story of Australia's early revolutionary movement. McNeill was a self educated coal miner who was active in the Socialist Labor Party and the various attempts to organize socialist industrial unions. He was born in 1872 and his story, told by the editor, Tony Laffan, in the introduction, is that of thousands of industrial workers of his era who were pulled out of school to help support their families. Somehow their minds overcame the exhaustion of ten-hour work days to read and inform themselves. This activity brought them sooner or later to socialism. In McNeill's case it brought him to the Socialist Labor Party of Australia and the various efforts to organize a revolutionary union. He served as an SLP organizer, speaking on street corners, teaching study classes, serving as an activist in the larger labor movement. This pamphlet is what one might expect from a worker familiar with the level of understanding of his fellow workers. It reflects the thinking of the old Detroit comrades I met in my youth who boasted that they got their education in the SLP. McNeill knew he must begin with "the beginning of things" for the people he was trying to awaken. And he did indeed begin at the beginning. Here is the first sentence: "Scientists are agreed that everything is in motion and that everything is continually changing." The subheadings make it clear that this is a crash course in the world history courses that workers missed when they were pulled out of school to go to work: "In the Beginning," covers the millennia of prehistory; "Social Systems" outlines the development of social organization; "Capitalist System" brings the student to the world he lives in. Then the final sections deal with the revolution and post-revolutionary society. Notable is McNeill's exposition of the SLP program, for he ties the "trusts"—a term unused today—to the industrial union government that will succeed them: "The workers must be educated not to smash the trust but to own and control it for the whole community."

His activity in the various efforts to build the IWW and IWW-like organizations did not change his DeLeonist insistence on political action: "The political reflex of the industrial movement should be a party of abolition. Its function should be to capture the machine, not to mend the machine but to end it." In a note that accompanied the pamphlet Laffan says that this is " Number 1 in a series I intend to bring out to honour the memory of an interesting bunch of agitators." Thirty A4 pages, no price given from Toiler Editions, PO Box 235, Singleton NSW 2330, Australia

(To p. 26)
TO: Discussion Bulletin

There is something a little odd about Charmian's Skelton's critical review (DB114) of Pieter Lawrence's article on "Socialism: sudden and gradual change" (DB113). Consider what she says:

Firstly, she dismisses as a "weak example," Lawrence's reference to the Bolshevik's assault on the landed aristocracy as proof that you can enact out of existence "an entire class and its corresponding mode of production" in one fell legalistic swoop. Skelton maintains, not unreasonably, that this was not the case and she cites Roy and Betty Laird in their Soviet Communism and the Agrarian Revolution to show that, in fact, the enactment of a law in November 1917, dispossessing the Russian aristocracy of their title to land, had been preceded by a gathering campaign of land seizures by the peasants themselves.

As a counter-argument of Pieter Lawrence's attempt to demonstrate the possibility of sudden change, this is fair enough - although I am bound to say, it does not necessarily invalidate the latter. For example, it is quite conceivable and indeed logically compatible for a model of social revolution to comprise both elements of sudden and gradual change. This need not necessarily be an either-or scenario (and, indeed, this is the view of socialist revolution I hold). Thus, for example one could characterise the situation above as one in which the aristocracy were first weakened by peasant incursions (gradual change) and then finally were disposed of by legal enactment (sudden change).

Yet having made this point Charmian Skelton then goes on to make another which seems totally incongruous in the light of her previous remarks: "But since in his article, he only offered one example of 'sudden' or 'short term change' - an example which has no basis in fact - we are left with only 'elements of...long term change' as Lawrence's view of the change from capitalism to socialism. Presumably this view is endorsed by the Clapham-based Socialist Party since his article was first published in their journal, the Socialist Standard. If it is the case that that Party has now adopted a gradual view of the socialist revolution, perhaps they should say so, clearly and unambiguously"

I find this conclusion quite astonishing - not least because her whole critique of Lawrence's article vindicates a gradualistic explanation which she now evidently decries in the case of the revolution from capitalism to socialism. This, on the face of it, is totally inconsistent.

