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BULLETIN MATTERS

This issue contains a marked increase in articles written especially for the DB and of letters and articles that relate to the interests and concerns of revolutionary, libertarian socialists.
The first article and the leaflets and documents that follow it may offend some of our readers who take the view that in these less than revolutionary times the most important thing for revolutionaries is to maintain themselves as a coherent group by isolating themselves from the subversive influence of reformers and infidels. The material here suggests that on a local level, in small cities at least, revolutionaries can and should join broader groups and work with the unsaved while still holding revolutionary principles. The leaflet on workers' centers is an example of the sort of project we can become involved in without being accused of backsliding.

Larry Gambone's first article will come as a surprise to those whose approach to Marx's writings has always been that of a fundamentalist.

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**ABOUT THE DISCUSSION BULLETIN**

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

In the DB the often antagonistic groups that make up this sector can debate and discuss the issues that divide them, gain some understanding of their history and future possibilities and begin a process, we hope, of at least limited cooperation.

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

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Sample Copies: A sample copy is sent on request. We mail copies not used to fill subscriptions to people on our extended mailing list.
This article is being written with due apologies for the title to
Chernyshevsky, Lenin, and all revolutionaries in history who saw the
futility of the activity they were engaged in and hoped to figure out
something more likely to advance the cause. Nothing new is being
proposed here, nor do I suggest it as a the answer to the problem
everywhere. But at this particular place and time--Grand Rapids
Michigan in 1984--the limited objectives of trying to organize a
broadbased anti-capitalist group has had some success.

The Present Situation: Political and Economic

This comes to you in September 1984 when the official unemployment
rate in Western Michigan has fallen below 5 percent. The "Help
Wanted" ads in the Grand Rapids Press Sunday edition of August 15 fill
15 pages, although perhaps half of that is temp company advertising
and much of the rest is for experienced tool and die makers,
production engineers, and other experienced technicians. Missing from
the daily paper, though, is any evidence of economic or social well-
being for working people. The additional percent or two of workers
that succeeded in meeting federal requirements for being counted among
the employed--part timers and temps--did not meet the human
requirement of economic security that under capitalism only a well
paid permanent job can confer.

The signs of capitalism's deterioration are both obvious and
frightening. The standard of living of our class is in decline and
has been for nearly 25 years. By the most estimates it has decreased
by over 20 percent. Nationwide, unemployment and underemployment are
growing. Those of us who came into the labor force between 1945 and
1975 and had only to visit a couple of factory employment offices to
get a full time permanent job have only to look at the different
conditions that face the new generation of job seekers. The effects
of poverty are being reflected in increased crime, especially violent
crime among young people. Along with this goes the "criminal justice"
industry that has arisen to repress crime and will certainly be used
to repress the people. I won't get into the effects of capitalism's
new world order, the slaughter in Bosnia, Rwanda, the Gulf War, etc.

But at the same time that we see capitalism deteriorating worldwide,
the revolutionary movement in the U.S. has shrunken to a tiny remnant of
what was tragically small in its best days. Of those groups that call
themselves political parties (the SLP, WSP, NUP, IUP) the largest has
fewer than a hundred active members. Those that do not call
themselves parties like the IWW and the WSA--revolutionary unions--
may be doing better; but they are oriented toward labor organization,
which in the face of capitalist resistance to--and working class
suspicion of--unions would seem to be a tactic that guarantees defeat.
Another segment of the revolutionary movement is the "left Leninists," a
remnant that includes the Dunayevskaya-ists and Internationalism,
the ICC branch in the U.S., as well as a splinter from that group called
International Perspective. Both have really tiny memberships. Then
there are the anarcho-socialist tendencies of various stripes, which
when they have any organization, are grouped as collectives around a
journal: Love & Rage, Fifth Estate, Free Society, Anarchy, The Blat,
and the like. Another category, the Bookchinist eco-anarchosocialists, have organized as an educational group.
The outcome of the "cold war" with the downfall of Leninist state capitalism in Russia and Eastern Europe and the triumph of corporate capitalism has had a profound effect on radical politics in the U.S. The Leninist denominations that rejected the leadership of the Soviet ruling class at some point during the past seventy-five years—like the PLP, RCP, and SWP—which we might expect to be recruiting like blazes on college campuses, are going nowhere. The CP has lost its less Soviet-oriented peace and justice members and retains only the seven million dollars and the Stalinists.

And important elements of the DSA and the Committees of Correspondence (the Gorbachovites thrown out of the CP by Gus Hall & Co.) as well as the academic radicals—most of them ex-USSR and Cuba apologists—have pretty much accepted the most important and defining of capitalism's primary characteristics, the market. They call themselves market socialists, disgracing the latter term and promoting the former.

Organizing in the 1990s

As for our political sector, it's no accident that the most successful are those that make the least ideological demands on potential recruits like the IWW, which seeks to organize on the basis of people's employment. Despite the IWW's problems of union organization—and I think they are insurmountable at the present time—with a few hundred members, it is probably the largest group in our political sector. It is also probably the least ideologically homogenous.

Organizing in Grand Rapids

First an historical note: The picture of Grand Rapids, Michigan, and I suppose hundreds of other small cities, as uniformly conservative is simply false. GR had a section of the First International in 1875, a Section of the Workingmen's Party in 1877, a Section of both the SLP and the IWPA at the time of Haymarket in 1886, and SLP, SP, and CP locals at various times ever since. Most recently there has been an SLP group here since the early sixties, which organized as a section with eleven members in 1975. By 1982 the section lapsed, the membership having almost melted away by loss of interest and expulsions.

Those of us who had been expelled continued holding meetings and agitating as the GR Discussion Group. We made two earlier attempts to organize more broadly, but these failed after a few months. Then in January 1981 we decided to try again and sent out invitations for a meeting to people on our contact list—nearly 250. About twenty-five people responded either by attending the meeting or by writing to the group. At the meeting we agreed that the basis for membership in this new group would be the belief that capitalism was the basic cause of social problems. As a result membership includes besides DeLeonists, and people who regard themselves as anarchists, Trotskyists, and social democrats as well as gut-level anti-capitalists. We named the group the Society for Economic Equality (SEE) and decided to make membership easy and cheap to obtain and also to relinquish. Anyone can become a member of SEE who pays a dollar dues and agrees with our principles. A person can drop out easily by not renewing his/her membership every six months in January and July. Members are free to
belong to other groups and to sell their literature and advocate their programs.

What Has SEE Accomplished?

SEE has brought to life a community of radicals, revolutionary socialists, and leftists. We can meet and discuss issues that interest us. At present we have a weekly study group that ranges from eight to ten. We also sponsor a weekly informal meeting in a local coffeehouse at which attendance varies widely. Our monthly public meetings of which we had eight last season— including two debates featuring Steve Coleman of the Socialist Party (of Great Britain)— have attracted audiences ranging up to seventy. Most of our meetings have involved a video on some social problem and a panel that includes a member of SEE who points out the economic cause and suggests the socialist solution.

Is This the Universal Answer to the Problem of Local Organizing?

SEE has grown in Grand Rapids, perhaps because the city is large enough to have developed a group of independent thinkers and too small for them (us) to sort ourselves into isolated political sects. Those conditions may not obtain except in cities like GR. I do think that this sort of ecumenical organization is worthwhile if local conditions make it possible. I know of one other group, the Action Network for Social Justice (8912 N. 38th St., Tampa. FL 33604), which is organized on a similar broad basis. One of their leaflets is published below.

I want to make clear one final point: This proposal deals only with local organizing. We can't get along without the national groups of World Socialists, Anarchists, De Leonists, and Syndicalists that publish the periodicals and the literature we all need.

