With DB49 we begin our ninth year of publication—and while I am still in a self-congratulatory mood, we still maintain our bimonthly publishing schedule. DB began as a forum for what we then called the "third force" of socialists and anarchists, by which we meant the whole range of what some people call the ultra-left: the revolutionaries that reject Leninism and social democratic reformism. Included as third forceists were anarchists, council communists, the political syndicalists (SLP and other DeLeonists), the non-political syndicalists (IWW and IWA), the world socialists (the SPGB and companion parties), the left communists (ICC), and a lot of individuals who would not classify themselves as belonging to any of the above. In this connection the article "A Reply to Jeff Stein" on page 25 carries a reproduction of most of the original prospectus discussing participants that appeared in DB1.

Unfortunately the term "third force" had already been appropriated by
a Trotskyist/social democratic grouping that saw itself as a third force rejecting both Soviet communism and capitalism. As a result we have no term by which we can identify ourselves. I tend to use "our political sector" and more recently "libertarian socialist." Perhaps "DB readers" is close enough, for it doesn't imply a non-existent unity. The DB Committee mentioned on page one and at the end of "Bulletin Matters" is my term for the subscribers and supporters to whom I feel financially accountable.

In DB48 we have a typical mix of letters and articles for our libertarian socialist forum. Wildcat's leaflet puts the Gulf War and the aftermath in an entirely new perspective, one that didn't appear on CNN. Curtis Price asks for information and provides some in the form of a source for research. Sam Brandon writes to answer Alan Sandler's article in DB48. Steve Coleman's article on sectarianism raises the whole question of how to avoid a problem that I think affects all small revolutionary groups to some extent.

Laurens Otter presents an interesting proposal for anarcho-socialist unity, a subject that arises elsewhere in this issue, as well as a rationale and an examination of "libertarian socialist" groups in Britain. Alan Sandler has sent us Part Two of his article on the Socialist Labor Party's centennial—and its "revisionism." I was under the impression that Part One had appeared in an earlier issue, but apparently it hasn't. You will see it in an upcoming issue. And finally I reply to Jeff Stein's article on Ulli Diemer in DB48.

Once again we call for your letters and articles. Please remember that they must be copier-ready. Also, please single-space and use narrow margins and a dark ribbon.

FINANCES: Again we have good news to report: the deficit has been wiped out, and we are in the black for the first time in over a year. We owe this happy condition to our copier. Unfortunately the quality is far inferior to the work of Thomas Printing, which printed issues 9 through 47. (I'm concerned about the lack of contrast—light printing—and the paste-up lines it leaves, but maybe it will be possible to remedy these defects.) Our survey of subscribers resulted in no opposition to the financing method and no complaints about quality.

Contributions: Margaret Begovich $20; Harry Wade $40; Frank Syratt $10; Ben Perry $7; Lila Holmdahl $7; Anonymous $20; Charles C. Collins $6; Frank Girard $22; Ron Girkens $3; Paul Burkett $12; Monroe Prussack $12; Phillip Colligan $7; Jim Plant $7. Total $173.00.

Thank you, comrades.

BALANCE June 23, 1991 (per bank statement) [deficit] $28.02

RECEIPTS
Contributions $173.00
Subs and sales $140.32
Total $313.32

DISBURSEMENTS
Postage $98.00

Cont'd on p. 7
TEN DAYS THAT SHOOK IRAQ
Inside information from an uprising

The Gulf war was not ended by the military victory of America and the Allies. It was ended by the mass desertion of thousands of Iraqi conscript soldiers. So overwhelming was the refusal to fight for the Iraqi state on the part of its conscripted army that, contrary to all predictions, not one Allied soldier was killed by hostile fire in the final ground offensive to recapture Kuwait. Indeed the sheer scale of this mutiny is perhaps unprecedented in modern military history.

But these mutinous troops did not simply flee back to Iraq. On their return many of them turned their guns against the Iraqi state, sparking a simultaneous uprising in both Southern Iraq and in Kurdistan to the North. Only the central region of Iraq surrounding Baghdad remained firmly in the state’s hands in the weeks following the end of the war.

From the very start the Western media has grossly misrepresented these uprisings. The uprising in the South, centred on Basra, was portrayed as a Shia Muslim revolt. Whereas the insurrection in the North was reported as an exclusively Kurdish Nationalist uprising which demanded little more than an autonomous Kurdish region within Iraq.

The truth is that the uprisings in both the North and South of Iraq were proletarian insurrections.

Basra is one of the most secular areas in the Middle East. Almost no one goes to the mosques in Basra. The radical traditions in this area are not those of Islamic fundamentalism but rather those of Arab Nationalism and Stalinism. The Iraqi Communist Party is the only bourgeois party with any significant influence in this region. The cities of Basra, Nasirah and Hilah have long been known as the region of the Communist Party and have a long history of open rebellion against both religion and the state. The “Iraqi” working class has always been one of the most troublesome in a volatile region.

In the North, there is little sympathy for the Nationalist parties - the KDP and the PUK - and their peshmergas (guerrilla movements) due to their repeated failure of their compromises with the Iraqi state. This is particularly true in the Sulaimaniya area. The inhabitants of the area have been especially hostile to the Nationalists since the Halabja massacre. Following the chemical attack by the Iraqi airforce against deserrers and civilians in the city of Halabja in 1988, the peshmergas initially prevented people from fleeing and then went on to pillage and rape those who survived the massacre. As a result, many villagers have long since refused to feed or shelter nationalist peshmergas. As in the South, the Communist Party and its peshmergas are more popular.

The uprising in the North was not nationalist. In the early stages Ba’athist officials and secret police were executed, police files were destroyed and the prisons stormed. People were openly hostile to the bourgeois policies of the Kurdish Nationalists. In Sulaimaniya the Nationalist peshmergas were excluded from the city and the exiled leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, Jalal Talabani, was prevented from returning to his home town. When the Kurdish Democratic Party leader, Massoud Barzani, went to Chamcharan, near to Sulaimani, he was attacked and two of his bodyguards were killed. When the Nationalists broadcasted the slogan: “Now’s the time to kill the Ba’athists!” the people of Sulaimaniya replied with the slogan: “Now’s the time for the Nationalists to loot Peshmergas!”, meaning that the Nationalists were only interested in looting.

A revolutionary group, “Communist Perspective”, played a major role in the insurrection. In their publication “Proletariat”, they advocated the setting up of workers’ councils. This provoked fear and anger amongst the Nationalists, as well as the Communist Party and its splinter groups.

Faced with these proletarian uprisings the various bourgeois interests in the region had to suspend hostilities and unite to suppress them. It is well known that the West, led by the USA, have long backed Saddam Hussein’s brutal regime. They supported him in the war against Iran.

In supporting Saddam the Western ruling class also recognised that the Ba’athist Party, as a mass based fascist party, was the only force in Iraq capable and ruthless enough to repress the oil producing proletariat.

However, Saddam’s ultimate strategy for maintaining social peace in Iraq was for a permanent war drive and militarisation of society. But such a strategy could only lead to further economic ruin and the intensification of class antagonisms. In the Spring of 1990 this contradiction was becoming blainer. The Iraqi economy was shattered after eight years of war with Iran. Oil production, the main source of hard currency, was restricted while oil prices were relatively low. The only options for redeeming war time promises of prosperity in peace were a rise in the price of oil or more war. The former choice was blocked by Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Saddam’s bold leap to resolve this impasse was to annex Kuwait and its rich oil fields.
This gave America the opportunity to reassert its political hegemony, not only in the Middle East, but also in the world as a whole. With the hope of exploiting the spectre of Vietnam, the Bush regime prepared for all-out war. The Bush administration hoped for a quick and decisive victory that would eject Iraq from Kuwait but at the same time leave the Iraqi regime intact. However, to mobilise the home front for war, Bush had to equate Saddam with Hitler and so became increasingly committed publicly to toppling the Iraqi leader.

With this commitment the American government now sought to impose such a military defeat on Iraq that the Ba'athist Party would be obliged to replace Saddam with someone else. Indeed the Bush regime openly invited the ruling circles in Iraq to replace Saddam Hussein with the approach of the ground war in March. However, the mass desertion of Iraqi conscripts and the subsequent uprisings in Iraq robbed the American government of such a convenient victory. Instead they faced the prospect of the uprising turning into a full scale proletarian revolution, with all the dire consequences this would have for the accumulation of capital in the Middle East.

The last thing the American government wanted was to be drawn into a prolonged military occupation of Iraq in order to suppress the uprisings. It was far more efficient to back the existing state. But there was no time to insist on the removal of Saddam Hussein. They could ill afford the disruption this would cause. Hence, almost overnight, Bush's hostility to the butcher of Baghdad evaporated. The two rival butchers went into partnership.

Their first task was to crush the uprising in the South which was being swelled by the huge columns of desiers streaming North from Kuwait. Even though these fleeing Iraqi conscripts posed no military threat to Allied troops, or to the objective of “liberating” Kuwait, the war was prolonged long enough for them to be carpet bombed on the road to Basra by the RAF and the USAF. This cold blooded massacre served no other purpose than to preserve the Iraqi state from mutinous armed deserters.