Not only that, when I and a few other comrades in the Socialist Party of Great Britain back in the late 80s put forward a gradualistic view of socialist revolution to supplement (not replace! ) the sudden view - in the document called "The Road to Socialism" - this view was later vitriolically attacked in [an] article in Socialist Studies (no. 8), the journal of the organisation to which Ms Skelton belongs. As a piece of crass logic, sectarian dogmatism and downright dishonesty that Socialist Studies article would surely take some beating!

But that is all by the by. The real question Charmian Skelton needs to ask herself is how does her own critique of Pieter Lawrence's article square with her group's repudiation of "gradualism" (bearing in mind we are NOT talking here about Fabian style state sponsored gradualism) and whether it is the case that this group has now come round to accepting a dual gradual/sudden model of socialist revolution as well.

I look forward to a frank response

For socialism

Robin Cox
Socialist Party of Great Britain
Richard Lloyd (DB 114) tries to refute the view that the notorious list of measures at the end of section II of the Communist Manifesto were not "in effect a recipe for state capitalism". But if they—and, remember, they included "application of rents of land to public purposes", "a heavy progressive or graduated income tax", "centralisation of credit in the hands of a national bank with State capital (sic!) and an exclusive monopoly"—were not state-capitalist, what were they?

Richard Lloyd quotes a whole chapter from an SPGB pamphlet but this does not, and was not intended to, refute the above statement. It merely says that Marx and Engels did not advocate such measures as reforms of capitalism, that they would not have supported the development of state capitalism that was then still going on in Russia, and that they did not equate state ownership with socialism (precisely!). All of which is very true, but is not the same as saying that such measures were not in effect state capitalist. I repeat, what else could they have been? They can't have been socialist since socialism involves the disappearance of money and so of all its manifestations including rents, taxes and credit which the measures presuppose continuing.

The fact is that, in 1848, Marx and Engels envisaged these measures as first steps towards gradually bringing all capitalist industry into common (not state) ownership. In other words, they then envisaged the continued existence of capitalists—and so of some capitalism—for a while after the workers had won control of political power. But this would have amounted to—was "in effect"—a form of state-controlled capitalism even though the state was supposed to be controlled by the workers. But how realistic was this? Not very. It is unthinkable that a section of the population, knowing it was doomed, would continue to play its part in industry, calmly awaiting the taking away of its privileges piecemeal. This was one of the problems that forced Lenin and his associates to retreat. And was why the SPGB said it was convinced that political and economic development since their day would have caused Marx and Engels to reconsider their attitude on this question.

Adam Buick, Brussels, Belgium.

(From p. 11)

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BALANCE August 20, 2002 $318.48

Fraternally submitted

Frank Girard
From: Joshua Freeze <jfreeze@earthlink.net>  Subject: "socialism of imbeciles"

Howdy Frank, I hope all is well with you. The following is a response to the Mouvement Communiste's piece in DB #114.

* * *

DB 114 included a fierce critique of the global justice movement from Mouvement Communiste (MC) in Belgium. There is plenty of room for criticism of the global justice movement. There is too much focus on big demonstrations and not enough on long term resistance. There is too much faith in NGOs and not enough discussion and debate about structures for accountability in the movement.

The MC however paints with a broad brush and simply dismisses the largest and most vibrant revolutionary movement of today as "the socialism of imbeciles." This is a gross mistake.

To begin with, MC claims that the movement concentrates solely on finance capital, "the better to blot out the critique of capital as whole." The latter quote suggests a determined position by the movement as a whole, when there is no such body that could do so. The fact that there is no way to make such a decision may or may not be problematic, but to suggest that the movement seeks to deflect criticism from capital is simply wrong. I was not in Davos or Genoa, but I was in Seattle, and many, many organizations were clearly opposed to all of capitalism. Watching the other demonstrations from afar, it is still clear the same was true.

The reason for MC's assertion lies in its mistaking a few organizations that pretend to be the voice of the movement for the actual movement. MC points to the economists Tobin and Keynes. Most of the demonstrators haven't the foggiest idea who they are, so it is not possible to conclude that they are the movement's economists. The MC then disparages demonstrators for using the terms "neoliberalism, social forum, participatory budget and citizen's economy." Neoliberalism is simply a descriptive term for one of modern capitalism's most important strategies. Would MC have us ignore the tactics of the enemy? The other terms are various experiments in democratizing the economic sphere. If MC is opposed to this concept, then one might wonder what exactly they mean by "Communiste."

