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ABOUT THIS ISSUE

This issue begins with four responses to Dave Stratman’s thinking on Marxism, the labor movement, and New Democracy. First, Cajo Brendel criticizes Stratman’s book We Can Change the World for its idealism—the belief that revolutions spring from hope. He also blames Stratman’s anti-Marxism on “his total ignorance of the existence of an anti-bolshevik communism.” Dawn Pisturino also feels that Stratman idealizes the working class and questions whether workers would accept major social change even if the opportunity for it arose. Bob Rossi, a union organizer, asks, “...how does it follow that trashing the AFL-CIO is the first step toward...building a movement of working people for democratic

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COMMENTS ON THE BOOK
"WE CAN CHANGE THE WORLD"

In his introduction the author says: "Hope in the future and belief in the possibility of fundamental change - belief in the possibility of revolution - are inextricably linked." His point of view is that "human beings have the capacity to create a human world" and that [...] "revolutions occur when people gain sufficient confidence in their own view of human life and in themselves as the makers of history to shape all of society with their vision... My purpose in this book is to show that we can triumph over the [capitalist] system to create a truly democratic society." Further on: "... a revolutionary vision must provide a coherent explanation of social change and a method for analyzing events and issues. Above all, it must furnish a basis for action..." And also: "The possibility of revolution comes from the values and ideas about human lives which most people share..."

The essence of what has just been quoted here is voluntarism. The author seems to believe, that insights and opinions are a precondition for any change of society. And though he absolutely doesn't agree with bolshevism, he comes very near to the wellknown watchword of Lenin, that "there will be no revolutionary praxis without a revolutionary theory". This is just the opposite of my opinion. There never is or has been any revolutionary theory without revolutionary praxis in one form or another.

Revolutions are not built on hope, as the author asserts in his conclusion, neither are they preceded by 'visions' or radical opinions. Often, those involved - makers of history - are unaware indeed of the real outcome of what they are doing or requiring. In the course of the turmoil their demands overlap each other, what they claimed yesterday is valueless today, they don't foresee that tomorrow they will reach far beyond the views of the present. Precisely this happened 1956 in the streets of Budapest. It happened many times before. And insurgents repeatedly have a distorted picture of the historical scene.

Completely neglecting this, the author, in his book, has tried to show with the help of some historical events, that visions, aspirations and consciousness are the solid basis of any hopeful struggle for revolutionary change. His wrong starting-point, just as his lack of social analysis as well as his deplorable mistake that bolshevism and social-democracy both are Marxist - due to a total ignorance of the existence of an anti-Bolshevik communism - are the cause of deceptive explanations. This I'll try to demonstrate from the pages (107-118) dealing with the so-called 'Cultural Revolution' in China.

Here the author remarks that "the historic developments in China over the past two decades, including the 'economic reforms' and the spring uprising [1989] can only be understood against the backdrop of the Cultural Revolution." In my view it's the other way round. All of what happened in China in the second half of our century, is nothing but the following-up of the revolution that broke out in 1911. It swept away the Manchu rule and has been the prologue to a transformation that, interrupted by different periods of stagnation, went on decade after decade, including the violent period in which China entered the mid-sixties, up to the present time of the inevitable economic reforms, which just because of these inevitability caused the rise of Deng Xiaoping.
In "We Can Change The World" on the contrary, the Cultural Revolution is not held up against the peculiarities of China's social development. "The Cultural Revolution", so says the author, "began in the late 1965 with a power struggle in the Chinese ruling class." Right, with the restriction however, that it not only began with a power struggle, but that it was a power struggle, a permanent struggle between two political currents: at one side the traditional Maoist party-bureaucracy, that had been the ruling class since '49, on the other side the representatives of a new ruling class, i.e. technocrat managers, being procreated by a growing industrialization and manufacturing. It lasted ten years with varying chances and ended with the victory of the managerial class.

In "We Can Change The World", things are hopelessly muddled. The book says: "One faction of the Communist Party-leadership wanted to pursue a model of economic development similar to the Soviet model... The other faction, led by Mao, emphasized a mix of agricultural and industrial development and the lessening of differentials between the countryside and the city. Moreover, Mao's faction stressed mobilization of the peasantry and working class based on egalitarianism and political commitment to increase production. Both sides in this conflict were committed to the supremacy of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)..."

A power struggle between the old ruling class and a rising new one, both committed to the supremacy of the CCP, that's true. And if this is true, that means a conflict between the defenders of state-capitalism and the defenders of another (more western) type of capitalism, thus in any case an alternative society was out of the question and so the 'Cultural Revolution' wasn't a revolution at all! That the 'Red Guards' honestly believed this, is explicable by the Maoist method of mystification.

Otherwise than the author reflects, the Maoist faction in this struggle wanted to maintain the existing order as it had been established in 1949, the other (managerial) faction wanted by no means fundamental, but nevertheless important necessary economic reforms. Consequently, the Maoist faction can be defined as a 'conservative one'. Appealed to by Mao, the 'Red Guards' considered themselves as a 'revolutionary' force.

"We Can Change The World" is an example of how a writer, as a victim of all sort of deceitful and abusing ideology, can intertwine the facts because of his naive believe that the human desire counts instead of the circumstances that determine human life.

The author explains: "...the [communist] party strove to harness the huge forces of the peasant revolution to achieve the goals of Chinese Marxism. Consistent with Marxist-Leninist doctrine the party believed that revolution in China should take place in two stages..." etc.

A close examination of Maoist doctrine shows that, just alike the Leninist doctrine, it has nothing to do with Marxism, in spite of what the Maoists and Leninists themselves believe. Thereabove you have to realize that Maoism even isn't the same thing as Leninism.

Lenin headed an essentially bourgeois revolution, that had to be executed by the (very small) working-class, notwithstanding the huge majority of the peasantry. He therefore spoke of his party as 'the vanguard of workers and peasants' and he called this by the party dictatorial dominated state 'a workers and peasants state'. In China it was different. Mao headed the same type of revolution, but not exactly the same type. In still feudal China the working-class was even far smaller than in czarist Russia. Therefore by Mao the peasantry was accounted for being the revolutionary vanguard. This
brought about differences with Leninist theory we can drop here. In both countries the result has been state-capitalism!

When the author of "We Can Change The World" says that "Mao meant the destruction of feudalism and warlordism and breaking the grip of foreign capital on the Chinese economy", he is right. It is, especially because of his lack of social analysis, his only reference to the pre-revolutionary social situation in China. But nevertheless he is right that "it would be a 'people's revolution', to include not only workers and poor peasants but also rich peasants and the national bourgeoisie". Here we rediscover precisely the phenomena of a bourgeois revolution, like for instance the great French Revolution of 1789. That Mao called the Chinese revolution a "socialist" one is, the author says, because "by socialism he meant state-ownership of the means of production... which in practice meant the dictatorship of the communist party..." Here he's right again.

Sure, one can't deny that there is a striking resemblance between some ideas of Mao and the CCP on the development of the Chinese revolution and those of Lenin and the Bolsheviks on the development of the revolution in Russia. However, if since 1949 the world started talking of a 'victory for communism in China' it was completely wrong.

The author of "We Can Change The World" correctly states that Mao and his comrades were against what they called "the restoration of capitalism in China". This, however, wasn't what happened. Not because socialism was preserved, but because it never was established. Only capitalism existed in China. What Mao and his friends defined as "the restoration of capitalism" wasn't a restoration at all. We repeat: it was the transformation of state-capitalism into a certain form of western capitalism conforming to the interests of a new ruling class that rose up as a consequence of Chinese economic development. Deng Xiaoping named it "a socialist market economy". A market economy it was; just as little 'socialist' as the economy in Mao's days.