Following this massacre the Allied ground forces, having swept through Southern Iraq to encircle Kuwait, stopped short of Basra and gave free reign to the Republican Guards - the elite troops loyal to the Iraqi regime - to crush the insurgents. All proposals to inflict a decisive defeat on the Republican Guards or to proceed towards Baghdad to topple Saddam were quickly forgotten. In the ceasefire negotiations the Allied forces insisted on the grounding of all fixed wing aircraft but the use of helicopters vital for counter-insurgency were permitted for “administrative purposes”. This “concession” proved important once the uprising in the South was put down and the Iraqi state's attention turned to the advancing insurrection in the North.

Whereas the uprising in the Basra region was crushed almost as it began, the Northern uprising had more time to develop. It began in Rania and spread to Sulaimania and Kui and at its height threatened to spread beyond Kurdistan to the capital. The original aim of the uprising was expressed in the popular slogan: "We will celebrate our New Year with the Arabs in Baghdad!" The defeat of this rebellion owed as much to the Kurdish Nationalists as to the Western powers and the Iraqi state.

Like all nationalist movements the Kurdish Nationalists defend the interests of the propertied classes against the working class. Most Kurdish nationalist leaders come from very rich families. For example, Talabani comes from a dynasty originally set up by the British and his parents own luxury hotels in Baghdad. The KDP was set up by rich exiles driven out of Kurdistan by the mass working class uprisings of 1958 when hundreds of landowners and capitalists were driven up.

As a result of these disturbing events a meeting of exiled bourgeoisie in Iraeaia, Iran organised nationalist death squads to kill class struggle militants in Iraqi Kurdistan. Later they carried out racist murders of Arabs. During the Iraqi-Iran war very few deserters joined the nationalists and the PUK received an amnesty from the Iraqi state in return for repressing deserters.

These Kurdish Nationalists, like the international bourgeoisie, recognised the importance of a strong Iraqi state in order to maintain capital accumulation against a militant working class. So much so, in fact, that they
merely demanded that Iraqi Kurdistan be granted the status of an autonomous region within a united Iraq.

In the uprising they did their best to defend the Iraqi state. They actively intervened to prevent the destruction of police files and state property, including military bases. The Nationalists stopped Arab deserters from joining the "Kurdish" uprising, disarmed them, and sent them back to Baghdad to be arrested. They did all they could to prevent the insurrection from spreading beyond the "borders" of Kurdish which was its only hope of success. When the Iraqi state began to turn its attention to the uprising in Kurdistan the Kurdish Nationalists’ radio broadcasts did not encourage or co-ordinate resistance but instead exaggerated the threat posed by the demoralised Iraqi troops still loyal to the government and advised people to flee to the mountains. Which they eventually did. None of this is any surprise if we examine their history.

Although, as we have seen, there was much hostility towards the Kurdish Nationalists, they were able to gain control and bring to halt the insurrection in Kurdistan because of their organisation and greater material resources, having been long backed by the West - the KDP by the USA and the PUK by Britain - it was the Kurdish Nationalist parties that were able to control both the supply of food and information. This was vital, since after years of deprivation, exacerbated by the war, the search for food was an overriding concern. Many individuals were mainly content with looting food, rather than with maintaining revolutionary organisation and the development of the insurrection. This weakness allowed the Nationalist organisations to step in with their ample supplies of food and well established radio stations.

The war in the Gulf was brought to an end by the refusal of the Iraqi working class to fight and by the subsequent uprisings in Iraq. But such proletarian actions were crushed by the combined efforts of the various (international and national) bourgeois forces. Once again, nationalism has served as the stumbling

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**OPPOSITION TO THE WAR IN IRAQ**

There has been a long tradition of class struggle in Iraq, particularly since the revolution in 1958. Wuh Saddam’s strategy of a permanent war drive to maintain social peace this struggle has often taken the form of mass desertion from the army. During the Iraq-Iran war tens of thousands of soldiers deserted the army. This swelled the mass working class opposition to the war. With the unreliability of the army it became increasingly difficult for the Iraqi state to put down such working class rebellions. It was for this reason that Saddam Hussein used chemical weapons against the town of Halabja in 1988.

Following the invasion of Kuwait there were many demonstrations against its continued occupation. Even the ruling Ba’athist Party was obliged to organise such demonstrations under the slogan: "No to Kuwait. We only want Saddam and Iraq" in order to head off anti-war feeling. With the dramatic rise in the price of necessities - food prices alone rising to twenty times their pre-invasion levels - there was little enthusiasm for war. The common attitude throughout Iraq was one of defeatism.

Despite a 20% pay rise deterrence from the army became common. In the city of Sulaimania alone there were an estimated 30,000 deserters. In Kirkuk there were 20,000. So overwhelming was the desertion that it became relatively easy for soldiers to bribe their way out of the army by giving money to their officers. But these working class conscripts did not merely desert, they organised. In Kirkuk thousands marched on the local police station and forced the police to concede an end to the harassment of deserters.

Two days after the beginning of the war anti-war riots broke out in Ramadi and later in Sulaimania.

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block for proletarian insurrection. While it is important to stress that Middle East politics is not dominated by Islamic fundamentalism and Arab Nationalism, as it is usually portrayed in the bourgeois press, but rest on class conflict, it must be said that the immediate prospects for the development of working class struggle in Iraq are now bleak.

The war not only resulted in the defeat of the Iraqi working class but also revealed the state of defeat of
the working class in the USA, and, to a lesser degree, Europe. The western anti-war movement never developed into a mass working class opposition to the war. It remained dominated by a pacifist orientation that "opposed" the war in terms of an alternative national interest: "Peace is Patriotic". While it expressed abhorrence of the Allies' holocaust it opposed doing anything to stop it that might bring it into confrontation with the state. Instead it concentrated on futile symbolic protest that simply fostered the sense of helplessness in the face of the state's war machine.

Following the defeat of the insurrection, the Western media's misrepresentation continued. The proletariat was represented as helpless victims, ripe for patronizing by the charlatans, grateful for the spectacles of pop stars flogging the Live Aid horse once more. For those that remembered the uprising a "Let It Be... Kurdistan" t-shirt was the obvious answer. Whilst the uprising was defeated we cannot allow its aims and the manner of its defeat to be distorted without challenge: hence this text.

The failure of the working class to recognize its own class interests as distinct from the "national interest" and sabotage the war effort can only serve to deepen the divisions amongst our international class along national lines. Our rulers will now be that much more confident of conducting murderous wars unopposed elsewhere in the world, a confidence they have lacked since the working class ended the Vietnam war by mutinies, desertion, strikes and riots.

This leaflet was produced by revolutionaries from Iraq and Britain. For more copies or correspondence we can be contacted by writing as follows:

BM CAT, LONDON WC1N 3XX, UK, or PO BOX 3305, OAKLAND CA 94609, USA.

Donations towards the cost of this leaflet would be appreciated.

Would any DB reader who could supply either originals or copy of the following please contact me? (payment can be worked out for costs of xeroxing, postage etc.)

1) "ECHANGES" Bulletins—any prior to #64
2) "As We Don't See It"—Solidarity pamphlet
3) "As We See It"—Solidarity pamphlet
4) "On the Content of Socialism"—Solidarity pamphlet

DB readers should also be aware of the Texas Archives of Autonomist Marxism, Dept. of Economics, University of Texas At Austin, Austin, TX, 78712-1173. For $5, they will send a copy of the Archive index plus 3 supplements. Archive holdings range from Italian Autonomism to CLR James and Socialism or Barbarism. Copies of all Archive holdings can be had for duplication and postage expenses.

--Curtis Price, 1101 St. Paul St. #2002, Balto., MD., 21202
Dear Comrade,

Alan Sanderson's reply to my attack on his article in the DeLeonist Society Bulletin of November 1990 is one of evasion and confusion. Nowhere, does he confront my charges head on. He shadow boxes around them.

I pointed out that membership in the S.L.P. declined during the 55 years that Arnold Petersen reigned as National Secretary. When DeLeon died in 1914, the S.L.P. had 5000 members which would be equivalent to 15,000 members in 1990. When Petersen left office in 1969 the S.L.P. had less than 500 members. By his expulsion of Sections, Language Federations, and individual members, he had destroyed the fighting S.L.P. of DeLeon. How does Sanderson reply to this charge? He forgets the facts and quotes National Secretary, Nathan Karp, of the S.L.P. in 1977 re the decline of its membership and party activity! Sanderson forgets the decline of the S.L.P. under Petersen and quotes the decline under Karp. Sanderson conveniently forgets the disastrous decline under Petersen and points out that under Karp the decline continued. Sanderson wants you to forget that Karp was Arnold Petersen's right hand man who aided and abetted Petersen in his destruction of the S.L.P. It was Karp and Petersen who caused the resignation of Eric Haas, the Editor of the Weekly People and four times the Presidential Candidate of the S.L.P. and whose resignation resulted in a flood of resignations from the party in support of Haas!

