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**BULLETIN MATTERS**

In the first article, the author, Howard Hawkins, engages in the wholesale slaughter of some of the cows we libertarian socialists hold most sacred. I have read similar if less convincing criticisms of "workerism" and "economism" before, but I find it rather hard to disprove some of Hawkins' points. Perhaps some of our readers will respond. The next issue will feature articles on Libertarian
Municipalism, the viewpoint from which Hawkins writes.

Next Alan Sanderson, after examining the views Sam Brandon expressed in DB90 on Arnold Peterson, National Secretary of the SLF, 1914-1924 and on Deleuze revisionism, finds them wanting. In the letter that follows, Brandon replies with further evidence to support his thinking on Petersen and revisionism.

A Boeing Machinist discusses the varieties of anarchism, including a reformist, anarcho-democratic variation—alogous, I suppose, to the social democrats—and concludes that, unlike Marxists, anarchist groups don't fall into easily defined ideological compartments. Laurens Otter answers by defending Bakuninism against charges of reformism.

The Subversion Group provides us with another voice in the marxism versus anarchism debate, this time from what the group terms the "libertarian communist" or "ultra-leftist" viewpoint. "As We See It" is the newly updated version of the principles of Philadelphian Solidarity whose long hibernation appears to be ending. Interested readers can obtain its list of publications, many of which originate from London Solidarity.

Next we have three announcements which speak for themselves; addresses are attached. They are followed by Laurens Otter's review of The Socialist Labor Party 1876-1981: A Short History, whose shortness he deprecates—so do its authors. It is followed by the review from the Socialist Party (of Great Britain)'s Socialist Standard and the letter Ben Perry wrote to SSA commenting on the review. All this gives us a chance to inform readers about the sources of the book:

$5 postpaid from Northern Herald Books, 6 Lillian St., BD4 SLF U.K.
$5 postpaid from Livra Books, 422 W. Upsilon St., Philadelphia Pa 19119

As always we call for written contributions from our readers. The DB bills itself as a forum for libertarian socialists, and while the reprinting of articles from publications in our political sector serves that purpose to a degree, we are especially interested in comments by our readers. Remember, please, they are printed from your copy. Please single-space using a dark ribbon and narrow margins. A seven to seven and a half inch typed line is ideal.

FINANCES: The DB's financial situation has deteriorated rapidly due in part to increased expenses (we had to pay a $75 annual bulk mailing fee [up from $60]) and substantially reduced income. The result is deficit spending in spite of cheaper printing. Nor is this all: post office box rent of $35 is due in February before the next DB will be issued.

Contributions: Jeff Brecht $2; Harry Wade $20; Robert Blais $7;
Anonymous $12; Sam Brandon $10; G.P. Mayer $10; Frank Girard $25; John Zerran $1. Total $87. Thank you, comrades.

BALANCE October 26, 1991 $87.00

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Cont'd on p. 18
Libertarian Municipalism, Workers' Control, and the Cooperative Commonwealth

by Howard Hawkins

The Principles of the Left Green Network refer to the democratic, socially-owned, cooperative, and ecological economy we envision as a "Cooperative Commonwealth." The principles have been criticized for not making any statement about workers' issues and workers' control. I hope that it goes without saying that all Left Greens believe that the people should control the day-to-day operations of their workplaces. We should amend the principles to make this clear.

But what about the broader social decisions concerning the economy — the structure of demand; the coordination of distribution networks; the disposition of surplus between investment, public goods, and private consumption; the choice of technology; the scale of production units and distribution networks; the harmonization of the economy with the environment? Should these be decisions made by workers, or by all citizens? In short, in our vision of a cooperative commonwealth, what should be the relation between workers' control and community control?

Two leftist models that claim to be democratic, socially-owned, cooperative, and ecological can be dismissed in short order. One, market socialism based on producer and consumer cooperatives, reproduces the evils of markets: the predatory ethics of competition and greed; the dearth of public goods; the surfacé of ecological and social "externalities;" the expansive market logic of limitless growth that is devouring the biosphere. The other, democratic socialism based on central planning by elected state agencies, entrenches a new class of technocrats in privileged positions and does not overcome the irrationalities that command planning creates, whether the planning class is elected or self-appointed.

This is not to preclude cooperatives or the democratization of public enterprise and planning (e.g., direct election of the board of a public electric utility that is currently appointed) from playing a role as transitional forms and demands. But I want to focus here on the leftist traditions whose maximum program is an economy coordinated from below without the market or the state.

The libertarian left has offered two basic models for this kind of post-revolutionary economy: the worker-oriented models of anarcho-syndicalism; council communism; guild socialism; and the community-oriented models of anarcho-communism.

Anarcho-syndicalism and council communism propose to organize the economy around workplace assemblies that are coordinated through mandated and recallable delegates to workers' councils which are federated by industries and by geographical areas. The geographical workers' federations would determine demand in their areas and coordinate supply, while the industry federations would determine how to produce to supply the demand. The area and industry federations would negotiate on a plan to balance supply and demand.

Guild socialism, while decentralized, and participatory planning build on this model, adding consumer councils to determine demand. The industry federations determine how what is needed and the area federations coordinate the distribution. In this case, negotiation between the federations of workers' councils and consumer councils would determine the plan.

Anarchocommunism proposes to organize the economy around federcations of community assemblies as the policy-making bodies, initially with federations of workplace assemblies, by area and by industry, as administrative bodies. In this case, workers' control is subordinate to a larger framework of community control in determining the plan of coordination.

In the longer run, anarchocommunism seeks to progressively dissolve into the community the separate enterprises based on a social and geographical division of labor. By physically decentralizing production to create rounded communities that reintegrate production and consumption, agriculture and manufacture, natural beauty and urban amenities, mental and manual labor, means of livelihood and ways of life, the question of workers' control as distinct from community control is ultimately rendered moot.

In the nineteenth century, however, with the rising factory system, the question of workers' control was anything but moot for anarchists. Anarchists thought they were agreed on a vision of society as a dual federation: economic, a federation of self-managing workers' associations; and territorial, a federation of free communes (i.e., municipalities). But how workers' control should relate to community control was never clearly posed until the 1880s, when it led to a split rather than a resolution.

In 1880, Swiss anarchists in the Jura Federation, unable to make up their mind, simply left the question open in one of their documents: "Is it to be a general assembly of all inhabitants, or delegations from the trades... which will draw up the constitution of the commune?" By the end of the decade, however, the two possible answers to that question had split the anarchists into rival tendencies: the syndicalists who looked to the workers to expropriate the capitalists and reorganize economy under trade union control and the communists who looked to the risen people to..."
expropriate the capitalists and reorganize the economy under municipal control. The class-conscious syndicalists ridiculed the communists for seeking popular alliances with the middle and lower classes, while the anti-reformist communists ridiculed the syndicalists for their trade union struggles for antimonarchical reforms within capitalism like the better wages and the eight hour day.

Another crucial difference from our viewpoint as social ecologists was that the anarchosyndicalists were generally incurious of industrial technology and wanted to adapt anarchist principles to it, while the anarcho-ecologists wanted to adapt machine technology to integrated communities that combined industry and agriculture and dissolved the social division of labor. Although anarchosyndicalism became the dominant tendency by the turn of the twentieth century, the anarcho-ecologists' territorial orientation naturally dovetailed with ecological concerns for the immediate land and environment of free communities (i.e., municipalities). The anarcho-ecologists' interest in adapting technology to decentralized communities lead to a revival of anarcho-ecology in the 1960s as the New Left turned its attention to issues of participatory democracy, urbanism, bureaucracy, community, technology, and ecology. 60s activists read Paul Goodman's writings on these subjects and rediscovered Kropotkin's thinking on them. Murray Bookchin found a growing audience for his explicitly ecologically grounded anarcho-ecology. These perspectives then found their way into the left-wing of the anti-nuclear alliances of the 1970s and the Green movement that emerged in the 1980s.

Yet the question of workers' control remains a vexing one for social ecologists. Between the economic structure we inherited today and the ecocommunities and bioregions of tomorrow lies a process of movement-building and fundamental change in power relations. In the meantime, many of us will spend hours a day at a workplace year after year. The day after a revolution, we will still have the centralized structure of physical production and distribution to coordinate even as we begin to decentralize it. So the answer, it seems to me, lies in not choosing between the workers' control and community control, but in finding the proper relationship between the two for today and for how the relationship should evolve as the physical production structure is remade to correspond to a libertarian community structure.

I will argue that anarcho-ecologist tradition — and particularly the libertarian municipalist approach advanced by Murray Bookchin 11 — offers the best framework for integrating workers' control and community control in a process of social change that ultimately yields a marketless, moneyless, stateless cooperative commonwealth. My basic position is:

The building blocks, power base, and policy-making bodies of a democratic political economy should be local community assemblies, inclusive of all people, that coordinate with each other through confederal administrative councils of mandated, recallable, and rotating delegates. While self-management of the day-to-day operations by the workers of each workplace should be affirmed, the basic economic policies concerning needs, distribution, allocation of surplus, technology, scale, and ecology should be determined by all citizens. In short, workers' control should be placed within the broad concept of, and subordinate to, community control.

Over time, the community should reorganize work so that people are not tied to any particular workplace, but rotate among a variety of workplaces and types of work (mental/manual, conceptual/rote, agriculture/manufacture, etc.). At the same time, the physical structure of the economy should be progressively decentralized until production and consumption, workers and community, are largely re-united in ecocommunities and bioregions and the question of workers' control is rendered moot.

In the meantime, the final word on all social policy, including economic policy, should rest with all the people in their community assemblies. Fighting to create and empower these assemblies, to bring more and more political and economic power under their control, in opposition to the state and capital, is the best means we have for creating this sort of cooperative commonwealth. Workplace organizing should be an organic extension of the community-based movement.

The reasons for this position will become clear by discussing the arguments between the worker-oriented and community-oriented theories. These arguments bear not only on what the economy should ultimately look like, but also on how we organize and struggle to get there. The arguments have revolved around four basic questions:

1. Democracy — What institutional framework best enables people to take direct control of society, uproot all forms of hierarchy, and discover their common interests?
2. The Revolutionary Subject — What social sectors are likely to become radicalized and take militant action?
3. Power — What social sectors and forms of organization and action have the potential power to overthrow capital and the state?
4. Transitional Strategy — What forms of organization and action best prefigure and build toward the new society?

Democracy

A fundamental problem with the worker-oriented positions from the viewpoint of democracy is that not everyone is a worker. Many are too young or old, sick, disabled, unemployed, rearing children, working for themselves outside
the formal economy, and so forth. At any one time, those with "official" jobs are only around 40% of the population and 60% of adults.

Anarchosyndicalism and council communism thus exclude or underrepresent in economic decision-making many social groupings affected by those decisions, such as women, minorities, and the elderly who are not involved in production because they are rearing children and housekeeping, discriminated against, or retired. This is true for both the revolutionary unions or workers' councils before the revolution and the worker-planned economy after the revolution.

