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BULLETIN MATTERS

This issue begins with Don Fitz’s report on the St. Louis Conference on Workers’ Self-Organization, which was largely organized by produced in part through the efforts of people and groups from our end of the political spectrum. Next is Tom Wetzel’s in memoriam for Rik Winslow, whose letters have appeared from time to time in the DB. About half of this issue is devoted to John Crump’s article on Marx. This even-handed, well-reasoned and well-documented analysis of Marx’s contribution to revolutionary socialism may give second thoughts to some of us who have willingly accepted the label Marxist. Comrade Crump, an editor of and contributor to Non-Market Socialism, reviewed in DB 31, does not engage in Marx bashing here; I suspect that Bakuninism and DeLeonism might suffer from the same kind of intensive examination. Comrade Brandon has a criticism of the Discussion Bulletin in this issue, and Monroe Prussack continues his crusade against Leninism in the SLP. This issue ends with a review of John Zerzan’s Elements of Refusal, which serves as a sort of slaughterhouse
for the sacred cows.

As usual we end by soliciting your letters, articles, and leaflets. Please submit them in camera-ready form, single-spaced and with narrow margins to conserve space.

Frank Girard
for the DB Committee

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

Recently the Discussion Bulletin received two new catalogs of books and pamphlets from our end of the political spectrum. These together with a couple of other received earlier will be the subject of this issue’s column and are listed below:

"Books for a Better World," from Charles H. Kerr Company, 1740 West Greenleaf Ave., Chicago, IL 60626

Summer '88 Catalog from Libertarian Book Club, 339 Lafayette St., Rm. 202, New York, NY 10012.

Catalog from New York Labor News, 914 Industrial Ave., Palo Alto, CA 94303.

Catalog from Left Bank Distribution, 5241 University Way NE, Seattle, WA 98105

Left Bank Distribution has easily the largest list of the four. It carries many of the same items as the Libertarian Book Club and is in basically the same political stream. Nonetheless, Libertarian Book Club has some fiction not carried by Left Bank as well as a list of older British pamphlets, a couple dating back to the Thirties.

An interesting question arose a couple of years ago regarding the relative seniority of the Charles H. Kerr Company and New York Labor News. Although the Kerr Company had been billing itself as the oldest socialist publishing company in the U.S., established in 1887, New York Labor News, founded in 1887 as the Socialist Labor Party’s publishing arm, would seem to have the better claim. The Kerr Company, was a typical privately owned commercial publisher until its owner was converted to socialism around the turn of the century. It fell upon hard times after WWII, but has recovered in the past decade under a new management which has cooperated with other groups interested in labor history. It has a fine list of new publications, many of them oriented toward this new interest. New York Labor News continues to reprint its list Marxist-DeLeonist books, the most recent being a new edition of Two Pages from Roman History. It also has a set of 39 reprints called "Socialist Studies," which sell at prices in the ten to fifty cent range.

These are the only publishers’ catalogs I know of in our political sector. If anyone has knows of any others, please send them in and we will take note of them in this department.
Industrial Unionists Gather in St. Louis

Can industrial unionists with different backgrounds and viewpoints work together toward a common goal of ending exploitation? There were a lot of people who said "yes" at the Conference on Workers' Self-Organization which met in St. Louis, November 11-13, 1988. Disagreements which were aired and discussed during the three day event added strength to the shared belief that working people have the inherent ability to collectively act in their own behalf, despite designs to control and manipulate them by capitalist managers, bureaucratic union bosses, and vanguard parties.

Workers' Democracy took up the idea of a gathering in late 1987. And, by early 1988, it was backed by the Chicago Branch of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), the New Union Party (NUP), the Socialist Party, U.S.A. (SP), and Workers Solidarity Alliance (WSA). But the overwhelming majority of those who showed up were not affiliated with any of these groups. Their interest was tweaked by the promise to explore the interface of culture, sexism and racism with exploitation at the point of production.

Most of the 125 to 150 people who participated came from Missouri cities of St. Louis, Rolla, Kansas City, or Columbia to attend just 1 or 2 topics. But there was a core group of 45 to 50 who were deeply committed to the concept of workers' self-activity and showed up for the bulk of the sessions. They came from all over the U.S. and Canada: Montgomery, Alabama; Berkeley, Oakland, San Francisco, Monrovia, and San Pedro, California; Boulder, Colorado; Atlanta, Georgia; Chicago and Springfield, Illinois; Fort Wayne, Indiana; Kansas City, Kansas; Amherst and Northampton, Massachusetts; Detroit, Michigan; Austin, Minneapolis, and St. Paul, Minnesota; Bloomfield and Trenton, New Jersey; New York City; Hubbard, Ohio; Windsor and Toronto, Ontario; Portland, Oregon; Knoxville, Tennessee; and, Richmond, Virginia. At least a dozen others looked into travelling to St. Louis, but were not able to arrange it. The jobs were at least as diverse as people's home towns. Though I did not get a chance to talk with most of the people there, I know that those who came represented autoworkers, teachers, steelworkers, poets, secretaries, cab drivers, social workers, printers, telephone workers, letter carriers, saw mill workers, musicians, lawyers, child care workers, waitresses, physicians, farmworkers, nurses, librarians, laboratory workers, and psychologists.

Ironically, the Conference began on Veterans' Day with a talk by Marty Glaberman which focussed on wildcat strikes by auto workers during WWII. Marty reminded us that workers voted for a no-strike pledge at the same moment they were carrying out the most massive strikes in the history of the American auto industry. Working class consciousness often begins to change in reaction to the brutalities at one's own workplace before there is an understanding of the need for an overall rejection of capitalism.

SP member Tom Page put together a panel on worker education programs, which included a talk by Verle Muhrer on the origins of the Project Adult College Education (PACE) program with the help of the Kansas City Metro Labor Council in the Fall of 1979. Fred Whitehead said that he found students were more likely to identify with Missouri and Kansas labor movements in PACE courses than national and international conflicts. The last panelist, Norm Diamond, pointed out that his experience teaching and coordinating the Pacific Northwest Labor College helped him develop interactive methods of teaching such as labor theatre.
If labor education is to be part of the modern world, it will have to catch up with the electronic revolution. This was behind Rose Feurer's showing her video, Making History: St. Louis Gas Workers, which she made for Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers Local 5-6. The film interviewed workers who participated in the 1953 sit-down strikes during the union's organization.