Sanderson's main attack on the S.L.P. was an article in the Centennial Edition of The People, in which they stated that a Socialist Industrial Union in its march to its goal would defend workers' immediate interests by defending wage levels and working conditions. Sanderson calls these reforms. I pointed out that these were not reforms and that in this article, the S.L.P. position was in line with DeLeon's position. I submitted three quotations from DeLeon to prove my point. How does Sanderson reply? By claiming that times and circumstances have changed over the years and the question in debate becomes: "WHY OUR CHANGE OF POSITION"? (Sanderson's emphasis). What changes have taken place that would cancel the defense by workers, organized in S.I.U's to their wage levels or working conditions? What conditions have abolished the class struggle?

Sanderson, by admitting the DeLeonist Society's "Change of Position", concedes that his position is different than DeLeon's! One must conclude, that the DeLeonist Society should now be called the Revisionist DeLeonist Society!

Sam Brandon

Cont'd from p. 2

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BALANCE August 26, 1991 $97.69

Fraternally submitted,

Frank Girard
for the DB Committee
(Note: The article below, written as part of an internal discussion of the Socialist Party of Great Britain (SPGB), deserves careful reading by everyone in our political sector. The major focus here is the danger of lapsing into sectarian behavior because of the need of the small revolutionary groups that constitute our political sector to emphasize the differences between themselves and other groups. But another is the care they exercise to ensure that they do not compromise their principles by giving way to reformism. The charge of sectarianism, often leveled by social democrats and Leninists against groups in our political sector, is usually based on this refusal to cooperate in the struggle of leftwingers for immediate improvements (reforms). In this article Steve Coleman defines sectarianism and shows that it can indeed pose a danger to genuinely revolutionary organizations. U.S. readers should remember that the "SP" discussed here is the Socialist Party of Great Britain with a record of anti-reformism dating back to 1903.)

WHAT IS SECTARIANISM?

There is a contradiction which lies at the root of The Socialist Party's identity as a revolutionary party. On the one hand, the party states that it represents the interest of the working class; on the other hand, most workers do not see their objective class interest and are either unaware of or opposed to the SP's claim to be the only party which is for the working class. So, the sole party standing for the working class is not known of or supported by the workers; the working-class party is in a minority in relation to the workers in their many millions. This contradiction is the source of much of the frustration which socialists feel. We want the workers to 'wake up' and transform the party from a movement for the working class into one for and of the working class. This problem of making the crucial revolutionary leap from being a minority which is for the workers to having a majority of workers for themselves is the central problem which faces socialists; it is the problem of dialectically transcending the contradiction which has been stated.

The two enormous errors which have historically emerged out of the working-class movement in its historical struggle to assert itself politically have been Gradualism (often referred to as Social Democracy) and Vanguardism. The gradualist fallacy, theoretically elaborated by Bernstein and dominating to its ruin the Second International (1899-1914), is based upon the assumption that workers will never want more than reforms and that therefore 'socialists' should abandon all intentions of awakening a revolutionary consciousness in the working class and get on with the 'practical' task of benevolent reformism. Even though some of the gradualists (it is hard to estimate how many there were then, or are now) favoured the socialist alternative, they argued that to demand socialism and nothing less, while the majority of workers wanted only the 'something less' of reforms, was 'sectarian'. Eight decades and eight Labour governments later, the record of history confirms that the SP was quite right to have warned that the Labour Party would only be able to become a mass party of the workers (who were not socialists) by acting as a party for the capitalists. The gradualists' 'something less' has not satisfied the workers and now they are increasingly abandoning the tired old Labour Party. The vanguardists share with the gradualists a contempt for the workers whom they do not think can ever attain revolutionary consciousness. According to the various vanguard parties, the workers must be led to revolution. Not only Lenin, Stalin and the entire Bolshevik disaster, but every 'revolutionary vanguard' from Mao to Mugabe,
has illustrated clearly the validity of Engels' statement in the last century that the majority can never be liberated by enlightened minorities. Both the gradualists and the vanguardists attack the SP for being 'sectarian' because we spend all of our political energies putting the case for revolution to the working class, rather than adapting our ideas to fit in with the current ideology of the workers. To be non-sectarian, in this sense, is to talk down to our fellow workers, to 'get on their level' and demand what they demand— in short, to solve the problem of being a revolutionary minority by joining the non-socialist majority. If such unprincipled compromise is non-sectarianism (and it certainly is what most of the people who call us sectarians mean by the term), then the SP should be proud to be sectarian.

Having rejected the left-wing attacks upon us for remaining honest and principled, and having disposed of the attack upon 'sectarianism', the matter is often left to rest. But it rests uneasily, for we are still a revolutionary minority trying to relate to the majority of our fellow workers without whom there can be no socialist revolution. In what relationship should this revolutionary minority stand to the working class? Marx and Engels addressed themselves to this important question, but, as is clear from the following passage from The Communist Manifesto, what they had to say would not appeal to the SP. (This becomes clear if you replace the terms 'Communists' and 'they' with 'SP' in this passage:)

The Communists do not form a separate party opposed to other working-class parties. They have no interests separate and apart from the working class as a whole. They do not set up any sectarian principles of their own, by which to shape and mould the proletarian movement.

The writers then go on to outline basic socialist principles, making the point that communists/socialists are 'the most advanced and resolute' workers who comprehend 'the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement'. It is clear that at this stage (1848) Marx and Engels were bending over backwards to avoid the sectarian danger of detaching the revolutionary minority from the working-class majority. In trying to avoid the sectarian position they adopted a reformist one, advocating several reform measures and support for national struggles in The Manifesto, which they later were wise enough to repudiate. They did not, however, disown the passage quoted above. Twenty years later, writing to Schweitzer, Marx wrote of 'the contradiction' between a sectarian movement and a class movement:

The sect sees its raison d'être and its point of honour not in what it has in common with the class movement but in the particular shibboleth which distinguishes it from the movement.

This concern about the danger of sectarianism was not an isolated instance; Marx was as concerned to preserve the working-class movement from the emergence of what he called sects, whose main purpose seemed to him to be distinguishing themselves from everyone else, as he was to guard against reformism and other anti-socialist trends. In 1864 Marx threw himself wholeheartedly into the First International which had an overwhelmingly non-socialist membership. His concern was to play an active role within the working-class movement. Explaining his participation in the International to Bolle, in 1871, Marx wrote that 'The International was founded to replace the socialist or semi-socialist sects by a really militant organisation of the working class.' Such participation was in line with the guidelines given to the revolutionary minority in The communist Manifesto. Contrary to those guidelines, the SP does exist as a separate, independent party with our own distinct principles. We are concerned to distinguish ourselves from the non-revolutionary majority within the organised working class.
It must be stated that Marx, and especially Engels after Marx's death, seemed so concerned to avoid sectarianism, i.e. detachment from the non-revolutionary majority within the working-class movement, that they tended at times towards opportunism. For example, in 1886 Engels, writing about the forthcoming U.S. election, stated that 'A million or two of working man's votes next November for a bona fide working man's party is worth infinitely more at present than a hundred thousand votes for a doctrinally perfect platform.' Engels was wrong: tens of thousands of American workers voting for socialism would have been 'worth infinitely more' then, as now, than millions of votes for a non-socialist candidate put up by the workers. In his last years Engels was impressed by the progress of the ILP, preferring its tactics to what he called 'the socialist secta'.

Wrong as they were in their methods of trying to avoid it, Marx and Engels were right to see sectarianism as a major problem for the socialist minority. To sum up the problem, it is that revolutionaries, being in a minority, become so concerned to preserve themselves that they further isolate and alienate themselves from the wider world in so doing. This sectarianism can manifest itself in the following ways:

1. The party can become so concerned with its own existence - with its past, its customs, its identity, its title - that it loses contact with the wider struggles of workers which are initiated outside it. The class struggle becomes a theory, accepted in principle, but not in active participation as a party.

2. The party, in its understandable frustration at not becoming a majority, can drift towards hostility towards those who are not in it - to blame the workers for their political ignorance. Even though many workers in the world outside are trying to see society more clearly and trying to make changes, the revolutionary minority refuses to listen to or learn from anyone or anything not born of itself.

3. Members of the party can lose interest in the frustrating business of relating to what is going on in society, preferring instead to indulge in theoretical-cum-theological disputes which could only interest the initiated, or, worse still, to devote all of their political thinking to internal party affairs. 'The Struggle' ends up as a tedious, often destructive, crusade to purify and then re-purify the minority, ceaselessly battling to gain control of the 'soul' of the party from those who might contaminate it.

These are the characteristics which emerge when a revolutionary minority becomes a sect. Just as reformism poisons the principles of a revolutionary party, sectarianism, in detaching the party from the excitement of being a part of the living struggle of history, converts revolutionary principles into proclamations divorced from historical activity.

Is the SP a revolutionary party or a sect? After over eighty years of persistent, independent, uncompromising struggle, it is not surprising that the party exhibits some sectarian features. Some members are fed up with doing very much to change the world except repeat that We Are Right; some have become absorbed in internal conflicts, the resolution of which will not make the slightest difference to more than a couple of dozen people who care about such matters. It is probable that there have always been certain sectarian trends within the party, as there have been in all small, principled, working-class organisations. These trends are a product of frustration and, perhaps (although we are on dangerous ground here), they sometimes reflect a certain personality type which is attracted to the cosy isolation of the small organisation. Whatever the precise cause of
the drift towards sectarianism, Marx was quite right to see it as a danger
to be avoided if a revolutionary minority is to relate to the movement
of history. Taken to its conclusion, sectarianism would make the revolutionary
minority smaller, less effective, more eccentric, leaving it finally as
a valueless sect - a Monument - to what it once tried to be. The vast
majority of SP members are not sectarian. They are out to make more
socialists, and to do so on a principled basis, and not to remove the party
from the working-class movement. It is that outlook, and the democratic
possession of the party by well-motivated workers who are more concerned
about the future than the past, that will guard the SP from becoming a
sect.