Guild socialism, negotiated coordination, and participatory planning give every citizen a voice through the consumer federations. But the problem here is that by granting equal power in the planning negotiations between the federations of workers' councils and consumers' councils, workers basically get two votes in the planning process, one on the production side and one on the consumption side. Non-workers only get one vote on the consumption side. This privileges workers in the decision-making process.

A community assembly, on the other hand, is open to all citizens. It is thus is potentially a non-hierarchical public sphere where all interests and concerns get a hearing and everyone has an equal standing — one person, one vote.

The workplace, by contrast, is not a rounded public sphere. It is one-sided, concerned with production. There is a build-in contradiction in the workerist models between the workers' functional interests in their workplaces as against the interests of the community as a whole. In the planning process, the workers either decide everything (anarchosyndicalism, council communism) or get an additional vote in the planning process (guild socialism, negotiated coordination, participatory planning). Either way, the workers hold a veto over society. Either way — even without the profit motive to fuel competition — each workers' assembly, council, and federation has an interest in easing its own burdens and shifting them on to other functional groups or on to society and nature as "externalities". Why should the workers of a workplace or a whole industry produce more to meet demand? Why should they shut down "their" plant for environmental or productivity reasons and relocate to another modernized plant or another branch of production? Why should they take affirmative action to diversify their workforce racially and sexually?

No internal dynamic exists in the workerist models to reconcile the particular interests of workplaces and industries with the general interest of the broader community. To the contrary, the inherent structural tendency — despite, let me re-emphasize, the absence of a competitive struggle for profits — is for self-aggrandizement by each functional group. In the historical example of the Spanish revolution of 1936-37, the dual federation structure of the anarchosyndicalists came into conflict with itself, with the industrial federations finally asserting themselves over the area federations. In the workerist models, each functional group has a particular interest — as against other functional groups as well as the community as a whole.

In order to overcome the divisions which pose one group against another along the lines of race, gender, ethnicity, age, occupation, class, and so forth, we need a basic social unit which is inclusive of all people. The territorially defined local community, institutionalized as a directly democratic community assembly, meets this need.

In the community assembly, different social groups (genders, ethnic groups, ages, classes) and functional groups (occupations, both formal jobs and informal work) must co-exist. Direct communication is possible. Conflicting interests can be dealt with directly by the people who have to live the decisions.

Community assemblies do not automatically transcend race, class, gender, and other divisions. But all interests are brought together on an equal footing in a deliberative democratic process that can lead to the discovery of common interests. Sectional interests, be they workers, women, or ethnic minorities, can still coalesce and organize to press their concerns. They can still take direct action to force a community that is failing to deal with their concerns to do so.

The persistence of racism, anti-Semitism, nationalism, fascism, religious fundamentalism, and other "socialisms of fools" among workers is decisive evidence that capitalism is not "progressive" in the sense of breaking down all irrational divisions of society against itself before its own rationality based on the logic of profit. Indeed, today, as advanced capitalism enjoys a legitimacy worldwide unparalleled in its history, we are witnessing an explosion of nationalism, racism, and religious fundamentalism around the world. Far from having "stripped [workers] of every trace of national character", far from teaching them to regard religion as mere "bourgeois prejudice", as Marx and Engels did it in The Communist Manifesto12, the development of capitalism has strengthened nationalism and religious escapism.

The history of capitalism shows that workers will frequently act against what they consciously understand to be their rational economic interests in order to participate in irrational myths like nationalism and religious fundamentalism. Ideology and psychologically-rooted subconscious motivations are at least as powerful as economic interest in shaping behavior. The turn of much of the German working class to fascism in clear contradiction of their conscious understanding of their class interests provoked Wilhelm Reich's Mass Psychology of Fascism, a re-evaluation of the Left's political approach, particularly its failure to deal with the psychological internalization of oppression, the blind obedience to, and identification with, oppressive authority.13 It seems clear a transformative political practice has to do more than appeal to economic interest.

The participatory nature of direct action — and particularly direct democracy in community assemblies as the highest form of direct action — can have a transformative effect on participants, enabling them to discover their powers to think and act for themselves without the sanction of far-away, mystified authority figures, be they statist, religious,
or commercial media celebrities selling lifestyle images to display (including apoliticism) rather than products to use. Libertarian municipalism seeks to create this kind participatory politics that is transformative for its participants. But that still leaves the question of majority oppression of minorities on the basis of race. How do we uproot racism? In the U.S., the question of racism is particularly crucial given the 400 years of capitalist development in which the class system of exploitation has been based upon the systematic racial domination of people of color. Majority rule has meant white racism rule. Democracy provides no simple solution if the majority continues to dominate ethnic minorities. Moreover, technological changes today are rendering labor less needed, threatening particularly the unskilled labor of racially dominated groups but also the labor of millions of whites. With downwardly mobile whites looking for scapegoats, a mass fascist movement that could threaten the very survival of people of color in the U.S. is not out of the question. Workplace organizing is less and less relevant to the particular situation of ethnic minorities rendered unemployed and expendable by technological development.

A municipalist approach, on the other hand, starting from the existing geographical segregation of people of color by white racism, can advance a program of confederations of self-governing African-American, Latino, and Native American communities. These self-governing confederations could develop a measure of mutual aid and self-reliance that could insulate them somewhat from an intransigent white racist majority. Hopefully, by demonstrating an inspiring example of confederal grassroots democracy and economic cooperation, radicalized communities of people of color could radicalize white communities by showing a better way to live and interrelate as human beings. At the least, by entering into the larger society with an independent power base, radicalized communities of color would confront white communities with a choice between continuing racism or developing a new relationship of mutual respect and equality — between continuing to ally on racist grounds with the white capitalist and statist elites that exploit and dominate them, or developing a new alliance on democratic grounds with communities of color in order to win their own freedom from exploitation and domination by the ruling elites. The basic program for uprooting racism, then, is a program of empowerment and self-government by the racially oppressed.

The difference between workplace and community assemblies is that the internal dynamic of direct democracy in communities gives a hearing to solutions that bring out the common ground and, when there is not consensus, an equal vote to every member of the community. Democracy is no guarantee that common ground will be adopted, but it is a necessary condition. The only guarantee is that when one section of society has institutionalized privileges, it will use those privileges to advance their particular interest at the expense of the general interest.

Given the present-day uneven geographical distribution of industry, classes, and ethnic groups, not all local communities will bring all the social interests and functions together. But at the municipal level of confederated community assemblies, and still more at the regional level of confederated municipalities, these interests and conflicts will be incorporated into the deliberations of the confederal grassroots democracy. Indeed, the sharing of resources and productive facilities among communities regionally and among confederated regions will serve to solidarize communities on the basis of common material needs as well as ideological commitments.

Building on the foundation of a socially-decentralized coordination of the economy, an additional policy of progressive physical decentralization of the industrial structure to create more self-sufficient (but not autarkic) communities would reinforce and enhance democracy. The historic breach between anonymous producers and consumers that was created by the expansion of capitalism into a global market nexus could be progressively dissolved. To the extent that production and consumption were re-united on a human scale, society would be rendered more comprehensible, social self-management more feasible. Economic "externalities" would be "internalized" as a natural and normal community concern. The community oriented toward its ecological bioregion, not the workplace oriented toward international divisions of labor and networks of exchange, is the framework around which we can construct relatively self-sufficing, rounded communities.

With the rotation of community members among a variety of workplaces, neither factory, farm, shop, or office would function as separate interests in the community. The temporary functional divisions of labor as people rotate among tasks would not correspond to a permanent social division of labor and the permanent sectional interests we have today that divide humanity against itself. Workplaces would essentially become administrative agencies implementing policy made by the whole community. People with special expertise in branches of production would be elected to advisory boards to propose policies that the community could adopt, amend, or reject. The economy would become truly politicized as one aspect of the public affairs addressed by the community assemblies and their confederal councils.

Work rotation could also be organized by the area federations in the workerist models, but this would still institutionalize the workers as a distinct class with a unique and privileged relation to the means of production and particular interest in the decision-making structure. If a classless society is the goal, then people who work should not have any privileges over those who do not work. In the case of work rotation policies and schedules, it is more democratic for the community as a whole to determine work assignments because they not only affect those who do the work, but also their friends, families, and neighbors.

The community provides us with a framework for integrating these concerns and ultimately dissolving enterprises into a community's ecology and way of life. Separate enterprises, after all, are an essential condition of capitalism, the cells of the capitalist mode of production, the form which property takes under capitalism. Where control over the
means of production is divided among enterprises, the links between them can only be commercial contracts to buy each others' output. Models of economic democracy based on workers' control of the workplace only reinforce this condition of capitalism. 14

In sum, the most democratic structure for a cooperative commonwealth would be (1) workers' control of the everyday operations of workplaces with workers rotating among workplaces (until physical decentralization largely re-united production and consumption, workers and community, in ecocommunities and bioregions that render workers' control as distinct from community control no longer a question), and (2) community control of the basic economic decisions concerning the structure of consumption, the allocation of production responsibilities, the disposition of surplus, the choice of technology, the scale of production and distribution, and harmonization with the environment.

The Revolutionary Subject

Workerist positions developed more from a belief that the working class was the revolutionary class than from abstract speculation about the structure of an ideal society in the future. Until the revolutions of 1848, radicals cast their views in populist terms — a broad coalition of "The People" vs. the small elites with ill-gotten privileges. Marx and Engels, of course, changed that view by providing the emerging workers' movement with a theory about their role as the class that would rise to power and, in so doing, abolish all classes. Class struggle, not popular struggle, became the watchword of radicals. As Marx and Engels declared in their 1848 Communist Manifesto, "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle." 15

The Marxian theory of the working class as the revolutionary subject (a view which anarchotrendy and council communism share) can be summed up in four key propositions:

1) The basic dynamic in capitalist society is the class struggle between the working class and the capitalist class. The Communist Manifesto:

   Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses this distinctive feature: It has simplified the class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other — bourgeoisie and proletariat. 16

2) The working class is an "immense majority." The Communist Manifesto:

   All previous historical movements were movements of minorities. The proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interests of the immense majority. 17

3) Because of its exploited and dehumanized position in relation to the means of production, the working class is compelled to become a revolutionary class. Marx and Engels:

   Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class. 18

   When socialist writers ascribe this world-historic role to the proletariat, it is not at all...because they regard the proletariat as gods. Rather the contrary...It cannot emancipate itself without abolishing all the inhuman conditions of life of society today which we summed up in its own situation. Not in vain does it go through the stern school of labor. It is not a question of what this or that proletarian, or even the whole proletariat, at the moment regards as its aim...It is a question of what the proletariat is, and what, in accordance with this being, it will historically be compelled to do. 19

4) The industrial proletariat is the core of the revolutionary working class because the factory system is training it in science, technology, cooperation, and unity. First Engels, then Marx:

   Finally, it may be observed that it is the factory workers...who form the solid core of the working-class movement...As one branch of handicrafts after another is transformed by the factory system, so more and more workers flock into the various working-class movements. 20

   Hand in hand with this centralization, or this expropriation of many capitalists by few, develop, on an ever-extending scale, the cooperative form of the labor-process, the conscious technical application of science, the systematic cultivation of the soil, the transformation of the instruments of labor into instruments of labor usable only in common, the economizing of all means of production by their use as the means of production of combined, socialized labor, the entanglement of all peoples in the net of the
world-market, and with this, the international character of the capitalist regime. Along with the
constant dimming number of the magnates of capital...grows the mass of misery, oppression,
slavery, degradation, exploitation; but with this too grows the revolt of the working-class, a class always
increasing in numbers, and disciplined, united, organised by the very mechanism of the process of
capitalist production itself.  