A debilitating stroke last June prevented George Rawick from attending the Conference. But his thoughts about working class racism were well represented by David Roediger, whose outlook evolved through conversations with George. Rawick connects the origins of working class racism with the brutal dehumanization that accompanied the early development of capitalism. Dave pointed out that, despite radical hopes for interracial unity, white workers have often defined themselves as being better than workers of color. created unions based on exclusion, carried out hate strikes, and participated in cultural degradation of blacks. This set the stage for George Lipsitz' description of civil rights organizing in St. Louis and how it connected with black peoples' worklives. The largest attendance at the Conference was when 70 to 80 showed up to hear St. Louis civil rights activist Ivory Perry recount his transition from picking cotton to working at many factory jobs and the common thread of racism running through all of them.

That evening featured a showing of the documentary Our Land Too - The Legacy of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union. The film traces the growth of the first rural interracial movement in the South. Afterwards, there were comments by R.L. Mitchell, who helped found the SFTU in the early 1930's and Louis Cantor, who wrote a history of the famous 1939 highway sit-down by southeastern Missouri tenant farmers.

The second day of the Conference looked at revolutionary labor movements around the world in order to contrast them with recent problems in the U.S. Perhaps the weakest link in the capitalist chain of world control is South African apartheid. Peter Mahlangu began the day with vivid accounts of what it's like to be a black worker in South Africa as he urged unity in the anti-capitalist struggle. Kim Scipes then showed slides of his recent trips to the Philippines, described the increasingly repressive atmosphere of the "liberal" Aquino regime, and talked about resistance to attacks on workers' living standards by the Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU - May First Movement). Miners March for Life, a video documenting self-defense actions taken by the revolutionary Central Obero Boliviano (COB - Bolivian Workers Central) in the face of plummeting tin prices, was provided by the Bolivian Education Project.

Peter Bachleiff headed an afternoon panel on "American Labor in the 1980's" with a review of this decade's struggles, beginning with Reagan's attack on PATCO (Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization). Dana Frank told about some of the novel organizing techniques which led to the 1984-85 victory of the largely female clerical and technical workforce at Yale University. Mike Walsh described the new sources of organizing drives being tapped by the Service Employees International Union.

But, the high point of the panel was when Pete Winkel, former Business Agent of P-9 at the Austin Hormel plant, provided a very personal account of working in a plant with a tradition of a great sit-down in 1933, granting concessions to help Hormel build a new plant, watching Hormel go back on its promises, and then being stabbed in the back by one's own "union." the United Food and Commercial Workers Union. Pete commented that the sexual revolution saw something new to be added to
homosexuals, bisexuals and transsexuals: "hormosexuals," or workers who screw themselves. This was his interpretation of what P-9ers had gotten from granting concessions to the meatmaster.

WSA member Tom Wetzel recalled one of labor's most shining hours, when over half a million Italian workers responded to crises of 1919-20 by occupying their workplaces and frequently restarting them under their collective control. This, of course, is what Polish Solidarnosc did on an even larger scale in 1980-81. Solidarnosc was one of the many Eastern European movements covered by Bruce Allen. While it is easy to find unions which are no more than negative examples of what we do not want to create, it's considerably harder to point positively to a democratic union structure. This is what WO member Don Fitz did with the slides of la Coordinadora, the Spanish longshoremen's union where all officers receive the same pay and do the same work as the rank and file, so that no labor bureaucracy exists.

The second day ended with a showing of The Wobblies, about organizing the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) from 1905 til after WWI. After the film, Wobblies Mike Hargis told about the IWW from WWI til today, emphasizing its struggles in small shops and in prisons during the last decade. Throughout the second day, everyone was treated to the Wobblie Art Show, which Ron Sakolsky used to transform the atmosphere of the meeting room. Covered with radical labor art, posters, and literature tables, the Conference room brought home the rich revolutionary tradition we have inherited.

The final day of the Conference brought together many of the themes covered in previous talks. Seymour Faber's discussion of the militant and successful Canadian workers' strikes and plant occupations of the last decade dispelled any myth that "objective factors" prevent American workers from defending their quality of life. Stan Weir discussed the domineering practices of vanguard parties which led him to conclude that radical intellectuals need to intensify their efforts to learn about blue collar worklife and avoid top-down structures.

NUP member Katherine Kleckner chaired the wrap-up session when people brought up their reactions to the Conference. Several people said that they had worried that it might turn out to be a "WO event" but were pleasantly surprised at the breadth of viewpoints and absence of attempts to impose an organizational "line." This lack of top-down control did contribute to frequent concerns that many speakers did not sufficiently delve into the issue of workers collectively organizing themselves and that too much time was spent sitting and listening. Conference organizers explained some of the difficulties in knowing how a planned program will actually turn out.

The current Planning Committee hopes to publish a volume from talks given at the 1988 Conference. A new Planning Committee formed to explore interest in a conference next year includes Katherine Kleckner, Norm Diamond. David Frazer, Don Fitz, Kim Scipes, and Tom Wetzel. This Planning Committee has a tremendous job in preparing for a new conference, beginning with when and where it will be. It also needs to figure out how to set more time aside for discussion without creating a lot of "dead time," when nothing is going on. People seemed to agree that any future gathering should have themes that focus on specific issues. For example, there could be discussion of whether AFL-CIO business unions can be a serious vehicle for transforming American society. This gets to the problem of how revolutionary industrial unionists can organize when the most that their co-workers are willing to do is affiliate with business unions.
The 1988 Conference successfully broke out of the radical ghetto by including a variety of topics, from those which would focus on concerns of the already-committed to widely publicized talks designed to attract a larger St. Louis audience. Should this "two-pronged" strategy be repeated, or should all parts of the conference have the same orientation?

No one presenting material at the 1988 Conference was told that they had to lecture. Yet, almost all speakers chose to. How can a gathering be put together so that the audience is not restricted to the role of passive spectator?

The Planning Committee for the 1988 Conference asked for contributions from three highly overlapping groupings: labor historians, union activists, and political organizations. Each of these has serious flaws at the same time they have vital contributions for such an event. By themselves, labor historians tend to drift off into abstractions further and further from reality; but, they can bring a sense of continuity with our revolutionary heritage and awareness of previously-travelled dead-ends. By themselves, union activists tend to yearn for the best deal in the present system; but, they bring indispensable experiences of dealing with the American working class as it is right now. Left to their own urges, political groups tend to degenerate into suicidal infighting; but, they bring critical reminders that the whole point of everything we're doing is to build a new society. Not everyone agrees with this analysis and the usefulness of involving all three orientations. People are even less likely to agree with the relative contributions that each should make to a conference. The new Planning Committee needs to decide whether to continue this approach and how to integrate the groupings it does include into a coherent program.

The structure and content of a future conference is not set. (Actually, it has not really even begun.) Please send your reactions and thoughts to: WD Press / P.O. Box 24115 / St. Louis MO 63130.