STEVE COLEMAN

(THIS STATEMENT WAS WRITTEN IN RELATION TO THE ITEM FOR DISCUSSION ON THE
1989 CONFERENCE AGENDA; IT WAS READ TO ISLINGTON BRANCH AT ITS MEETING
ON 16 MARCH, 1989 AND WAS ENDORSED BY THE BRANCH.)

REVIEWS OF PERIODICALS

Here we review what we regard as the periodicals of our political
sector (libertarian socialist) in rotation as space permits. The
reviews are preceded by what is intended to be an exhaustive list of
such journals in the English language. If you would like to suggest
additions to the list-or deletions for that matter-please let us
know. Those titles followed by an asterisk are regarded as being in
our political sector but unconsciously carrying the Leninist virus of
"dictatorship of the partyism."

AGAINST SLEEP AND NIGHTMARE, A INFOS, ALARM, ANARCHIST LABOR BULLETIN,
ANARCHY, ANGRY WORKERS' BULLETIN, ANY TIME NOW, BLACK EYE, BRICK,
BULLETIN OF ANARCHIST RESEARCH, CLASS STRUGGLE BULLETIN, CLASS WAR,
COLLIDE-O-SCOPE, COMMUNISTS, COMMUNIST BULLETIN, COUNTER-INFORMATION,
DECLERIST SOCIETY BULLETIN, DEMOLITION DERBY, DISCUSSION BULLETIN,
ECUADOR, EWIU NEWS AND COMMENTS, FACTSHEET FIVE, FIFTH ESTATE,
FREEDOM, "GREATEST" DEPRESSION ERA NEWSLETTER, HERE AND NOW, IDEAS &
ACTION, INDUSTRIAL WORKER, INTERNACTIONAL BARBS, INTERNATIONAL
PERSPECTIVE, INTERNATIONAL REVIEW, KAMUNIST KRANTI, LIBERTARIAN
LABOR REVIEW, LITTLE FREE PRESS, LOVE & RAGE, MAKING WAVES, THE
MATCH, THE MONTHLY MEANDER, NEW UNIONIST, OPEN ROAD, ORGANISE, THE
PEOPLE, PROCESSED WORLD, REBEL WORKER, THE RED MENACE, REGENERATION,
SINEWS, SMILE, SOCIALISM FROM BELOW, THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC, SOCIALIST
STANDARD, SOCIALIST VIEW, SOLIDARITY, THE SPANNER, SUBVERSION,
SYNDICALIST BULLETIN, WILDCAT, WORKERS' INFO-RAG, WORKERS SOLIDARITY,
WORKERS' VOICE, WORLD REVOLUTION, WORLD SOCIALIST, WORLD SOCIALIST
REVIEW.

WORKERS' INFO-RAG (for information write to) PM, c/o Zamisdat Press,
GPO Box 1255, Gracie Station, New York, NY 10028. "...an occasional
information bulletin relating to anti-capitalist, anti-statist
struggles. It is not affiliated with any party, trade-union, or
leftist group..." but has a Situationist flavor. WIR is published
"occasionally" on 0 1/2 by 11 blue paper. Free, but donations
appreciated. The most recent publication is a one-page statistical
document that compares the cost of war, $492,000 per minute, to the
cost of various socially useful expenditures--e.g., the Brooklyn Public
Library operating budget for a year (now closed one extra day a week

Cont'd on p. 21
A PROPOSAL AND RATIONALE

by Laurens Otter

ANARCHO-SOCIALIST FEDERATION

AGAINST THE MARKET

Objectives:

To facilitate the promotion of a common platform of ideas held by constituent members of the Federation (first order positions) and to provide the framework and the appropriate climate conducive to the exchange of members' views where they diverge (second order positions). With regard to the latter the aim should be to encourage mutual understanding and theoretical clarification within a tolerant and non-sectarian atmosphere; it is not to promote uniformity (except in so far as it already exists in respect of first order positions) or undermine the autonomy of constituent members. Its watchword should be diversity in unity. The more diversity it encompasses in respect of its second order position, the wider the range, and hence the greater the number of people drawn to its core ideas.

Advantages:

1. Organisation - greater coordination and collaboration in the distribution of members' material and the organisation of events such as conferences. Also, economies of scale with regard to the production of Federation material and the (possible) provision of assistance to constituent members in the production of their own material (e.g., wider access to graphics, the creation of a relevant data base and a contact list of individuals specialising in certain subjects).

2. Propaganda - the capacity to draw upon wider circle of skills, talents and knowledge in the promotion of first order ideas for "external consumption" e.g., through Federation leaflets/statements on such matters as opposition to war or the currently fashionable "free market" dogma in the context of events in Eastern Europe.

3. Morale - too often revolutionaries are more pre-occupied with what divides them than what unites them. This is a perverse sense of priority. It encourages inward-looking approach and a distancing from the "real world" revolutionaries seek to radically alter. This leads to disillusionment and a loss of morale which can be minimised by systematically building into a new framework an orientation which stresses what we have in common rather than focussing on our differences. This is not to say differences should be overlooked; it is the context in which such differences are discussed that is important: morale sapping schisms are only likely to occur where such differences are not allowed to exist. Finally, numbers are important and this must be recognised. Being part of a larger association however loose aids the resilience of individual groups or journals comprising that association.
Suggested first order positions:

- Opposition to the market and the state; having as one's aim a society in which the roles of the state and the market have been effectively nullified.
- Opposition to reformism - that is, policies designed to ameliorate the problems thrown up by capitalism with a view to perpetuating the capitalist basis of society.
- Opposition to vanguardism; stressing the importance of mass revolutionary consciousness as a precondition of social transformation.
- Opposition to nationalism as opposed to ethnic or cultural differentiation.
- Opposition to sexism and racism; recognition of the class nature of modern society and of the working class as the prime mover in social revolution.
- Opposition to State Capitalism or any other variety of capitalism; recognition that the form that capitalism takes is less significant than its content, grounded in the relationship of wage labour and capital.

Second order positions:

- How to achieve a non-market and stateless society - providing the means are not in conflict with the specifications contained in first order positions
- Contemporary trends within capitalist society
- Philosophical and religious bases of commitment to a non-market and stateless society.

Proposed action:

- Initiating body to draft proposal for circulation to contact groups (see below). With this include a request for
  - group's response to proposal
  - some basic details about the group/journal (e.g. numbers)
  - an indication of willingness to attend an inaugural conference and mobility
- Circulate above responses to all respondents with suggested details of conference. Get agreement to make preparations and call for items for agenda relating to a) organisational structure b) finances c) plan of action
- Publicising inaugural conference via members literature etc Arrangement of accommodation details etc.

Some initial contact groups/journals:

In September I submitted the attached to Hull Syndicalists as a proposal to get S.B. to call a conference; that wouldn't merely duplicate the DAM; I've not had a reply, and by & large this proposal is made redundant by the Spanner draft, but there may be reference points herein that are worthwhile. L.O.

The anarchist (libertarian socialist) movement was during the 60s polarised into two main categories:

- Freedom, & a number of smaller factions grouped around it, reverted to the belief that one could convert people to anarchism, without any suggestion as to how that anarchism might be attained, & that one should rely on thus making sufficient anarchist converts for them to create a social transformation spontaneously;

- In reaction to this, a number of groups adopted - whether consciously (Rakunan, or Platformist) or unconsciously (FAList) quasi-vanguardist theories & organisational forms that approximated to Leninism; it is perhaps no accident, (given the way that Leninist groups denounce each other,) that these were adamant in opposition to any anarchist-Marxist dialogue.

I believe that both categories fail to provide the whole of anarchism though both also have helped to keep alive aspects of the anarchist aim. There are however a number of yet smaller factions, situated between these two main streams which have survived & have endeavoured to keep alive a vision of anarchism as not merely a nice aim but as a road to that aim. Have therefore insisted both on class struggle & that the organizational forms anarchists support now must reflect the desired society. Though there are few such groups (that have so survived) & none of them is large, there has recently been a remarkable growth, a break-away from the SPGB having launched Spanner, the former Nottingham Anarchists publishing Flux, & reputedly - a section of the DAM having abandoned vanguardism.

Anarchism is essentially a combination of two inextricably linked instincts fundamental to the working class, (& - pace Marx - common to other exploited groups,) mutual aid the basic desire for a cooperative society, & solidarity in the face of exploitation & oppression. Those groups who fall in this middle tradition, will differ on the matter of spontaneity, - whether or not it will be desirable at some stage to form a revolutionary industrial union movement, - will differ as to whether the class struggle or the cooperative elements of anarchism are the more important, will have different degrees of emphasis on what constitutes libertarian internal social organization, & as to the permissibility of working within unions, single issue campaigns & so forth.