We assume they aren't Stalinists since they claim that "big social-democratic and Stalinist parties" are the force behind the movement. While some of these parties have shown up, anyone who had been at the demonstrations could clearly see that in fact those old parties have little or no power.

MC continues its mistaking the part for the whole when they claim that the solutions put forth are simply reformist demands like closed markets or the Tobin tax. It is interesting though that they include in this list the experiments by the PT in Porto Alegre at economic democracy. As with the movement as a whole, the PT has made errors, but they have also made some astounding successes.

The MC seems to desire some ideal movement that smoothly and rationally adopts the precise positions and simultaneously institutes global revolution. This is fantasy. Social movements are not choreographed like a ballet. We do need both theory and strategy in addition to action, but there is no recipe book that tells us step by step how to get there from here. It requires experimentation. No one organization is going to call all the shots. Revolutionaries can set sparks, but we have to work with revolt when it happens. The global justice movement is the most promising of all the current options. If we write it off, we may or may not call ourselves "Communiste", but we have no right at all to consider ourselves part of the Mouvement.

Solidarity,
Joshua Freeze
IWW Executive Board Chair
A SHORT TASTE OF HISTORY

MC was founded in 1988 by the merger of two tendencies: one from Belgium, by comrades who split from the ICG, and an other in France by Italian comrades having belong to «operanti» groups. After two years of existence, the usual turn over of membership worked at full speed and the group was restrained to a handful of comrades. The group met a new start after the wave of strikes in France (from the Air France strike of October 1993 to the November-December 1995 «public sector» strike, through the industrial strikes of spring 1995 in Renault, Belin and other plants). To day the group exist in Brussels, Normandy and Paris area.

WHERE WE STAND

Our aims are simple and ambitious; to contribute to creation of workers political committees able to size against the independent struggle (independant from unions, both official or «rank and filist», parties, «rackets» of what ever kind) against capitalism and to give life back to the worker’s autonomy. Then we participated to any struggles, movements as any other worker, and in our general material, we try to deliver to workers «theoretical weapons» to understand how operates capital society to strike it the more heavily, at a lower cost for strikers. Obviously, we don’t run across the industrial countryside at any moment to find whatever movement could exist.

Like all others communist groups, MC works for its own dispersion in a broader structure and does not exist for itself and does not pretend to build «the» organization (and no more «party»). Despite this question is not on the agenda today for the real movement, we always stressed the emphasis to the necessity of centralizing action. For us the «party» which is the process of centralizing actions on a world wide level is not created by decree of any organization but the result of struggles themselves. To put it more clearly, for us, the IWW was «the party» in America before 1920, and workers assemblies during the «Autunno Caldo» in Torino in ‘69 also.

WHAT WE DO

Today the level of class struggles restrains our activity to produce «paper» which consists mainly of a yearly review, some pamphlets and leaflets when they are useful. We don’t do any public meeting but we organize when we need and when we could discuss with other people. On international level, we have good contacts with Wildcat from Germany, despite these contacts and common work are not as close as we wished. We have worked also with Authenem.

We have contacts with informal groups of Iranian or Turkish workers both at home or in immigration. In the USA, we knew people who produced «the poor the bad and the angry» in San Francisco area and also Neil of «Black and Red Notes». We never restrained discussion with other according to where and what they are. And we are always ready to do commonwork as practically as possible as long as we feel common interest in working class struggle and development of worker’s autonomy.

For instance, we have launched again this year a review called «Le Bulletin Ouvrier» in France which is a structure for a common and practical work between MC and other comrades.

WHERE WE COME FROM

Despite it is an often asked question (Where do you come from, what kind of «ism» do you belong?) we always state that we are nothing but orphans from any theoretical or organizational links with any groups or currents. 30 years and more of stalinist counter revolution and tremendous development of what we called «social democracy» have dried up any links between «revolutionnaires» or the «communist theory» and the working class. All the small «left» or «ultra-left» groups or currents have failed in a regular way to maintain or create real contacts between them and the real proletariat. They are no more than sects that refuse to confront their theories with the real movement.