As a sort of appendix to this article, readers will find the following selection of SEE documents and publications and the Tampa group's leaflet:

1. The invitation to the organizational meeting
2. The "Who We Are" flier
3. The SEE Bylaws
4. The "Why Are Working People Poor?" leaflet
5. The Tampa Group's leaflet

GRAND RAPIDS DISCUSSION GROUP
PO BOX 15647 GRAND RAPIDS MI 49501

Dear Friends,

Just as world capitalism seemed to be king of the mountain, having won the Gulf War and watched the Communist Party regimes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union collapse, it became clear that all is not well here at home. The problems of unemployment, underemployment, homelessness, poverty, and curtailment of health care and other services have shown that the U.S. ruling class is just as unwilling as the Soviets to maintain the living standards
of working people. In the past twenty years, the buying power of wages has dropped 20 percent.

The Grand Rapids Discussion Group believes that just as in the USSR and Eastern Europe there is a strong potential for resistance and rebellion among American working people. As a first step toward fostering this potential locally, the GRDG is sending out this invitation. It is going to people here in Western Michigan who we believe share both our view that the basic cause of the present crisis for working people and the poor is the capitalist system and that the solution is to get rid of the system.

The purpose of the meeting is to see whether those of us who attend have enough ideas in common so that we can cooperate in various projects to advance the cause of anti capitalism and an alternative society. To that end the Discussion Group proposes the meeting in room 215 in Grand Valley State University's Eberhard Center at the downtown campus, 101 W. Fulton. The date is this coming Saturday, February 8, at 10:00 a.m.

PROPOSED AGENDA

1. Brief greeting and comment by a member of the Discussion Group
2. Self introductions
3. Election of a facilitator
4. Adoption of the agenda and additions
5. Discussion of the following question: Can we organize as an action group and if so, on what basis should we organize?
6. Discussion: What should be the objectives of such an organization?
7. Discussion: What activities could we engage in that would advance the cause? Can we consider possible working groups?
8. Possible recess to organize working groups.
9. Reports of working groups and plans for future meetings.
10. Financial matters

Name/Address ____________________________

1. ___ I am unable to attend this meeting but please let me know about future meetings.

2. ___ I would like to contribute $____ to help cover the expenses of this and future meetings.

3. ___ Please send me a summary of what took place at this meeting.
4. ___ Please remove my name from your mailing list.

MAIL TO Grand Rapids Discussion Group, P.O. Box 1564, Grand Rapids, MI 49501.

SOCIETY FOR ECONOMIC EQUALITY (SEE)

BYLAWS

June 1984 Version

1.1 The name of this group shall be the Society for Economic Equality (SEE).

Purpose

2.1 The Society for Economic Equality (SEE) is a local, independent group convinced that it is both necessary and possible to build a new society based on cooperation to replace the present "free market" system. Our purpose is to inform people about both the defects of the capitalist system and the harm it causes and about the alternative: a cooperative commonwealth in which the means of producing and distributing goods and services will be owned by all the people in common and run democratically by them.

Membership

3.1 Membership in the Society for Economic Equality is open to anyone who 1) is in general agreement with the statement of purpose and the bylaws, 2) supports the group to the best of her or his ability, and 3) signs up as a member and pays six-month dues of $1. Membership must be renewed every six months in January and July.

Structure

4.1 The group's business is conducted through monthly General Meetings.

4.2 A quorum for conducting business shall consist of one-third of the quorum-countable members. Members shall be considered not countable for the quorum if the General Meeting permanently excuses them from attendance.

4.3 Order of Business for General Meetings

1. Call to order by a member after a quorum is present.
2. Selection of a facilitator by rotation
3. Discussion of and approval of the summary of the previous meeting
4. Membership report by the recording secretary
5. Financial report and approval of bills to be paid
6. Call for agenda items including reports of SEE activities
7. Correspondence
8. Business held over from the previous meeting
9. Informal general discussion
AN INTRODUCTION TO S.E.E.

THE SOCIETY FOR ECONOMIC EQUALITY

Who We Are

We are working class people. We are students. We are retirees. We have factory, office, and service jobs. And we are deeply concerned about the deteriorating quality of our own lives and the lives of others. We see unemployment, crime, and poverty on the increase. We see medical care, education, and family stability on the decline. And our concern is not only for ourselves but for billions of people worldwide.

What We Stand For

We believe that an unfair economic system creates the injustice and insecurity that most working people experience. The so-called "free market" system, for example, feeds social problems like crime, unemployment, poverty, and racism. The competition for the relatively small number of well-paid jobs fosters hostility and racism. This economic system causes a constant decline in living standards that undermines the stability of people's lives and communities. We believe that any lasting justice and security must involve the abolition of the market system and the political apparatus that supports it.

We realize that many problems like hunger and homelessness require immediate action, and we support efforts to alleviate the pain and suffering that capitalism causes. But we also realize that the persistence of human misery, violence, and divisiveness can not be ended by politicians and reformers, no matter
how good their intentions.

We believe that it is time for working people of all races and all income levels to proclaim a new Declaration of Independence—this time from an oppressive economic and political system. We want to see the people of the world build a new society, one where all people will share equally in producing things they need to live and share equally in consuming them, where the means of production are owned socially and where we will have an everyday economic democracy instead of the phony, rigged political system that now poses as democracy.

Although we recognize the difficulties that people face in making such changes, events—especially in Eastern Europe—over the past few years suggest that even the most complete ruling class control over social institutions and the media can not prevent people from rebelling and gaining their freedom.

What We Do

To promote such change, SEE sponsors discussion meetings, study groups, and public meetings where we present videos, debates, forums, and panel discussions. We write and distribute leaflets, and support working people’s job actions. We also cooperate with other local groups that are working to build a better world.

We hope you will get in touch with us so that we can send you information about such activities.
S.E.E. PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

Discussion Meetings

Beginning in the winter of 1982, even before we organized as SEE, our group held discussion meetings on social issues. The problem has always been finding a public place for such meetings and a time convenient for everyone. Over the past two years we have stabilized both time and place:

1. Some Tuesdays 7-8 p.m. at Socrates News Center, 1500 Wealthy, SE--corner of Ethel Ave. These meetings focus on a particular issue and participants are invited to bring clippings and other materials. The most recent meetings have concentrated on unemployment.

2. Every Friday 12:30-2:00 p.m.--also at Socrates News Center. These meetings are utterly informal and concentrate on whatever is on the participants’ minds.

Public Meetings

In January of last year we initiated a series of video/panel discussion forums held at the Eberhard Center at GVSU’s downtown campus. The six meetings we held last winter/spring were very successful.

Last September we showed the video of The Panama Deception, and in October we sponsored two debates featuring Dr. Steve Coleman, a socialist professor from London. We have decided to return to the video/panel discussion format for the first two meetings in January and February of 1994.

We also hold monthly business meetings and,
when the spirit moves us, picnics and
socials.

Joining SEE

If you too see the need for a new social
system based on economic democracy, we hope
you will consider becoming a member of SEE.
You can obtain a copy of our bylaws and other
information by writing to SEE or phoning the
number below.

For further information on SEE and its
activities, write to:

SEE
PO Box 1564
Grand Rapids, MI 49501

or phone Frank at 453-0305.
A treasurer shall be elected for a six-month term.

A recording secretary shall be elected for a six-month term to take notes at the general meeting and render a summary.

Amendment

These bylaws can be amended at any General Meeting by a motion, which will be voted on at the next General Meeting.

(From p. 2)

Christian to Holy Writ. This article spells out not just the historical limitations of a writer whose major work was written 150 years ago, but the textual evidence that Marx himself—as he is supposed to have said—was not a Marxist. Gambone’s second article is unusual among writers on the connection between Hegel and Marx in that it is understandable. Dunayevskaysists take note.

Internationalism’s article about the New Unionist position on the events in South Africa—"capitulation to bourgeois democracy" from their point of view—raises once more the question of how a revolution can come about. Jeff Miller’s letter, which he has also sent to Internationalism, defends the New Unionist and DeLeonism against the capitulation charge. Perhaps one of the questions at issue is the difference between "force" and "violence" as well as the role of spontaneous revolutionary organizations, whether socialist industrial unions or workers’ councils.