History has not developed the way Marx and the syndicalists thought it would.
First of all, the capitalism has not simplified the social question, into a two class struggle. Second, the industrial
working class is not the immense majority, but a minority and decreasing in social weight. On one side is the
growing "underclass" of the permanently unemployed, surviving off the dole and often petty criminal pursuits, as well
as the growing "servant class" of highly casualized workers in personal services and sub-contractor sweatshops. On the
other side is a smaller but growing, highly educated, securely employed, and well-paid strata of technical and
professional but still waged workers. All may be exploited in Marxist terms, but they view each other as quite
different status groups, not class contraries.
Moreover, as capitalist development has proceeded, stratification has congealed around a wide array of non-class
identities, creating a myriad of racial, sexual, occupational, educational, bureaucratic, regional, and international
hierarchies. To theoretically impose from the outside of this reality an objective class commonality based on a relation
to productive forces does not mean subjective class consciousness will automatically follow. To the contrary, for the
last 40 years, it has been the transcendent issues that have mobilized people — the so-called "new social movements" —
around peace, the environment, feminism, gay liberation, racial equality, ethnic autonomy, community control, and a
whole array of cultural movements that reject the alienated structure of need and the compensatory consumption that
have grown with the commodification of social relations. Popular struggles against spiritual impoverishment, much
more than class struggle around material exploitation, have been the radical movements since the New Left mobilized
initially around civil rights, anti-colonialism, anti-bureaucratism, and banning the bomb in the 1950s. The "immense
majority" today are the many alienated and oppressed sects of society, not a single class defined by its relationship to
the means of production. Economist "class struggle" is too one-sided and parochial to express the universalization of
the struggle against multiple forms of hierarchy and irrationality. The democratic struggles of "The People" better
expresses this generalization of the struggle against myriad forms of domination than the two class struggle of wage
labor and capital. The community is the potential public sphere where this broad array of oppositional forces can
generalize their particular struggles around a common program of radical democratization. Struggles at the point of
production are limited to that sphere and are easily isolated there. Even a general strike can pit workers not only against
capitalists, but against many segments of the popular strata that are conformed by the strike and perceive it at the
action of a "special interest," not on behalf of the general interest.
Third, the class struggle no doubt continues under capitalism, but it has become a struggle over how to best
manage it and distribute its product, not over its right to exist. To continue impute unique revolutionary dynamics to it
after instilling the last 25 years is to be blind to the evolution of revolutionary syndicalism into collective bargaining
and revolutionary socialism into emancipatory social democracy — in short, into the day-to-day administration of
capitalism.
Fourth, far from being a school for revolutionary socialism, the factory has been a school for docility. If one
examines the history of workers uprisings, one usually finds a "working class" that was now to the factory system, in
transmission from the farm or artisanship. Whether one examines the European uprisings of 1848, the Paris Commune of
1871, the Russian revolutions of 1905 and 1917, the workers' council movements throughout Europe after World War
I, the Spanish Revolution of 1936-37, or Polish Solidarity in the 1980s, one finds that the activists came from a much
wider array of life situations than industrial worker and that the industrial workers were generally in recent transition to
those occupations. Moreover, the children of the radical industrial workers were socialized into and tended to adapt to
the factory system with its military-like chain of command and obedience. The hierarchical working class came to regard
the hierarchical discipline of the factory more as the inevitable nature of things, not a burden to be resisted; it's
hierarchy of occupational grades more as a career and status ladder to climb than a prop to knock out from under the
bosses. The factory "disciplined, organized, united" workers into capitalism, not into opposition to it.
Marx hoped that workers struggling for their own interests would raise a general interest that would ultimately
dissolve class and national divisions into a classless society. Looking back today it is fair to conclude that when
workers have struggled around their own economic interests, they have usually sought merely a better deal from
capitalism, not a classless society.
In any case, the industrial structure that Marx saw emerging and analyzed with often remarkable prescience is
passing. With automation, the fate of the industrial worker is that of the farmer. Factories, like farms, will remain,
but automated machinery and robots will replace most of the human labor. Indeed, we are in the midst of a
technological revolution based on microelectronics and biotechnology that will be as profound in its social implications as
the agricultural and industrial revolutions. It will be "post-industrial" in terms of what most ordinary people do for a
living, but super-industrialized in terms of the degree of mechanized production.
Along with this technological revolution is a restructuring of the social paths through which wealth and income circulate. In fact, just as the factory system was introduced by capitalists to mobilize and discipline labor before most of the technology of smokestack industries was developed, so, too, capitalist restructuring today is driving the technological revolution. Heightened international competition is undermining the "social contract" between labor and capital that yielded the "middle class" blue collar worker with union protection, secure employment, and relatively decent benefits between the 1950s and the 1970s in the U.S. In order to compete, global corporations are employing new technologies of instant global communication and automation to pit U.S. workers against cheap labor abroad and against robots at home. The "Fordist" circuit of accumulation, based on mass production for mass consumption, is giving way before a new regime of accumulation based on luxurious "overconsumption" by privileged upper strata with subsistence or less for an underclass which, when employed, works as low-wage temps producing goods and surviving the well-to-do. The barrel shaped income distribution, with the securely employed blue collar worker in the solid middle income brackets, is giving way to an hour-glass shaped structure of income stratification. On one side is a shrinking strata of securely employed, highly skilled, often unionized skilled workers and technicians. On the other side is a growing mass of unemployed, poorly paid, rarely unionized, and generally marginalized workers in the services and in the "global factory" of dispersed networks of interchangeable, highly-automated, modular industrial units. These production units usually require only a limited workforce, often hired on a part-time, short-term basis, much like migrant farm workers.

In short, we are witnessing the decomposition of class structure of industrial society. Millions of people are in transition, with no stable position in the system of social stratification. Millions are becoming expendable, their labor no longer needed, with growing criminality and social unrest from below and brutality and repression from above. An increasingly repressive, militarized, state-guided capitalism is emerging to keep "order."

A popular struggle for grassroots democracy, not a class struggle around material interests, is the weak link of this emerging structure of militarized state capitalism. The victims of this restructuring are becoming deaf to traditional worker-oriented class appeals of the old left as they would be to the old agrarian appeals of the nineteenth century populist movement of farmers and sharecroppers. But "The People," the revolutionary subject of the classical democratic revolutions of the eighteenth century, could return if populist alliances in post-Fordist cities can be developed between the middle strata concerned with the quality of life and the marginalized concerned with simple access to the means to life. Economically and technologically displaced persons are receptive to the material issues raised by this restructuring — economic insecurity, the scapegoating of minorities, poisoning by toxics, the "poverty draft" of the poor for foreign wars. But the more economically secure middle strata are just as receptive to the cultural and moral sides of these same issues — meaningless work, the absence of community, the general degradation of the natural and urban environments, the mean spirit of militarism. Democracy is the programmatic link between these two populations, which combined make up the "immense majority."

Libertarian municipalism as a program of popular empowerment thus potentially broadens the social base of a revolutionary movement. It calls for community assemblies as the social form through which "The People" can find their voice and power. Community assemblies provide a forum in which all the issues can be addressed and integrated into a common program that addresses alienation as well as exploitation and poverty; the desire for community as well as oppression and hierarchy based on race, gender, age, and occupation; humanly-scaled ecological technologies as well as cleaning up toxics; peace and international cooperation as well as the poverty draft.

Through neighborhood assemblies, neighborhood mandates of municipal council representatives, and neighborhood power to revoke council decisions and recall their representatives, both the material concerns of the marginalized and the quality of life concerns of the middle strata could begin to be addressed. Divided, the capitalists run the cities by playing the middle and the marginalized off against each other. United, the middle and the marginalized could use municipal institutions to begin to remake their cities to meet the concerns of both groups. By linking up with other cities, municipal confederations could resist the centralized power of national states and global corporations and ultimately replace them with new forms of grassroots political and economic democracy.

What gives grassroots democracy its radical thrust is that real democracy is the last thing modern state capitalism wants. It short-circuits the military, state, and corporate managers' need for centralized control and repression to maintain stability and "order." Quantitative economic demands can be granted for a time to demobilize and pacify those who demand them. They can be used to play each sectional interest off against the others (as witness the Republicans from Nixon's "Southern Strategy" to Bush's constant quota-baiting). But the qualitative, structural demands around democratic self-government in order to restore environmental quality and create meaningful work and community are "wedge issues," to borrow from the Republican's strategic lexicon, with the difference being, however, that these "wedge issues" isolate the elites from the people, instead of driving a wedge between different popular sectors. Capitalism's dynamic of limitless growth stand directly at odds with the goal of an ecological society in balance with nature. Democratic control of economic development directly challenges capital's prerogatives and profit-oriented dynamic. The desire for meaning in work and everyday life bring the irrationality and atomization created by market society into question. These are issues better suited to broad popular struggles organized in communities than to narrow economic struggles organized on the job.
Power

For Marx and Engels, the schooling in scientific technology, social cooperation, and class consciousness that the factory system provided for industrial workers was to be used in an independent workers’ party aiming for state power. Whether by election or insurrection, it was only a matter of time before the numerically increasing working class would come to power. But, as we have noted above, occupational hierarchies among waged working people have mitigated against coalescing around a common class program.

Where strong labor parties have been consolidated and taken state power (Sweden, France, Germany, the U.K., among others) they have streamlined and administered capitalism, not replaced it. Party elites may have been elected into office, not into real power. They have been no match for the extra-electoral powers at the disposal of the ruling elites — capital mobility, entrenched bureaucracy, corporate media, military repression. Recognizing that the parliamentary road is self-defeating and that only a majoritarian movement based on direct action to carry through the program of social reconstruction has the power to overthrow the ruling elites, worker-oriented revolutionaries have focused on direct action at the point of production, building toward the revolutionary general strike.