That does not mean that we are the new beginners who will create the new theory and forget to pay they due to those past groups (for instance in today MC, people came from various origins as different from Trotskyism to anarchism, from ultra-leftism to operatism). In a way there is an «invariant» in the capitalist society, the exploitation of salaried workers which could only be suppressed by the workers themselves if they (and we exclude us within) are unable to do that nobody could do. Or, in another way, Communism will be for everybody or for nobody.
Dear Editor,

I was, and still am, grateful to the DB for reviewing my book, Yes—Utopia! in the May-June 2002 issue. However, I did not expect readers to assume that the one-page review covered everything that the book takes 190 pages to discuss. I think that perhaps Charmian Skelton is making this mistake. She asks, “Has Ron Cook ever had any contact with young children?” It was just my thirty years as a teacher, the thirty-eight years served by my wife and our experience as parents that caused me to write:

“Those children who burst into tears on their first day at school are not mistaken. They know that they are being placed in the power of strangers—adults who can keep them there against their will and punish them if they break the rules of the institution. They are not free to choose their own companions. They are grouped together in school classes of age bands, not for their benefit, but for the efficiency of the educational system. They are not free to follow their own interests. They are forced to learn what the system decides is important and is incorporated in the examination syllabuses. They are compelled to arrive on time; to sit where they are told; to walk about quietly; to play when they are told to play, to stay until the bell rings, and so on. ... This is one of the main lessons that they all learn. It is a lesson that we do not acknowledge, however: we teach them at school and at home how to be unfree.”

What the chapter then discusses is the vital relations between parents or other adults and children: “When we have ... removed the cause of our own unfreedom, we shall be in no frame of mind to perpetuate it or re-impose it upon our children. We shall want them to be, if possible, freer than we ourselves have been. We shall use the physical and instintual dependence of their early years to strengthen that mutual trust and respect between us that will encourage them to accept our help and criticism as they grow and learn. And if we are to do this well we shall not be able to exclude them from the adult world at all. They will learn from us, and be guided by us, by being with us, if they want to, in whatever we are doing.” And Charmian will be reassured that: “There is no reason why mothers or fathers should not take babies or small children to work with them, if they want to, not necessarily to be separated off in creches, but beside them, wherever possible. If the working environment is not safe, we must make it so. And children will grow up with a familiarity with at least some areas of the work and the organising of society.

If, as they become more curious and adventurous, children want to go into factories or offices or even coal mines to watch, or perhaps to take part, adults will have to be alert to take charge of them, protect them, guide them and explain the work to them. Such practical encounters will demonstrate, far more effectively than advice or prohibitions, the sort of theoretical knowledge and practical skills that must be learnt before certain types of machinery can be controlled or chemicals handled or processes understood.”

And, as regards socialisation (as opposed to capitalist regimentation): “The nuclear family, for good and bad reasons, binds most children of today close to the parental home, so that the majority feel homesick if they leave it for more than a day or two. As the new patterns of living develop, children, as they get older, may want to spend increasing amounts of their time with other children, not simply “to play with” for an hour or two, but for days or even weeks at a time.

This will hardly be possible, or tolerable, in their mother’s or parents’ home, especially if groups of children want to stay together. Like everyone else in the new social environment, however, children will be intrinsically free. They will be free to take what they want and to go wherever they wish and, as long as they cause no trouble to adults or each other, there will be no strong reason or incentive to prevent them following their own bent in this respect.

We may, therefore, adopt the practice of allocating certain houses for the exclusive use of children. Groups of ten or even twenty may coalesce into semi-stable communities, sharing certain interests, supporting each other, quarrelling and making it up, becoming responsible for their own comfort and cleanliness, learning to live together.

Because of the children’s own physical and psychological rates of change, such communities are never likely to persist for long, but each such experience by an individual child would add valuably to
his or her emotional and social development.”

I hope that the few examples I have selected will persuade Ms Skelton that Yes—Utopia! was written with considerable experience and a lot of thought about what a democratic society of common ownership might well be like. Not that it would please every one of us today—but of course that is irrelevant.