Alan Kerr’s letter refers to an earlier discussion in the DB regarding the Socialist party of Great Britain (dissident group) as well as a personal difference with the SPFGB regarding the role of the party and the state during an upswing in revolutionary sentiment among workers. Monroe Prussack writes on the importance of combating specific reformist illusions as well as the more general myth that government social programs are socialism.

Bruce Allen writes on the predicament facing the capitalist labor movement in Canada as the unwritten agreement between the capitalists and the union leaders comes apart in the wake of the internationalization of capital and the generally improved position of capital versus the working class in the past twenty years.

DB lifted the discussion of class from the IWW monthly the Industrial Worker. Bill Comiskey’s leaflet strikes me as an ideal tool in what I think is the first step in raising class consciousness: getting the point across to working people in a less school teacherish way that there are class divisions in society. This leaflet splices up the lesson with humor. The Grand Rapids SEE group is already using it.

The DB is indebted once again to Curtis Price for a set of brief reviews as well as a list of publications that should interest DB readers. As usual we end with some additional short reviews.

(To p. 19)
WHY ARE SO MANY WORKING PEOPLE POOR?

If you work for a living, you may have noticed that the people who work the hardest make the least money—or so it seems. And the jobs that have the least recognition and are most unpleasant are on the bottom when it comes to wages. The really big money goes to people who don’t do anything useful at all. These are the people who own big businesses and factories. They have stock in GM, Steelcase, McDonalds; they own Amway or are bigshots in the government.

It wouldn’t be so bad if all we working people had to do was support them and their expensive habits. We can do that easily enough. We’ve been doing it for a thousand years. The trouble is that they won’t let us support ourselves decently. They own or control everything. They won’t allow us to build houses and apartments even though
millions of us need decent housing. The same goes for food, clothes, and all the other things we and our families need desperately or would like to have. If they can’t sell such things at a profit, they won’t let us make them.

For a lot of us, things are really bad. If someone in the family gets sick, we don’t have money enough to take him or her to the doctor. If something goes wrong with the car, we can’t afford to fix it and still pay the rent. Nowadays it takes the earnings of both husband and wife to support a family. The loss of one job means that we can’t pay the rent, make the payments, and keep food on the table.

We know this little piece of paper isn’t telling you anything you didn’t know already. And reading it isn’t going to put money in your pocket. But at the same time, it doesn’t hurt to know that other people besides you know what is going on and resent the way poor people are treated. It’s bad enough if you have a job and are poor, but if you are unemployed or on welfare, the parasites that own and control this country treat you like dirt.

But there is something we can do. We can join with others to reach more people. Once the majority knows the cause of our misery is that a tiny minority owns and controls this country, we can all cooperate to change it. We can build a new America where working people can produce goods and services to satisfy the needs of everyone.

The working people who produced this leaflet are members of the Society for Economic Equality (SEE). To get in touch with us or to get a leaflet that tells more about us, drop a card or letter to SEE, P.O. Box 1564, Grand Rapids, MI 49501 or phone us at 453-0305.
WORKERS' CENTERS
A COMMUNITY PROJECT

We need a new approach to organizing a united force and developing consciousness of our mutual situation as workers if we are to combat the increasing attack on our living standards. Unions, whatever importance they may have and can play in workers' struggles for economic rights, have shrunken to 16% of the entire work force. They, together with the 84% of us who are not unionized have little chance to resist what is happening on the labor front without a change in the way we have been doing things. Workers facing cuts in wages and benefits, increasing demands and stress on the job, unemployment or only part time minimum wage jobs, feel completely helpless as well as isolated in the face of this onslaught. Yet these problems are common to all of us. The logical answer is to establish an organization to support all workers (employed and unemployed) along side of the unions, but outside of the workplace as such—a Workers' Center.

These Centers will be based in the community itself where the power elite has not yet taken away our constitutional right to free and peaceful assembly.

This concept of organizing community based Workers' Centers has become especially important in the last 15 years because employers using the authority of the legal system and justice department which they own lock, stock and barrel have smashed unions like the air traffic controllers (PATCO) and are now using all their muscle to dictate to those that are left.

The Caterpillar Company is one such example. Since 1992, the company has refused to seriously bargain on a contract with the UAW, while arrogantly flaunting its power by firing workers merely for displaying the union label on their lunch boxes and clothing. Management is clearly demonstrating that in spite of our so-called political democracy, the workplace is a dictatorship. Caterpillar thought it could intimidate the rest of the workers because of the high unemployment situation. However, as far as the rank and file were concerned, the question went beyond getting a decent contract, but to their rights as free Americans. They showed their anger about what was happening with 8 wildcat strikes before the present company-wide walkout.

TACTICS OF EMPLOYERS

The problem is that despite the competition between firms, when it comes to a question of workers' interests, the owners are united. They are prepared for any resistance on our part-while we workers have no such plans. The owners prepare for strikes by building up inventories, or shifting orders to their other plants outside of the strike area. They hire "management consulting firms," labor busting outfits, who carry on such strategies as studying worker's personnel records in order to get rid of potential leaders before an impending strike.

The owners use tactics to confuse and divide us. They call us "associates", not employees, and try to convince us that their company is ours, that we have the same interests and are all part of the team and not just a bunch of five dollar an hour wage slaves.

Aside from all the tactics and schemes, the owners are well organized. There are their many "think tanks" (American Enterprise Inst., Heritage Foundation) that produce policy for the government. On the local level they have organizations like the Chambers of Commerce where they can meet and share ideas with other employers on how to keep us under their control as well as how to influence everything else that goes on in our society.
In contrast, we have no such central meeting place where we can air our common grievances and work out strategies to combat the influence of the "prominent" employer citizens. In a teacher's strike or a nurses strike, for example, the media which is owned by the class-conscious employers, puts forth its standard lies. How was the last time the media blamed the school board for forcing the teachers to strike because of the board's refusal to negotiate. When was the last time the government fined a school board, as contrasted with their frequent fining of teachers' unions. Are workers always at fault for going on strike? It is a question we workers need to ask ourselves when we are urged by newspapers and TV to side with the employing class against the employees.

A WORKERS' CENTER

A Workers' Center is a place where we can gather to talk about our problems and share tactics for combating the anti-labor activities of employers. As a community organization, the center would have the advantage of drawing employees from both large and small businesses, unionized and non-union. It would include the unemployed, and retired, and the families. Its strength would lie in the varied backgrounds and wide experience of its members.

The Center would coordinate activities in supportive ways to aid those of us who are having difficulties with an employer. During a strike, for example, a workers' center could provide leaflets as to the issues involved, organize letter writing and phone calls to the media, assist in picketing, urge community groups to boycott the business, raise funds for the strikers and numerous other activities.

A Workers' Center would not be a substitute for a union. However, because it is organized outside the workplace, it can carry on many activities that the unions are prevented from by law. Employers would find it difficult to use legislation to hamper it as they have done with unions.

Finally, a Workers' Center would be a place where workers could discuss political and economic issues, and grow in an understanding of working class politics. As we broaden our perspective, and realize how our problems relate to those of workers in other communities, we will see the value of establishing some kind of interconnected national and/or international organization of such centers as perhaps, a first step toward gaining control over our lives.

We of the ANSJ are exploring the idea of organizing a Workers' Center in the Tampa Bay area.

ACTION NETWORK FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE
EMMETT CARTER
8912 N 39TH ST. TAMPA FL 34604
(813) 988-5645

I WOULD LIKE TO BE KEPT INFORMED AS TO THE UPCOMING MEETINGS ABOUT THE CENTER.

I CANNOT PARTICIPATE, BUT ENCLOSED IS A CONTRIBUTION TO HELP WITH YOUR WORK.