Contrary to the description in "We Can Change The World", Mao didn't encourage the masses to criticize the party. What he wanted to realize with the help of the masses was a stronger position of the party. Here, one has a very good example of the tragedy of errors caused by the author's inability to distinguish between the two factions in the Chinese ruling elite.

What the author describes as 'three main organized forces in the Cultural Revolution' is not a description of reality. The party-leaders were confronted by the reformers. If apart from this in some Chinese cities and in the countryside the mobilized masses went far beyond what the Chinese revolution really in process of transforming was, you cannot describe them as 'an organized force of the ultra left' without any analysis of its social structure. Of course it has to do with the fact, that any revolution brings the oppressed masses on the historical scene, fighting for their immediate or even their future interests. This happened during the French revolution, this happened in Bolshevik Russia as well and it happened elsewhere.

But what has been the real situation in China?

In a struggle that doesn't fundamentally change capitalism, you can't clearly distinguish between 'left' and 'right'. Where the author says that "Maoism was exposed as inevitably in conflict with its ability to rule", he's right. Continuing that "the party began to seek ways [...] to privatize Chinese lives", he is not correct, because it is the faction aiming for reforms that did so and not the party as such. He doesn't give a clear explanation of the struggling forces during the Cultural Revolution. What he calls
the ultra left' were the peasants? If so, you can not define it as one of the 'three main organized forces'. If not, you can't speak of 'the ultra left'.

Where the author says that "the ultra-left document 'Whither China?' accepted Marxism/ Leninism as the keystone of the revolutionary thought", this surely indicates that it has nothing to do with left opinions and that it is a pure summary of state-capitalist developments and that it either has nothing to do with "the theory of social change on which the party's birth and development were based" (p. 115/116).

There is certainly truth in what the author says about this document, namely that it "challenges the Marxist framework of the Chinese Revolution, which however does not really escape the Marxist view." But where the author talks about 'Marxist framework' and 'Marxist view' he speaks about the so-called Marxist view which in reality has nothing to do with Marx but with Lenin only.

Everywhere where the book is talking about Marxism, in reality it refers to Leninism and its whole and complete confusion is also due to this mistake. For that reason it is absolutely not true that, as is meant by the author, "the Cultural Revolution represents the exhaustion of Marxism as a theory of revolution". It has nothing to do with that!

By the way, it is very strange that on page 113 the author talks about "the Cultural Revolution continuing for two more years" (i.e. up to 1969) though it continued about eight years more and that further on he is talking about everything that happened then, completely contradicting the date of its end that he indicated before.

The author ends his book with the following words: "It [the Cultural Revolution] shows, that the great historical task at this time [for us and the readers of his book] is the construction of a new paradigm of social change which, because it sees the masses of people as active makers of history, can lead to the society which it envisions".

Here one sees clearly first the author's misunderstanding of Marxism and secondly his voluntarism. Of course people make their own history, however they make it in accordance with the real possibility given by social and historical reality. The author's opinion, that we can change the world, if we want to do so, is an illusion and a fairy tale.

In his conclusion the author says "Revolutions are built on hope." I've already denied that. Any time that people move, they do so because they are forced to defend their threatened interests and they do so if and when reality clearly points to possibilities or what possibilities seem to be. Neither revolutions nor temporary uprisings are initiated by intellectuals. They are inevitable consequence of irresistible social forces.

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Cajo Brendel.
Dave Stratman has everything backwards in his theory about the labor struggle in America.

He is absolutely correct when he states that it is taboo to mention the word capitalism; however, this hardly matters because most people don’t understand what that means anyways. Most people, however, acknowledge flaws in “the system.”

Secondly, he assumes simplicity that all labor activists and working-class people share the same goal that he does: to transform society.

This is so far off base, I can hardly believe that Dave Stratman believes this. A small minority of people, it seems to me, want radical changes in society. This was proven during the last presidential election when Clinton was re-elected. People were voting against radical change.

The AFL-CIO has never claimed to be anymore than what it is: a union for working people to work within the system for improved wages and working conditions. They have never claimed to be a “revolutionary” organization seeking radical change. They are basically a lobbying group now which uses its resources to influence legislation in Washington, D.C.

Thirdly, Stratman claims that the labor struggle is really about worker equality and solidarity. Here, I strongly disagree! While UPS strikers showed great solidarity during the strike, I did not hear one worker bewail the fate of his fellow workers who were laid off as a result of the strike. That old axiom, “I got mine,” still applies.

But the main evidence against Stratman’s theories is history itself. History proves that economics is everything!

Every war and revolution that has ever been fought has been in some way connected to economic factors. No matter how you dress it up; no matter how many pretty slogans you invent; no matter how many idealistic pictures you paint — economics is everything!

The reason “it’s harder now to build a movement than it was in the 60’s is because” most people feel too comfortable materially. They have no reason to seek radical change or to transform society. Most people are content to curl up on the couch with a couple of beers and watch mindless T.V. or to run up the ol’ credit cards at the mall. Another reason is that people recognize that other parts of the world are still worse off than we are in America.

In other words, most people look at the glass as half-full rather than half-empty because they are afraid to do otherwise.

Stratman is also wrong in his analysis of Marxism. Marx was not wrong; he simply did not foresee the technological changes that would take place in the future. In fact, many left-wingers completely ignore the radical changes that are taking place all around them everyday. It’s called computer technology.

The global network makes it possible for the first time for real democracy — one person, one vote — to actually exist on a worldwide scale. In turn, this makes the ideal of socialism (working together to create and maintain an equal, democratic economic and political society) a reality.

However, average people will never fight to create this kind of world until they are pushed to the point where they have no other choice. I say this because history has
proven this to be true. People will not put forth the effort or the risk until their backs are to the wall and they feel personally threatened. People must have something precious to gain or something precious to lose before they will take the necessary steps to make radical changes in their lives.

If Stratman’s theory was true, then all the idealistic platitudes of the ‘60s should have blossomed into a greatly changed society. But in reality, things have not changed much over the decades. The outward trappings have changed, but the basic structure remains the same. In other words, idealistic youth did not change the world. Instead, most of them sold out to the capitalistic system in the form of recording contracts and high-paying corporate jobs. The more militant ones wound up dead or in exile, never to be heard from again.

People do make small gestures of resistance against “the system” in their daily lives. This is one way they maintain their self-esteem and avoid going crazy. In fact, the U.S. Constitution guarantees them this right. But those small gestures are simply not enough to overthrow the entire capitalistic system; and if David Stratman believes they can do the job, he is a dreamer.

Stratman also assumes that most people want the responsibility of creating a new world. In my political dealings, it has been my experience that most people are more than happy to shove off the responsibility onto someone else. This is how elites are formed: because most people are followers, not leaders.

Lastly, the idea that people will vote -- or be allowed to vote -- in socialism or any other radical transformation of society, is naive and foolish. Even if a majority of people voted to dismantle capitalism in favor of socialism, the powers that be would find some way to invalidate the vote.

Left-wingers banter the word “revolution” around until it has lost all of its true meaning. They write that “the day after the revolution” everything will be coming up roses. Hogwash! There has never been a peaceful, non-violent, non-chaotic revolution in the history of the world, and there never will be. Most of the time, “revolution” means violent change; and violent change generally means anarchy and chaos. While this may appeal to a minority of twisted minds, the vast majority of Americans abhor violence. They will never elect to use it unless they feel so desperate that they have no other choice.