(From p. 20)

Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Russia is a collection of articles on Russia published between 1957 and 1991 in the Italian language journals of the Internationalist Communist Party (ICP). It is number five of the “Texts of the Communist Left; others include pamphlets on the group’s program, the fundamentals of revolutionary communism, and the nature and role of the revolutionary communist party. The introduction, written in 1991 during the Gorbachev period, characterizes the Russian economy in a way rather similar to that of other non-market socialist groups: “The Russian type of economy is distinguishable from that found in the West in terms of quantity, but not by the economic category or social relations.” The word “quantity” here apparently alludes to the chronic shortage of consumer goods that marked the Soviet economy. After pointing out the basic similarities between the Russian economy and that of the West, the authors go on to ask why the Russian elite are so interested in change. Their answer is that the Soviet system “...suffers, if that’s the right word, from a capitalism which is so close to the ideal capitalist structure that it can’t function in order to exploit the proletariat with sufficient ruthlessness; Russian capital requires unemployment and the suppression of businesses which don’t treat their employees like slaves, etc.” The implication here is that seventy years of Soviet capitalism had created conditions that interfered with the exploitation of wage labor at the barbaric intensity prevalent in the West. In the eleven years since this introduction was written the Russian ruling class has succeeded in inflicting mass unemployment, wage cuts, and other fruits of Western management style on the proletariat at level their U.S. mentors can be proud of. The ICP is the lineal descendent of a portion of the Italian left that split from a more activist element to devote itself to developing its communist program and analyzing the economic system it hopes to replace. Its English language publications are available from ICP Editions, PO Box 52, Liverpool L69 7AL, UK.

Chicago ABC Zine #1 was published on July 1st, 2002 by South Chicago ABC Zine Distro, PO Box 721, Homewood, IL 60430. This 60-page issue can be obtained for $2, free to prisoners. ABC is the abbreviation for Anarchist Black Cross, which is concerned with the lot of victims of the U.S. legal system whom the American Red Cross ignores. Number 1 begins with a calendar of ABC events, among them a rally round the Cook County Jail, a benefit showing of what is billed as the “Franz Kafka and Orson Welles collaboration on the intense and timeless masterpiece The Trial.” Under “Who We Are” in the contents we find articles on the Chicago ABC by Anthony Rayson, the prime mover South Chicago ABC Zine Distro, which distributes a host of prisoner publications, and Jane Doe. “Prisoner Cases and Initiatives” analyzes each of five cases of individual prisoners as well providing information on the Missouri Prison Labor Union. The MPLU describes itself as "an organization that fights against oppression, repression, torture, brutality, rape, corruption, and exploitation of prisoners, both male and female. We are prison abolitionists...” They publish a journal called Off the Hook, which can be obtained from their support group, New York ABC, PO Box 20449, Tomkins Sq, Station, New York, NY 10009. Part “C. Analysis” includes “The Crime of Politics in America and the Politics of Crime” excerpts by

---Ron Cook

(To p. 28)
Internationalists' Discussion List

In April 2001, a new discussion network was formed called the Internationalists' Discussion Network (Intdiscnet/IDN). The impulse to form the network came after the establishment of a similar French-language list in December 2000. The French call was initiated by the Paris Discussion Circle (CDP) a group of former militants of the International Communist Current. On the weekend of April 20-21 2002, comrades gathered in New York city for the first face to face meeting of the English language wing of the network.

Those participating in the network saw a need to address aspects of revolutionary theory and have adopted the following criteria for participation:

1. We are not living the end of history. Liberal capitalism and its political expression, democracy, is not the terminus, the finally achieved form of human history. The capitalist mode of production, like all those that have preceded it, is not eternal.

2. This world system is not reformable; it cannot be transformed gradually via trade unionism or bourgeois democracy. It must be overturned from top to bottom.

3. Internationalism is a condition sine qua non for belonging to the network. Real communism can only be envisaged on a planetary scale. Today, as yesterday, "the workers of the world must unite." They have no country.

4. Denunciation of all false communisms USSR, China, Cuba, etc. For a classless, moneyless, wageless, stateless society.

5. Finally, we must respect a revolutionary ethic. This implies, without concession, intellectual honesty, tolerance and the rejection of insults. It outlaws any idea of manipulation in the name of tactics.