The longer established groups in this tradition have cooperated in the past, (in fact dating back for over forty years,) predominantly but not exclusively in the industrial field. One can hark back to the League for Workers' Control, (late 40s & early 50s,) the Industrial Rank & File Movement, the Industrial sub-committee of the Committee of 100, the Homeless Hostel Campaign, the 1960s revival of the Squatters' movement. But unfortunately such cooperation never became formalized in a permanent alliance; even though it was generally true that what divided us was less important than what distinguished all such groups from all other revolutionary traditions.

I believe it is time for a new try; in saying I want cooperation I am not saying I want merger, there are differences, & these differences are important, but not so important as to preclude cooperation.

I believe that the example of the Industrial Rank & File Movement suggests a
basis for cooperation, & that though it, as an organization did not last or achieve much, it was the forerunner of a number of very significant movements embracing basically the same people.

Now, as then, there is a need for a movement which will help spontaneously formed rank & file industrial groups in their struggles, (not exclusively industrial,) whether by providing printing & other publicity facilities, or in other ways.

Now as then there is a need for a movement arguing the need for such struggles to remain outside the control of parties, whether vanguardist or reformist; whether confessing to such vanguardism or reformism or claiming to be anarchist; & also to argue that this spontaneous cooperation & struggle could & should be the basis of a new social system.

Now as then, there is a need to foster such struggles & extend them, with the aim of so escalating the struggles that eventually coniascing they would result in a situation of dual power which would permit the growth of a new cooperative social system.

Now as then there is a need to act both inside & outside the industrial field - (apart from the obvious sexual politics, the peace movement, anti-imperialism, anti-racism etc.,) pensioners (elderly or disabled) & the unemployed are obviously unable to struggle on an industrial field, they have no industrial muscle & are not so much exploited as deprived, but still have needs that class society will never satisfy, & the right to fight for these - but is all such struggles this tradition would wish wherever conceivably possible to develop an industrial dimension for the struggle.

Now as then the crucial test that would distinguish such a movement from all other traditions is that its constituent groups would advocate that a fundamental part of any revolutionary social transition must be the demand that workers attain direct & total control of the industries in which they work; though it must also be added that this is only a stage in the rapid transition to a society where there would be no class divisions, therefore no distinct class of workers, & therefore workers' control would then be a misnomer.

The reader by now will (or at least should) be asking for more details as to who do I see as fitting into this middle ground?

Since I am known to belong to Syndicalist Bulletin it will go without remark that I would claim that it is to be found therein; I would stress that it belongs to that tradition that sees the shop stewards movement of say 80 years ago as the authentic example of syndicalism in Britain; & it looks to a similar upsurge of rank & file militancy creating a new & comparable movement, rather than trying to draft people into joining an artificially precreated industrial unionist movement. Syndicalist Bulletin can be contacted c/o of Hull Syndicalists, P.O. Box 102 Hull; or Wrekyn Syndicalists, College Farm House, Wellington (Salop.), T.F.1-1 P.R.

Stressing mutual aid a little more than would syndicalists, (though I would stress, what I said above, that mutual aid is an essential prerequisite of any industrial organization, & the nearer it comes to syndicalism, the more it is
necessary, adding that syndicalist involvement in free schools & other activities essentially linked to the syndicalist tradition helps to demonstrate this.) & in contrast, putting a little less influence on industrial militancy is "Spanner". Recently created as a break-away from the SPGB, it has the usual SPGB belief that consciousness is all important, but does not have the greater immediate militancy. Spanner believes that the proportion of the working class has attained real socialist consciousness, this will affect the general political context & the level of militancy generally; & that in such circumstances it will be possible for workers' cooperatives to be created without the danger of the capitalist system coopting them, as it has done to communities & cooperatives in the past. Moreover Spanner, in perhaps its greatest heresy as far as the SPGB is concerned, sees the formation of cooperatives as part of socialist propaganda, & so there despite the dangers from cooption, supports their formation even now, though recognizing the dangers.

Spanner can be reached at B.K. Spanner, London W.C. 1 X. - 3 X. X.; or c/o Robin Cox, 3 The Mount, Lower st., Haslemere, G. U. 27 - 2 P.D.

Though Councillists & Syndicalists have long sat at opposite ends of a dimension of spontaneity/organization, & so there is no basis for cooperation between purists of the two traditions, they have much the same mix of mutual aid and stress on militancy. Syndicalists acknowledge the dangers of the decay of revolutionary organizations, but argue that the propagandist value of retaining such movements often outweigh the disadvantages. Of the five groups that traditionally tend towards the spontaneity of the councilists, Wildcat, Subversion, the revamps of Solidarity & Common Wealth, & the British contacts of the Marxists, Humists, News & Letters group; CV & Solidarity were respectively involved in the League for Workers' Control & the Industrial Rank & File Movement, (the withdrawal of the London section of the Marxists, Humists from the latter occasioned disagreement with their Glasgow comrades,) & the reputed reason for Subversion's breach with Wildcat suggests that some cooperation is possible with them. Besides these there are two groups not traditionally either syndicalist or spontaneist but which nevertheless theoretically approximate to a mid-position between the two. Flux is produced by the former Nottingham Anarchists as a journal of anarchist-libertarian marxist dialogue; & Socialism Current (after years of creating a bridge between anarchism & the best in Trotskyism,) shed its residual vanguardism some time ago. Solidarity can be contacted c/o Ken Veller at 123 Letham Rd., E.6; G.V. either c/o John Barks, 3 Newhouse Close, Thaxton Without, Canterbury, Kent; or Buck Taylor, 107 Milton St., Barnstaple, E. X. 31 - 1 P. Q.; Marxists, Humists have to be contacted through Chicago. Mike Ballard's address for Subversion is c/o Raven Press in Manchester. Flux is at Box A, Rainbow Centre, Mansfield Rd., Nottingham, N.G.7 - 6 A.Q. Socialism Current is c/o Frank & Pauline Rowe, 142 Clements Rd., E. 6 - 2 D.L.

A faction of the DAM, supposedly controlling Black Flag, is said to be re-purposing the DAM belief in setting up a purported "national confederation of labour", & renounces the role traditionally associated with Black Flag, & which the FAI set out to do within the Spanish CNT, of acting to preserve the revolutionary nature of the mass organization, in a way unpleasantly reminiscent of a Leninist Party. (Obviously something else would need to be said about this, but I haven't got enough information. I did buy a copy last Saturday, but though the tone of that issue was not vanguardist, it wasn't specifically anti-vanguardist.) Its position, like that of Syndicalist Bulletin, is anarcho-syndicalist. It comes from a tradition that puts all its
emphasis on (at least verbal) militancy, playing down the mutual aid element in syndicalism; & though it may have renounced open vanguardism, it continues to work in a vanguardist context. It can be contacted through B.K. Hurricane, W.C.1 N - 3 X.I.

Those who read the arguments for a new libertarian united front I produced in Syndicalist Bulletin about an year ago will obviously see resemblances. I therefore need to stress the differences, (apart from the obvious one that it was written before the collapse of Eastern European stalinism which rendered obsolete the adoption of the Libertarian League's statement;) as in that I was arguing - as a matter of principle - that there should be room for diversity within an industrial unionist movement; but was not taking into account all the British conditions.

I envisaged there anarchist-socialists who saw syndicalism as one aspect of an overall anarchist strategy; the reality - in Spanner - is anarchist socialists who see mass industrial action as one limitation amongst others of state power which would allow workers' cooperatives to reorganize society; who would therefore argue that anarchist-socialists should engage in industrial militancy, but would not necessarily foresee or desire a social general strike.

Though the Spontaneists are much as I imagined, though I saw that syndicalism needs to be distinguished from anarcho-vanguardism as much as Leninism & though I assumed that there would be potential allies who had just rejected vanguardism, I assumed that these would be ex-Leninists, & that their position would be a compound of pre-1917 Stalinism & Trotsky's pre-1917 views (Kozhentsevism.) I don't pretend to know what the position of Black Flag members who have abandoned vanguardism, but still hold to the Black Flag tradition may be. Those groups whose views are reminiscent of Kozhentsevism, (basically Socialist Current which abandoned vanguardism in the 70s & Flux which never was,) here occupy the central ground.

Some notes on groups concerned in the above, these are estimations of the groups concerned, not what they have said about themselves, so are only intended for rough use to clarify discussion. Even in that sense the distinction I have tried to draw between S.B. & B.F. may, obviously, be challenged.

Spanner: an anarchist discussion journal, though - judging by the adverts in it & one of the articles in the second issue - the columns are open to a wide variety of libertarians, the core group of Spanner is anarchist-socialist & emanates from a faction of the SPGB, & indeed some of its members remain members of that party, though under the terms of the "Hostility Clause" in the SPGB principles, there is a danger if not a probability that they will be expelled.