With the turn of the century wave of general strikes, especially the formation of workers’ councils (soviets) in the 1905 Russian uprising, the mass strike became a key strategic perspective for more radical Marxists like Rosa Luxemburg and later the council communists. Even earlier, anarchosyndicalists had put the general strike at the heart of their strategy. Not only was the capitalist system making industrial workers radical, they believed, it was also positioning them in the key positions in the economic structure to resist and eventually overthrow capitalism. As Rudolf Rocker explained:

...in Spain the widespread strike movement among the workers and peasants after the Fascist revolt in July, 1936, developed in a “social general strike” (sociala generala) and led to armed resistance, and with this to the abolition of the capitalist economic order and the reorganization of the economic life by the workers themselves.

The great importance of the general strike lies in this: At one blow it brings the whole economic system to a standstill and shakes it to its foundations. Moreover, such an action is in no wise dependent on the practical preparedness of all the workers, as all the citizens of a country have never participated in a political overturn. That the organized workers in the most important industries quit work is enough to cripple the entire economic mechanism, which cannot function without the daily provision of coal, electric power, and raw materials of every sort.

For the workers the general strike takes the place of the barricades of the political uprising. It is for them a logical outcome of the industrial system whose victims they are today, and at the same time it offers them their strongest weapon in their struggle for liberation.  

A traditional problem for radical labor organizing has always been the fact that the higher strata of the working class — the more skilled, better paid, and more securely employed — have been easier to organize. This problem is only exacerbated today with the new industrial structure that has emerged with capitalist restructuring over the last twenty years. Industrial unions, or federations of workers’ councils organized by industry, made some sense in the older “Fordist” industrial structure based on a locally-integrated factory with a large and stable workforce. But the heightened mobility of capital in the new industrial structure has weakened workers power at the point of production. It is very easy for capital to instantaneously switch production to another plant halfway around the world in order to undermine militant workers.

On the other hand, relative to the national state, local government finds itself with heightened responsibility, and hence leverage, for the conditions of production that attract investment. Not only tax breaks and pollution abatements, but schools, public services, and the general quality of the local environment are increasingly the factors corporations weigh when locating new plants and offices. This gives community-based movements some leverage over the direction of economic development, and potentially more leverage when a network of community movements emerges that can counter capital’s attempts to play one community off against another.  

After 150 years in which worker-oriented theories have dominated the Left it is easy to forget that most of the high-points of revolutionary upheaval in the last millennium have been communal peasant movements and urban municipal movements. From the free cities and the leagues of confederations they formed for periods from the 10th century on, through the many peasant uprisings seeking communal autonomy from oppressive landlords, the American and French Revolutions with their town meetings and neighborhood assemblies, and even such high points of “proletarian socialism” as the Paris Commune of 1871 and the Spanish Revolution of 1936-37, it has been multi-class, popular movements aimed at local self-government in opposition to the centralized state that have shaken the foundations of hierarchical society, both feudal and capitalist. Indeed, in the larger historical perspective, it is the workers movement that is the “new social movement” — and probably a transitory one corresponding to the rise and fall of the factory system. The transclass democratic movements are the older and more abiding forms of popular struggle. It is not the working class inciting as capitalism develops, but the municipality still surviving despite
the massive growth of the state that is the potential time-bomb that could explode and shake state capitalism beyond recognition.

With its potential for direct democracy and confederal forms of coordination that stand in stark opposition to statist forms, the municipality and municipal confederations create a local framework through which millions of people can act directly to replace market society and the bureaucratic state with free, egalitarian, and cooperative social forms. By broadening the social forces that can be mobilized, a libertarian municipal approach can sustain and institutionalize much more popular power against the state and capital than can a workers’ control approach limited to the workplace.

Transitional Strategy

A transitional strategy seeks to raise demands and develop forms of action and organization which progressively build the conditions in which popular revolutionary action becomes possible.

First, it should raise demands that mobilize people around their immediate concerns, but in ways in which the course of struggling for them, educate people as to the nature of the system and the need for fundamental change. The demands and the struggle for them should serve as a bridge between present consciousness and revolutionary consciousness.

Second, the demands if won should not improve capitalism, but impinge upon its logic by creating new centers of democratic counterpower which prefigure the society we want to create. As the Preamble of the Industrial Workers of the World put it, we need forms of organization and action which begin to create “the structure of the new society within the shell of the old.”

Third, the demands and forms of action and organization should aim at shaking the system, provoking a crisis, and opening the door to fundamental social transformation.

Anarcho-syndicalism and council communism viewed the struggle between wage labor and capital at the point of production as meeting these requirements for a transitional strategy. Rudolf Rocker:

By direct action the Anarchist-Syndicalists mean every method of immediate warfare by the workers against their economic and political oppressors...

In its simplest form it is for the workers an indispensible means of raising their standard of living or defending their strained advantages against the concerted measures of the employers. But the strike is for the workers not only a means for the defence of immediate economic interests, it is also a continuous schooling for their powers of resistance, showing them every day that every last right has to be won by unceasing struggle against the existing system.

Just as are the economic fighting organizations of the workers, so also are the daily wage-struggles a result of the capitalist economic order, and consequently, a vital necessity for the workers. Without these they would be submerged in the abyss of poverty. Certainly the social problem cannot be solved by wage-struggles alone, but they are the best educative instruments for making the workers acquainted with the real essence of the social problem, training them for the struggle for liberation from economic and social slavery...

Here we come to the general cultural significance of the labor struggle. The economic alliance of the producers not only affords them a weapon for the enforcement of better living conditions, it becomes for them a practical school, a university of experience, from which they draw instruction and enlightenment in richest measure. The practical experiences and occurrences of the everyday struggles of the workers find an intellectual precipitate in their organizations, deepen their understanding, and broaden their intellectual outlook.26

From what has been said so far, it should be clear that strategies focused on struggles at the point of production have isolated workers from the rest of the community. Hierarchy in the workplace has been much like the military, an experience of socialization into obedience, not a school for rebellion. Contrary to the expectations of Rocker and other worker-oriented radicals, the labor movement has not been a self-developing struggle, building upon itself in an escalating series of demands, winning more workers’ counterpower that serves as a platform for still further demands until the workers can take on the system itself. Instead, labor has become a competing interest group in capitalist society, bargaining for a better position within the system, not fighting for an alternative to it.

Recognizing these facts is not to say that workplace struggles should be ignored or disregarded. Workplace hierarchy, wages, benefits, hours, health and safety — all are important issues. But they need to be linked organically to community struggles. Workplace groups should be part of broader community organizations that take workplace issues out of their particularistic context and generalize them. In this context, workplace struggles can develop way beyond a narrow struggle for labor to get its “fair share” within capitalism and raise basic questions about the system: Why work when contemporary technology is so productive? Do we need bosses or can we do it ourselves democratically? How can we restructure tasks and choose technology so that working develops us as creative and responsible human beings, rather than uses us as cogs in the megamachine? How can we produce more of what we want locally for local use?
So rather than an economic struggle separated organizationally from a political struggle, the economic struggle should be an arm of a community-based struggle for participatory democracy. The community-based strategy would bring the different social actions in communities together and bring the struggles against their various different political actors to the common good of creating community assemblies of all citizens and confederations of local assemblies.

With the new industrial structure we face today, a convergence of community and labor organizing makes more sense, with the community rather than an industry being the basic unit of labor organizing. Community-based unions make more sense when most of the workforce is moving from job to job in small workplaces around the community. The old Wobbly idea of One Big Union, where workers transferring from one job to another were automatically enrolled in the IWOC union at the new workplace, should be revived, but adapted to fit the needs of communities. The community-based unions are the units of confederation. Community-based unions as components of broader community movements create the right kind of network for raising "transitional demands" relating to work — open the books and other corporate information, "green bans" where workers refuse to work on environmentally destructive projects as has been done by Australian construction workers, health and safety demands on the job linked to anti-toxics demands in the community, workplace democracy, control over workplaces and types of work, and so forth. They provide a natural community-based context for solidarizing and harmonizing workers' interests and shared community concerns and struggles.

As community struggles grow, as a combination of direct action and local electoral campaigns leads to a restructuring of municipal government around community assemblies, it becomes important to begin developing a municipalized economic sector through public financing and eminent domain that can prefigure the cooperative commonwealth and begin to act as a countervailing power in the corporate and state sector. Building the struggle this way creates an immediate context in which everyday people from all walks of life — not only party elites, not only workers — can act directly to democratize the economy and society generally. As liberated areas under community control link up and begin to develop a parallel power structure that can challenge the supremacy of the state and capital, this grassroots counterpower would face efforts by the national state and global corporations to crush the new powers exercised by the grassroots democracy.

At this crisis point, tax strikes against the state, expropriation of capital, and an overall appeal to the people to withdraw every form of support from the old centralized structures and throw it to the new grassroots democracies would be the order of the day. Much would depend on whether the rank-and-file of the armed forces sided with the people or their chain of command, a condition which a community-oriented strategy can address much better than a worker-oriented strategy. But there would also be a role for workers' councils forming in the workplaces at this crisis point. They would be indispensable for expropriating corporate and state property and bringing it under the administration of the grassroots democracy. Despite their declining relative numbers, there are still today in the U.S. some 30 million industrial workers (19 million in manufacturing, 6 million in construction and mining, 5 million in transport, communications, and utilities), down only slightly in absolute numbers from the 1979 peak. This is roughly 25-30% of the workforce and 10-15% of the population. Workers' control is thus not irrelevant, but neither is it the leading edge of a revolutionary strategy. Rather, it is an aspect of the broader strategy of community control, an aspect that grows out of the community struggle and is not likely to emerge until the community movement is well-developed.

To build to that point — to progressively create the conditions in which popular revolutionary action can finally overthrow state capitalism — the core of the mounting struggle has to be oriented toward the community, toward building the new political counterinstitutions based on community assemblies and confederal networks among them that can eventually appropriate the economy and establish the cooperative commonwealth.

Notes
5. "Negotiated coordination" is the term used by Pat Devlin, Democracy and Economic Planning: The Political Economy of a Self-governing Society (Boulder: Westview Press, 1988), one of the most detailed attempts to work out a non-market, non-statist socialist economic model.
6. "Participatory planning" is the term used by Michael Albert and Robin Hahnel in their detailed model of a non-market, non-statist socialist economy. See by Albert and Hahnel, Socialism Today and Tomorrow (Boston: South End Press, 1981); "Participatory Planning," in Steve Shalom (ed), Socialist Vision (Boston: South End Press, 1983); Looking Forward;


9. Cole, Devine, and Albert/Halilu do give the community through its political institutions the final say on economic planning when their relative weights among the workers and consumers federeations. In each case, these political institutions are participatory, based on assembly forms and mandated and recallable representation. Cole calls these institutions communal as opposed to social, Albert/Halilu sometimes do and sometimes do not make clear that these forms are distinct from social forms, while Devine simply regards them as more democratic forms of the state. But what still distinguishes these models from community-oriented models is that the economy still institutionalized as a separate set of institutions. The community, through its political institutions, is merely a court of last resort for economic disputes.