One component of a recurring conference of industrial unionists is core. It comes from negative experiences that many of us had almost 20 years ago with Students for a Democratic Society and other civil rights and anti-war organizations. They were all infected with vanguardist groups, each of whom had the "correct" line they sought to impose once they "captured" the organization. Each vanguardist clique sought to outdo the others in its degree of petty personal vindictiveness and intolerance of thoughtcrime.

Unfortunately, pages of the DISCUSSION BULLETIN often reek with vitriolic ravings which are indistinguishable from the worst forms of vanguardism. Somewhat bizarrely, the nastiest bickering tends to be penned by those who most pompously profess their libertarian anti-vanguardism. Perhaps it is time for some DB contributors to realize the sterility of their unending stream of condescending sneers and grow out of the adolescent phase of onanistic exhibitionism. One way to do it is learning how to get along with people you disagree with when there are larger issues at stake (such as stopping the capitalist class from terminating life on this planet).

If there is another Conference on Workers' Self-Organization, one thing I think all of us would like to see again is comradely diversity of views amongst industrial unionists. This does not mean shutting off debate but it does mean coming with a willingness for give and take (which is precluded by having a fixed organizational line or perpetual holier-than-thou, one-upmanship attitude). If we are going to
prefigure a cooperative society within our gatherings and coalitions, we are going to have to develop ways to resolve our differences without creating openings for vanguardists (including "libertarian" vanguardists) to destroy the work we have done.

Don Fitz

Dear DB readers,

Since Rik Winslow has written a number of letters to the DB, and probably had correspondence with quite a few of the DB's contributors as well, I wanted to inform everyone that at the end of October Rik was killed in a freak auto accident on a narrow Central Valley road. I don't think I could describe how awful I felt when his mom told me the news over the phone.

Rik had just turned 21 in August. Those of us in USA here in California who knew Rik personally had a lot of respect for him. Rik had a solid, informed commitment to anarcho-syndicalism, to rank-and-file workplace organizing, and faith in the revolutionary potential of the American working class. Knowing his abilities, we anticipated his positive contributions to the movement in the years to come. We were about to elect him our regional delegate/organizer within USA.

Rik was a voracious, careful reader, constantly questioning, constantly searching. He had dropped out of high school, but that is perhaps a comment on the failure of the educational system more than anything else as Rik was very bright, a tremendously self-motivated learner. I had come to look forward to his long letters filled with all sorts of questions and observations, requests for advice on what to read about this or that topic, etc.

A very sizeable proportion of the indigenous white working class here in California is descended from the mass migration of people in the '30s and '40s from the swath of states stretching from Nebraska south into Oklahoma and Arkansas. I am personally familiar with this social milieu as my mother's family migrated to California from Nebraska in the '30s with little more than the clothes on their backs. Rik's family was also a product of this same migration -- his grandparents came to California from Arkansas during that period, bringing little other than their ability to work. His mom worked as a migrant laborer in Central Valley fields in her youth.

Rik grew up in the radical political milieu. His father was a member of Vietnam Veterans Against the War and worked on a radical student paper at Sacramento State in the early '70s. His parents took him along on anti-war marches in that period, when he was a young child. Though Rik charted his own course and figured out his own political views, his parents, and his extended working class family, were supportive and admired him, even if they disagreed with his political views.
Rik's love of humanity is perhaps a reflection of that supportive environment in which he was raised. Rik was personally pained by the injustice to people he saw in the world around him. His love also extended to other living things; Rik was also pained by cruelty to animals and the current destruction of animal species by capitalist greed and blindness.

Within revolutionary circles there has long been a debate on whether a revolutionary upsurge of the working class would be motivated more by the positive aspiration for freedom and control over their lives or as a reaction to some cataclysmic failure of the current system. Reflecting his faith in humanity, Rik inclined more towards the first viewpoint. But Rik did not believe that a libertarian revolution would happen simply because of conversion under some ideological rubric -- "Most wouldn't even call themselves 'anarchists'", Rik would say. Rather, he believed that libertarian communism would be built as the natural outcome of a working class in pursuit of its freedom, self-determination and enlightened class interests.

Rik may have been motivated by love of humanity but he also had a down-to-earth ability to relate to his peers -- which gave him such good potential as an organizer. Rik understood the importance of a constant dialogue between revolutionaries and those in the working class who are not presently in motion or who do not presently share our ideas. Rik respected the autonomy of others, he had an anti-elitist concept of organizing. As such, he disagreed with those anarchists or anti-authoritarians who see any kind of organizing as "vanguardist." "That's a great excuse for sitting on your ass," Rik would say.

I write these lines to explain our appreciation for Rik, especially for the benefit of those DB readers who did not know him personally.

Sincerely,

Tom Wetzel

Workers Solidarity Alliance
San Francisco Group
PO Box 40440
San Francisco, CA 94140

Cont'd from p. 24

1914 were the legitimate descendants of Marx. The article is made less effective, in my estimation, by its subjective Marx-bashing style.

The final essays deal with rebellion in the 1980s. Here again Zerzan steps on toes, for what he sees as hopeful signs of resistance to capitalist and statist authority, many of us may view as anti social, nihilistic, even sociopathic behavior. These signs include drug use, alcoholism, job-related violence, and other forms of social violence, not all directed against authority. Regardless of--or perhaps because of--these reservations we strongly recommend this book to DB readers. $8.95 is a small price to pay for such a large package of new ideas.
The following article was first written in 1975 when I was living in Tokyo. It was published jointly by the Social Revolution and Solidarity groups as a pamphlet in 1976. Not only does the article have a bearing on the debate over labour vouchers which has occupied many columns of the Discussion Bulletin, but it argues more widely that the Marxian legacy is an ambivalent one. A genuinely communist/socialist/or even anarchist vein does run through Marx's and Engels' writings, but there is another side to their works which is fit only for the state-capitalist slag-heap.

John Crump, 21 July 1988

A Contribution to the Critique of Marx

What do we say about Lenin? We see him as a bourgeois revolutionary who expressed his bourgeois aspirations using communist terminology. This is not to say that Lenin represented the interests of the existing bourgeoisie in Russia in 1917; nor are we focusing attention on Lenin's own personal bourgeois social background. All that we mean when we call Lenin a 'bourgeois revolutionary' is that he and the Bolsheviks were instrumental in building up capitalism in Russia following the capitalist revolution of 1917 (which included the October seizure of power as one of its episodes).