This group therefore holds (or held) the basic SPGB thesis that socialism can only come about when the vast majority, (probably about 80%) of the world's population already desires it, not just as something that might be quite nice, & is on the whole preferable than the political policies elsewhere an offer, but as something that this overwhelming majority wants sufficiently to be ready to confront, in one way or another, the ruling class which commands, but does not staff, the organs of state coercion.
It also retains SPGB beliefs regarding stalinism, third world despotism & social-democratic reformism as state capitalism; indeed it does not question beliefs, other than to say that as the socialist movement grows the general actions of the workers are bound to affect the nature of capitalism & cause modifications before the overwhelming majority is won over; (particularly in the time that socialists already have a bare majority.) They argue, that in such circumstances, there would be a proliferation of workers' cooperatives & that these would begin the reorganization of society, in a proto-socialist direction, before the time that, as SPGB members, (a therefore insistent on overwhelming majority,) they would feel it right for socialists to take power.

Holding, therefore, that while reformism should be rejected, as also all conceptions which allow a minority of conscious socialists to take power, it is still both possible & essential to make some change in a socialist direction prior to socialist revolution; they align themselves - in terms of immediate action - with (basically Kropotkinist) anarchism; though they argue for this in terms as much reflecting a Marxist past as an anarchist present.

Like many other anarchist-socialists they can be assumed to see industrial action as one significant section of a broad pattern of anarchist activity; since their theory is aimed to mobilise workers to limit the powers of state & ruling class so as to allow workers' cooperatives to be founded under more favourable conditions, where they are not forced to behave like capitalist enterprises in order to survive, any means to reduce the powers of state & ruling class which does not conflict with the basic socialist aim is presumably desirable.

Spontanists: there are a variety of groups more or less in this category; some, but not all, would regard themselves as councillors, Solidarity used, in Chris Pallis’s day, to reject all labels other than libertarian socialist, though Ken Weller described himself as syndicalist. Basically all - to some degree, - reject syndicalism regarding it as being as liable to bureaucratic corruption as any mass party; basically all believe with syndicalists in a mass nation (a utopia) wide social general strike, but whereas syndicalists foresee a national confederation of labour co-ordinating this, councillors would regard this as an unacceptable degree of centralisation & their insistence on council power implies that the syndicalist confederation is bound to become a centralised high command. All have in the past cooperated with syndicalists in alliances such as is now proposed.

The groups in this category have a wide variety of origins & these naturally shape their current approach. Wildcat & Subversion both derive from a 1970s split in the SPGB - founded “Libertarian Communism” - that briefly fused with Solidarity. Wildcat is very sectarian, & this was the reason for Subversion breaking away. (Subversion claimed that the majority of the then members broke away but that the remaining member had the copyright to the name Wildcat.) But both certainly distrust any aim at creating a permanent workers’ organization, while disclaiming any hard & fast doctrinal reasons against temporary alliances. It remains to be seen if Subversion, at least, is sincere in this disclaimer.

Common Wealth originated as a left reformist party opposing the war-time coalition but not the war in 1942/3; by which time it was created by the reunification of the remnants of the pre-war Popular Front excluding obviously the Stalinists. There were four major splits, in 44, 45, & two in 46, each of which took very nearly half the membership into the Labour Party, the remnant only consequently moving leftwards, & by 48 there were discussions concerning
Socialism ou Barbarie, (the French inspiration for Solidarity,) was a sub-anarchist product of the split in the Fourth International, just before Trotsky died, when the minority decided that it was no longer necessary in all circumstances to defend the Soviet Union, regardless of the rights & wrongs of the conflict in question; & from there split into smaller groups as they began to question the class nature of the Soviet union. Solidarity itself originated in a 1960 split in the SLL, (ironically its leading members had been arch-disciplinarians when they were inside the League.) Despite its rejection of Leninism, the language in which it expresses that rejection, indeed the rest of its theoretical framework inevitably reflects that Leninist heritage. The Marxist Humanists, an American originated group, which had similar origins to "Soc. ou Barbe.", differs from the latter in retaining a personal admiration for Lenin while perversely claiming - substantiating the claim with an abundance of quotations that somehow manage to ignore the actions of Lenin when in power - that Lenin abandoned vanguardism in 1916, & thereafter opposed everything which we associate with Leninism.

Libertarian Socialists (not spontaneists):

Socialist Current is another group with Trotskyist origins, (though after the collapse of the R.C.P., Frank Rowe joined the AFB & became its secretary, as also subsequently of the SWP, when it too declined to inactivity he reverted to Trotskyism & with two personal friends launched S.C.) It however worked closely with the SWP during the CND first wave years, growing increasingly alienated from the rest of the Trotskyists, & eventually - in the mid-70s - abandoning vanguardism. Frank & Pauline Rowe, effectively all that remain, have not this time round declared themselves syndicalist, but since syndicalism is part of Frank’s heritage, this is hardly necessary. While the Marxist Humanists retain a personal admiration for Lenin, the Current does for Trotsky, (still believing that its role is to orient its message to Trotskyists) but the views it argues to them bark back to Trotsky in the months before the revolution, rather than to Trotsky in the years after it. (Mehrabianism not bolshevism.)

Flux is the former Nottingham Anarchist Group, its members would probably if pressed sufficiently describe their views of how social revolution will actually take place as syndicalist but it too feels that in the current circumstances it must orient its propaganda primarily to creating dialogue with Trotskyists & trying to influence people in such milieux.

Syndicalists Note that whereas in the last two categories, groups despite their differences are assumed to have so much in common that the category is all important, it is still my opinion (though this is not based on full knowledge, & this may be disproved by those who know better,) that the division between the two avowed syndicalist traditions is such that they come under distinct categories. While it may be that Martin Howard has abandoned vanguardism, it strains credibility to hold that Albert Meltzer, would have so far surrendered control of the paper, that Black Flag can parameatly change, to the degree that Guy hopes; which does not preclude an adoption to a mid-position; indeed whereas if B.F. has not changed at all cooperation would be impossible, & if it has changed, as far as Guy believes, there could be no valid argument for our continued separate existence, only if it has adopted a mid-position can we realistically consider cooperation between groups.

Note also - apropos Spanner - that though syndicalist propaganda would seem
to suggest that creating workers' cooperatives is a diversion from class activity, arguing that cooperatives can only exist on capitalist terms. All syndicalist movements when they form print-works, paper shop outlets, canteens, or other such auxiliaries to the union confederations, create these as workers' cooperatives, & that most such movements have at one time or another found that further advance can only be attained by launching such cooperatives in one field or another.

There have been two basic traditions of syndicalism in Britain. The upsurge of 1909-1913, (referred to in the history books as the syndicalist upsurge,) was when rank & file members of the unions, who had been radicalised by the general spread of socialist ideas in the previous two decades, by the militant example of the suffragettes, & by the general sharpening of the class struggle, pushed forward creating the shop stewards' movement, the South Wales Socialist Societies & subsequently the Clyde Workers' Committee, as a new grass roots movement based on face to face democracy. Those who did this were by no means all anarchistic syndicalists, they brought with them from their origins in the Labour Party, Guild Socialism or the B.S.P., all sorts of reformist illusions.

Contrasted with this there were before 1909 a number of attempts to build pure syndicalist movements modelled on the French C.G.T. or the American I.W.W. They never achieved comparable significance, though no doubt they contributed to the general socialist education of the class that allowed the syndicalist upsurge to take place. It should be mentioned that when it came to the war, despite the illusions that the members of the mass movement had brought with them, this mass rank & file syndicalistic movement did continue to wage the class struggle, - even where it refrained from coming out openly against the war; whereas some of those who ten years before had been purist syndicalists were to be found supporting the war.

Understandably many have pointed to the degeneration of the shop stewards' movement, the generally temporary nature of the syndicalist upsurge, & as disillusion came with the communists & syndicalism once more became a distinct force - there were not only those who tried to repeat the 1909 upsurge but also a tradition of those who once again tried to create movements importing to Britain replicas of organisations elsewhere. I take it that we are agreed that S.B. is in the former tradition, in this it is in line both with the post-war A.F.B. (later the S.W.F.) & the group round Philip Sanson connected with Freedom, but are distinguished from the post-war Anarch-Syndicalist Union from which Black Flag is descended which has always seen the way forward as building a small pioneer purist syndicalist movement.

Naturally there is always an overlap between such movements, there are always times when immediate policies do not diverge as much as they should in theory do; but if one thinks about it, diametrically opposed actions here & now spring from these two distinct roads to creating a syndicalist movement. If you want a syndicalist movement, consisting only of people who are revolutionary ab initio, then you wish to recruit one by one, having fully educated them in advance, & you must logically regard all mass struggles purely as an area for recruitment. If on the other hand you wish to foster the rank & file's self education through experience, & you believe it learns through all exposure to socialist propaganda, even the propaganda of groups with which you disagree; then you approach mass struggles not as a way of winning a few recruits, but because you support them for your own sake. (Obviously there are some working class struggles - e.g. racist ones - which the revolutionary can never support.) You go into them to promote direct action, rank & file democracy & so forth; & there are occasions when you refrain from pushing a full anarchist
argument because that would be divisive.

This naturally affects not just the content of the published propaganda material but also the manner & the occasions it is sold. Obviously it is irritating for a writer to see intrinsically correct articles refused as divisive (I have had this as often as most) but there is a greater need to avoid building barriers between the class & the revolutionary group. If one sees the syndicalist movement as arising from the mass organizations, if in consequence one's propaganda is chiefly by example, a personal contact on the picket line & elsewhere, then the aim of the journal is primarily to provide a vehicle for workers in struggle to use, regardless of the fact that the workers who write do not belong to a syndicalist group, & that they are still in large part bound by reformist illusions.