The New York meeting set itself two tasks for discussion, imperialism and functioning within the network.

In the months prior to the meeting a number of comrades wrote documents addressing the theory of imperialism and its application today. Many of those present at the conference felt that the "classical" models of imperialism, such as those developed by Lenin and Luxemburg were inadequate to explain the contemporary world, even if aspects of their theories were still important.

As such, the discussion on imperialism touched upon the events of September 11 and the War in Afghanistan, the Balkan Wars, the middle east, the EU vs. The US, and the "Empire" thesis as proposed by Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt. While some participants in the network see a tendency in the direction proposed in Empire, participants at the conference agreed that capital is ultimately unable to overcome its national framework.

The second day of the conference was given over to discussions of functioning, and to facilitate future discussions it was decided to set up a three-person technical commission. Also dealt with under this point were matters of disruption to the flow of discussion and ways to expand the network. Since the network is not a proto-party or recruiting forum it was considered important that the network remain open to a wide range of views.

The participants in the English list are spread over a wide geographical area, but it was decided to continue to hold conferences, as all thought the experience very valuable. The next English language conference has been tentatively scheduled for next year in New York.

Information about the list can be obtained on the net at http://groups.yahoo.com/group/intdiscnet/, or by sending a blank e-mail to intdiscnet-subscribe@yahoo.com. If you do not have e-mail access, please write to the R&BN address.
[The following note, received via e-mail, comments on Rado Mijanovich's assertion in his "Response to Perry Sanders" in DB114 that Greek civilization was "...possible only because of its overwhelmingly larger population of slaves than freemen." Of course the author's point doesn't disprove Rado's. Like the ruling class in Grand Rapids, the Athenian elite had someone to do the work. Queried about his source, Connexions cited The Population of Classical Athens in the Fifth and Sixth Centuries BC by A.W. Gomme, Glasgow 1933 –fg]

A note on the issue:

Why are "the private property societies of absolute slavery" better typified by Greece than Babylon or Assyria or Persia or Judea or Carthage? It is not slavery that's unusual but freedom, and that's what's different about Greece.

Athens in the golden age had perhaps 250,000 people. The very highest estimate is 400,000 in the following century (the silver age). In the golden age there were some 30,000 citizens. (By "citizen" they meant those who voted in the assembly, not those who voted for "representatives"). A multiplier of 4 in deference to the canonical "family of 4" and we have 120,000, although their families were probably larger even with infant exposure. That leaves 130,000 "slaves and metics." The customary estimate of metics is 50,000. That leaves a slave population of 80,000, not "an overwhelming larger population of slaves than freemen."

As for "absolute slavery," it is instructive that "slaves and metics" are commonly lumped together, as metics were the merchant class and much wealthier than the citizens. The privileged strata of the slave population had much in common with the metics. Such figures of authority as cops and bank loan officers were slaves. (Passion, the wealthiest man in Athens, had been a slave loan officer.) The poorer citizens had so much in common with slaves that tortes complained that one could not tell them apart. But of course Athens was by no means the most advanced of the Democracies: Locris and Phocis abolished slavery.

"Connexions"

(From p. 26)


The last is a criticism of the Prison Activist Resource Center, described as "the Angela Davis group." Basic to ABC's opposition to PARC is its "support of abolition of prisons AFTER we as a society have found a structure to replace them." ABC simply doesn't trust PARC, arguing that ABC already has a structure to replace prisons; it's called freedom. PARC also has paid staff positions, unlike ABC.
What Is Capitalism?
By Jan Pole

Workers of the world unite!
"Anti-capitalism" has become a popular slogan, and a good thing too. But if this is to have a positive impact people have to be clear as to what they mean by capitalism. To put our cards on the table straightaway, what we mean by capitalism is an economic system where productive resources are used as "capital", i.e. they are used to produce more wealth with a view to profit; this sets in motion an impersonal and uncontrollable economic mechanism which leads to the accumulation, in fits and starts, of more and more capital, of more and more wealth used to produce further wealth with a view to profit. Capitalism is, then, a system of capital accumulation. Hence, of course, its name.