14. It is precisely because the guild socialism of Cole and the democratic planning models of Devine and Albert/Halilu do not envision the eventual dissolution of the enterprise with its separate workplaces into the life of the community that they remain a form of money and exchange value based on labor time in order to link workplaces by exchange that is national and international in scale. As long as ownership remains social, workplaces remain internally democratic, and prices remain socially planned by a democratic process of negotiation, exploitation, and private accumulation are theoretically precluded. Yet as long as workplaces confront each other and consumption units as functionally differentiated interests, there is the real possibility that these units will seek advantage over each other, reintroducing competition, and leading eventually to reversion back to capitalism with competitive markets and private accumulation.


17. The Communist Manifesto, p. 22.

18. The Communist Manifesto, p. 3.


22. Anarchosyndicalism, pp. 121-123.


28. For discussions of this kind of scenario in modern industrial countries, see Murray Bookchin, 'The Forms of Freedom' and 'The May-June Events in France - 2' in Post-Scarcity Anarchism.
(The article below is reprinted by permission from the DeLeonist Society Bulletin, Nov/Dec 1991 (P.O. Box 944, Station F, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4Y 2N9). It was written in response to Sam Brandon’s letter in DB49. Sam Brandon’s reply to this article is on page 16 of this issue.)

SOCIALISM "This year, next year, now, or never?" BY ALAN SANDERSON

First, before answering Brandon’s comments on The De Leonist Society’s "Change of position," a word or two about his charge against former SLP National Secretary Arnold Petersen. This Petersen-bashing (in which the revisionist SLP, also, did not hesitate to indulge) recalls the earlier De Leon-bashing wherein De Leon was repeatedly accused of bossism! Brandon, once an SLP member himself, should know better; should know that under the SLP constitution not the National Secretary but the National Executive Committee was assigned the duty of expelling any Section it found guilty of disloyalty. As for Hass, here again Brandon is completely off the mark. He wants facts. The record is replete with facts that cannot be denied, facts directly and indirectly related to the party’s position on Imperialism and National Liberation. Facts proving that by 1966 Hass had become infected with the virus of revisionism and fully deserves the censure administered upon him by the National Executive Committee of that year. Need it be added that precisely contrary to Brandon’s assertion, the so-called "flood of resignations from the party in support of Hass," far from being "disastrous," unquestionably rid the party of at least some of the revisionism that was either latent or active within its ranks thus helping it survive as a bona fide revolutionary party until the end of the Petersen era.

A final word under this head. Brandon charges that (Nathan) Karp "aided and abetted Petersen in his [alleged] destruction of the S.L.P." Here again is a most serious charge, a charge that unaccompanied with specifics should not have been made. We have illustrated the falsity of Brandon’s charge against Petersen and would add that if Karp helped marshal evidence of Hass’s compromise (a task in which he undoubtedly did assist) then he, too, at this time, undoubtedly helped keep revisionism at bay. In short, the record indicates that although Hass succumbed to the lure of revisionism in the 60s, Karp did not evince a like weakness until the end of the Petersen era. At the same time it is abundantly clear from the record that Petersen stood firm and unwavering against compromise, upholding the De Leonist revolutionary spirit to the end of his tenure.

Now as regards "defending workers’ immediate interests," "reforms," and "WHY OUR CHANGE OF POSITION?"—all three categories being intimately connected in the subject under debate.

As to Reform: Apparently Brandon still thinks we are sidestepping his charge that we call workers’ defense of wage levels and working conditions reforms. Not so. Our November 1990 article called organization for this purpose "reformist," as opposed to revolutionary, in character. The term "reformist," here did not point to reforms per se but to the workers’ continuing conservative habit of thought—a mindset that rejects the revolutionary spirit and continues to pin its hopes on amelioration (instead of abolition) of wage servitude.

Brandon next asks: "What changes have taken place that would cancel
the defense by workers, organized in S.I.U.s [of] their wage levels or working conditions?" The changes have been so extensive and dramatic that in our reference to them (our May Bulletin) we stated: "Jhn, look at the changes that have taken place!--changes such as we could only touch on in our reviews of De Leon's two addresses, 'The Burning Question of Trades Unionism' and 'Socialist Reconstruction of Society' (the said Reviews having been included in the literature ad of our November 1990 issue). For example:

"A second aspect of 'The Burning Question of Trades Unionism' to become dated concerns its position on 'immediate demands,' namely, that although the bona fide trades union (Socialist Industrial Union) has for its supreme mission the socialist reconstruction of society, that mission is ultimate; that accordingly, while keeping its eye on the goal the union has an immediate mission to put 'a brake on the decline of wages' and otherwise 'break the force of the onslaught of the capitalist.' That was in 1904. However, conditions today are so radically altered that in North America at least there appears little or no remaining possibility of successful resistance to capitalist encroachments. For one thing, the unionized segment of the working class is no longer divided between bona fide socialist unions and 'limbs of capitalism' officered by 'labor lieutenants of capital,' but is now wholly in the hands of the latter. For another, the state has erected a virtually impregnable legal barrier against certification as bargaining agent of an 'undesirable' labor organization. Even more to the point, in contrast to the beginning of the century, capitalism is now so far advanced in decay (has indeed already encroached so disastrously upon all aspects of the life of the nation) that it is difficult to see how class conscious unions could be appreciably more effective today than their conservative counterparts in shielding their members from the blows of the decadent system." ("The Burning Question of Trades Unionism--A Review")

"As regards the mission of unionism, therefore, the I.W.W. was split into two camps--one emphasizing unionism's mission to 'organize and drill the working class' for Socialism, the other emphasizing industrialism for resistance to capitalist encroachment. This within one organization! Even so, it was by no means evident at the time that the two were incompatible; indeed, even De Leon seemed hopeful at first that with an input of socialist education an industrial union founded upon a mix of 'immediate demands' and 'ultimate goal' would be capable of serving the former without inhibiting the latter...But that was in 1905, before the I.W.W. had proved hostile to socialist 'drilling'...The relevance of the foregoing to De Leon's address is now clear: that is, that while it may be 'idle speculation' whether political unity is brought about by industrial unity, or the latter by the former, it is not speculation (idle or otherwise) that neither can arise in a climate of 'immediate demands.'" ("Socialist Reconstruction of Society--A Review")

We repeat that moribund Capitalism has not merely rendered meaningless resistance to capitalist encroachment a fruitless exercise but has spread a pall of life-threatening situations over the whole of society, hence that the season for the "supreme mission" of unionism (a mission destined to END the class struggle!) is no longer "ultimate" but NOW!
Dear Comrades,

Alan Sanderson continues to shadow box around my charges. He does not reply to my charge that during the period of 55 years by Arnold Petersen as National Secretary of the S.L.P. the membership declined from 5000 when he took office to 500 members when he retired. I pointed out that on the basis of 5000 members in 1914 the S.L.P. should have had 15,000 members in 1969. I contended that his expulsion of Sections, Language Federations and individual members he had destroyed the fighting S.L.P. of DeLeon. He accuses me of Petersen basing his say, RAPPLY TO MY CHARGES! what caused the tremendous decline of the S.L.P. membership if not the continuous chain of expulsions? Read the reports of Petersen each year to the N.E.C. and every four years to the National Conventions. The bulk of these reports were recitals of internal disruptions! Sanderson says the National Society did not expel these members, it was the N.E.C. That is technically true but there is more than meets the eye. Before Petersen recommends the expulsions to the N.E.C. he has set up his victims with reasons of correspondence in which he manages to get them to insult him. Examine the records. Not once in 55 years has the N.E.C. failed to respond to Petersen's demand for expulsion! In the S.L.P. the N.E.C. has been a rubber stamp for Arnold Petersen. I was a member of Section Bronx, the largest Section in the party, consisting of 63 members. Petersen instructed the Section to prefer charges against two of its members. The Grievance Committee found them not guilty and the Section overwhelmingly endorsed its findings. Despite this Petersen had the Section expelled even though the Section was supposed to have jurisdiction over its own members. I was State Secy. of N.Y. but I and dozens of DeLeonists were lost to the party.

Sanderson and the DeLeonist Society seem to idolize Petersen. Yet he is the one who wrote "Socialist Russia, "Promise or Menace". When Stalin executed Bukharin, Radek, Zinoviev etc. this is what he wrote in this pamphlet. "Recognizing the fact that traitors will appear in any case (however great and noble-and, the greater and "noble", sometimes the greater the traitors!) The S.L.P. is not unduly impressed with the fact, deplorable as that fact is, some of the most prominent men in Russia having turned traitors. In our own party we have had similar experiences, yet the S.L.P. has had no qualms in dealing properly and effectively with traitors and disrupters, no matter whether they hold the lowest or the highest posts in the party. And in our ability to maintain discipline, and dispense S.L.P. Justice, with complete Party, i.e. rank and file democracy and publicity we have found proof of our strength, our 'Indestructibility'. And so with Soviet Russia... and when the battle lines are finally formed, Soviet Russia (if she and her leaders remain true to Marxist principles) will be found on the side of the S.L.P. and its principles, while the middleheads, sentimentalists, traitors and renegades will line up with the capitalist reaction, where, in fact, they are already to be found. And a Foster, a Browder, or their successors in the dock will present no cre titer sign than did the Bukharins, Aykovs, Radeks, Zinovievs, et al. Soon'tt'll be 'The last call to battle- close the ranks in place!' Accordingly, not censure and condemnation, but understanding interpretation in the light of Marxism, have been the aim of the S.L.P. with respect to the "Russian Trials."
Was Soviet Russia a menace? According to Petersen it was a menace! The S.L.P. never repudiated this pamphlet. No action was taken against Petersen! The membership dared not dispute the Dictator! Judging from what he wrote he would like to have executed instead of expelling members of the S.L.P.

As National Secy for 55 years Petersen acted and spoke like a Dictator or Boss. In his Supplement Report of 94 pages to the 1968 National Convention he speaks of "The Heto Problem" in the National Headquarters. "One of the reasons for the failure to solve this agonizing problem is the fact of our being a Socialist organization with all that this implies to generally prejudiced workers. This meant for one thing, we cannot go to unions to supply the needed help.... it is obvious that the party could not meet the demands, rules and regulations of the pro-capitalist unions except at a ruinous cost-pensions, fringe benefits, featherbedding and what not." These are the words of the National Secretary of a Socialist organization! To me they seem exactly like those uttered by an out and out Capitalist! The worker is prejudiced, he featherbeds, he wants pensions, fringe benefits and what not! Petersen needed a mailing clerk. An S.L.P. sympathizer named Ed Leader journeyed across the continent and took the job. Petersen writes "It soon became clear he was not suited for the job and was given notice with two weeks extra pay.... A recent member V. Prockelo...was hired. At first he made a good impression and seemed willing but it soon developed he was highly emotional and quite immature." Petersen says that because of his physical frailness he was transferred to the Business office. "At first seemingly compliant, Prockelo soon manifested a steady and rapid deterioration in his work as well as his attitude, at one time threatening to quit. Things grew worse..... no noticeable improvement..... one evening he stepped in the office dropped his keys on the desk .........walked out.....was not heard from again. Petersen hired a compositor. The new compositor proved to be irresponsible. "Repeatedly he showed up late or failed to show up...he was never at a loss for excuses; he had an accident; he had to go to court...."