(potential contributions are not tax deductible)

NAME

ADDRESS

PHONE

GEORGE BOONE OF ZEPHYRHILLS, CANDIDATE FOR GOVERNOR OF FLORIDA HAS AS HIS CENTRAL PLATFORM THE BUILDING OF WORKERS' CENTERS. WATCH FOR HIS UPCOMING CAMPAIGN (He can be contacted through the above address.)
THE LIMITS OF MARXISM?

Frank says that the last DB contains no discussion, well let's see if I can rectify that. Found the SPGB education series on "Theories of Economic Crises" to be excellent. Unlike most sects they have really done their homework instead of clinging to some fossilized caricature of marxist economic theory, (like for example the pathetic ICC). However, they do not appear to be aware of the marxist school which emphasizes the overproduction of capital. (see most particularly Value and Crisis: Essays On Marxian Economics in Japan by Makoto Itoh, MR Press, 1980 and the Principles of Political Economy: Theory of a Purely Capitalist Society, by Kozo Uno, Harvester Press) I'm not going to lay out their arguments so, if interested, the former work is a kind of overview of the latter and thus is a good place to start.

What I would like to throw out is the possible limitation of marxist economics as a tool of analysis. Note well please, the word is limitation; this does not mean that I am saying marxism is wrong, only there are points which it does not deal with adequately. If DB readers will remember that with me the baby always remains in the bathtub while the dirty water is poured away, there will be few misunderstandings.

The first limitation has to do with the difference between marxism and Marx. Marxism, where it is not downright economic determinist (vulgar marxist) is overly structuralist. What do I mean by this? That the marxist analysis tends to make all the problems of capitalism into epiphenomena of the capitalist system itself. There is no room for accidents, stupidity, neuroses, politics, ideology and the whole accursed pre-capitalist baggage of feudalism and autocracy. If you bring up any of these subjects with a marxist true-believer his answer is to reduce the aforementioned aspects to economics - vulgar marxism once more. (I know there will be some clown out there who will accuse me of making politics etc. completely independent of economics - Not so fellas! The world is a unity, but even a dreary Stalinist like Althusser realized that ideology had a certain level of independence from the, God how I hate that term, "economic base")

Now Marx and Engels were not so dumb as to be an absolute structuralists. Examples - Marx regretted that Richard the Lion-hearted went on the Crusades, for if he had stayed home and built up the English state the Industrial Revolution might have occurred two centuries sooner. Engels also tells an amusing story about how an illicit love affair at the Spanish court changed the whole of European history. Hardly structuralism, let alone economic determinism, eh? Or how about "acceleration and historical delay [in historical progress] are very much dependent upon accidents... including the character of the people who head the movements." Marx, Selected Correspondence, p. 264

Then there is the problem of the interpretation of CAPITAL. I do not think that Marx such a clod that he could not see he was building a scientific model of capital. Now a scientific model will, of course, be based upon empirical data, as was CAPITAL, but this does not mean that the model will be exactly the same as the really existing capitalism we find in day-to-day life. The best
analogy is that of water, the scientific model of which is "H2O" ascertained by breaking water down experimentally through electrolysis. But in real life the stuff that comes pouring out of your kitchen tap is not "H2O" but contains all kinds of trace elements such as calcium, sodium and potassium.

So too with capitalism. Marx's followers were not intelligent enough or too imbued with Positivism, the dominant ideology of the time, to realize this. Marxists therefore must decide what aspects of the theoretical model still apply to today's economy and what aspects have been superceded by world trade, class struggle etc. (the trace elements, if you like). One final aspect that Marx, living before Freud could not be aware of, yet which has an important bearing upon leftist analysis generally. For Marx, as for almost all 18th and 19thCentury thinkers, except for outcasts like Sade, Lautremont and Nietzsche, humankind was rationally motivated. This to me is the real flaw in Marx's thinking, a flaw which is the result of being a creature of his time.

Human beings are partly rational and partly irrational - all of us without exception. (the latter aspect something you become well aware of hanging around the left) Yet marxism would reduce our motivations to the rational alone. Workers should rise up against their exploitation (they sometimes do) yet there remains a host of reasons why they don't, not all of which can be reduced to the Deus ex machina of the mass media. If capitalists were really interested in profit alone they would simply contract the work out to self-managed workers' committees, but no, they are also motivated by the love of power, the need to fulfill a weak and stifled ego, to prove their masculinity, to show off to Dad and Mum etc.

What all of the above ultimately means is that if you are going to have a genuine materialist analysis of the economy, or any other aspect of the present situation, you must take into account all the factors. Reductionism is a dupes game. But this does not mean the factors are totally independent, or that they should all be given the same amount of emphasis.

Of course what I am talking about here is that dreadfully over-used word "dialectics". Now 99.98 out of a 100 leftists wouldn't know a dialectic if one ran over them driving a D9 Cat. What we do get is a hell of a lot of moralizing and religious absolutism. Typically, anyone who dares to criticize a leftist's fetishes is confused, ignorant, petty-bourgeois, an opportunist, a turncoat, an enemy of the people to be shot at dawn etc. (scratch a leftist and you find a fascist) Now what do we do when we do the aufgehen? We find the limitation, retain that which still applies of the old concept and synthesize the whole into a new and greater knowledge. Now is that really so difficult? Hence, rather than clinging religiously to a 1900 view of capitalism, we must retain the valid concepts, yet search for those aspects, resulting from class struggle and other contradictions, which have caused the older form to be transcended. One final point - rather than proclaiming our "answers" shouldn't we be asking questions?

Larry Gambone
THE COMMUNIST IDEA IN HEGEL AND MARX

My first introduction to Hegel was through Alexandre Kojevé's reading of the first six chapters of the Phenomenology. It seemed that the dialectic of the master and slave foreshadowed Marx on class struggle and alienation. Somewhat later came Lukac's "The Young Hegel" and the theme of alienation and class struck me again, but also Hegel's obvious study of political economy, most particularly Adam Smith. Lukacs the Stalinist seemed to have a great deal of trouble fitting this Hegel in with the accepted Marxist version knocked about as an "idealist". Then came readings of Gustav Mueller and Walter Kaufmann who declared that Marx had misunderstood Hegel and had helped to create the myth of the Hegelian Three-Step. (Thesis, Anti-thesis, Synthesis, a crude dance whose inventor was Fichte not Hegel)

By this time I was beginning to have my own thoughts on the relationship of Marx to Hegel and was finding the traditional Marxist version very hard to swallow. It struck me that the notions of "idealism dialectic" and "materialist dialectic" were oxymorons, for what is dialectic but the overcoming of such dualisms as materialism vs. idealism?

What a great joy it was to discover David MacGregor's The Communist Idea in Hegel and Marx. Here are discussed many of the aforementioned problems, but there is also a critique of Marx through a study of Hegel's Philosophy of Right, a work often maligned for its supposedly reactionary content. MacGregor has given us the first critique of Marx I have ever read. All the others are mere variations of Bakunin's slander of "Marx the statist". Marx is criticized for his basic interpretation of Hegel, the weakness lying in his adoption of Feuerbach's critique of Hegel which was "simply wrong" and had a "disasterous" impact upon Marx. Or as MacGregor states, "The Idea is not the supreme power over man. Hegel does not need turning upside down. Marx did not transcend Hegel's philosophy, he merely developed and amplified ideas already available in ... the Philosophy of Right...the division between Marx and Hegel is illusory."