Naturally, Lenin thought of himself as a communist, and there is no reason to doubt that he was perfectly sincere when he said so. Yet it is easy enough for communists to point out numerous ways in which his practice and the theory from which it was derived fell far short of communism. His concept of the role the working class was to play (or, more to the point, was not to play) in the revolution and his Jacobin ideas on dictatorship are just two of the more obvious of his deficiencies when we measure him against communist standards. As is equally well known, much of what he had to say about socialism/communism also indicates a peculiarly warped concept of the new society. The famous formulation of socialism in The Impending Catastrophe and How To Combat It, written in September 1917, is that "socialism is merely state-capitalist monopoly which is made to serve the interests of the whole people" (1) - an explicit statement that his image of socialism was a fundamentally state-capitalist one. Then there was the phony distinction made between 'socialism' and 'communism' in State and Revolution, which served to give the illusion that this arbitrarily labelled 'socialism' was within striking distance for the Bolsheviks in 1917, even if 'communism' was not. Coupled with this went the often expressed assertion that "There is...absolutely no contradiction in principle between Soviet (that is, socialist) democracy and the exercise of dictatorial powers by individuals" (2) - unashamed defences of the continuing oppression of the working class.

Of course, this is all rather old hat. But it is on this sort of evidence that our rejection of Leninism rests, and it is by applying to Russian reality standards which can be obtained from Marx's works (or simply by thinking them out for yourself) that we have been able to show the Russian social system to be capitalist
and the Leninist ideology which masks and justifies it to be an essentially bourgeois body of thought. It is a simple matter to put side by side with certain quotations from Lenin's writings and speeches an equal number of totally contradictory ones lifted from Marx's and Engels' texts. For example, as a random selection:-

"...the working class, exclusively by its own effort, is able to develop only trade-union consciousness." (3)

"...the emancipation of the workers must be the act of the working class itself..." (4)

"If socialism can only be realized when the intellectual development of all the people permits it, then we shall not see socialism for at least five hundred years..." (5)

"Marx...entirely trusted to the intellectual development of the working class, which was sure to result from combined action and mutual discussion." (6)

"We must raise the question of piece-work and apply and test it in practice;...we must make wages correspond to the total amount of goods turned out, or to the amount of work done..." (7)

"Let us now consider a little more closely the characteristic peculiarities of piece-wages. The quality of the labour is here controlled by the work itself, which must be of average perfection if the piece price is to be paid in full. Piece-wages become, from this point of view, the most fruitful source of reductions of wages and capitalist cheating." (8)

It is these sorts of passages which have led us to say that Leninism and Marxism are qualitatively different, that they express the interests of totally different classes and totally different revolutionary processes.

* * *

All of this appears to be completely cut and dried, yet what has been gradually occurring to me is that there is a real danger of one-sidedness in the way in which we go about assessing Leninism and Marxism here. In other words, we have to be careful not to contrast Leninism only with what is best in Marxism. We have to be very careful to compare Leninism with the whole of Marxism and not with some carefully selected and refined 'Marxism' which only represents one side of Marx's thought and activity. I would, of course, agree that there is an entire area of Marx's writings which amounts to an often brilliant and penetrating exposition of communism. If we take the communist doctrine expressed in this section of his writings and apply it to Lenin's ideas, true enough we can show (as we did above) the bourgeois revolutionary nature of Leninism. But, on the other hand, what happens if we take that same communist doctrine and apply it both to the rest of Marx's own writings and to his overall activity as a revolutionary? How does Marx himself begin to show up then?
Since I don't want to mince my words, I'll say frankly that Marx then starts to look like a bourgeois revolutionary himself. More specifically, he and Engels can then be identified as the theoretical leaders of the bourgeois revolutionary movement (social-democracy) which culminated in the German revolution of 1918.

Now, to say this is not to retract what I said above— that there is an "entire area of Marx's writings which amounts to an often brilliant and penetrating exposition of communism". Nor is it to deny that Marx's contributions to socialist theory in this area of his writings are enormously valuable and that we can still learn a great deal from them even today. What it is to say, though, is that the communist ideology which Marx developed here was a socialist theory expressing an entirely different (bourgeois) political practice. To put it another way, the communist ideology which Marx elaborated here was precisely what he himself meant by the term 'ideology'— a set of ideas which (even when intrinsically correct) mask rather than reveal the true nature of the problem.

The particular problem which several generations of European radicals were wrestling with throughout the long years of Marx's and Engels' political activity was the problem (or, rather, the series of problems) of bourgeois revolution. This was why there was nothing contradictory in the fact that the movement into which most of them were eventually to become organised (the Second International) should have culminated in a wave of capitalist revolutions which swept across Central and Eastern Europe at the end of the First World War. This bourgeois revolution expressed itself in a variety of guises—demands for German unity, Polish independence, the overthrow of tsarist autocracy in Russia, etc.—and one of the theoretical forms it took was 'socialism' or 'Marxism'. To the extent that this 'socialist' doctrine was theoretically correct (i.e., was genuinely socialist) it was little more than a disembodied theory, having no real point of contact with the problems of the day. Ultimately, this was precisely what some of the social-democrats came to say about it. On the other hand, to the extent that this doctrine did relate to the problems inherent in bourgeois revolution (the pressing problems of Marx's and Engels' day), it was capitalist. Needless to say, it was just this state-capitalist area of Marxism which was eagerly taken up by social-democrats and (later) Bolsheviks alike, while in their hands the communist sector of Marx's thought was either ignored or else ritualised into harmless scripture.

The communist element within Marxism could not have been anything other than a disembodied theory at the time it was put forward because, in the conditions of the nineteenth century, communist revolution was simply impossible. Just how near or far the communist revolution is from us today is not something which I will go into here, but at least we can say that for Europe and the other advanced, industrialised parts of the world the era of bourgeois revolutions is well and truly finished. Even if the prospects for a communist revolution remain fairly bleak, at least we now have the opportunity (which Marx and Engels never had) to engage in the work of constructing a theory of communism with minds which are relatively uncluttered
with the baggage which belongs to the bourgeois revolution. As we set about constructing this theory of communism, many of the foundation stones from which to build it can be cut from the rich communist vein which runs through Marx's writings. If we want to build soundly, however, we need to be perfectly clear in our minds about those other sections of Marx's works which are fit only for the state-capitalist slag-heap. Above all, we need to free ourselves from the sort of mystifying generalisation which declares that "all attempts to deny or 'transcend' Marxism lead inevitably to counter-revolution" (9) The only worthwhile comment is to enquire which particular 'Marxism' it is that those who come out with this sort of remark have in mind: the 'Marxism' which stood for the "Abolition of the wage system!" or the 'Marxism' which declared itself for the "gallant Turks"? (10, 11) The 'Marxism' which maintained that the "complete domination of the alienated thing over man is fully manifested in money" or the 'Marxism' which wanted "Centralization of credit in the hands of the state, by means of a national bank with state capital and an exclusive monopoly"? (12, 13)

*

This article is not intended as a systematic explanation of a new way of looking at Marx. A hefty tome would be required for that. All I want to do in the remaining sections is to put a little flesh on the skeleton of the case which I have argued so far.