After two months he quit. It seems that Petersen had as much trouble with his help as he had with the S.L.P. membership.

I said that Petersen and Karp caused the resignation of Eric Hass who edited the Weekly People for 50 years and who was the S.L.P. candidate for President four times. On April 12, 1969 he resigned from the S.L.P. and a flood of resignations from the party in support of Hass followed. Hass gave his reasons for resigning. I have referred above to Petersen's supplement to the N.E.C. report to the 1968 Convention. It shows how Petersen is nit picking in order to undermine Hass. Hass had delivered a talk at an S.L.P. picnic at Singac, N.J. Petersen and the Sub-Committee wanted to know what Hass meant when he used the word "preconception" several times in his talk. What did he mean by "we cannot shoehorn history into some preconceived pattern". What did he mean when he said "history has shown a tendency to be "untidy" and we must capitalize on the plusses in history as it unfolds. ....to whom were you referring when you stated that it is unrealistic to condemn Negro violence without considering the circumstances under which the Negroes have been forced to live? These are the questions that a shyster lawyer would raise. They were intended to provoke Hass. Hass replied at length answering fully each question. However Petersen had to have
the last word and weakly replied at length thus ending the matter. Hass then notified the National Secretary that we would not accept renomination as Editor of the Weekly People when his term expired. On April 17, 1969 he resigned from the party. Thirty years as Editor, four times the S.L.P. Presidential candidate, A National Organizer, the S.L.P.'s television and radio spokesman. And now Sanderson tells us that Hass was infected with the virus of Revisionism!

Sanderson is the revisionist. He admits his position is different from DeLeon but claims that conditions have changed! No change in conditions has altered DeLeon's statement that "The attitude of workingmen engaged in a bona fide strike is an inspiring one. It is an earnest that slavery will not prevail. The slave alone who will not rise against his master, who will weekly bend his back to the lash and turn his cheek to him - that slave alone is hopeless. But the slave who...persists, despite failure and poverty, in rebelling, there is always hope for....... I bank my hope wholly and build entirely upon this sentiment of rebellion with you." Sanderson originally criticized the S.L.P. statement "accordingly, the S.L.P. holds that the mission of unionism must be to organize all workers, as a class, along industrial lines, to not only defend worker's immediate interest in protecting wage levels and working conditions, but when sufficiently organized, to assume control of the means of production, dispossess the capitalist class of its ownership of them, and to form the basis for a new socialist government and social system." Sanderson says and I quote "Our Nov. 1990 article called organization for this purpose "reformist" as opposed to revolutionary in character." No matter how Sanderson wiggles he cannot squirm out of this statement! He is taking an anti DeLeon position. He is the revisionist! He admits my three quotations from DeLeon's writings are correct! But he cries, conditions have changed! He fails to cite one condition that would alter DeLeon's stand. Sanderson admits the DeLeonist Society has changed its position! THEY SHOULD NOW CHANGE THEIR NAME!

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Fraternally submitted.

Frank Girard
for the DB Committee
"Our Political Sector"
by A Boeing Machinist

Discussions about whether Marx or Bakunin were more fair-minded in 1872 are of zero relevance to practical revolutionary work in "our political sector" today. Disputes over participation in elections or unions or certain kinds of reform movements are secondary issues, mere tactics. Those of us who claim that these are primary, defenders of political sector, are still living in 1905 or 1917 when one tactic or other did indeed create a line of ideological demarcation. Today, it makes more sense to take the attitude, when relating to others in "our political sector", of "You try this tactic, I'll try that, and we'll sort out the results later".

It makes good sense, though, to be aware of the historical roots of the various components of "our political sector". For example, I think that Marxists here might tend to know a lot that's not true about the various brands of anarchism. As an ex-Leninist trying to come to grips with the reality of a world in which both the state and the market system of capitalism have been exposed as incompatible with freedom, I admit that I don't really have an accurate idea of anarchism pinned down. I have no idea how much of my speculations about it are true.

To paraphrase something Frank Girard once wrote, DeLeonists assume that all anarcho-syndicalists, like the IWW, advocate the abolition of capitalism and the state and the rest of DeLeon's STU program. If Frank's right, then any self-proclaimed anarcho-syndicalist is in "our political sector". Me, I'm not so sure.

I don't think any real, true-black anarchists would claim to be in favor of states. Bakunists (a.k.a. collectivist anarchists) have historically been in favor of the market, however. Freedom (84h Whitechapel High St, London E1 7QX) recently published John Griffin's 'A Structured Anarchism, in which you can read, page 36: "Because collectivist anarchism, like Capitalism, uses the self-regulating tendencies of the market, and therefore most closely relates to the psychological condition of the mass of the populace, it has the best chance of gaining mass acceptance."

Sure, pal, I said to myself on reading that, and capitalism is even more closely related to the psychological condition of the mass of the population. Why not just go with the flow? Tinker with it a bit to refine it, if you like, though. That'll keep your moral sensibilities in check.

Then I rubbed some brain cells together and drew the tentative conclusion that the reason that Griffin's collectivist anarchism sounds like capitalist reformism is that it is capitalist reformism, and not particularly far, on paper, from certain types of state-capitalism-with-a-human-face. Titolism, perhaps, or the Liberman reforms. Maybe Dubcek or Nagy could live with this. Collectivist anarchism has capitalist bookkeeping, free speech, a work-or-starve aspect, scientific expert advisors with a real say over hunting or energy production—yeah, that sounds like a go, Boris baby. Let's do lunch.

It's dressed up nicely, in the most uncompromisingly anticapitalist rhetoric available, but then, so is Leninism. It's attracted generations of no-kidding revolutionary workers, too. But then, so has Leninism.

Anarcho-syndicalism is something rather different. But is it in "our political sector"? I'm not convinced that it automatically is or isn't.

The anarcho-syndicalist documents at my disposal (Rocker's Anarchosyndicalism (Phoenix Press), Maximoff's program, the IWA and Rebel Workers Group platforms) seem unwilling to take sides on the question of whether revolutionaries should utilize the market system post-revolution. It's the kind of thing that makes the born hair-splitter go apoplectic.

I don't think that anarchists have quite the same stake in ideological rigor as do Marxists, though anarchist documents can be quite rigorous. Nor
do anarchists pay as much attention to ideological lineage as do Marxists and pseudo-Marxists. I sense that there’s less exegesis going on in any C. P. Maximoff’s Program of Anarchico-Syndicalism (Monty Miller Press) than in any comparable piece by Lenin or Robert Bells or your garden variety Maoist.

Instead, he quotes Bakunin or Kropotkin indiscriminately. Not to establish an orthodox Bakunist or Kropotkinist line, or to establish the theoretical unity of these two thinkers, but to merely buttress his own position. “Eclecticism” the Marxist or pseudo-Marxist cries in horror.

And, more to the present point, you could, if you like, say that it renders anarcho-syndicalism neither fish nor fowl, neither in “our political sector” nor out of it. It bows to anarcho-communism (clearly something in “our political sector”) as the most up-to-date form of anarchism, yet seems captivated by the immediate program of setting up people’s banks to issue people’s money, etc.

What to do about that? Take a closer look at it, I’d suggest. Prove my half-baked speculation wrong. Or find some facts that support it, and get some dialogue going with anarcho-syndicalist organizations about the aspect of their work that has reflected its aim from the obvious target. Help keep anarcho-syndicalism a solid part of “our political sector”.

Hells bells, what is “our political sector” anyway? “Libertarian socialism” has been suggested. But it seems a little weak as a term. To me, it’s best defined by reference to what revolutionary dead ends have been exposed over this century. It’s non-market, non-state, non-vanguardist socialism. Market socialism, state socialism, and socialism under the leadership of our heroic vanguard party and great helmsman are lies. Their only meaning is as propaganda slogans for ugly new forms of capitalist privatization, capitalist dictatorship, and capitalist misery. Piss on ‘em all, I say.

Anyone who agrees with that is in the political sector I’m in.

Dear Comrades,

Certainly Proudhon was in favour of the retention of the Market. Bakunin wished to abolish money altogether—one of the things for which he was attacked by Marx—and it is hard to see how it can be argued that Bakunists favour the market (though perhaps “Bakunists” are not necessarily Bakunians, just as “Trotskyites” aren’t Trotskyites.)

As “More Modern Marxists” knows that Freeden published John Griffin, (a) he ought also to know that there has been considerable criticism of Griffin in the pages of Freedom. (It was an attempt to produce a more realistic version of anarchism, (by no means the first such), & like many such can be regarded as reformist; but it can hardly be argued that Griffin speaks for all Bakunians.

“Being” (if I may be pardoned the familiarity of using his/her first name) then jumps to comparing Bakunin with Lenin. (She might there have more of a case, Fan-

nubok) published a critique attributing Lenin’s elitist faults to Bakunin’s influence, as did “Samad.” (Alfred on the other hand appealed to Lenin to break with Marxism & find his true allies among Bakunians.) & several anarchists—notably Malatesta—disassociated themselves from the Bakunian tradition because of this element in his work.

I suppose “Being”’s case can be argued from Makhno or Zapata, where in both cases the revolution was made in limited areas for a limited period & was engaged throughout in war with the old order; but while these would seem to be valid criticisms to be made of both movements, that one would seem to be really underhanded.

Anarchocommunist was a misnomer & it is not possible to draw an hard & fast
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 have ideas for 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 sector but unconsciously carrying the leninist virus of "dictatorship of the partyism." Readers will note the absence of the following journals from the current list because we have reason to believe they have ceased publication: Angry Workers' Bulletin, Anarchist Labor Bulletin, Alarm, Class Struggle Bulletin, Collide-o-Scopes, and Socialist View. At the same time we have added several periodicals to the list. We count on readers to let us know if there are any mistakes.


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MARCISM AND ANARCHISM

INTRODUCTION

Recently we received a letter from a comrade from an Anarchist background who wrote asking the opinion of "Council Communists" on a number of issues. Among these were the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, Centralisation, the reactionary positions taken by Marx and Engels and the whole Marxist/Anarchist divide, Materialism and Dialectics. What follows is an edited form of the reply we sent, which we are printing here because the issues involved are important and will be of interest to our readers in general.