Not just a market economy
This is not just how defenders of capitalism like to portray things. Many shun the c-word and talk instead about a "market economy". To most people a market is a friendly place where you buy things you need so the term "market economy" is employed so as to conjure up the idea of an economy geared to serving consumer demands. It is possible to envisage such an economy on paper but it would be vastly different from capitalism. It would be an economy of self-employed farmers, artisans and shopkeepers, each producing a particular product which they would exchange on the market, via the medium of money, for the products produced by the others which they needed. There would be no profit-making, no exploitation and no accumulation, just independent producers exchanging their products for their mutual benefit.

The farmers, butchers, bakers, candlestick makers and others would be producing their particular products which would sell at a price reflecting the average amount of time required to produce it. There would be no profit and no exploitation because everybody would be receiving the full value of what their labour had produced. They would just be exchanging so much labour in one form for the same amount in a different form. Marx called such an economy "simple commodity production" (a commodity being, for him, an item of wealth produced for sale), but it is doubtful whether it has ever existed in a pure form. The nearest that may have come to it would have been in some of the early colonial settlements in North America, but even Adam Smith writing over two hundred years ago in 1776 assumes an economy in which there is already production for profit and accumulation. Capitalism is indeed a market economy, but not a simple market economy. A key difference of course is that under capitalism production is not carried out by self-employed producers but wage and salary workers employed by business enterprises. In other words, under capitalism, the producers have become separated from the means of production. This makes all the difference. The producers are now not bringing to market what they have produced (that belongs to their employer, the owner of the means of production) but only their working skills, so they receive the value not of their product but only of their ability to work, which is less. The product is still under normal circumstances sold at its full labour-time value but the proceeds go not to the direct producers but are pocketed by the owners of the means of production. Profit is the difference between this and what they pay, as wages and salaries, for the working skills they purchase on the labour market.

Production for profit
So capitalism is not a simple market economy. Marx explained the difference well when he said that what happens in a simple market economy is that the producers brought to market a product of a certain value which they sell for money in order to buy another product or products of equal value. The economic
circuit is commodity-money-commodity (C-M-C), the aim being to end up with a basket of useful things.

Under capitalism the economic circuit is different. A capitalist sets out with a sum of money which they use to buy commodities (factory buildings, raw materials, working skills) that can be used to produce other commodities with the aim of ending up, after these other commodities have been sold, with more money than they started off with. So the circuit is now money-commodities-more money (M-C-M').

It is now clear why capitalism cannot be described as an economy geared to satisfying consumer demands. The products of capitalist production have to find a buyer of course but this is only incidental to the main aim of making a profit, of ending up with more money than was originally invested.

Production is initiated not by what consumers are prepared to pay for to satisfy their needs but by what the owners of the means of production calculate can be sold at a profit. This is what makes the wheels of capitalism grind or not grind, or not grind so quickly, as the case may be depending on the level of the rate of profit.

But the picture of capitalism is still not complete. Capitalist investors want to end up with more money than they started out with, but why? Is it just to live in luxury and consume in riotous living?

That would suggest that the aim of capitalist production was simply to produce luxuries for the rich. Once again, it is possible to envisage such an economy on paper. Marx did, and called it "simple reproduction", but only as a stage in the development of his argument.

By "simple reproduction" he meant, logically enough, that the stock of means of production was simply reproduced from year to year at its previously existing level; all of the profits (all of M' less M) would be used to maintain a privileged, exploiting class in luxury and idleness. As a result the M in M-C-M' would always remain the same and the circuit keep on repeating itself unchanged.

Capital accumulation
This of course is not how capitalism operates. It is not a "steady state economy". On the contrary, it is an ever-expanding economy of capital accumulation. In other words, most of the profits are capitalised, i.e. reinvested in production, so that production, the stock of means of production, and the amount of capital, all tend to increase over time (not in a smooth straight line, but only in fits and starts, but that's another story). The economic circuit is thus money-commodities-more money-more commodities, even more money (M-C-M-C-M').