Revolution does not guarantee that the “good guys” will win, either. There are plenty of Right-wingers just aching for a chance to set-up a fascist society which they control outright. Many of these Right-wingers are the very working-class people that Stratman hopes to educate and convert over to his way of thinking.

Finally, there are so many philosophical differences among people on the Left, how can we preach solidarity and unity to others when we do not practice it ourselves?

In the end, I must stick with my original thought that David Stratman promotes an idealistic program for change that has no hope of succeeding.

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January 13, 1998
Judging from DB #87, New Democracy is wrong about many things. With all of their errors, however, they are way ahead of most DB writers in dealing with issues facing activists.

The union I work for is relatively democratic and the union I came out of in West Virginia is entirely run by members with relative success. Because I organize workers every day I know that unions can take many forms and reflect different pressures. I say "relatively democratic" and "relative success" because no working class organization has been fully democratic and successful while being combative; our consciousness and our organizations evolve in dialectical relationships.

Spotlighting the AFL-CIO leadership as the primary enemy is a common error among the ultraleft. It misunderstands or ignores the debates taking place within the labor movement, gives the bureaucracy too much credit and misses the historical moment we're living in.

The most interesting debate taking place within the labor movement concerns the service, mobilizing and organizing models of unionism. Why is this debate not reflected in the left press? The people who determine this debate do so because they organize or represent workers with varying degrees of success. Unions within the AFL-CIO use different models and locals within unions use different models. This would be so even without bureaucracy: workers adopt structures which correspond to their work situations so that some organizations are relatively decentralized while others are more centralized. Democracy stands as a thing apart from centralization or decentralization.

I don't believe that most workers understand that we are involved in a class war, despite the presence of working class resistance to capitalism and affirmative working class values. American workers have rarely gone beyond a "libertarian populism" which is part syndicalism, part reformism, part socialism and part religion. This gives our struggles a vibrancy but also imposes limits on what we are able to win and allows openings for bureaucratic leadership. It is to the credit of union reform movements that they generally reflect the tensions between our vibrancy and our limitations.

Stratman is correct in saying that concerns over wages and working conditions and working class values drive activism. This should serve as a rationale for taking part in union reform efforts because most reform efforts give values shape and content, draw activists into debate and provide challenges which break down fear barriers. Railing at unions from the outside, putting forward an agenda from outside of our struggles and not defining one's struggles in relation to power is a do-nothing strategy.

Stratman's spectrum goes from "intimate acts of personal kindness" to "public acts of class war" but lacks a workable
formula for moving from individual acts to mass action. The
ultraleft is uncomfortable with more than criticism: who among
the DB activists does analysis and organizes? Union
activists operate from a more complex paradigm than Stratman
conceives of. The people I work with are clear about class war
and working class values. We express these concepts differently
than Stratman does because workers are rarely there. I don’t
use rhetoric because it is a language of powerlessness.

Has New Democracy done something to merit using "we" when
discussing working class struggles? It rings as hollow as Jon
Bekken talking about "us working stiffs" in The Industrial
Worker. Speaking of the working class being "defeated" implies
there was a classwide battle we lost. What battle was this?
Who is Stratman paraphrasing when he gives his version of what
union reformers say? Has he dialoged with them? Has he thought
strategically about relationships of forces? Why does Stratman
counterpose the interests of organizers to working class values
and see the social relations of workers apart from economic
conditions (rather than in a complex relationship with one
another)? It is a series of false dichotomies.

No one I work with disagrees with Stratman’s assessment of union
bureaucrats, class collaboration and the nature of capitalism.
He’s more likely to get arguments from the rank and file about
this. The art and science of organizing consists largely of
taking ownership and taking ownership of a struggle.
We would disagree with putting UFCW leaders, Yokich, Sweeney
and New Directions in the same category. The experience of
organizing around issues of power allows us to see a spectrum
of possibilities that Stratman doesn’t see.

It’s great to talk about building a movement of working people
for democratic revolution, but how does it follow that trashing
the AFL-CIO is the first step to take towards that? This sounds
more like provocation. The place to begin is with learning
organizing skills and organizing co-workers around power issues
and analyzing the struggle with others who also do organizing.

Stratman’s idea for discussion groups is a good one. I believe
that most DB writers will have a hard time with even that tiny
step, however, having become used to talking only with one
another for so long. His suggestion approximates what some
Russian and American populists attempted in the last century.
Stratman underestimates the talents and abilities real
communication and organizing takes. The "key to success"
-- whatever that is--lies as much in a "message of struggle and
hope" as it does in how that message is advanced and structured
and who advances it.

For all his anti-marxism, Stratman makes the common error of
thinking of the working class and the capitalist class as if
they were either masses or collections of individuals at war
with one another. This doesn’t describe class relations, makes
our fight abstract and doesn't deal with values in a historic context. Class should be understood as a constantly occurring process grounded in shifting relations between people; it is more verb than noun, more history than static categories or stasis. "Working class" and "capitalist class" should be a form of shorthand used to describe relations. Talking of a class war without talking about historic class relations is powerlessness finding itself. Instead of historic class relations we get the tragic plea that when millions of working people understand what little New Democracy is saying the "salvation of the world" will occur.

The way is open for people on the libertarian left to try out their ideas. The reformist left is dispersed, the labor movement is resurgent and people are searching. It would be interesting to see New Democracy and the World Socialists do something or the DeLeonists try to build an SIU which doesn't compromise. Why the inability to act when even the clumsy IWW manages to put up an activist facade?

---Bob Rossi
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(from p.2)

revolution?" Although most of Irving Silvey's article is directed toward the De Leonist Society of Canada, he has at Stratman in an addendum which Dave may be hard put to answer.

Next the De Leonist Society of Canada faults me for questioning their hardline stand on whether the day-to-day struggles of workers are reform efforts. The DSC goes on to argue that workers should not be organized into socialist industrial unions until they are class conscious and presumably sound on socialism. I reply to their letter. Barbara Shawl-Jolly defends her understanding of socialism against the statement I made in the DB87 review of her pamphlet that her vision of socialism seemed remarkably like capitalism. Her letter is followed by my reply.

"The Failure of the Working Class" by Anton Pannekoek, the Dutch council communist. Pannekoek came to the socialist movement as a young student in the natural sciences. He became an astronomer of some prominence and besides theoretical works wrote for the movement on scientific subjects. I have an old Kerr pamphlet Marxism and Darwinism, which he wrote around 1910. This essay, which came to me from the internet, was first published in Dwight Macdonald's Politics in 1946. I suspect that a half century later most of us would agree that our class still can't see anything better than capitalism on the horizon and aren't yet desperate enough to search. As usual we end with some notes, announcements, and short reviews.

Finances

We very nearly held our own financially during the past two months. In fact, had it not been for the post office box rent, we would have had a surplus. Also, if you check the final balance given in the last issue against the beginning balance per the bank statement in this issue you will find what seems to be a gift from Old Kent Bank that more than makes up for any shortfall in revenues from subs and donations. Perhaps this generosity derives from feelings of guilt. Until recently the DB didn't have to pay a

(to p. 16)
Dear DB,

You may well ask, "Is this only one of those nasty, sarcastic replies to the DLSC's (De Leonist Society of Canada's) attempt to dismantle De Leon's concept of Socialist government?" Perhaps. But I prefer to believe otherwise and that, as Snoopy would put it, "Here's the Red Baron up in his Fokker cautiously scouring the skies, swiveling his head to left and right in search of the enemy. There is one scooting away into cloud cover. But the Red Baron is on his tail and has him in his sight. Aeh! Aeh! Aeh! Aeh! Aeh! Aeh! Oh! Poor sod. He never had a chance. Give the brave lad a salute." Get the picture? The DLSC is dead in the sights and my finger is on the trigger. To ensure a quick and merciful end to its flights of fancy the DLSC would do well, before time runs out, to keep its promise to admit the error of its way. Of course, few knowing the DLSC will hold their breath while waiting.