While "class/group growth" syndicalists have to use self-censorship in terms of written propaganda, in order not to create a barrier between themselves & those they would influence; vanguardist "individual growth" ones self-censor in terms of activity. If you interest is primarily in terms of selling papers, you do not involve yourself directly in those actions of rank & file militants that would detract from such concentration on selling. Certainly you would never risk arrest, but nor would you take on work demanding a lot of time for the wider movement for your group could not spare you. If one is attempting to build a pure syndicalist movement, then one must rigidly exclude any material that is not pure revolutionary. Both have roles to play (from the point of view of the S.E. tradition,) but they are different roles.

Cont'd from p. 11

for lack of funds)" = 1 hour 42 minutes of war. Number 8, Nov. 1990, two pages, is devoted to a letter in which the writer, "P," informs "Dear Q," who apparently lives abroad, of the nature and extent of the current recession and the level of working class resistance. The writer believes "This crisis is bigger than the 1981-81 recession and...the 1973 oil crisis...

WORKERS SOLIDARITY; P.O. Box 1528, Dublin 8, Ireland; Quarterly (Publication was interrupted between Numbers 30, Winter 1989, and 31, Spring 1991); 20 8 1/2 by 11 pages; sub: send L5 for issues of that value (60 pence per copy). WS describes itself as an "Irish Anarchist Magazine" It is the " Magazine of the Workers Solidarity Movement" and differs from such major U.S. anarchist periodicals as Anarchy and Fifth Estate, which concentrate on a critique of capitalist culture. WS, like ideas and action, the WSA journal, is class struggle-oriented and actively organizes for and advocates a libertarian socialist society and the destruction of capitalism. Articles in number 30, Winter 1989, have a syndicalist slant. "Victory for Spanish Anarchist Union" describes the success of the Spanish syndicalist union CNT during a general strike in the late eighties. The review of "In Place of Compromise" published by the Anarchist Workers Group (British) seems to support the idea of rank and file unionism rather than organizing new revolutionary unions, but at the same time criticizes the AWG for not having "Fleshed out its criticism of bureaucratic unionism in a way that would persuade people of "the potential reality of free socialism." Number 31 has articles on the Gulf War, "Fight the Rich, Not Their Wars," the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Easter Uprising, "1916: What Are You Commemorating?," and an interesting, thoughtful article on the collapse of soviet communism, "Lenin: Makers or Breaker of the Revolution."
Not least among the bulwarks that have been raised against Socialism are the monstrous distortions and misrepresentations of De Leonism that "socialist" revisionism has indulged in. In our November issue, with specific reference to the centennial edition of The People, we once again pointed up the revisionist SLP's "immediate demands" compromise of the revolutionary goal—a compromise which shut the door against the revolutionary spirit in favor of ingratiation, and a compromise which spelled the demise of the bona fide SLP. But now, resurfacing in the November 3 People (an edition largely devoted to the afterglow of the SLP "centennial" celebrations), is a revisionist product that is even more damning than the foregoing to possible socialist victory. It appears in The People's Question Period column, concerns the question of Transition to Socialism, is a prime example of anti-De Leonist idiocy, and is an invitation to disaster that demands exposure as such. Let us therefore close in on it.

A questioner asks The People:

"What is the difference between socialist industrial unionism and the term 'dictatorship of the proletariat'?"

The question is not new. Moreover it was answered extensively on a number of occasions by the bona fide (i.e., the De Leonist) SLP. The kernel of the De Leonist explanation was and is that whereas due to limited 19th century industrial development and consequent vagueness as to the form that a socialist society would take, Marx and Engels thought the road to Socialism would require a political State dictatorship of the proletariat that would "wrest, by degrees [our emphasis], all capital from the bourgeoisie"—whereas that was the 19th century projection, 20th century industrialization plus De Leon's breakthrough in socialist thought rendered unthinkable a transitional period or stage of development between Capitalism and Socialism—unthinkable not only because now unnecessary, but also unthinkable because fraught with danger of defeat (vide the aborted 1917 Russian proletarian revolution)

That was the position of the once bona fide SLP and that is the position of The De Leonist Society.

Apropos, and by way of further introduction to this vital matter, involving as it does the question of form and the question of tactics, we would urge our readers to reread the comprehensive and well-documented treatise published in our November issue under the head DANIEL DE LEON—SOCIAL ARCHITECT. Here, among the many relevant passages quoted by the writer to give authority to his statements, none is more relevant to the question we are presently pursuing than the following quote from De Leon:

"The political movement of labor, that, in the event of triumph, would prolong its existence a second after triumph, would be a usurpation. It would be either a usurpation or the signal for a social catastrophe. It would be the signal for a social catastrophe if the political triumph did not find the working class of the land industrially organized, that is, in full possession of the plants of production and distribution, capable, accordingly, of assuming the integral conduct of the productive powers of the land.
would be instantaneous. The plants of production and distribution having remained in capitalist hands, production would be instantly blocked. On the other hand, if the political triumph does find the working class industrially organized, then for the political movement to prolong its existence would be to attempt to usurp the powers which its very triumph announces have devolved upon the central administration of the industrial organization."

But how does The People answer the questioner?

"Socialist industrial unionism describes an entire concept of how workers can organize, on both the political and economic fields, to overthrow capitalist rule and establish a socialist society. The 'dictatorship of the proletariat' refers to a particular phase of the transition between capitalism and socialism, in which the organized working class has achieved control over all or most of the means of production and is ruling society, but must still contend with resistance from the defeated capitalist class and its allies...

"So long as such resistance exists, and the new workers' government is obliged to use some measure of force or compulsion to consolidate its rule against such resistance, the society cannot yet be properly described as 'socialist.' Until the resistance is eliminated, class relations fully dissolved, and the socialist industrial union government no longer has to act in the capacity of a 'state,' this transitional period of working class rule--whether it takes a day or a decade--is the 'dictatorship of the proletariat,' as described by Marx and Engels."

Here's a pretty kettle of fish! Daniel De Leon to the contrary notwithstanding, because Marx and Engels postulated a transition period, necessitating a dictatorship of the proletariat, therefore we Marxists must needs do the same. We must simply disregard, overlook, or rid ourselves of De Leon's monumental, qualitative addition to Marxism, his master plan whereby the working class can effect an immediate transition to Socialism--a plan based on a depth and breadth of national industrialization such as could be scarcely imagined by Marx and Engels in their day, a plan for the integral industrial organization of the wage working class wherein that class is not as before a minority but now a majority (today an immense majority!) in society, a plan which at the behest of society enables the producers to simultaneously lock out the capitalist class from the industrial complex and commence production and distribution for society's well-being; in short, a plan that does not conceive the revolutionary act as a series of measures stretched over time but as an immediate, instantaneous response of a united working class majority to a mandate from society.

The People states: "One can imagine any number of scenarios for a revolutionary struggle." It failed to add that the longer the struggle the greater the number of possible scenarios for failure, including the viper scenario that in his "Socialist Reconstruction" address De Leon took pains to warn against, thus:

"Now, mind you, that might [the integrally organized Socialist Industrial Union] the labor movement needs, as much, I would almost say, against the political movements which its own breath heats into being as against the
capitalist tyrant himself. It needs that might against the capitalist tyrant to put the quietus upon him; it also needs that might to prevent the evil consequences to which, in this corrupt atmosphere of bourgeois society, the political movement is inevitably exposed. The two points are vital. Much, infinitely more than appears at first sight, hangs thereby."

And here we must point out that The People's woefully loose portrayal of the role of "the revolutionary political party of labor," tied as it appears to be to "any number of scenarios," is itself cause for deep concern. Quoting in part:

"And it [the revolutionary party] would work for a peaceful transition to socialism, by winning the majority of society to that position [a position that calls for the abolition of capitalism], capturing the capitalist political state for the express purpose of dismantling it and turning social authority over to the socialist industrial unions. The socialist industrial unions would then become the new governmental organization of a socialist society." (The People's emphasis.)

Connecting the above quote with the previous quotes from The People, we come up with the following:

QUESTION: Whereas the revisionist concept of transition from Capitalism to Socialism is not as projected by De Leon a transition that is accomplished at once but is a "phase" wherein "the socialist industrial union government...has to act in the capacity of a 'state'" (i.e., wherein the economic organization, not the political, is designated by the revisionists as the "government" during the said phase), how come (according to the revisionists) a political victory for Socialism will not directly and immediately confer upon the economic organization the "social authority" to govern but will instead vest it in the political organization for an indefinite period (a "day or a decade"?) while it "dismantles" the political State?

We ask again: How come? How can a political triumph for Socialism be (1)--a mandate to the Socialist Industrial Union to govern when it is (2)--a mandate to "the revolutionary political party of labor" to assume the mantle of "social authority"? It is a case of now we have it, now we don't!