It is impossible to unravel the contradictions which exist within Marx's theory and practice unless one understands his morbid horror of utopianism. One of Marx's best points was his vision of communist society and the passion with which he clung to it throughout most of his adult life. In place of a society based on private property, where "my work is an alienation of my life, because I work in order to live, to furnish myself with the means of living" (14), Marx's image of a new society where "my work would be a free expression of my life, and therefore a free enjoyment of my life" (15) has won for his early texts their current popularity. But the achievement of such a society was not (even distantly) on the horizon at the time that Marx was writing such texts. Communism remained just as much a utopia when Marx wrote about it as it did in the hands of (say) Owen. No doubt it is expecting too much of Marx, but what was required was a cool understanding that the struggles which were in process in his day were not (even remotely) the struggle for the society that he was dreaming of. Even the struggles of the working class of his day, however heroic they might have been, could not be artificially drafted into the service of communism.

Of course, Marx was only made of flesh and blood and the urge to be active was a strong one for him and Engels. But, if they chose to be active, it was their duty as communists to make absolutely clear the difference between, on the one hand, the bourgeois-revolutionary and reformist working class activity in which they engaged (there was no other activity worth talking of for them to engage in) and, on the other, the communism to which they were committed in their theory. To have failed to make this difference clear would have resulted in socialism being fatally confused with bourge-
ois revolution and working class reforms of capitalism. As everyone
knows, this is just what did happen. And it happened thanks, at
least in part, to Marx and Engels.

I want to try to avoid being misunderstood here. There is
a passage in Engels' Marx and the Neue Rheinische Zeitung where he
writes:

If we did not desire that, if we did not desire to take
up the movement from its already existing, most advanced,
actually proletarian side and push it further, then
nothing remained for us to do but to preach communism
in a little provincial sheet and to found a tiny sect
instead of a great party of action. But we had already
been spoilt for the role of preachers in the wilderness;
we had studied the utopians too well for that. We had
not drafted our programme for that. (6)

It is worth mentioning, just as an aside, that the phrase "take up
the movement from its already existing, most advanced, actually
proletarian side" is little more than bluster. There was no real
proletarian class in Germany at the time Engels was writing about,
and "most advanced" is a purely relative expression. One could sub-
stitute "hopelessly backward" without doing any great damage to the
meaning of this passage. Apart from this aside, however, I am not
arguing that Marx and Engels should have "preach(ed) communism in a
little provincial sheet and (ought) to (have) found(ed) a tiny sect".
It is true that, if they had done so, it would at least have been
striking a blow (however small and insignificant) for communism
rather than against it, since less confusion would have been caused.
But doubtless there were good reasons - in the sense of applying the
materialist conception of history to the conditions in existence at
that time - for their encouraging and participating in bourgeois revo-
lutionary movements in 1848 and at later dates too. To put it
another way, there were doubtlessly good reasons for their behaving
as capitalist revolutionaries even while they remained communists
on the theoretical plane. To have consistently applied the materialist
conception of history in this cold, unemotional way, however, would
have required a superhuman degree of mental toughness. Cold and
unemotional though Marx and Engels might have been on some occasions,
there was a heavy slice of romanticism in their characters too.

Since they were men and not angels, there is nothing surprising in
the fact that they should have sought some escape from the tension
that was set up between their theoretical commitment to communism
and their actually engaging in bourgeois revolution. This escape
was nothing less than kidding themselves (and most of the rest of
the world too) that the bourgeois revolution in which they engaged
was itself communist - or that at least it included a (non-existent)
communist potential. Whatever the personal relief that this escape
from reality gave to Marx and Engels, it did incalculable damage to
the development of a correct theory of communism.

Perhaps no-one who has ever read Marx with a critical
consciousness could deny that the criticism which we have
made of him here applies to his early writings. The very idea that
"the German proletariat" (what proletariat?) stood in an "excellent
situation... for socialism" in 1844 is too preposterous to waste any
time on. (17) Precisely the same goes for the notion expressed in
the Communist Manifesto that the "Communists turn their attention
chiefly to Germany, because that country is on the eve of a bourgeois
revolution... and because the bourgeois revolution in Germany will
be but the prelude to an immediately following proletarian revol-
tion." (18) Interestingly enough, when Engels wrote many years later
that "Never has a factual programme justified itself as well as..."
the one put forward in the Manifesto, he quoted the section contain-
ing the above passage. (19) Wisely, however, he cut his quotation
short in mid-paragraph - before it came to the forecast of a prolet-
arian revolution in Germany!

Obviously, this sort of romantic nonsense looks ridiculous
in retrospect. Yet in itself it was not particularly damaging to
communism. If this were all that was wrong with the position which
Marx and Engels adopted via-à-via the revolution of 1848, it would
be quite reasonable to say that they were guilty of nothing more
than their enthusiasm for socialism getting the better of them.
They imagined socialism to be a great deal nearer than it eventually
turned out to be, and hence were mistaken only in terms of the time-
scale that was likely to apply to the social changes which they were
predicting. Unfortunately, however, there is more to it than this.
In the Communist Manifesto and elsewhere we find a mixture of starry-
eyed romanticism and hard-headed realism that was to prove fatal.

If Marx had simply projected an image of communist soc-
ity in the Manifesto and suggested that this would be the more or
less rapid outcome of the revolution which he saw coming, this in
itself would not have done too much harm. Marx was too much of a
realist for this, however. Instead of an out-and-out utopian (but
not particularly harmful) projection of socialism, what we get is
a semi-realistic recipe for state capitalism which was fraught with
danger because its relation (or non-relation) to socialism was
left unclear. Firstly, the proletariat was to take power. In the
conditions of the time this was no more realistic than suggesting
that the moon would drop out of the sky, but at least as an abstract
and - as it were - ahistorical statement of communist principle,
this was correct. Having taken power, though, the proletariat
was to exercise its rule within a continuing capitalist society.
In other words, the proletariat, as a unified class, was to be the
political master of a system which economically continued to exploit
it. What can be made of this? As far as Marx's understanding
that in the middle of the nineteenth century an immediate advance
to communism was impossible is concerned, the position he took up
was again realistic and correct. But to imagine that, within the
economic system of capitalism, the proletariat could maintain its
undivided unity and hence its political rule, so that a new ruling
minority class would not appear (nor the politically dispossessed
bourgeoisie regain control of the state) was utterly wishful think-
ing. Lastly, and for the same reason, the idea that this (suppos-
edly proletarian-administered) capitalism could peacefully and
gradually transform itself into communism was just as mistaken
(and as dangerous).
Anyone who notices a similarity between the programme we have criticised here and the policy which Lenin and the Bolsheviks subjectively thought they were pursuing from 1917 onwards is, of course, perfectly right. True, there were differences between Bolshevik policy and the programme outlined in the Communist Manifesto. For Marx it was the working class as a whole which was the revolutionary actor; for Lenin the party. One can criticise Leninism on these grounds and it is a throwback to Jacobinism, as Rosa Luxemburg did. But such a criticism is, in the end, more or less peripheral. The whole notion of a proletarian-administered form of capitalism, which was common to Marx in the Communist Manifesto and to Lenin in 1917, was disastrously wrong. Lenin's concept of the role of the revolutionary vanguard might well be an additional error on top of this, but the communist critique of Leninism does not centre on this additional mistake.