This, however, is not the conscious choice of the owners of the means of production (given the choice, they'd probably prefer to consume it all themselves). It is something that is imposed on them as a condition for not losing their original investment. Competition with other capitalists forces them to reinvest as much of their profits as they can afford to in keeping their means and methods of production up to date. As a result there is continuous technological innovation.

Defenders of capitalism see this as one of its merits and in the past it was insofar as this has led to the creation of the basis for a non-capitalist society in which the technologically-developed means of production can be now and could have been any time in the last 100 years consciously used to satisfy people's wants and needs.

Under capitalism this whole process of capital accumulation and technical innovation is a disorganised, impersonal process which causes all sorts of problems particularly on a world scale where it is leading to the destruction of the environment and the absolute impoverishment of many formerly independent producers in the so-called Third World which have rightly ignited the anger of the new wave of anti-capitalist protesters.

www.worldsocialism.org
An open conference hosted by the Workers Solidarity Alliance

October 12 -13, 2002 (Columbus Day weekend) – NYC

This conference will be for persons who are committed to an anarcho-syndicalist perspective and/or are currently involved in syndicalist organizing efforts.

Aims of the conference:

♦ to promote comradely discussion and debate on issues of concern to anarcho-syndicalists
♦ to assess the current political situation in the U.S. and to discuss possible strategies for the workers movement
♦ to explore opportunities for improving mutual aid and networking
♦ to meet good people and have a great time

Items for discussion (partial). The agenda is a work-in-progress (please send us any further proposals or suggestions).

♦ reports on local activities
♦ the state of the U.S. working class and the labor movement today
♦ a retrospective on anarcho-syndicalism in the U.S.
♦ relating community activism to workplace organizing
♦ how to link individual militants up with collective activity
♦ report from the I-2002 Conference in Germany

There will be a party for participants in the conference and friends during the course of the weekend.

Limited housing available—listing of reasonably priced accommodations will be provided.

If interested, please contact us at: wsany@hotmail.com

339 Lafayette Street, Room 202
New York, New York 10012
212-979-8353
Fax: 973-773-9337

http://flag.blackened.net/agony/wsa
NOTES, ANNOUNCEMENTS, AND SHORT REVIEWS

Red & Black Notes recently mailed out its Summer 2002 issue. The masthead describes R&BN as “a council communist newsletter,” an appellation that raises the question of just what council communism is, since nothing in the contents of this issue would suggest a council communist program as such. In some respects R&BN resembles the DB, carrying information from various non-market socialist political persuasions, except that it seems to concentrate on material from the political descendants of the Italian, Dutch, and German critics of Lenin and the Soviet Union the political terrain of left communism and left Trotskyism. The DB’s point of departure from the left, on the other hand, is the turn of the century rebellion against reformist social democracy like DeLeonists and world socialists. Both currents have some kind words for anarcho-syndicalists and anarcho-communists. This issue begins with an excellent analysis of the current recession, arguing that ruling class excuses for the most recent down turn results, not from 9/11, but from the usual workings of the the capitalist system. Also, besides an article on the Canadian protest movement, this issue features “A Reply to ‘The Real Movement,’” a four-page response by one “Monsieur Dupont” to an editorial in the previous issue that discusses the nature of the opposition to capitalism. “The Legacy of CLR James” is R&BN’s critical article examining the neo-Trotskyist movement that has ended in the Chicago-based News and Letters. R&BN also does an excellent job of keeping track of internet sites of interest to our political sector. $5 for a four-issue sub from PO Box 47643, Don Mills, ON M3C 3S7, Canada.

The Bulletin of the Kate Sharpley Library opens its July 2002 issue Number 31 with an essay by Max Stirner taken from the December 1919 issue of the Anarchist Soviet Bulletin edited by Marcus Graham. Interesting for its demonstration of the thinking of a philosophic anarchist in a revolutionary era it strikes me as notable for its omission of the role of capital as the oppressor of the useful producer. “Resistance in France” consists of an interview with an anarchist active in the WWII anti-Nazi resistance in Marseilles. Unrelated to the generally CP-run French resistance many of its members were political refugees from Franco’s Spain and Mussolini’s Italy. Especially interesting is its discussion of the activities of Voline, who later wrote The Unknown Revolution, the definitive history of anarchism in the Russian Revolution.