The revisionist's position is not merely different from the De Leonist position, it opposes it. Whereas De Leonism heads straight for the goal, revisionism circumvents it. Does the above revisionist "scenario" square with De Leon's portrayal of the transition to Socialism ("Like the slough shed by the serpent that immediately reappears in its new skin, the political State will have been shed, and society will simultaneously appear in its new administrative garb.")? Obviously not! Does it square with De Leon's warning against the mission of the political movement ("Its mission will have come to an end just before the consummation of that consummating act of labor's emancipation"--i.e., the revolutionary act of the economic organization)? Obviously not! Obviously the revisionist "position" is suspect, opening as it does a switch that De Leon had taken great pains to close--a switch that, open, invites opportunism, corruption, and dictator-
ship OVER the proletariat!

All of which is a reminder that having captured the bona fide Socialist Labor Party a dozen or so years past and turned it into an anti-De Leonist organization, the revisionists and their dupes who gathered in September last to celebrate an alleged SLP "centennial" have neither cause to be proud of their work nor the right to parade themselves under the De Leonist flag.

Meanwhile The De Leonist Society warns that if and when workers want Socialism they will have to not only give top priority to the socialist goal but will have to knock scatterbrained revisionism out of their way!

-- from the Jan/Feb, 1991 issue of the De Leonist Society Bulletin, P.O. Box 944, Station F, Toronto, Canada M4Y 2N9

A REPLY TO JEFF STEIN

Jeff Stein’s "Diemer's Heap" stacks up as proof that modern-day partisans are unlikely to agree on the facts of the nineteenth century Bakuninist/Marxist feud. If, however, we limit the Bakuninists to anarcho-communists and syndicalists and the Marxists to libertarian socialists, the prognosis is better. For both are—or should be—1980s revolutionaries whose only real purpose in being in the movement is to urge on the non-capitalist 90 percent of the population to destroy the system.

But back to the article itself. The opening salvo was well aimed. I think my perception of what constituted "an example of the less combative and prejudiced literature of the [Marxism vs. anarchism] controversy" was sufficiently distorted by my own "Marxism, that I saw Diemer’s article as a fair appraisal of anarchism. In defense of Diemer (and myself), though, I’d point out that he would have been hard put to avoid reference to Bakunin’s acts and words in defending Marxism just as Jeff’s refutation of Diemer’s Marxist folklore about anarchism required an appeal to the historical record and hence to the actions and writings of Marx. No doubt Comrade Stein sees his reply as evenhanded and fair, too. But I think that for the time being this is a good place to lay the Marx versus Bakunin feud to rest. Any attempt to pile another layer on the "heaps" that have appeared in the DB so far will be counter-productive.

Instead, I’d like to raise an entirely different question: How do the goals and methods of agitation of a libertarian socialist who labels himself an anarcho-syndicalist, like Jeff Stein, differ from those of other libertarian socialists who read the DB? I suspect that there isn’t a nickel’s worth of difference and that we would agree on the following:

1. that our goal is a revolution in which the great majority of the people unite to destroy the capitalist system, abolish the political state, and create new institutions that will insure 1) worker control and management of production and services, 2) a system of free access to goods and services that will replace the market system of buying and selling, and 3) popular control of local communities. The preceding statement glosses over the possibly violent scenarios of such a revolution. But I would suggest that recent events in Eastern
Europe and the USSR show that ruling classes often lack the will and the means to repress mass movements.

2. That although we can't predict the time and precipitating circumstances of this revolution, we would prefer that it come as a result of a rise in consciousness that enables the 90 percent of us that are not members of the capitalist class to see the capitalist system as the real source of all social ills.

3. That our task as revolutionaries is to produce the literature and other forms of agitation that will create dissatisfaction with the system and point to the socialist alternative.

In the latter part of this article I would like to respond to Jeff's conclusion. He begins it by saying that he feels he may have put a bit of a damper on the idea of bringing the anarchists and non-leninist marxists together as a 'third socialist force'. But the fact is that we have always constituted a third force - an anti-capitalist political grouping that, opposes reform, calls for social revolution now, and insists that revolution entails the abolition of both capitalism and the state.

In this connection, I'd like to reproduce the first five paragraphs of the introductory letter that was published in the first issue of the Discussion Bulletin:

Dear Comrade,

You are receiving this first issue of the Discussion Bulletin because you represent an element of the "left" which differs in many important ways from the conventional idea of "leftwing." If you are typical of this element, you believe that whenever our class decides to, it can abolish the capitalist system with its political state and replace it with a stateless society in which the means of production are socially owned and managed directly and democratically by the workers themselves through their own unions or councils.

Unlike the Leninist-Stalinist-Trotskyist-Maoists you reject the idea that a transition period to such a society is necessary under the guidance of a "workers" party, and unlike the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) and other social democrats, you do not believe that such a society can be achieved gradually through political action within the present social system.

As a result, you constitute what might be called a "third force," as opposed to the Leninists and social democrats, in what popular wisdom lumps together as "the left." As you know, both the "first and second forces" are badly splintered into competing denominations - a condition about which we can take some comfort since they aim to do no more than reconstitute many of capitalism's characteristics under a new name and a more enlightened management.

But if they are splintered, our "force" is atomized, consisting of small groups and grouplets each with its own publication and small circle of members and sympathizers. Except for the Socialist Labor Party (SLP) and the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) historically mortal enemies although they share an identical view of socialism, the groups are local, isolated, and like the IWW and SLP,
often mutually hostile or at least suspicious.

Unlike the Leninists and social democrats each with a relatively neutral publication--The Guardian and In These Times respectively--which serves in part as a sounding board and an arena for debate and discussion of their political persuasion, we have no such publication. This Discussion Bulletin is intended to serve that limited purpose, providing a forum for exchanging ideas, challenging assumptions, presenting theories, and perhaps resolving differences and beginning the first stages of limited cooperation.

Note that the highest hope for "bringing together" entertained at that time was "beginning the first stages of limited cooperation." I have no illusions about "unifying" even the Marxists in our political sector, much less the anarchists and Marxists.

Some people of us see at least one advantage to a unified libertarian socialist group: it could publish a weekly or monthly journal. But actually the larger groups in our sector already publish such journals: The People (SLP) and the Industrial Worker (IWW) in the U.S., and in Britain--Freedom (anarchist), Socialist Standard (SPGB), and World Revolution (TCC). I would guess that nearly all of us subscribe to and support one or another of these that most nearly reflects his political views.

For so disparate a group to attempt to publish a national or international journal would be to invite disaster. Aside from the already existing loyalties to various publications, there is the matter of political infighting that would certainly arise over the journal's editorial political positions, etc.

Actually I'm fairly happy with the present situation. I think the small fraction of our political sector who are involved in the DB both as readers and writers have broadened our outlook about other groups; I know I have. I also feel that small, local, independent groups can do as much to advance that cause of social revolution as national groups--and perhaps do it with a level of creativity that national organizations sometimes inadvertently squelch.

As for the mutual political hostility that animates some elements in our political sector, I suspect that it is a by-product of trying to elevate minor distinctions into real differences that justify their existence.

Frank Girard

Cont'd from p. 2 1

WORLD REVOLUTION; RH Box 869, London WC1N 3XX, England; monthly; 8 page tabloid; sub: £5/$8 per year. WR is the publication of the British section of the ICC (International Communist Current), which has publications in eleven countries. It defends the positions of the ICC, one of which is that capitalism is in a stage of "decadence" that signals its rapidly approaching decline into chaos. The front-page headline in the April 1981 issue reflects that position: "New World Order: Terror, Chaos, and War. This war, this dreadful massacre, is in reality a grim warning of what will be increasingly 'normal' under the reign of decaying capitalism: mass murder, terror, epidemics and famine." "Chaos and War at the Gates of Western Europe" Cont'd on p. 2 8
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heads the lead story on Yugoslavia in the July/August issue. Another story in the April issue, "No Light at the End of the Tunnel" provides statistical evidence of the impending economic collapse of capitalism and of the need for our masters to resort ever more to a war economy and actual war to prop up the system. I think most DB readers would find ICC's analysis of the condition of capitalism acceptable but would express it less stridently. Other headlines in the July/August issue include "To Be Led by Unions Is to Be Led to Defeat," and "British Imperialism: Helping the US to Police the 'New World Order'".

WORLD SOCIALIST: JOURNAL OF THE WORLD SOCIALIST MOVEMENT, Socialist party of Great Britain, 52 Clapham High St., London SW4 7UH, England. Published biannually, 46 6 inch by 6 pages. WS was an attempt by the SPGB and its "companion parties" in Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the US, Sweden and Austria to publish an international journal. Eight issues were published from 1984-88. Although publication has been suspended indefinitely, we list it here because copies can still be obtained and because its alphabetical location prevented our reviewing it during its existence. Number 6, Winter 1986-7, had as its theme "World of Free Access" with an editorial on this important aspect of SPGB theory and several articles related to the subject. It contained articles on this theme and other topics by contributors in Australia, Canada, Ireland, and Britain. The theme of Number 7, Winter 1987-8 was "Japan: The Other Side of the Miracle" Number 6, which I seem to have mislaid, contained an article in Esperanto. Interested readers can obtain all eight issues for $5 or individual issues for $1 each from the World Socialist Party, PO Box 405, Boston MA 02272.