The first point to make is that though we regard the Council Communist movement as one of a number of positive trends from which we draw inspiration, we have never described ourselves with that term. There is no term that we'd all agree "pinpoint" us politically. Perhaps "Libertarian Communist", or even better, "Ultra-Leftist" since we reserve the term "Left" to mean only the left wing of Capitalism.

Where your questions ask about "Council Communists" we will answer for "Subversion".

DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT

On the "Dictatorship of the Proletariat", this is a term usually misunderstood, and we prefer to explain our positions using straightforward language as much as possible, so let's say we support it if it is understood to mean the collective exercise of power by the new, developing communist society against the remnants of the overthrown class until these latter have become history. We certainly do not accept any structures or any power over the citizens of the new society (note that we have not said "Working Class" because this class ceases to exist the instant it seizes power since it is then no longer an exploited class of producers who have nothing but their labour power, but a group of people who collectively own the means of production, and who are not even a class, for they then have no class relationship, i.e. production relationship, with anyone else. They are the classless society in its embryonic stage).

CENTRALISATION

On the question of "Centralisation", this is a term which can mean two distinct things. It can mean everything is run by the whole society acting as a collective decision making unit, as opposed to one group of people having exclusive control over their own patch of land, and another group over another. It can also mean power being exercised by a minority of people in the "centre", whether "elected" or "delegated" or not. This latter we oppose. The first, however, seems the ideal way for a Communist society to organize, since if control over a part of the resources of the world resides in the hands of some people & not others, then this is a form of private property, which we adamantly oppose. We do not believe that people have more right to "own" the resources of their head of the woods than the rest of Humanity. The "natural" association of people with their geo-
On the question of the "Leftist" (i.e. radical capitalist) positions taken by Marx & Engels - support for Social Democracy, Parliament, Nationalism etc - we have differences of opinion, or at least nuance, within Subversion, but the majority of the group certainly rejects these things.

Indeed, we consider ourselves "Marxist" in the sense that we support Marx's method of analysis. We support Historical Materialism and Marx's economic analysis of Capitalism, and while we are very sparing with a term so misused as "dialectic", we nonetheless feel that this understanding of class struggle (and reality in general) as a dynamic process really does mark us out from many other people (including some styling themselves "Marxists").

However, this doesn't mean we accept the political practice of either Marx or the "Marxist Movement" or regard the latter as a "glorious tradition" whose torch we hold aloft.

In fact, we regard the notion of Marxist and Anarchist traditions as only holding back revolutionaries today who hold on to either of them - an important element in the development of revolutionary ideas is the rejection of past ideas in the light of the experience of history, and the 19th Century split between Anarchism & Marxism has little bearing on the class line between revolution and reaction today, as revolutionaries today need to reject more than they accept of BOTH traditions.
AS WE SEE IT

1. Throughout the world the vast majority of people have no control whatsoever over the decisions that most deeply and directly affect their lives. They sell their labor power while others who own or control the means of production accumulate wealth, make the laws and use the whole machinery of the State to perpetuate and reinforce their privileged positions.

2. During the past century the living standards of working people have improved. But neither these improved living standards, nor the nationalization of the means of production, nor the coming to power of parties claiming to represent the working class have basically altered the status of the worker as worker. Nor have they given the bulk of mankind much freedom outside of production. East and West, capitalism remains an inhuman type of society where the vast majority are bossed at work and manipulated in consumption and leisure. Propaganda and policemen, prisons and schools, traditional values and traditional morality all serve to reinforce the power of the few and to convince or coerce the many into acceptance of a brutal, degrading and irrational system. The "Communist" world was never communist and the "Free" world has never been free.

3. The trade unions and the traditional parties of the left started in business to change all this. But they have come to terms with the existing patterns of exploitation. In fact they are now essential if
exploiting society is to continue working smoothly. The unions act as middlemen in the labor market. The political parties use the struggles and aspirations of the working class for their own ends. The degeneration of working class organizations, itself the result of the failure of the revolutionary movement, has been a major factor in creating working class apathy, which in turn has led to the further degeneration of both parties and unions.

4. The trade unions and political parties cannot be reformed, "captured," or converted into instruments of working class emancipation. We don't call however for the proclamation of new unions, which in the conditions of today would suffer a similar fate to the old ones. Nor do we call for militants to tear up their union cards. Our aims are simply that the workers themselves should decide on the objectives of their struggles and that the control and organization of these struggles should remain firmly in their own hands. The forms which this self-activity of the working class may take will vary considerable from country to country and from industry to industry. Its basic content will not.

5. Socialism is not just the common ownership and control of the means of production and distribution. It means equality, real freedom, reciprocal recognition and a radical transformation in all human relations. It is "man's positive self-consciousness." It is people's understanding of their environment and of themselves, their domination over their work and over such social instincts as they may need to create. These are not secondary aspects, which will automatically follow the expropriation of the old ruling class. On the contrary they are essential parts of the whole process of social transformation, for without them no genuine social transformation will have taken place.
6. A socialist society can therefore only be built from below. Decisions concerning production and work will be taken by workers' councils composed of elected and revocable delegates. Decisions in other areas will be taken on the basis of the widest possible discussion and consultation among the people as a whole. The democratization of society down to its very roots is what we mean by "workers' power."

7. *Meaningful action* for revolutionaries, is whatever increases the confidence, the autonomy, the initiative, the participation, the solidarity, the equalitarian tendencies and the self-activity of the masses and whatever assists in their demystification. *Sterile and harmful action* is whatever reinforces the passivity of the masses, their apathy, their cynicism, their differentiation through hierarchy, their alienation, their reliance on others to do things for them and the degree to which they can therefore be manipulated by others—even by those allegedly acting on their behalf.

8. No ruling class in history has ever relinquished its power without a struggle and our present rulers are unlikely to be an exception. Power will only be taken from them through the conscious, autonomous action of the vast majority of the people themselves. The building of socialism will require mass understanding and mass participation. By their rigid hierarchical structure, by their ideas and by their activities, both social-democratic and bolshevik types of organizations discourage this kind of understanding and prevent this kind of participation. The idea that socialism can somehow be achieved by an elite party (however "revolutionary") acting "on behalf of" the working class is both absurd and reactionary.
9. We do not accept the view that by itself the working class can only achieve a trade union consciousness. On the contrary we believe that its conditions of life and its experiences in production constantly drive the working class to adopt priorities and values and to find methods of organization which challenge the established social order and established pattern of thought. These responses are implicitly socialist. On the other hand, the working class is fragmented, dispossessed of the means of communication, and its various sections are at different levels of awareness and consciousness. The task of the revolutionary organization is to help those in different areas to exchange experiences and link up with one another.

10. We do not see ourselves as yet another leadership, but merely as an instrument of working class action. The function of a Solidarity organization is to help all those who are in conflict with the present authoritarian social structure, both in industry and in society at large, to generalize their experience, to make a total critique of their condition and of its causes, and to develop the mass revolutionary consciousness necessary if society is to be totally transformed.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS
KAMUNIST KRANTI

Dear Friends.

We plan to hold a discussion at Faridabad in March 1992. The topic is: "What are the fundamental problems facing the marxist communist movement today?"

Please send us a written text in English/Hindi on the discussion topic latest by 15. 2. 92. Definite invitations will be sent to those whose texts are received.

Looking forward to a positive response,
Sher Singh
for Kamunist Kranti

Address: MAJDOOR LIBRARY
AUTOPIIN JHUGGI
FARIDABAD - 121001, INDIA

* * *

IU 620 (EDUCATIONAL WORKERS INDUSTRIAL UNION, IWW)

According to the IWW's numbering system, workers in the education industry organize under 620. At its most recent convention the IWW voted $1000 for a major organizing effort in the education industry. DB readers who fall into this category—which besides teachers, includes school bus drivers, custodians, cafeteria workers and anyone else involved in education—and would like a copy of their journal, IU 620 News & Comments, and organizing fliers should write to: IU 620 IWW, 1005 Market St. #204, San Francisco, CA 94103.

* * *

ANARCHIST DEMOCRATIC UNION

Anarchist Democratic Union (ADU) was found in April 1990. Now it includes some organisations in five cities of the USSR: St. -Petersburg, Archangelsk, Petrosavodsk, Orsha, Borisoglebsk.

Information publishing agency ADU "AN-PRESS" publishes the newspaper "Free Agreement" ("Svobodny Dogovor"), some of the theoretical booklets "Anarchy", the review of anarchist movement in the USSR "Bulletin AN-PRESS".

ADU - is a collective member of the Konfederation of Anarchists Syndicalists (KAS).

The fundamental items of our programm are the understanding of the necessity for the democratic stage in the development of our country as the transition period to the non-state society, decentralisation and self-government of all
aspects of the social life, the refusal from violence as a method of the achievement of the political aims.

Considering the importance of the coordination of all the organisations within the anarchist movement, we are looking for the coordination with all of its trends. We invite you to contact us.

Our addresses in St.-Petersburg:
199048, USSR, St.-Petersburg
V.O., 9 линия, д. 78, кв. 13
Гескин Павел (Geskin Pavel)
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пр. Пархоменко, д. 33, кв. 76
Майшев Александр (Maishev Alexander)
Petersburg ADU’s secretary

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WILDCAT: BM Cat., London WC1N 3XX, U.K. or PO Box 3305, Oakland CA 94603, USA: quarterly; 32-page slick magazine format; four-issue sub LS or $15

As the introduction above states, we ordinarily review periodicals in rotation alphabetically, but when a periodical contains material that should come to the attention of BB readers before several months pass as we work our way through the alphabet. We are making an exception of WILDCAT #15, Autumn 1991 because it contains two articles that we believe will interest BB readers: “The Hunt for Red October: Ten Days That Didn’t Overthrow Capitalism” and “Remember Kronstadt.” Both articles contain information I don’t recall having read before. The former begins by analyzing the critiques of the Russian Revolution by various revolutionary tendencies and then presents its own view of the Russian Revolution and of revolution in general, one that will shock many readers. The two articles are meant to be read as one and are documented as such. There is a good chance that BB will publish the six pages of “The Hunt...”, when space permits, but readers who don’t want to wait should send $1.50 to the British address or $3 to the American. I shouldn’t end this without informing readers of the ICC reaction to the articles in the December 1991 issue of World Revolution (BN Box 868, London WCIN 3XX, England). In “Councilists Help Capitalism Rubbish Russian Revolution,” WR accuses WILDCAT of becoming a part of world capitalism’s effort to wrap the revolution in the same package as the collapsing Soviet system.

WORLD SOCIALIST REVIEW, PO Box 405, Boston, MA 02272; quarterly but apparently less frequent, Number 8 being the Summer 1988 issue, Number 7 - Winter 1981; 20 6 1/2 by 11 pages; subs: 4 issues $4. WSR is the current publication of the World Socialist Party, the companion party in the U.S. of the Socialist Party of Great Britain. The contents of Number 6 include “Self-Management and State Capitalism,” which describes Polish Solidarity’s earlier advocacy of a plan to involve

Cont’d on p. 30
An Introduction doubtless
an excellent one but nevertheless only an introduction.
The Socialist Labour Party 1876-1991, A short History, by Frank Girard & Ben Perry
- (106 pages) - Livra Books.