* * *

Even if some people can accept this criticism of the early Marx up to and including the Communist Manifesto, they will probably tell us that Marx in his maturity is a different kettle of fish. I do not agree with this and I think it is possible to prove it wrong. It is, for example, no defence of the mature Marx to refer to his and Engels' joint preface to the German edition of the Manifesto of 1872, where it was stated that "no special stress is laid on the revolutionary measures proposed at the end of section II." (20) Anyone who reads that preface carefully can see that what Marx and Engels were talking about was a change in the details of the policy they advocated, emphatically not a change in the principle on which that policy rested ("...the general principles laid down in this Manifesto are, on the whole, correct today as ever.") (21) Unfortunately, I do not have the time or the materials to hand to trace the state-capitalist thread right the way through Marx's literary output in the years following 1848. However, as an illustration that state capitalism was still being advocated by Marx in his maturity and what is more, was being even more explicitly (and erroneously) identified with socialism than in the Manifesto - we can refer to the Critique of the Gotha Programme of 1875. The Critique is worth taking up because, as with the Communist Manifesto, it also shows the theoretical continuity which exists between Marx and Lenin, as well as the discontinuity which exists between them.

Of course, just as with the Manifesto and Marx's earlier texts, the Critique of the Gotha Programme contains plenty of good points. 'Good points' here means valid statements of communist principle. As before I am not disputing Marx's commitment to communism as a theory in the Critique, and this commitment to communist theory is just what provides the theoretical discontinuity which exists between Marx and Lenin. One searches in vain in Lenin's writings for an exposition of socialism which can even begin to be compared to any of the many excellent explanations of socialism which occur within Marx's works. Lenin never properly grasped what socialism was all about and normally seems to have identified it with 'proletarian'- (i.e., vanguard party, in his
case) administered state capitalism. Not so Marx. Marx knew exactly what socialism was. But in his concern to convince himself and the world in general - that the capitalist revolutionary activity he was engaged in had something to do with socialism, he ended up presenting a proletarian-administered state-capitalist image of socialism alongside the correct image of socialism which is also to be found in his writings. It is this proletarian-administered state-capitalist image of socialism found in Marx as well as Lenin's texts which provides the theoretical continuity which exists between them, and it was this parallel existence of two distinct images of socialism within Marx's thought which also gave rise to the formulae of the "first phase of communist society" and the "higher phase of communist society" which are found in the Critique of the Gotha Programme.

Let us analyse these two "phases of communist society". The so-called "higher phase of communist society" corresponds, in fact, to communism. At first glance, so too does the "first phase of communist society". The state has disappeared, the means of production have been socialised, "producers do not exchange their products" any longer, we are told. (22) Formally, at any rate, the "first phase of communist society" rests on these cornerstones of communism. Marx admits that the "first phase" suffers from "defects", that it is still "stamped with the birthmarks of the old society" (23), but such admissions never shake his conviction that it is still communist. What is important in Marx's description of the "first phase of communist society", however, is not so much what he says about it as what is left unsaid. What we have to do is to think out the unspoken implications behind what Marx tells us about his so-called "first phase".

...the social working day consists (we are told) of the sum of the individual labour hours; the individual labour time of the individual producer is the part of the social labour day contributed by him, his share in it. He receives a certificate from society that he has furnished such and such an amount of labour (after deducting his labour for the common fund), and with this certificate he draws from the social stock of means of consumption as much as costs the same amount of labour. The same amount of labour which he has given to society in one form, he receives back in another. (24)

Formally, the means of production are owned communally. But, as far as the individual is concerned, without working he cannot consume. In order to live he has to supply his labour power in exchange for the certificate which enables him to eat. He is, in other words, nothing but a wage labourer (a certificate labourer, if you like) and will probably need quite a bit of convincing that his condition is basically any different to his propertyless status under capitalism.

"Producers do not exchange their products", Marx tells us, but he admits that "the same principle prevails as that which
regulates the exchange of commodities". (25) Equivalent amounts of labour are still in fact exchanged, only in this case it is certificates which are exchanged with products. True enough, these certificates are not money - since they are not intended to circulate - and exchange is supposed to be confined to relationships between the communally-owned warehouses (or whatever one calls them) and the individual. Yet, even if we assume this to be so, this would still not prevent Marx's "first phase of communist society" from being a form of capitalism. The fact is, though, that even these restrictions on the process of exchange could in reality be nothing more than pious hopes. Exchange between individuals would still be bound to occur and, whatever the intention behind the labour certificates, they would be bound to circulate too. The only way to prevent this, or at least to drive it underground, would be to devise some strict form of policing system for suppressing exchange between individuals.

This last point brings us on to the question of the state. Marx's "first phase of communist society" would inevitably be a society well supplied with social tensions. As we have seen, certificate labourers (whatever the mythology employed to obscure this state of affairs) would in fact stand before the means of production as propertyless certificate earners forced to 'sell' their labour power. The means of production would therefore confront them as an alien force, from which they were divorced, but to which they had to submit. As far as personal consumption was concerned, this would be as rigidly controlled as it was within existing forms of capitalism. In addition, the only way to restrict exchange between individuals would be to suppress it forcibly. To keep the tensions engendered by such a society under control, some form of policing authority - employing force where necessary and defending what were in fact property rights - would be required. One might, of course, suggest that no special armed body of men and women would be needed to do this job - that all would participate in the business of policing themselves. Difficult though it might be to imagine this working in practice, there would be nothing to recommend it even if we grant it as a possibility. It would be no more preferable to have certificate labourers policing themselves than it would to have them policed by a special social group. Indeed, one could say that it would be even less preferable, since the chances of workers (sorry - certificate labourers!) fighting back would be reduced.