For several years in DB, the DLSC has touted its plan to wed De Leon's politically sensitive industrial constituencies, the SIU (Socialist Industrial Union), with an administration based on geographical constituencies. The response from DB readers to this titillating bit of legerdemain has been poignantly mute. Aside from myself and a few brave souls, the DLSC position has gone unchallenged, if not unnoticed. Is it because most are in agreement with it, or is it because most couldn't care less? When I first subscribed to DB, it was with the impression that it was a device to encourage Marxist, anti-Marxist and non-Marxist encounters. Not only that. I thought the term "socialism" to be useful in stimulating those encounters. So, what's one to think when a plan is passed off as socialist that crudely contradicts its most elementary principles, yet raises so few hackles from the readers? Also, where are all the other old ex-SLP reprobates who should be concerned over the DLSC's diddling of De Leon's SIU? Fending off the diddler is not hard, as you shall see. When stripped to bare essentials, the DLSC's plan to de-construct Socialism is revealed for what it is.

To begin, the DLSC tells us its version of Socialism must make room for two groups of people: 1. those IN the SIU, the SIUSe; and 2. those NOT in the SIU, the 'at-large populace', or ALP. The SIUSe labor to produce the necessities of life. The ALPs do not. All are members of geographic locales and vote on 'social' matters. Voting on 'industrial' matters is the exclusive right of the SIUSe. The NEEDS of the ALP are supplied by the SIUSe. The ALPs supply NAUGHT. The first thing to note about the DLSC version of Socialism is that it consists of a group, the ALPs, that live off the labor of another group, the SIUSe. This is a parasitic relation typical of the exploitation of labor in class-divided societies. As noted by S. A. Resnick and R. D. Wolff, on page 20 of 'KNOWLEDGE AND CLASS, A Marxist Critique of Political Economy, University of Chicago Press, 1987,

"...consider the Marxian notion of class, an economic process. It is defined as the process of producing and appropriating surplus labor. Laborers are understood to do a certain amount of labor sufficient to produce the goods and services their current standard of living requires. Marx calls this "necessary labor". However, laborers in all societies perform more than necessary labor. They do what Marx calls "surplus labor". This surplus may be retained by the laborers, individually or collectively. Alternatively it may be appropriated directly and immediately by non laborers. The latter case is Marx's precise definition of exploitation: when the class process involves..."
non laborers appropriating the surplus labor of laborers."
Hence, it cannot be viewed otherwise than that the DLSC proposes a
Socialist Society in which SIU members are to be exploited by non-SIU
members.
Though some of our readers must suppose that this burst is more than
sufficient to down the DLSC, and think even to spot some dirty, brown smoke
blowing from its nose cone, we should not underestimate its skill or forget
the high degree of perseverance and determination it has demonstrated in
earlier dog fights. However, never fear. There is still an unfired round
left in the other barrel of the Red Baron’s twin gun, also loaded with
another socialist principle recklessly ignored by the DLSC. That is the
principle of collaboration, alias cooperation, alias reciprocation, alias
the beloved principle of share-and-share-alike which includes, equally with
food, comfort and shelter, that essential item, WORK. However, an
equitable distribution of this vital commodity is not deemed
demographically feasible by the DLSC, who believe there to be technologica
grounds preventing it. In accordance with this belief, it insists on
Socialism holding fast to ter-political instruments to ensure that those
without work will not be deprived of influence. After all, why should
anyone lack, work or no work?
No sharing of work???? Exploitation of labor???? Strange kind of
socialism? You bet! Now the clouds have been blown away. All the better
to catch what Snoopy’s snuff sniffs. Caught in the open by the Red
Baron, the DLSC plan shreds its ailerons, rips its wires and loses its wings.
In a vain attempt to avoid the inevitable, its desperate aerial
maneuvers afford the DLSC no respite from pursuit by its nemesis whose twin
bursts have damaged it beyond repair. There it goes! We salute as down in
flames spirals the DLSC. Adieu, brave adversary! Adieu!
But wait! The Red Baron, who thought himself without further
challenge, is beset by another foe who, hedgehopping unnoticed over the
hedgerows, has slipped up on him shadow-like and is nipping at his tail.
Thus positioned, Monroe Prussack, though armed with a lighter suite of
armament than the DLSC, is relying heavily on a twisting maneuver created
by the DLSC that accuses the SIU of stripping retirees and senior citizens
of the benefits Capitalism currently affords them. Struck by several
rounds of this remorseless attack, the Red Baron calls on still untapped
reserves of skill to perform a maneuver only his iron nerves are capable of,
the one-up-and-under-over-handed-barrel-roll. Lo and behold, poor
Monroe finds the tables turned. The Red Baron now has him in his sights
instead, but his guns are already emptied on the DLSC. What has he left?
Oh! Ha! He pulls his trusty Luger out of his cockpit glove compartment and
fires with deadly aim at M. Prussack, hitting him straight between the ear
with the Law of Exchange Value. Whence his head clears and, moments before
he spins out of control, Flight Lieutenant Mr. M. P. remembers, too late,
that retirees are numbered amongst the non-productive, cast-off elements of
Capitalist society and exert no influence upon it other than what their
financial position allows. For most this accrues as a claim against
profits, which is a no-no to Capitalists who work night and day, despite the
U.S. Constitution, to rid themselves of this drain on their assets. In
a socialist society, production will be for use, not exchange for profit.
Older persons won’t be shuffled off to obsolescence in the face of market
dictates. Unconstrained by the law of exchange value, their contributions
need not be considered either non-productive or less-productive than the
youths in the SIU, for whom they will remain as guides and counselors in
their shops. As his lids close on the brilliant light that has mercifully, we hope, illumined his last moments, Monroe Prussack descends to solid earth with wrenching suddenness. Farewell, noble heart!

Having disposed of the DLSC and Monroe it would be nice, now, if only those naugahide rats who insist on using the term 'political' so loosely that it loses all semblance of its original sense, would clean up their acts as well. To be truthful it wouldn't be wise to wait for this to happen since the confusion due to its indiscriminate use is so widespread both outside as well as inside DB. But, if we admit to each other that a 'POL(L)-itical process' is nothing more than a 'POL(L)-ing process', we will find ourselves already fifty percent purged of that confusion. The other fifty percent concerns the common sense observation that a POL(L) must be authentic. In other words, it must reliably disclose the mode of the POOL [PO(O)LL] in which the POLLED [PO(O)LLed] exist. The derivation of 'polis'; from which stems 'politic', relates to 'pool', which means an in-gathering or a combination of interests. The dictionary is only of modest help in getting at this kernel of meaning, since it is primarily concerned with vernacular which often reflects the more disingenuous (outlandish) uses to which these terms are put.