The concept of "Idea" is revealed as having nothing to do with "idealism". "The Idea - even the Absolute Idea - is the scientific expression of society and nature as it has been developed by the thinking activity of individual human beings" Or the Idea is "...something that is manifested in concrete social reality through conscious human activity...and later given theoretical form by philosophy." Obviously we are talking about praxis and not some disembodied spook! To drive the point home, "It is not the Idea that creates history, but the concrete action of individual men and women guided by their interests, passions, And

1 MacGregor, David, The Communist Ideal in Hegel and Marx, p.259.
2 ibid, p.42-44
Hegel therefore discovered praxis long before Marx. Not only was Hegel well aware of political economy, he also "accomplished the unique synthesis of the views of Ricardo and Sismondi that virtually every other scholar...attributes to Marx". Hegel in discussing property rights, also adds a psychological dimension which Marx does not have. Property ownership enables one to have recognition in civil society, and since the worker is propertyless, his is a struggle for property rights in order to reaffirm his personality. Hegel stresses another aspect ignored by Marx, and that is that the capitalist has formal possession of industry but it is the worker who has concrete possession, ownership being implied by constant use. Hegel's concept of property is based upon usufruct. The worker by his involvement in the mode of production, in effect lays a claim to it.

One area that Marx did not pay much attention to was bureaucracy. Perhaps this was a result of his rather reductionist notion of the state being merely the executive committee of the bourgeoisie. Hegel, unlike Marx, developed a complete theory of bureaucracy and saw the rise of a new class of functionaries who would take an increasing role in the organization and development of society. (As in fact, has happened) For MacGregor, "Marx's concentration on property relations...allows him to overlook the educated middle class...and its connection to the state...a major element in Hegel's theory." Hegel was also a prophet in regard to the rise of the corporation. He saw that society would be increasingly made up of corporate entities, a development which was a result of "...the alienation of the abstract pursuit of profit as well as the desire to establish a secure source of capital." Once again the psychological aspect, since the corporation allows a level of respectability beyond that of the single money-grubber. But the corporation did not end simply with capitalism, it was also a means of overcoming the capitalist system. In Hegel's corporations positions were to be elected and trade unions (also considered a corporation) important in order for the workers to "become very powerful."

He was also "keenly aware of the factors in bourgeois society which are likely to increase the rational control of public

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1 ibid, p. 112
2 ibid, p. 226
3 ibid, p. 30
4 ibid, p. 190
5 ibid p. 190
6 ibid, p. 32
7 ibid, p. 197
8 ibid, p. 232-235
authority over corporations. Much of this development is not forseen by Marx and is underemphasized even by contemporary Marxists.\footnote{Ibid, p.199} One example of this is that Hegel foretells the growth of the modern consumer movements.

The rationalization of the corporation and bureaucracy got rid of most of the arbitrary pre-capitalist aspects which infected early capitalism. There is now a regularity of relations enforced by contract and law. "With the appearance of the corporation, domination by the arbitrary will of the single capitalist gave way to a system in which the worker has increasing authority and control over the conditions of his work." FLEXI-TIME, QWRL, the downsizing of supervisory sector are "the necessary products of capitalism itself."\footnote{Ibid, p. 231} Marx agreed that work relations become freer in modern capitalism because it is a "purely economic" relationship.

Marx and Hegel differed on the means that would be used in overcoming capitalism. Where Marx saw capitalism being overthrown in revolution by the workers, Hegel saw a synthesis of capitalist and worker developing which would eventually result in his form of communism called "the rational state." In Hegel's "rational state" conflict still exists, yet not civil war, and the corporations gradually come under workers' control. The family and civil society still persist. Thus capitalism is transcended but not in the manner forseen by Marx.\footnote{Ibid, p.37-38}

While it would be overstating the case to say that this is what is happening at present, nonetheless, with the spread of property ownership among workers and the replacement of the bourgeoisie by managers, some evidence for this synthesis exists. There is certainly more evidence in contemporary society for the Hegelian "overcoming" than the propaganda of proletarian revolution.

The difference that arose between the Marxian revolutionary utopia and the "revolution of synthesis" (my term, not MacGregor's) is rooted in a misconception of the nature of the dialectic. Marxism generally has not understood the dialectical method, seeing it as essentially critical and negative. But the negative aspect is not the most important, or as Hegel stated "The fundamental prejudice is that the dialectic has only a negative result."\footnote{Ibid, p.245}

The notion of "negative dialectics" (or dialectics as "struggle") completely overlooked the real process of historical development which is not nearly so nihilistic. "Dialectical method investigates the immanent or self originating development of the
social organism... [the new within the shell of the old]...land aims to disclose the rational elements within the present which presage the future." Hence the rational society will contain all of the positive aspects of the past. The young Marx was influenced by Feuerbach and hence had utopian and apocalyptic tendencies.

Thus according to MacGregor, Hegel’s analysis is of great benefit today as an adjunct of Marx - a kind of filling in the large gaps that he missed. However, it is my feeling that Marx should not be let off the hook so easily. As Karl Korsh was to point out in his Marxism and Philosophy, the abandoning of the dialectic by social democracy was an important cause of the degeneration of marxism. Marx’s claims of surpassing Hegel, of standing him on his head, of no longer needing philosophy contributed to this abandonment. To this very moment none of the sects claiming the mantle of Marxism have ever paid a moments notice to dialectics. The structure of their belief systems remains a turgid mish-mash of religious fanaticism, idealism, weepy moralism and obsolete positivism.

Larry Gambone

(From p. 10)

FINANCES

This section of DB66’s “Bulletin Matters” broached the idea of using DB funds to pay for some copier maintenance. Since we received no negative feedback, subscribers can take some pride in the fact that they paid for the surgery by the copier health expert that replaced the wornout rollers that feed paper into the machine. If all goes well, these will last for two years also.

Despite what appears to be a gift by the bank to DB’s checking account, this bill cuts DB’s surplus funds to manageable proportions, eliminating the need to look for sound investments.

CONTRIBUTIONS: Ron Girkens $4; Frank Girard $22; Joe McCarthy $1; Paul Burkett $6; Bill Friessser $3. Total $36. Thank you, comrades.

BALANCE June 27, 1984 (per bank statement) $228.94

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Canadian check $1.23
Total $196.26

BALANCE August 28, 1984 $180.04

Fraternally submitted,

Frank Girard
for the DB
New Unionist falls for democratic myth in South Africa

The June 1994 issue of the New Unionist (published by the DeLeonist New Unionist Party), features an analysis on South Africa which declares the following in its headline: "Successful struggle for political democracy sets stage for next struggle for economic democracy." The article then goes on to analyze the factors involved in the demise of apartheid and the role of the ANC and Mandela as the new ruling team for South African capitalism. While there are a number of points in this analysis with which we agree and others that we disagree with, because of limited space we will focus our critical comments here on the NUP's serious confusions on the nature of bourgeois democracy.

Despite acknowledging that the transfer of state power to the ANC does not challenge capitalist rule, the NUP tells us that "the creation of a democratic State, where the people elect their political leaders, is a giant step forward for the people of South Africa." This idea that the "people" now choose their own leaders in South Africa is an appallingly naive acceptance of the bourgeois democratic myth.

This capitulation to bourgeois democracy is not limited simply to the article on South Africa. In their statement of basic principles, the NUP writes, "...the workers will need a political party to spread the idea of social ownership and gain the support of the majority at the polls." In an accompanying article, also in the June issue, "A Worker's Party--and a Workers Union," they advocate a revolutionary party that "educates, that coordinates, that inspires working people toward a revolution at the ballot box."

This adulation of bourgeois democracy, which implicitly holds out the possibility of a peaceful, non-violent revolution against capitalism, can be traced back to the writings of Daniel DeLeon himself. In Socialist Reconstruction, De Leon wrote, "the ballot is a weapon that no revolutionary movement of our times may ignore except at its own peril. The Socialist ballot is the emblem of right." Elsewhere in the same text, he spoke of the "ideal so dearly pursued by the Socialist--the peaceful solution of the social question." (emphasis in the original)

The DeLeonist position on parliamentarism was as mistaken at the turn of the century as it is today, though for different reasons. In the ascendant period of capitalism which ended in the early part of this century, when it was still possible to win durable reforms from capitalism, revolutionaries participated in bourgeois elections in order to win seats in parliament in order fight for the interests of the working class. They fought for structural reforms like the 8-hour day, an end to child labor, etc. They did not run in the elections simply to use them as an educational forum to talk about socialism, nor did they have the illusion that the revolution could be gained by winning a majority of seats, as the DeLeonists believed. Today, in the decadent period of capitalist development, when it is no longer possible to wrest durable reforms from a capitalist system that has outlived its usefulness, elections serve only as a bourgeois mystification, to mislead the working class and derail it from its political struggle to overthrow and destroy the capitalist state, as a first step towards the economic transformation of society.