No matter how insistently Marx might have applied the label "first phase of communist society" to this society which he described in the Critique of the Gotha Programme, as soon as we examine it in any sort of depth we can see that it is a form of capitalism. Marx's presentation of communism is perfectly correct as long as he deals with it in an abstract, theoretical fashion - or as long as he relegates it to the distant future (the "higher phase of communist society"). But as soon as he tries to relate his presentation of communism to the struggle he was actually engaged in, or to what was materially possible in the latter half of the nineteenth century, he inevitably starts to reduce this 'communism' to the level of capitalism.

With a 'proletarian'-administered state-capitalist
Image of socialism of his own, Lenin was the last person likely to notice any inconsistencies in Marx's description of the "first phase of communist society". On the contrary, when Lenin wrote his commentary on the Critique of the Gotha Programme in State and Revolution he did so entirely uncritically. But the remarkable thing about this section of State and Revolution is that, while Lenin accepted the basic inconsistencies incorporated in Marx's treatment of the "first phase of communist society", having once accepted these inconsistencies he consistently thought them through to their conclusion in a way which Marx himself had never done. Lenin thus realised what we ourselves have pointed out above, that the description of the "first phase of communist society" given by Marx in the Critique of the Gotha Programme means inevitably the "strictest control by society and by the state over the measure of labour and the measure of consumption". (26) Lenin is quite right to point out that, once Marx's basic inconsistency that "bourgeois right" will continue to exist within communism is accepted, it consistently "follows that under communism there remains for a time not only the bourgeois right, but even the bourgeois state, without the bourgeoisie!" (27)

Naturally, anyone who has a reasonable grounding in Marx's writings can ridicule what Lenin wrote here. It is after all quite possible to sift out any number of bald statements that socialism and the state are incompatible, that there will be no state under socialism, from Marx's and Engels' texts. It is, however, a singularly pointless exercise to do so. Statements that the state is an organ of class society, that there can be no state in the classless society of socialism and so on may abound in Marx's and Engels' works but they belong to those sections of their writings where they were dealing with more or less abstract socialist theory. Whenever Marx and Engels got down to suggesting concrete solutions to the problems of the capitalist revolution they were involved in, it was an entirely different story. Socialist terminology was still employed by them, even on those occasions, but the socialist content of their ideas was then eclipsed by state capitalism in their desire to be 'realistic' or 'scientific'. This is what provides the theoretical continuity between Marx and Lenin. When we compare the Critique of the Gotha Programme with State and Revolution, the most we can accuse Lenin of is having said openly and honestly what Marx himself had merely implied.

By way of summing up, I would like to restate what I have already said in a slightly different way. The dilemma which Marx found himself in was very much the same as that which still confronts communists today. Marx yearned for communism at a time when only capitalist struggles offered any chances of success in the reasonably near future. Like most present-day communists he was frustrated by inactivity too. The third source of tension was that he wanted to have done with utopianism and to be 'scientific'. We can thus represent Marx's dilemma graphically by a diagram which shows Marx occupying the middle ground between 'communism', 'activity' and 'science' (we could just as well call this last factor 'materialism' or 'anti-utopianism').
COMMUNISM

MARX

ACTIVITY  SCIENCE/MATERIALISM/
ANTI-UTOPIANISM

Marx wanted to close the three sides of this triangle but, in the conditions of his day, it was impossible to do this. Try as one might, only one side of the triangle could be closed. One could try to be an active communist, i.e.:-

COMMUNISM

ACTIVITY  SCIENCE/MATERIALISM/
ANTI-UTOPIANISM

but this left one open to the charge of being utopian, since one's 'activity' was like thrashing about in a vacuum. One could be a scientific communist, i.e.:-

COMMUNISM

ACTIVITY  SCIENCE/MATERIALISM/
ANTI-UTOPIANISM

but, since science demanded that one recognise that communism offered no prospects of anything but the very longest-term success, one was bound to be accused of inactivity, or at least of standing aside from the mass struggles that were in process. Finally, one could be active and 'materialist' (or 'scientific' in the sense of engaging in what Engels called "the already existing" movement), i.e.:-

COMMUNISM

ACTIVITY  SCIENCE/MATERIALISM/
ANTI-UTOPIANISM

but - as we have seen - this could only put one's commitment to communism at risk.

The answer to this riddle is, of course, that only the working class as a whole, rather than individual revolutionaries, can bridge the three sides of this triangle. Until the workers do close this triangle, all we more or less isolated revolutionaries
are stuck with this dilemma. What makes it particularly painful is precisely that there is no solution at the level of the isolated individual revolutionary (or revolutionary group). However distasteful it might be, in the absence of communist consciousness among the mass or the working class, the individual revolutionary has to give up something. The only choice we have is to decide which one of the three factors we have represented in our diagram ('communism', 'activity' or 'science'/'materialism'/anti-utopianism') we choose to abandon. Without becoming sentimental, this is the tragedy of anyone who desires to be a revolutionary socialist under present conditions - and Marx demonstrates that tragedy particularly well.

John Crump

Notes

9. Revolutionary Perspectives, No. 1.
15. Ibid.
17. The King of Prussia and Social Reform, Karl Marx, Early Texts, p. 217.
21. Ibid., p. 97.
23. Ibid., pp. 565, 563.
24. Ibid., p. 563.
25. Ibid.
27. Ibid., p. 471.
Frank Girard,
Discussion Bulletin,
P.O. Box 1564,
Grand Rapids, MI 49501,

I wish you would explain specifically who you refer to "as our end of the political spectrum"? Who comprised the "third force socialists" whom you have renamed, "non market socialists"? Also, was there a "first force socialists" or a "second force socialists" and if so, who were they comprised of and what were their political spectrums?

After 69 years of activity in the DeLeonist movement all this is confusing to me. In all those years, I found Socialist and Marxian terminology simple and understandable. After examining the programs of the political spectrum at that time, I concluded that the program of the DeLeonists was correct and this is the program that I advocated. I fought the defenders of capitalism as well as the reformers, burlesque bolsheviks and labor fakers that were misleading the working class. I debated with representatives of most of these groups and was convinced that their programs were harmful to the working class. Now, I find you have put the DeLeonists into this group, along with the Anarchists, the Libertarian? Socialists, the Socialist Party, the International Communist Current, the Workers' Revolutionary League, the I.W.W., the World Socialist Party, the W.S.A. and others whom you term, the "non-market socialists". Why not include the Shachtman group in your political spectrum?

I am sure that the majority of DeLeonists do not want to be included as part of that bizarre group whose programs cannot lead the working class to their emancipation! It is not a political spectrum, but a political garbage can!