The terms GOVERNMENT, POLITICAL, POLITICAL DEMOCRACY and STATE fare little better; more often than not they are used interchangeably. From our freshly agreed upon (above) understanding of the term POLITICAL, it must be obvious that there are few governments, past or present, STATE or STATELESS, without a POLLing process of a sort. The PO(O)LLS from which the PO(O)LL elicit responses vary with the circumstances. To the degree that they are more or less inclusive, they may be more or less democratic, autocratic, dictatorial, oligarchic, etc. POL(L)S may be formal or informal, official or unofficial, secret or public. They may be conducted on the basis of Xs, $s, bullets, or other power manifests.

Further confusion can be dispelled by an agreement that STATE government is the POL(L)-itical administration of PROPERTY coextensive with a geographically defined territorial domain. PROPERTY includes everything below, above and upon the earth. Today, POL(L)-itical government is almost universally STATE government due to historically established advantages afforded property rights. Were property rights to lose supremacy, the POL(L)-ing process would persist compliant with the next social order's scheme of government, as De Leon opined by insisting on a ballot box in each shop. With the passing years one would have expected SLP spokespersons, of all people, to have stopped using 'POLITICAL' as synonymous with 'THE STATE'. Yet even they continue to stroke this ambivalence, as evidenced from the Stephen Emery paper provided us in DB 80, page 24, where he critiques "...the erroneous idea that the governing agency of Socialist society will be political in character—i.e., a state". So the odds are that, regardless of our (above) agreement, confusion over the terms STATE, non-STATE, and POL(L)-itical government will continue to plague DB. To avoid this when referring to the STATE it will clarify matters to use the more descriptive term, TERRA-POL(L)-itical Government, or TERRA-POL(L)-itical Administration. Doing so should smooth discussion of the NON- TERRITORIAL, STATE-less, POL(L)-itical DEMOCRACY championed by De Leon.

In its DB 85 critique of my article in DB 82, 'AN SIU RE-VISTA', part 1', the DLSC asked me to explain how to achieve Democratic goals in a society bereft of TERRA-POL(L)-itical parties. Its request leapfrogged material anticipating this request that had already appeared in DB 84.

There, laid the brush to show the work in progress, but be...
There, in 'AN SIU RE-VISTA'D, part 2', principles of SIU organization were laid out that had been developed by the SLP's Los Angeles Section and brought before the 1993 SLP National Convention. Simple forms of democratic process other than TER-FOL(L)-itical were amply described to show that TER-FOL(L)-itics do not define Democracy. Principles were brushed broadly, not for lack of the ability to render their details, but because it seemed best to wait until they were asked for. Despite their lack of adornment, these principles and those of De Leon are of a piece. In DBs 72, 83 and 84 they stand open to criticism by any who care to make the effort; unfortunately for the DLSC, it neglected the opportunity.

If in its next life the DLSC opts to scrap its TER-FOL(L)-itical suit for democratic wear more in keeping with Socialist ideals, it may consider applying itself to the question of matching up individuals to votes in a more varied and selective way than simply one up, one down. This possibility was raised in an earlier article of mine which mentioned that tribal rites of passage suggest a variety of structural solutions to the dilemma of apportioning voting power throughout a society mirrored within an infinitely broad and inclusive SIUniverse.

As for you other poor sods, beware of the Red Baron! - aeh! aeh! aeh! aeh! aeh! aeh! aeh!

Addendum:
Over the years the contributions of Dave Stratman have been greeted with both appreciation and criticism by readers of DB. Whether he has shown the ability to grow under the scrutiny given his ideas by numerous critiques is questionable. However, the consensus seems to be that we must credit him with good intentions. Having read his latest draft manifesto, 'FIGHT TO WIN: A STRATEGY FOR LABOR' in DB 87, and taking at face value his request for input to make it more effective, it seems only fitting that my two cents be added to his worthy cause. In the event Mr. Stratman wishes to truly make of his draft a manifesto that contains the elements required to fan the flames of revolution and bring forth the animated exuberance he effects to believe necessary, he must, like all fairy tale princes, answer the three questions set by the genii having power to grant his wish. The questions are:

1. Where do we come from? 2. Why are we here? 3. Where are we going?

Though he devalues Marx's contributions on several counts, he would be well advised to note with what vigor the Communist Manifesto applied itself to those three questions in captivating the working class genii. If one were to think that the answers once given no longer elicit interest, let him think again. The first one, by itself, has engaged the intellects of countless scientists in every field of inquiry. Consider the attention to original beginnings undergoing new impetus from DNA science and its impact on Evolution theory. As this affects the social sciences, the community of interests they reflect ceaselessly contribute a steady stream of communications, some of which impact the questions we want answers to.

This amidst intensifying interstellar probing into the earliest moment of the universe that involves a perception of its present, as well as, future state. Reconceptualizing the past obviously requires updating answers to questions no. 2 and 3. Due to the never ending circularity of the process it is not a job to be wished on any one. Nevertheless, if Dave feels up to the regimen Marx imposed on himself, there is much more material at his disposal now than Marx had to work with and, in some respects, more
accessible than it was to him.

It is notable, however, that Dave’s draft makes no effort at answering question no. 1, while a faint attempt to answer No. 2 can be discerned only with great difficulty, i.e. in his address on "The Attack on Public Education". The answer to question no. 3 likewise fails to offer solid fare, the failure masked by an over reliance on the term "revolution", in effect, diverting the reader from a lack of substance. Perhaps Dave feels that by starving it he can overcome the genii.

Even if Dave were not to believe in our genii; he obviously believes it necessary for his manifesto to deal with questions that have an appearance of profundity. The three questions that he selects to answer are:

1. What is the enemy? 2. Why does it defeat us? 3. How do we destroy it? Unfortunately, Dave’s manifesto doesn’t begin to address the synchronic diversity evocative of its facile summary. It also naively (Should we say, insultingly?) presumes that these questions are of only recent interest, whereas in the last century, alone, they have been asked countless times over in every conceivable circumstance. By ignoring the thickly layered history of class warfare his responses, even to his own questions, do no more than scratch at surfaces. This is not sounding too helpful here, so perhaps its best to call it quits for now. But, if after all the above, Dave still wonders what point is being made, it’s that our ever loving, working class genii continues to insist, “Don’t expect me to lay my ass on the line for no good reasons”.

Yours Truly,

IRVING SILVEY

(monthly fee) so long as I kept a balance of $300 in the account. Now I don’t have to keep a certain balance, but the bank collects a $7 monthly account fee.

Contributions: Aaron Fenwick $2; Anonymous $17; Joe Tupper $40; Tom Ronse $4; John Craven $7; Bob Rossi $5; Clark Dismeyer $17; Anonymous $4; Donisio Villereal $4. Total $100. Thank you, comrades.

BALANCE December 24, 1997 (per bank statement) $384.29

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(to p. 21)
Dear Frank:

We are puzzled by your introductory remarks to our article, ORGANIZING FOR SOCIALISM (1), which appeared in DB36. Quoting as follows:

"Next the De Leonist Review criticizes The People, the Socialist Labor Party paper for asserting that workers in the socialist industrial union (SIU) will engage in the day-to-day struggles of our class. I was under the impression that The People's position is that held by De Leon, who saw the socialist industrial union as serving a two-fold purpose of advocating socialism and carrying on the class struggle."

You imply that in criticizing The People's position on the "day-to-day struggles," The De Leonist Society of Canada is thereby also at odds with what you believe was De Leon’s position on this matter. Where does this lead?

In the first place, because you neither elaborate nor qualify, we can only conclude that you are dismissing our position out of hand simply because it appears to contradict De Leon's position. As we see it, however, the important thing is not to view the socialist program as "carved in stone" but as a program that should be abreast of our day.