DeLeonism's kowtowing to bourgeois democracy, and its embracing of pacifism and a peaceful transition to socialism represent a departure from Marxism. As Engels wrote in "Anti-Duhring," "...in the words of Marx, (violence) is the midwife of every old society which is pregnant with a new one, that it is the instrument with the aid of which social movement forces its way through and shatters the dead, fossilized political forms -- of this there is not a word in Herr Duhring. It is only with sighs and groans that he admits the possibility that force will perhaps be necessary for the overthrow of the economic system of exploitation..." As we pointed out in a previous article on DeLeon, "Engels could have been writing about DeLeon's aversion to violence." (Internationalism 24 page 20)

Alone among DeLeonist groups, the New Unionist Party, attempts to analyze contemporary issues facing the world working class movement. But the heritage of DeLeonism, as demonstrated by the deep confusions on bourgeois democracy, stands as an obstacle in the NUP's efforts to clarify political positions and make a positive contribution to the working class. In order to go forward, the NUP will have to go beyond DeLeonism and examine the theoretical contributions not only of the communist left, but those of Marx and Engels which DeLeonism has distorted. -- JG

From -- Internationalism, P.O. Box 288, New York, NY 10018
Dear Comrades:

You state, among other distortions of DeLeonism in your Summer, 1994 “political,” “New Unionist falls for democratic myth in South Africa,” that “DeLeonism’s kowtowing to bourgeois democracy, and its embracing of pacifism and a peaceful transition to socialism represent a departure from Marxism.”

It was, you may recall, Marx who insisted that the first task of the workers’ movement is “to win the battle of democracy,” that is, to help in the creation of a democratic state. He insisted, against the oh-so-super-radicals of his time, that the workers must temporarily unite with the democratic bourgeoisie to create a democratic state, and that it was within the context of bourgeois democracy that the class struggle between the working class and the bourgeoisie would be fought out to a finish.

Was Marx then too kowtowing to bourgeois democracy, comrades? If so, you should have the courage and consistency to say so. Of course, it’s quite possible that conditions since his time have dated this explicitly Marxist position, a position that neither Marx nor Engels ever repudiated. But, again, if that is what you believe you should state it forthrightly and defend what isundeniably your clear departure from Marxism.

Also worthy of note is the fact that Marx castigated the anarchists for using the very arguments you do against electoral-political action, that is a “bourgeois mystification” to keep the workers confused, etc. He likened them to the early Christians, who didn’t allow themselves to be polluted by their sinful society by any struggle within its corrupt institutions.

Your equating DeLeonism with “parliamentarism” elsewhere in the article further reveals your complete confusion on the role of political action in the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism. DeLeon attacked parliamentarism by name, which is the idea that incremental reforms achieved within bourgeois parliaments can eventually add up to socialism. Since both Internationalism and the NUP reject this strategy, the issue of parliamentarism has nothing to do with our debate, and for you to interject it by falsely ascribing it to DeLeonism is merely a device to avoid the real point of difference (one of several) between us: how the capitalist state can be overthrown and replaced by a workers’ government.

DeLeonism offers a strategy for capturing and overthrowing the state that recognizes the actual institutional functioning of the bourgeois democratic state where — are you following me, comrades? — the one with the most votes wins. See, that’s why Mandela is president of South Africa and Clinton is president of the U.S. — get it? That’s why the capitalists spend their money to finance election campaigns, to help the candidates they like get the most votes so they can take political office. Unless, that is, you have a better explanation.

Of course, what the capitalists decide to do once they are faced with a majority vote for the revolutionary workers’ party is a separate question. If the political organization of the working class is as yet not complete, and the capitalists can rally enough reactionary support to launch a violent counterrevolution, they will obviously have to be smashed by the organized force of the workers’ movement. In order to have the means to do that, the workers will have to be industrially organized to enable them to seize the industries, thereby cutting off the capitalists’ economic ability to wage war at the same time giving the workers the means to govern society in
place of the old state. At that point defeating the counterrevolution will be a matter of a speedy mopping-up operation.

Whatever the level of violence, if any, turns out to be needed in the revolution, we'll never get that far to find out without the workers first organizing for the seizure of the state and the industries by organizing a revolutionary party and one big industrial union. Since Internationalism rejects both electoral politics and unions, it is impossible to fathom where the force you insist on is going to come from, unless you suppose a lot of tough talk and ridiculous anarcho-posturing are going to scare the capitalists to death.

Finally (for the sake of brevity), your equation of DeLeonism with "pacifism" is a stroke of sheer desperation. The theoretical principle of non-violent revolution in DeLeonism does not derive from a philosophical moral absolute but from a sociological analysis of force and power in a modern technological, bourgeois-democratic society.

Marx and Engels said force (not your parenthetical "violence") is the midwife of a new society. Force implies coercion, but not necessarily violence. For example, I am forced to go to work against my will each day through non-violent economic coercion. Engels defended the right of the workers to use violent force if necessary. He also recognized that the workers' movement in the modern political and economic environment of the late 19th century, as opposed to the underdeveloped capitalism of 1848, was most successful using the legal means of mass political organizing instead of violent conspiracies. He also noted that modern military technology and tactics had made "barricade revolutions" a thing of the past in Europe — an observation entirely borne out in the 20th century.

To sum up, in order to "prove" your contention that DeLeonism distorts Marxism, you have had to distort both DeLeonism and Marxism.

Jeff Miller
Editor, New Unionist

621 W. Lake Street
Suite 210
Minneapolis MN 55408
Dear reader

In 1991 two Branches were expelled from the Socialist Party of Great Britain/Socialist Party, and at once formed themselves into the newly reconstituted Socialist Party of Great Britain. They publish the new journal called "Socialist Studies". I've been talking with them.

The first two paragraphs; in my open letter, below, recall an earlier letter which I wrote suggesting to them that, they should not be thought of as a rehash of another group, now extinct, called the "Socialist Propaganda League."

The remainder of the same open letter, below, tries to answer the objection, or two, which some of them have about my suitability as a future member.

If a significant difference, in outlook, makes me unsuitable, then, that should be explored. I hope that we can resolve the objections, which are preventing their renewal, of my application.

If any readers of the Discussion Bulletin, have any comments to share, agreeable or hostile as the case may be, still, I'll be very pleased to hear from you.

So here is my open letter itself:

Open Letter 4 Feb 1994
To each member of the Socialist Party of Great Britain
Dear Socialist

Your Party is allied to the old 'Socialist Propaganda League-view'.! So therefore, you are nothing but a phoney S.P.G.B! So understood a contributor to the international "Discussion Bulletin". I could not swallow that sad understanding of you which featured on pages 12. and 13. of the "Bulletin." for January/February 1993. So I wrote to each of you.

Your various and fine responses to my letter, and; your issue of 'Socialist Studies' (Issue no. 10.), with some of your "paragraphs" therein, dealing with and attacking the "S.P.L.-view." also called "W.B./Upton Park-view.", now permit us readers to say that sad "understanding" of you, featured in the "Discussion Bulletin." is, in fact, not correct.

At that happy, and satisfactory outcome; may I please try to tidy-up the proverbial loose end? Not especially relating to the above. But. Back at the time of that, my first letter to you, some of you were actively discussing the question of those representing capitalists, in control of Parliament, refusing to hold elections. And one, or two, of you were some what dissatisfied with a part of my letter mentioning that same question. So in order to help you to help me to know the reason or reasons for your dissatisfaction I offer you this, second letter:

It is necessary for our class to become well aware of our interests, and the basis for them. So that we can gain POLITICAL POWER. AND WITH POLITICAL POWER, THE CONTROL OF THE POLICE AND ARMED FORCES AND WHOLE STATE APPARATUS, NOW AT THE DISPOSAL OF THOSE REPRESENTING THE CAPITALISTS. This to make possible at last, the organisation of society in our interests.