For a while, the supporters of the World Socialist Party used the D.B. to put across their program. I sent you copies of my discussion with the Editors of their publication, The Socialist Standard, which you did not publish. Lately, the I.C.C. has entered or "intervened" in the D.B. In D.B. #51, you published their leaflet, "To, To Election", without any comment on their anti-political stance! In #61, of their publication, Internationalism", there is a longer version of this leaflet, but basically the same. In this same issue, there is a "Thesis on Intervention", adopted at their National Conference. Anyone reading this must conclude that this thesis comes from outer space and not part of the real world. This organization advocates "the Dictatorship of the Proletariat", opposes Socialist Industrial Unionism, opposes political action, etc. It is part of your political spectrum. I want no part of it.

It appears, that the D.B. is more interested in numbers than it is with basic working class principles. I am not interested in debating how many angels can dance on the point of a needle. Your "political spectrum" in reality is a "political spectacle". DeLeonists should concentrate their energies toward propagating the DeLeonist program among the working class. The mish mash that comprises your "political spectrum" only promotes confusion.

Sam Brandon

Sam Brandon
Dear Readers,

It is disappointing that Marin Dekovich rejects a few of my opinions. In fact, rather than have people develop their own ideas in the Discussion Bulletin, he would prefer that we all distribute SLP leaflets that do educate. Within the last ten years I would have agreed with him, but I have since become convinced that the SLP is not doing its job right.

Although the SLP has not taught Leninism formally, it had the highest regard for Lenin, and I can recall no criticism about the man's integrity and devotion to principle. In fact, the SLP boasted that if Lenin had had health good enough to exercise full control a few years before he died, Russia would have developed into an industrial democracy. The SLP blamed the evil Stalin for thwarting the benign plans of Lenin. Lenin praised De Leon and the SLP showed its appreciation.

What information I have acquired to cast doubt on the beneficence of Lenin came from right wing sources. The SLP never mentioned the Kronstadt affair that ended in March 1921 in which 15,000 people were killed or imprisoned. The attack on Kronstadt was led by Trotsky with Lenin's approval. The crime that brought on the attack was to put the Soviet above the Communist Party. Thanks to the food and help the United States and other capitalist countries sent the USSR, their despotic social system did not fall as the Kronstadt workers expected. With the use of the intellectual tool, dialectical materialism, that Marx passed on to us, the SLP would not have been so wrong about Lenin and his deeds.

Recently Mikhail Gorbachev wrote a book about Perestroika in which he declared that he is the true successor of Lenin. No mention was made in the book of Marx, but Lenin was considered a true disciple of William James, the founder of the philosophical school of pragmatism.

The New Economic Policy started by Lenin in 1923 and similar policies that Gorbachev is now pushing justify his feelings. In that case is it pragmatic for De Leonists to accept Gorbachev as a revived Lenin? The Russian proletarian put Lenin on a wave of popular appeal, but is the current Lenin popular in the country? If association with Lenin no longer enhances De Leon's ideas, we should downgrade that glorified tyrant and go on with our job to educate people for their historic mission. Let us not help to muddy the pure waters of Marxian science and life to conform with the left wing of intellectuals.

Fraternally yours,
Monroe Prussack

Part of this collection of John Zerzan's essays from the past decade traces the continuing enslavement of the human species. Zerzan begins with the transformation from the primitive hunting/foodgathering culture to the slavery of agriculture. Up to this point his ideas seem consistent with the view of social evolution I learned in SLIP study classes. But he rejects what I understand to be the Marx-Engels explanation for this change: that it was a tradeoff in which our species exchanged the individual freedom of a hunting/foodgathering culture for the security of food supply that agriculture made possible.

According to Zerzan, recent research destroys the long-held theory that our ancestors took up agriculture to escape the scarcity in primitive societies. In fact, Zerzan says that the evidence indicates that primitive man could obtain his food in a fraction of the day, leaving the rest for play, story telling, and other social activities. This raises a question. Why then the shift to the slavery of agriculture? Zerzan's explanation is based on the then-prevailing religious observances; the need for animal and vegetable foodstuffs for sacrificial purposes.

Other essays point out additional elements in the increasing enslavement of humankind: consciousness of time, the development of language, the use of numbers and of numbering, and what he regards as the alienating of "art" through its development as a function separated from the activity of the mass of the people. All of these essays provide an outlook which I think will be new and stimulating to most DB readers.

The major focus of this collection is human resistance to the increasing enslavement, alluded to the title, Elements of Refusal. While the specifics of the resistance to the transition from the hunting and foodgathering culture to agricultural slavery are lost in the mist of prehistory with only such myths as the fall of Adam, the loss of Paradise, and comparable myths in other cultures, Zerzan details the historical record of such resistance to industrialization. In England this amounted to almost constant rioting during the last quarter of the Eighteenth and first quarter of the Nineteenth centuries. This included the Luddite machine breaking and factory smashing by artisans who resisted the loss of the freedom they had enjoyed in home-based handicraft. The historical record of these rebellions in both the British Isles and the United States, carefully documented by Zerzan, provides the reader a measure of confidence in that ultimate refusal that will destroy capitalism.

Much of the remaining two thirds of the book examines more recent events for evidence of worker rebellion. Zerzan describes and documents case after case of spontaneous resistance to authority, both
economic and civil from WWII to 1986 and concludes that the decay of industrialism in the U.S. is being accompanied by the decay of its educational and political institutions and their credibility among post 1960s youth.

Among the most personally satisfying to this reader are three of the essays which indict the union movement for anti-worker collusion with the capitalist class and help to destroy widely held illusions about the role of the CIO and its radical unionists. These carefully documented case-by-case studies—"Taylorism and Unionism," "Unionization in America," and "The Revolt against Work"—alone make the book valuable to DB readers.

The most unsettling essay was "The Practical Marx," which began as a typically academic biographical examination of the more scandalous aspects of Marx's personal life. In the process, though, Zerzan turns to another aspect of Marx's life: what purports to be the historical record of his anti-revolutionary political career. Zerzan asserts that at the same time Marx was writing Capital and with Engels developing the materialistic conception of history, he was carefully distancing himself from revolutionary activity. From 1852 into the 1860s he was the "most highly valued" and "best paid" columnist for the chief bourgeois newspaper in the U.S., the New York Daily Tribune. 165 of his columns appearing as editorials. Zerzan has him asking Engels' help in getting into business in 1882, supporting reformist bourgeois groups rather than revolutionists in Germany and Britain, and consistently underestimating the revolutionary capacity of the working class from 1848 through the Paris Commune. The essay is replete with cases, although unfortunately, unlike the other essays, it is undocumented. Nevertheless, after reading this it's difficult not to conclude as does Zerzan—and John Crump in this issue as well—that the European social democratic parties that capitulated to their nationalist tendencies in

Concluded on p. 8