Looking at the matter more closely, the question you raise about the "day-to-day struggles" appears to have two main sub-divisions: (1), What in fact was De Leon’s position? and (2), Upon what specific grounds do we justify our own position?

As to De Leon’s position on "the day-to-day struggles" (i.e., on "immediate demands" or "something now"), there is ample evidence that De Leon held not only one view but also a second view during the course of his SLP career--positions which are not merely distinctly different but positions that oppose one another.

Thus in support of your "impression" that De Leon saw one of the roles of the SIU to be that of "carrying on the class struggle," we quote from his January 23, 1906 Daily People editorial titled Industrialism (See the SLP publication INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM--Selected Editorials):

'"Industrialism is that system of organization of the Working Class that...organizes the WHOLE WORKING CLASS into ONE UNION...in order to wrestle as ONE BODY for the immediate amelioration of its membership, and for their eventual emancipation by the total overthrow of the Capitalist Class, its economic and political rule."

Obviously, however, De Leon's above position on the day-to-day struggle for "immediate amelioration" is contradicted and negated by the dictums of his which we quoted in our article ORGANIZING FOR SOCIALISM (1), to wit:

"Workers who ask for 'improved conditions' do not ask for freedom. They ask for a lightening of the yoke of slavery."

"Request a little, when you have a right to the whole, and your request, whatever declamatory rhetoric or abstract scientific verbiage it be accompanied with, works a sub-
scription to the principle that wrongs you."
"The 'demand' is ONE—it is the proclamation of the goal. The so-called 'immediate demands' are legion....The moment things that are not in the nature of a 'demand,' because they are not the goal, are raised to the dignity of a 'demand,' they are apt to be, and generally are, confused with the goal itself."

*  

As to our own position: The passage of time has immensely clarified the question of the role of the Socialist Industrial Union, has freed the question from ambiguity and ambivalence, has in our opinion RULED OUT industrial organization for "immediate amelioration"—not merely because by and large such an aim has proved itself an IGNIS FATUUS, but worse, because this very aim of "something now" has patently militated against organization for Socialism by crowding the socialist goal out of sight, out of mind.

But after all, wasn't this latter lesson delivered as early as 1908 by the IWW debacle? Nowhere have we seen the case put better than it was put by Olive Johnson (Editor of the Weekly People 1918-1938):

"My own position has already been made clear in 1909 in an Open Letter to the American Proletariat, of which I am unqualifiedly approved...I said in the Open Letter of 1909:"

"'All true Socialists hailed the advent of the I.W.W. The revolutionary forces were amalgamating within its folds and it looked for a moment as if Socialist unity of action would be accomplished by the force of logic....But the struggle the I.W.W. passed through during its short existence and the fiasco it now presents demonstrate one point beyond all doubt. A Revolutionary Industrial Union cannot be organized with an uneducated, conservative, or simply rebelliously discontented proletariat. The hope of the revolutionists in the I.W.W. was to get the workers into touch with the movement and then to educate them. It proved a complete failure as in the nature of things it had to fail.....The only alternative remains that the wage workers must be educated in Socialism before they can be organized upon industrial lines.'" (From the Report of the Weekly People editor to the 16th National Convention, SLP of America, 1924.)

And what of today? Added to the IWW experience that organization for "something now" was incompatible with organization for Socialism, is a veritable floodlight of current evidence that not only nails "immediate amelioration" an illusory aim, but also transforms the goal of "eventual" emancipation into a goal that with each passing day is more urgently needed! For example:

As regards "immediate amelioration": The capitalist class has not been idle! Merely consider that this class has itself "carried on the class struggle" in a number of ways, not the least of which has been the erection of legal breastworks against "class struggle" unions that grow
"too big for their britches." (Note here a classic case of "union-busting" under the administration of former U.S. president Ronald Reagan—the government's vicious response to a strike by the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO)—a response which invoked all the power of the Justice Department to launch both civil and criminal actions against the striking workers, and a response which in the end had the union decertified!)

As regards "eventual emancipation": From all quarters come repeated warnings that are surely loud and clear enough for us all to hear, evidence that Capitalism is now totally unable to cope with the Pandora's Box of environmental perils and social evils which it has engendered and loosed upon civilization. Such evidence underscores Socialism's warning to workers that their safety, indeed their very survival, appears to hang upon their IMMEDIATE Socialist Reconstruction of Society!

In a nutshell: We, too, advocate working-class industrial organization, but not (repeat not) for the purpose of "carrying on the class struggle"—the struggle against capitalist encroachment, a struggle that has been keeping workers on the treadmill of "immediate demands." No, we call upon workers to build a Socialist Industrial Union not to "carry on" their struggle for "a fair day's wages" but to END that struggle forthwith by emancipating themselves from their wage-slave status! Accordingly, what we hold to be the Socialist Industrial Union's "two-fold purpose" is (1), to enforce the RIGHT of a socialist ballot and (2), to conduct production and distribution in concert with policy guidelines of Parliament or Congress.

At the same time we are convinced of the wisdom of the principle of swift! STU organization, when the time becomes ripe, as enunciated by Olive Johnson:

"Agitation and education through the class-conscious political revolutionary organization are the necessities of the hour. When workers start to move, they will and must move quickly—and then it is all-important that they move without blundering." (INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM, 1935.)

Finally, if watchwords could be used to further emphasize our objection to "carrying on," instead of ending, the class struggle, we think they could well be found within the following passages:

* "Instead of the conservative motto, 'A fair day's wages for a fair day's work!' they [the workers] ought to inscribe on their banner the revolutionary watchword, 'Abolition of the wages system!'" --Marx

* "Unite! Unite upon the only economic principle capable of backing up the right of the labor ballot with the might to enforce it! Unite...to overthrow the political robber burg of capitalism, backed by the general strike against, or, rather, the general lock-out of the capitalist class from the industrial fields that it has usurped. Unite for the emancipation of the working class, and to save civilization from a catastrophe!" --De Leon

Sincerely,
The De Leonist Society of Canada
Reply to the De Leonist Society of Canada:

I did not intend to sound as if I were dismissing the De Leonist Society’s position and certainly not because I felt that it was at odds with De Leon’s thinking. Daniel De Leon was much more pragmatic than the SLP or labor historians give him credit for. Events and changes in circumstances changed in De Leon’s position on unionism as well as other matters. And since he was editing a daily paper during many of these years, the changes were chronicled daily. As the DLS is aware, the Socialist Labor Party’s (SLP) involvement in the union movement dates back to the party’s founding in 1876. Prominent party members helped to found the AFL and worked as organizers and held leadership positions in both the Knights of Labor and the AFL prior to De Leon’s joining the SLP in 1890. In the early nineties the SLP’s efforts to extend its influence in the unions were blocked by the union hierarchy, first in the AFL and then in the Knights. It was these events that led to the SLP decision to organize a “socialist” union in 1895, a union that could serve as a transmission belt for getting socialist ideas across to the workers. De Leon, who was a far more militant socialist than his predecessors in the editorship, believed that with the large SLP membership in many unions in and around New York City and in New England the nucleus of a new classconscious union movement could be built that would replace the KL and AFL.

The model seems to have been the German Social Democratic Party’s relationship with the union movement rather than any new pattern of industrial unions. That came later when the SLP’s union became a constituent part of the IWW at its founding in 1906.