That new society of free individuals does not cease to be further modified. The gradual dissolution of the state apparatus is an example of this. For the old state apparatus is not immediately abolished as, for example, some "anarchists" have thought.

Neither is all of this just a "nice idea". For in that new society ideas remain a reflection of and flow in the first place from the real world and not vice versa as, for example, some "anarchists" have thought.
As the S.P.G.B., make very clear; Socialists must organise for Political Power, through election. The position is, in this respect, the same where those in control keep refusing to hold elections, in some kind of attempt to stop a growing Socialist majority of the population.

In that case Socialists must continue; even more steadfastly than ever; to organise for Political Power through election. The prospect of chaos must force those representing capitalists in control of Parliament to have the elections which, that overwhelmingly Socialist population demand. See my letter to you; which says the same; in the following words:

"...consider an 'impending' Socialist victory when those representing capitalists in control of Parliament, keep refusing to hold an election.

Given a consistently independent Socialist majority combining the spreading of their Socialist ideas, with a campaign to bring about an election, you'd whole-heartedly support them..."

Words taken from my letter to you.

Of course; I hope that this is in step with members views and with membership. So that you may accept this present letter as a request, to renew my application to rejoin the Socialist Party of Great Britain.

Yours for Socialism

Alan Kerr -- 13 Huntings Farm, Green Lane, Ilford IG1 1YE England

Dear Readers:

Years ago, when the S.L.P. had study classes on works of Marx, like Capital, Vol. 1, and "Value, Price, and Profit," it created the impression in me that capitalism is doomed to collapse under its own dead weight. The Great Depression of the 1930s was proof that the abundance of wealth produced under capitalism is a problem that could destroy the economy if not disposed of so more could be produced again. It was convenient to have World War II and post-war reconstruction as well as the Cold War to enable capitalism to work. With the end of the Cold War and the emergence of the United States as the only super-power, it makes an arms race controllable and limited; the capitalist system is still the dominant system of the world. The anarchy of production that Marx predicted would destroy capitalism has been somewhat replaced by regulations, nationally and internationally, and the booms that lead to busts are not likely. What I learned from the S.L.P. was that the class struggle is inescapable, and is becoming ever more intense. Now I believe that the collapse of capitalism will come as a result of the class struggle between the working class and the capitalist class; and not as a result of a social vacuum caused by the economic collapse of capitalism.

Unfortunately, the capitalist class has the advantage in the class struggle at present. Realistically, the two goals in this class struggle are socialism and capitalism. So long as people have false visions of socialism, they can't further anything but the interests of the capitalist class. We will not be able to create a democratic industrial government so long as most people continue to believe that some degree of State ownership is socialism. When people study history so as to become aware that the political State enabled upper classes to rule workers, they will have revolutionized
their thinking so that they will be in a position to establish socialism. It was said by a Marxist that before the revolution to socialism can take place the revolution must first occur in the minds of the masses.

With our knowledge that the capitalist world is rotten ripe for the new social system, socialism, politics is much simpler for us than for those who choose among the parties supporting capitalism. It is necessary for Marxists to correct the misconception that State ownership is socialism to make the socialist program clear. On a personal level some Marxists may prefer a government-controlled national health service because we will feel more secure under such a system. However, for a Marxist to advocate nationalized health care is to spread the confusion that, whenever the government is involved in any industry, it is socialism. It would be better for Marxists to oppose false socialized medicine so as to go on record that, when the capitalist government controls businesses or an industry, it is not socialism. If we must give up a temporary feeling of security to expose State ownership and control as a form of class rule that we oppose, it could result in final victory in this class struggle.

Fraternally yours,
263 Hutton St.
Monroe Prussack
Jersey City, NJ 07307

Anarchist Studies

Anarchist Studies is an international journal concerned with all aspects of contemporary anarchist research and theory. It has grown out of the earlier Bulletin of Anarchist Research, published since 1985 by the Anarchist Research Group. Anarchist Studies primarily focuses on contemporary developments in anarchism and provides a forum for original academic papers, as well as reviews of books, films, music and other cultural forms. From time to time, special issues will be published on specific themes. Anarchist Studies is aimed at a wide intellectual readership, and its two issues per year offer the latest and best scholarly writing on anarchist political theory and history, commentary on the arts and literature, and news of important meetings and publications. Each issue is a well-produced paperback book of 96 pages.

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Crisis in the House of Labour

What we are witnessing currently is an international agenda that has as its goal the destruction of much of the progress made by workers over the past five decades. The global corporations want to sweep aside all the institutions, programs and structures that stand in the way of their agenda. - 1994 CLC Convention Theme Document

Over 2500 delegates and guests attended the 20th Constitutional Convention of the Canadian Labour Congress from May 16 - 20 in Toronto. The convention gave voice to the anguish felt in the labour movement in the wake of ten years of Federal Tory rule and revealed that the CLC is increasingly conscious of the magnitude of forces which Capital has lined up against workers in Canada and around the globe as the 20th century draws to an uncertain close.

An acute awareness of the situation was evident in CLC President Bob White's opening address to the convention. White made repeated references to "an international corporate economic agenda" which, in his words, "seeks to massively restructure our society". Indeed, recognition of this effort to restructure our society was also evident in virtually all of the material given to the delegates.

Faced with this effort to "make the market the arbiter of social relations" the CLC declared that "thwarting the corporate agenda is the most pressing and critical challenge facing the labour movement over the next two years". White specifically called for "a strong counter movement to what is taking place" and added that "we must extend our hands to workers in other countries".

But as the convention went on the delegates were given few specifics as to how this is going to be done. They were shown nothing to indicate that the tide is going to be turned in the near future.

A strongly worded resolution calling for organizing the unemployed and a call in the CLC's Action Plan for such action provided cases in point. Delegates left the convention with no clear idea what the CLC was going to do to turn the unemployed into a political force to be reckoned with in this country.

The only precise plans of action spelled out at the convention concerned efforts to plan a National "Peoples Agenda Conference" in 1995 and the future of the CLC's relationship with the NDP. The new CLC Action Plan stated that the objective of the former will be to set out a labour alternative to the corporate agenda while the future of the CLC's relationship with the NDP was addressed in detail in a composite resolution. That resolution represented an attempt to reconcile those in the CLC
who remain firmly committed to the NDP with those who increasingly see that the NDP, like all other social democratic parties, has repeatedly betrayed the interests of workers while in power and will not confront the corporate agenda.

The composite resolution called for a committee to review the relationship between the CLC and the NDP "as part of the internal review process of the NDP". Furthermore, the goal of the committee will be to make "a serious effort to strengthen the future relationship between the CLC and its political ally". The committee will report to the next CLC Convention on the results of its work.

The resolution passed by a large majority mainly because the delegates feared the issue of the CLC's relationship with the NDP would split the Congress if it did not pass. In effect, the CLC bought time. But in doing so it abysmally failed to come to terms with the fact that the NDP is in a crisis precisely because social democracy everywhere is in a crisis and can no longer claim to represent a real alternative to the corporate agenda.

Consequently, two years from now the CLC will probably go through another painful debate over this issue. But the situation will be more serious by then because the NDP will be in virtual shambles east of the Manitoba border and will still be almost irrelevant in federal politics.

Finally, it must be noted that one issue was barely dealt with at the convention. It was NAFTA. The CLC has clearly recognized that NAFTA is here to stay. But the CLC has also shown that it has no strategy to deal with NAFTA now that the treaty is in place. Nor is any strategy forthcoming. One can only conclude from this that the CLC is in a state of denial with respect to NAFTA. One must also conclude from this that the CLC, like the NDP, is in a state of acute crisis and has no roadmap for the future.