Though it is amazing how much the authors manage to cram into what is in fact little more than a pamphlet, (without index & appendices, 115 years of socialist history in 80 pages,) inevitably this only whets the appetite. At the beginning the history refers to the split between Marxists & Anarchists within the International but though it explains the distinction between Marxists & Lassalians, it has no room to the Marx/anarchist distinction; not even when it goes on to mention people leaving the Marxists to join the anarchists; which, given De Leon's theories & his polemics with the latter is an unfortunate lack.

De Leon's political development, (to put it no higher than the differing positions held in the well-known four pamphlets which the SLP still reproduces, let alone the previous movement through Henry George, Bellamy, Greenbacker,) is touch-ed on but there is no room to underpin, the very radical shifts in thinking, from an authoritarian & bureaucratic reformism to a libertarian - albeit blueprinted - revolutionism.

Lack of space means that we are told that De Leon & James Connolly felt out because of the latter's catholicism, without any explanation of the fact that De Leon had not previously seen this as unacceptable, & suddenly did so find it only when in 1904. Connolly came out against the belief that strikes were useless because of capitalist control of the economy. Nor is it mentioned that this division was arising, at that time, in many other marxist parties, that it had been earlier debated during Marx's lifetime & that though De Leon's position was different, in several respects, from Lassalle's "Iron Law" Connolly was able to cite Marx's own arguments. Rightly or wrongly Connolly claimed that De Leon had asked him to come to the States, because of his industrial organizing abilities; (certainly De Leon had welcomed his arrival;) had De Leon developed a new theory, & was the breach because Connolly didn't go along with it? or was the breach about SLP internal power politics, & did the new theory evolve as a rationalisation?

The history of the IWY-SLP split is obscured by the polemics on both sides; a lot of dishonest arguments are advanced, & so it is fair enough that the authors skate over it briefly; but nevertheless they shouldn't have fallen into the SLP error of describing all the Webbiles as anarcho-syndicalist; only a small minority were. Again there is no space to mention that not all SLP members joined the Detroit IWY, a faction remained within the Chicago body, reconciling regard for De Leon's socialist theories with the belief that the Chicago IWY was the principal vehicle of workers' industrial struggle: the fact that they were not expelled from the SLP is significant; one could hardly believe that Petersen would have permitted such deviation. On this latter, the authors write of the theoretical accommodation to Stalin's internation, & to authoritarian internal organization, but do not permit themselves the luxury of considering how far the two were linked.*

The authors touch on other potentially fascinating points, on which they have no time to elaborate. SLP relations with the KAPD, a short-lived Industrial Socialist League. I hadn't known of the 1945-47 revolt in the SLP, & in amazement that Haas was able to survive in the party for twenty years after taking part in this, would love to know how. Again most events since Petersen died are new to me, & I am sorry that there is no room to describe these more fully. *

* Perhaps these matter more to me than to most readers; like the authors I combine great respect & admiration for De Leon as a thinker (on most issues) with a belief that he was totally wrong in his portrayal of contemporary anarchist

*
I believe that the logic of De Leon's arguments leads to a form of anarchism; I believe De Leon has a vastly important contribution to make to anarchist thinking; a contribution which unfortunately was not made because of a pointless quarrel; a polemic that still alienates two variants of libertarian socialism. I had hoped, when I heard that this book was to be written, that it would explain why this unnecessary conflict occurred. I can understand that this interest is a minority one, which the authors had no room to satisfy, but I am still disappointed.

--Laurens Otter

To the editors:

I read with interest your review of The Socialist Labor Party 1876-1971 by Frank Girard and myself. I have a couple of comments: The SLP (founded in 1876, not 1878) does not really have "a detailed blueprint for future society..." It is true that they publish a chart showing how industrial representation would function, but it is very sketchy, designed to illustrate rather than specify. It is unfair to imply that they claim to foresee all the details in their projected future organization of society. As to labor vouchers versus free access, the SLP is less dogmatic than generally described and has apparently modified its position somewhat. In a recent issue of their paper they concede the possibility that labor vouchers would never be necessary.

I feel the phrase "SLP's undemocratic structure" can be misread.
The National Secretary and the NEC don't actually have constitutional power to expel members. Aside from members-at-large, a member can be expelled only by his local organization ("section"). (The extra-constitutional expulsion of Frank Lloyd by a National Convention is the single known exception to this rule.) This fact explains why so many sections have been expelled over the years; they refused to expel a member who had fallen from grace with the National Secretary and so were themselves expelled.

While over-centralized in the view of many, the party's constitutional structure is not so much a problem as the compliant membership which has tolerated an authoritarian leadership. In short, it has in this regard reproduced some of the ills of class society. The SLP has not been alone with this problem, of course, as an examination of innumerable left (and right and center) organizations will attest. My knowledge of the SPGB is limited, but if you have not had this problem I would be interested in knowing how you explain this.

Sincerely,

Ben Perry

Cont'd from p. 27

workers in the management of their own exploitation. The opponents of the plan (The CP government of the time) argued that the plan was modeled after the failed efforts of the Yugoslavs to accomplish the same end and was "anarcho-syndicalist." The most interesting part of the article to this reader was an insert in which the writer points out that in Spain during the Civil War the anarcho-syndicalist CNT did not attempt to set up the sort of market system Solidarity was pushing but rather a free access economy. Number 6 also contains an interesting dialog between a WSP member of Twin Oaks, the commune in Virginia, and other members of the commune. Number 7, published after the collapse of capitalism's eastern branch, is devoted largely to articles discussing the cause of the failure of the soviet system.

AGAINST SLEEP AND NIGHTMARE, PO Box 3305, Oakland CA 94609: published annually, 3 1/2 by 11, 28 pages; suba: one issue $1.50, four $6. Number 3, the current issue, undated, begins, "I write this magazine to improve my life. It remains a one-person project." The author admits to being influenced by Situationism, and most of the articles—all written by him—are strongly flavored with Situationist ideas, language, and graphics. This issue contains: "Some Fragmented Views of a Fragmented World," "What Is To Be Done," "Casey’s Brain," "The Geopolitics of Collapse," and others.


Numbers 10 and 11-12 consist of short news summaries from the French press organized by date and under such topics as "Extreme Right," "Nuclear," "Corsica," etc.

ANARCHY; C.A.L., PO Box 1446, Columbia, MO 65201; quarterly: 44-page tabloid; $2.50 per copy, $9 for a six-issue sub. Anarchy, subtitled "A Journal of Desire Armed." advocates "...a Society based on Mutual
Aid, Voluntary Cooperation and the Liberation of Desire." The current issue, #31 Winter 1982, is a special on "Women, Gender & Anarchy" with such articles as "Beyond Feminism," "The Women’s Movement and the Reaction Against It," "Anarchism and Gender," and "Mujeres Libres and the Spanish Revolution." Also in this issue is "Winnie Mandela, Queerbashing, and the Left," a discussion of homophobia that exists among some elements of the South African liberation movement and also the silence about the situation in leftwing periodicals in the U.S.

"Uncommon Ground: Fear and Hierarchy in Boulder" criticizes the authoritarian side of the national conference of SEAC (Student Environmental Action Coalition): "Everyone at the conference wore either a green or yellow SEAC shirt. As you could easily guess, the green who could answer no question without repeated or by the yellows, who could be seen running around, walkie talkie in hand, barking out orders to the greens...." Anarchy is currently serializing Raoul Vaneigem’s situationist text, The Revolution of Everyday Life. Anarchy #29 was devoted to Situationism pro and con with essays by Leo Chernev, John Zerzan, Bob Black, etc.

Any Time Now, Affinity Place, Argenta, B.C. Canada V0G 1B0; quarterly; 42 pages 5 1/2 by 8 1/2 inches; no subscription price given. Articles in Vol. II No. 2 include "Non-Violence and Peaceful Living" and "Socialized Capital and Revolution." The former is a discussion of the principles of anarchist-pacifism. In the latter Larry Gambone questions the likelihood of revolution in "a society which has achieved a high level of socialization," by which he means most advanced industrial societies. By "socialization" the author means the process of the past hundred years in which "...capital has been losing its private aspect, becoming subject, more and more to the will of the population." We have also seen the vast growth of mutual aid and cooperative societies. We have seen the conversion of the working class from a penniless borde living at bare subsistence to having some capital of its own. All this is intimately linked to with the process of democratization, for it is in the societies with some level of democracy where this socialization has reached its highest point. The article concludes with the hope that by understanding this evolutionary process we can "...speed the development toward our ultimate goal - the universal human community."

BLACK EYE, 339 Lafayette St. #2, New York, NY 10012, issued irregularly (our last issue is #10 Winter 90/91); 44 pages, 5 1/2 by 8 1/2; $1.50 per copy, four-issue sub $6. BE is a sort of theoretical journal for the anarchist movement. The principal article in #8 (Winter 1990) is "The Group" by Jonathon Leake, which describes what has become the primary organizational form among anarchists, modeled after the "groupuscules" that played an important part in the May 1968 Paris General Strike. Leake describes "affinity groups," the term currently in use here, as having six to twenty members who meet to discuss, produce publications or engage in "actions" of various kinds. "Instead of a movement of personalities and 'the masses,' giving and taking orders through a top-down pyramid scheme, the Groupuscules were a Direct Democratic environment, where the small-scale, core-integrity and link-up with other groups allowed group members to both make decisions and carry them out--no separation of powers, no delegation of 'representative' authority." In this and other issues can be found

BRICK, PO Box 1153, Russellville, AL 35653; issued irregularly; 8 pages 5 1/2 by 8 1/2; no price. Brick comments on events of interest to anarchists in Alabama, reviews current anarchist publications, and reprints short articles and announcements, especially those dealing with the anarchist movement in Eastern Europe.

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LEFT BANK DISTRIBUTION - FALL 1991 CATALOG

This is easily the super giant of all catalogs of radical publications: 55 pages, 8 1/2 by 11. "Left Bank Books is a collectively owned & operated project, now in its 18th year, which serves as an umbrella organization for a number of independent projects..." The descriptive title listings in this catalog run to about 43 pages. In addition it is cross indexed according to author and subject. I counted 675 items in the catalog proper and another 111 in the Winter 1991-92 supplement. Although the list includes periodicals — in fact, just about every anarchist periodical in existence in the English language, the number of books and pamphlets is still incredibly large. Nor are they entirely anarchist publications. Marx is represented by three titles and Engels by one. In addition there are books and pamphlets by John Reacher, Pannekoek, Kollontai, Gramsci, C.L.R. James, Gorter, and W.Z. Foster.

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