By that time the SLP and the revolutionary wing of the Socialist Party were studying the European syndicalist theories that led De Leon and others to develop the plan of an “industrial republic of labor” that De Leon elaborated in his 1905 speech on the Preamble of the IWW, since renamed Socialist Reconstruction of Society. This kind of thinking along with increasing disgust with the corruption in the AFL among workers led to the Chicago convention that organized the IWW. The wide spectrum of political views in the new union created the kind of organizational infighting that creates splits. In 1908 the anarcho-syndicalists, based mostly in the West, forced the political syndicalists (the SLPers), mostly in the East, out of the IWW. The politicals immediately held a convention, declared themselves the genuine IWW, and eventually established a permanent headquarters in Detroit.

Olive Johnson’s 1909 letter dates from that period of De Leon’s disillusionment with unionism of all kinds. But whatever she and De Leon felt about the likely success of organizing unclassconscious workers in 1909 didn’t stop the Detroit IWW, supported by the SLP press, from continuing to organize in the way that became a tradition in both IWWs. Because only a few factories were organized permanently by either of the IWWs, members in a locality were organized in mixed locals. This was the case in most large industrial cities in the East. When a strike threatened in an unorganized plant, workers would turn to one of the other of the IWWs or to the capitalist unions who would furnish organizers. Many of the strikers would join the union, and a large local would result which would evaporate after the strike was over. Then in the case of the IWWs the hard core would return to the mixed local and continue their street corner agitation. The Paterson, New Jersey, silk workers’ strike is an example. In 1913 the Detroit IWW led a strike, which was lost. In 1914 the Chicago IWW led a strike which was also lost. In both cases the IWWs continued as mixed locals.

I note that Olive Johnson’s letter is reprinted in the SLP’s 1924 Proceedings of the National Convention ten years after De Leon’s death. In 1924 she and Arnold Peterson, the SLP’s national secretary were busy destroying the Detroit IWW, which had changed its name to the Workers International Industrial Union around 1915. It seems reasonable to guess that the letter was reprinted as part of that internal party struggle.
As I recall, the SLP’s position on reform, as it was presented informally by members of Section Wayne County (Detroit), began with the point that a person could not join the political arm of the movement, the SLP, until the members were satisfied that he was “sound” on the party’s program. This insistence on soundness would not extend to the socialist industrial union, membership in which was a part of the socialist education workers would receive.

In the meantime we would distribute leaflets—hundreds of thousands in Detroit alone some years. It was these that would educate the working class and create, if not immediate class consciousness, then certainly the seed thereof. The Detroit membership had given up on the idea that events would create a pre-revolutionary SIU movement during which the workers would imbibe class consciousness. They assumed that when the revolutionary moment arrived, the more advanced workers would carry the presently apathetic with them and either organize industrially and seize the workplaces (or vice versa) and that with the education provided earlier by SLP literature and by events and agitation during the revolution would proceed to build socialism.

To me this still seems the more likely scenario. Your requirement that the working class be educated and class conscious before organizing the SIU strikes me as being rather close to the thinking of the World Socialists (SPGB). But what is involved here, it seems to me, is not a matter of principle but rather a question of judgment—which alternative is more likely.

One more thing: I think that some of the De Leon quotations you use opposing reforms apply only to the party and to political reforms. The SLP has always regarded the efforts of workers to improve their standard of living as a part of the class struggle. Thus the party always supported strikes, for example while at the same time pointing out the need for workers to abolish the wages system.

—Frank Girard

(from p. 16)

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BALANCE February 24, 1998 $353.68

Fraternally submitted,

Frank Girard
for the DB
Dear Editor:

Thank you for mentioning the Mahanaim Institute’s publication: Socialism: A Religious Issue, in your latest issue of The Discussion Bulletin.

May I make a few suggestions regarding your comments, or should I say comment (singular), on my use of the word profit, more specifically, with regard to the workers receiving the “profit” from their labor. I assume from your statement that you concur with some segments of the socialist community that, under socialism, there will no longer be money, as we know it, as the accepted medium of exchange. Instead, the economy will function on vouchers. I got the impression, therefore, that you regard the term profit as a synonym for money, hence, a dirty word!

History shows that all social groupings, whether primitive or highly technologized and sophisticated, need a medium of exchange if there is to be any significant economic relationship among people, whether of the same, or different cultures, languages, or forms of work. A medium of exchange requires that it have similar or equal value to the product or service it purchases. This system works fine in a simple agricultural community where the value of a chicken, goat, or bag of corn is easily recognized.

However, in societies as highly industrialized, technologized, diverse, and scattered as is the capitalist system, it is virtually impossible to assess a fair exchange rate between goods and services without money as we know it. The disparity would be obvious when agricultural workers try to exchange foodstuffs, cotton bales, lumber or animals for automobiles, books, clothing, or body massages.

It appears that the word “profit” needs to be defined, because it seems to be a “boogie word” for some socialists, a misunderstood concept for others. Profit, per se, is not a dirty word, nor is it a prerogative of capitalism alone. The problem is not profit itself but who receives it, and whether it is distributed equitably and fairly to those whose labor created it.

Profit is the value remaining after the costs of production and distribution have been paid. This value is created by the workers, no matter what the economic form of production. When I use the term “profit” I am referring to the value remaining after the costs of production and distribution have been paid. I assume that socialists are not so hostile to capitalism that they throw out the baby with the bath water. Hopefully they realize the need for selling their products and services for a little more than what it cost to produce them.

If they don’t, they are not only woefully idealistic; they are ignorant of the facts of economic life as it has been lived throughout history. If socialism does not allow for excess value after production costs have been paid, how can the workers purchase goods and services they need, but do not produce themselves?

The difference between the costs of production and distribution, and the return on the sale of those products and services, which I call “profit”, will be distributed to the workers in the factories, stores, offices, etc., whose labor created those items or provided those services. That is the meaning of what I said in the pamphlet, and which you quoted. I am sure that if you read more of our publications, you would realize that they can never be accused of merely advocating another form of capitalism under the guise of socialism.

I must admit I found your comments confusing. What do you mean by
“collective/social” ownership and the abolition of the profit system? As you noted in the quoted portion, we said that the workers themselves will own the factories, corporations, etc. Yet, you suggest that in our next edition we consider the possibility of collective (social) ownership. I believe we already acknowledged that concept in the portion you quoted. With regard to the abolition of the profit system, how does one do that and still carry on a vital necessity of not only a nation’s economic life but its social and political life as well: the exchange of goods and services? Perhaps you can clarify your comments in a coming issue of the Bulletin.

You really missed the boat with regard to the point of the pamphlet. Perhaps I did not make myself as clear as I might have. The point I make is that it is time for the socialists to realize that looking to the unions for economic salvation is like trying to ride a dead elephant. The unions are dead in the water, fellas, in case you haven’t noticed.

I grew up in Wisconsin, and spent my married life in Michigan. I’ve seen the unions in un-action and dis-union for many years. We need to come to socialism from a totally new direction. The old direction—the unions—has never worked in ways that can adequately provide the basic needs to all the people, unionized or not. If you wish to point a capitalist finger at any organization, you had better point it at the unions.

Therefore, I propose that the socialist publishers stop trying to raise the unions from the dead and look for a new source of economic radicalism. That source is the Christian Church system. The reason being that the teachings and lifestyle of Jesus—the church’s purported savior—are as close to socialist ideals and activism that any group or person has yet reached. However, one would never recognize the socialist Jesus by reading the New Testament books, which were translated—grossly inaccurately—from the original Greek.

I have been translating and studying these original Greek texts for 20 years, and have come to the conclusion that it is those early documents that provide the justification and prescription for a new humanitarian socio-economic system. We are in the process of finalizing and publishing the results of my Greek translations with regard to the church’s doctrines, and how they violate Jesus’ teachings of social and economic justice and activism.