Bruce Allen
CAW Local 199 Delegate to
the 1994 CLC Convention
What is Class?

TW: Defining class in terms of ownership rather than power won't work. When GE closed the last US flat-iron factory a few years ago, a laid off worker who was president of the UE local took her life savings and opened a restaurant. Owning a restaurant doesn't make her a "class enemy" any more than being a foreman would.

MB: If a worker sets up a business and employs wage slaves then that worker has crossed the class line. If that former worker finds herself on my side of the picket line in the class struggle, then that former worker, now capitalist, has renounced their class interests and is not my enemy. I don't blame people for surviving under capitalism. If that restaurant owner endorses the organization of workers as a class for the social ownership of the productive apparatus of society, including her own restaurant, then I don't worry about that capitalist because she has truly renounced her class interests.

Workers, of course, can also renounce their class interests. More likely, they deny even having class interests. "A fair day's work for a fair day's work" is a thought all too common. Others see themselves purely as individuals with no identity as members of a class. People who think like this are a pretty diverse group, from teachers to janitors, supervisors to supervisors.

TW: What is the "employing class?" Your employer is a firm or government agency, not a person. Firms are institutions, not a "class". So, who is the "employing class", the people who own the firms, or who run them?

MB: The people who own them. The capitalist class as a whole controls the State, much like the Communist Party used to control the Soviet State.

TW: Many companies have employee stock ownership plans, and workers may own chunks of stock. Does this make them capitalists? "Not unless they live on it," you say. But this is not clear cut. I know a worker who has squirreled away about $1 million (he doesn't spend money on hardly anything for himself). He refuses to be a boss (they've tried to promote him), but he still works for wages, but he could live on his investments if he wanted to. What is his "class" position? As I say, class boundary lines are fuzzy, like clouds.

MB: You're right. This particular guy is in a fuzzy position. My class analysis would await his appearance on one side or the other of the picket line.

Most workers who own stock, don't own enough to allow them to quit selling their time for a living. Some workers put their money in CDs, savings banks, bonds etc. Still, they must stay wage-slaves until retirement. When they retire, they just live off of a portion of what they've already made. Social Security is nothing but a small part of the value we've created coming back to us, trickle down style.

The owners dominate us because they make us dependent on them to buy our labor power in order to live. The sooner we realize this, the better.

Everyone from cops to soldiers to faculty members to postal service employees to all the hired hands at Ross Dress For Less are capable of organizing as a class to end the absurdity of domination by the owners--the capitalist class, this miniscule ruling class.

(Mike Ballard & Tom Wetzel)

From the Industrial Worker, 1095 Market St #204, San Francisco, CA 94103
That's right, friends, I, Bill Comiskey, am going tell you a fool-proof way to get rich. If you do what I will be setting down in the next few paragraphs, you will become richer than you ever thought possible!

Now, the first thing you're going to say is, "If you're so smart, how come you're not rich?"

My answer is that there is no correlation between intellect and wealth. As a matter of fact, most of history's great minds have found wealth to be odious. But that's enough philosophizing. Let's get on with making you rich!

Notice that you work every day, every week, every year. Now, here comes the most critical fact: THE TRULY RICH DON'T WORK AT ALL! If you work and are not rich, and they don't work and are rich, what's the answer? That's right—you did the work but they got the money!

It doesn't matter what you do for a living now, whether you work in a plant, drive a truck, punch data into a CR7 or pick peas. You can get rich with the same formula thousands of other people have used to become fabulously wealthy.

Understand here and now that this is no gimmick. This is not some shady real-estate scheme or a hot tip on the stock market or a fast horse. The rich make money in the stock market and with real estate, but only after they've already become rich. As for the horse, only a fool tries to get rich at the track.

Before I tell you how to get rich, let me tell you why you are not rich now. It is important that you know this, so don't skip this and go on to the "how to" part. In order to understand "how to," you've got to know why. So go along with me step by step and envision yourself as the worker in this example:

You're working in a factory making fishing reels (it could be anything, but we'll use reels as an example). You're paid $10.00 an hour for an 8-hour day, 40-hour week, or $400 per week. $10.00 an hour is the most you can get. So if you want to make more money, you have to work more hours.

Let's say you take a second job, again at $10.00 per hour, and you work an additional four hours each day. Now you're making $600 per week. The only way you can make more money than that is to work more hours, but working more hours doesn't make you rich, just dead.

Sure, you're making more money than you were before, but you still can't stop working and go lie on the beach for the rest of your life.

Why not? Because as soon as you stop working, the paychecks stop. Besides, $600 a week isn't going to make you rich. And, as a working man or woman, you are limited to how much money you can make by the number of hours you are able to work. If you never had to sleep and never stopped to eat and worked every available hour in the week, you would still not get rich; rich, that is, the way the ultra-wealthy are rich.

Well, now we get to the "how to do it" part.

In order to make more money you have to do one very simple thing—YOU HAVE TO HAVE SOMEONE ELSE WORK WHO WILL GIVE YOU A PORTION OF THE MONEY THEY EARN.

Once you have done this, your income is no longer restricted to the number of hours in a week. If you can get 2 or 10 or 20 or more people to donate what they earn in 20 or 30 hours of their work each week to you, YOUR INCOME WILL SOAR INTO THE THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS A DAY. Now you're ready to go shopping for that yacht!

Don't scoff at this and condemn it as a crackpot idea. If you bear with me I'll show you how this is the way rich people got rich and is the way they stay rich. And if you don't believe it can be done, prepare yourself for a shock, because I'm about to tell you one hard, cold fact that you're not going like, and that fact is this:

THE RICH ARE DOING THIS TO YOU RIGHT NOW. They've had you donating hours of your work to them every day for as long as you've been working! And that, fellow worker, is why we're the working poor and they're the idle rich.

All right, you say, prove it!

OK, follow along. We're going to continue with the fishing reels, but it doesn't matter if you're cutting meat, welding steel or typing letters, this example applies to you.

If you can make 3 fishing reels an hour and each reel has a value of, say, $10, you are producing a value of $30 per hour. In the first 2 hours and 40 minutes of each day you have produced $80 of value. That's fine! But you're getting paid $80 for the day and you've still got 5 hours and 20 minutes to work producing fishing reels for which you will not get paid.

If you've produced $80 worth of product in the first 2 hours and 40 minutes, and you're paid $80 for 8
SHORT REVIEWS

ALTERNATIVE PRESS REVIEW: YOUR GUIDE BEYOND THE MAINSTREAM, Spring/Summer 1984, quarterly. 62 pages, 8 1/2 by 11 with slick cover; $3.95 per issue, $16 for four issues from C.A.L. Press, P.O. Box 1448, Columbia, MO 65205.

The recent retirement of Lev Cherney (I hope I have the spelling right) from the editorship of Anarchy seems to have created the conditions for magazine mitosis. In the ensuing division APR remained in Columbia Missouri and kept that part of Anarchy that concentrated on short reviews of alternative publications as well as selected reprints from them. This issue contains thirteen pages of such reviews. The publications described include a sampling of irreverent punk zines as well as serious anarchist and libertarian socialist periodicals like Here & Now, Aufheben, and Alarm. We also find non-political publications on the fringe like the Skeptical Inquirer and small circulation, fairly mainstream magazines like In These Times and Wine Reader.

Articles selected for publication range from Noam Chomsky’s “Time Bombs” subtitled “Why the new global economy will trigger more explosions like Chiapas” from In These Times to “Pornography and Pleasure” from Fifth Estate and from “Redefining the Radical: PC as Media Scare” to “The Political Economy of Ecstasy.” A four-page article written especially for this issue, “The Left Bank Collective” features an interview with members of the group that runs the largest U.S. mail order house for alternative publications, Left Bank Books in Seattle.

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