Granted, Jesus’ work appears to be directed mainly at treating the symptoms of an unjust and inequitable socio-economic/religious culture. However, we now have the knowledge and the resources to not only TREAT our socio-economic ills, but to CURE them. In so doing, we can completely change our culture so that all people receive all the necessities of life, as well as its amenities.

Therefore, instead of looking to the unions, or any other secular institution, as the source for economic revolution, we should be aiming our sights at the Christian religious system. It is the church that, for centuries, has claimed to have a monopoly on Truth. However, as I study the church and its activities, it is obvious that Christendom, contrary to its leader’s edicts and example, actually supports, participates in, and is a beneficiary of, the capitalist system. Because institutional religion, namely Christianity, is one of the strongest forces, if not THE strongest force, that fashioned this country’s value system and cultural ideals, it is there that we must begin socio-economic change.

I might note here that we mainly publish materials about Christianity and its false doctrines. The pamphlet you received was the only one that dealt directly with the socialist concept. However, all our publications, even though they deal primarily with
religious doctrine, still bring in the socialist ideals, because we believe that the church is
the only segment of society that holds possibilities for transforming society.

We believe this is so because Jesus' teachings were obviously socialist in
cell. And, because Christians look to Jesus as the focal point of their worship, it
seems logical that we should use his teachings to provide a solid justification and
foundation for eradicating capitalism and establishing a socialist economic system.

I would also add that we should be looking to today's social thinkers and writers
for the blueprints of a socialist economic system. I receive several other socialist
publications, and all of them lean heavily on socialist writers and thinkers who wrote a
century or more ago. Times have changed. Marx, Engels, DeLeon, Dunayevskaya, et al,
cannot possibly provide the building blocks we need to build a 21st-Century socialism. I
am losing patience with periodicals that do little more than quote from people who wrote
regarding conditions that no longer exist.

Times have changed. We need a socialism for the 21st Century because the
socialism that Marx, Engels, et al., wrote about was directed to the 20th Century.
Obviously, their socialism never took hold, for reasons that are painfully obvious to
today's socialist thinkers. Therefore, we need to develop a new socialist concept, one
that speaks to the 21st Century. We cannot "put today's new socialism into the old
socialist wineskins of a century ago".

We must deal with technological changes and world outlook that those writers
could never have foreseen, or for which they could never have prescribed a "socialist"
blueprint. Let's hear from people living today who are trying to find solutions to the
problems that we face. It would also help if we stopped acting like editors, looking for
the nits in each others' writings, instead of recognizing the substance each has to offer.
This would give us more time to put together a detailed and workable socialist blueprint
for tomorrow.

Here's to a Socialist Tomorrow,

Barbara Shaw-Jolly
Co-Director with C.W. Jolly
The Mahanaim Institute

(from p. 32)

<PEOPLE AT HOME, the Amsterdam Chronicle raises some questions about the Dutch attitude toward
freedom, at least on the official level. About 30 pages in this issue are concerned with the drug culture
in the Netherlands with an interesting excursion into the social role of drugs as a device for ruling class
control. Other articles include a comment on the 1997 Euro Summit in Amsterdam; a review of
Cultures of Unemployment: A Comparative Look at Longterm Unemployment and Urban Poverty, in
which the Dutch authors examine the legacy of Dutch social democracy; and a three-page article
entitled "A Trip Through the World of Dutch Liberalism," which I expected would assert that the term
was an oxymoron, but which turned out to be historical/philosophical -- but worth reading. 60 pages,
US $5, f10.00 ( a six-issue sub US$25 or f50.00) from Kanaalstraat 66-huis, 1054 XX Amsterdam, The
Netherlands. Please make out checks to Grace Hogan.

--fg
Dear Readers,

I concur with Barbara Shawl-Jolly’s view that efforts toward socialism demand that we take into account the hundred or more years of technological progress and industrial organization that have transpired since Marx and Engels were writing. I also agree that in the U.S., at least, the overwhelming majority of the people who will establish socialism regard themselves as Christians. It also seems reasonable to assume that as the economic condition of these workers continues to deteriorate and they begin to seek alternatives, their ideas of a new social system will be colored by their religion. Unlike many other non-believers in the socialist movement, I have no problem with that. Certainly the working class could choose a worse goal than that inferred from the words and actions of Jesus.

At the same time we must remember that 2000 years have passed since Jesus preached his message of peace, charity, and the brotherhood of man. We must also remember role of the Christian church during those 2000 years and the crimes committed in the name of Jesus by people who regarded themselves as Christians. Obviously the ideals inspired by Jesus are a shaky foundation on which to build the new Jerusalem. Marx at least had a clear idea of the nature of the economic system that had developed out of feudalism and understood how its class division and the economic mechanism by which we are exploited. We need this understanding in order to build socialism. Central to socialism is the matter of who will own and control the means of production. Socialists argue that ownership must be social, that the productive wealth must be owned in common by all of society. Ms. Shawl-Jolly seems to envision socialism as a sort of cooperative system in which the owners of a company, for example, are the workers. This more widely dispersed system of ownership would operate under the same money/wages/market/profit system that obtains today.

This would seem to be a good point to answer Ms. Shawl-Jolly’s statement that “History shows that all social groupings whether primitive or highly technological need a medium of exchange...” The fact is that exchange—and thus a medium for it—did not exist during the hundreds of thousands of years when our primitive ancestors lived as members of extended families prior to the birth agriculture and the ability to produce surpluses. It is surpluses and the appropriation and ownership of them which created the class divisions in human society. A socialist society will produce goods for use, not for profit. There will be no exchange. We will share the product just as we will share the work of production.

Exchange implies ownership. Today the capitalist class brings to the market the wealth of commodities created by its wage slaves. We workers, on the other hand, have nothing to sell, nothing to bring to the market except our ability to work, which we sell to the capitalist for a wage—if we are lucky enough to get a job—in order to live. This economic process is the basis of capitalism. In Barbara S-J’s baby-bath water metaphor, this monstrous system for exploiting workers is the “baby.” Any successful effort to get rid of the bath water of war, poverty, war, starvation, environmental degradation, crime must get rid of that monstrous baby too.

Most DB readers will agree with her analysis of capitalism’s union movement. As for my nitpicking, I have always assumed that a reviewer had an obligation to respond critically. If we are going to—in Barbara S-J’s words—“put together a detailed and workable socialist blueprint for tomorrow,” we had better subject it to the strictest kind of “nitpicking.”

—Frank Girard
The Failure of the Working Class (1946)

Anton Pannekoek

In former issues of Politics the problem has been posed: Why did the working class fail in its historical task? Why did it not offer resistance to national socialism in Germany? Why is there no trace of any revolutionary movement amongst the workers of America? What has happened to the social vitality of the world working class? Why do the masses all over the globe no longer seem capable of initiating anything new aimed at their own self-liberation? Some light may be thrown upon this problem by the following considerations.

It is easy to ask: why did not the workers rise against threatening fascism? To fight you must have a positive aim. Opposed to fascism there were two alternatives: either to maintain, or to return to the old capitalism, with its unemployment, its crises, its corruption, its misery—whereas Nationalism Socialism preserved itself as an anti-capitalist reign of labor, without unemployment, a reign of national greatness, of community politics that could lead to a socialist revolution. Thus, indeed, the deeper question is: why did the German workers not make their revolution?

Well, they had experienced a revolution: 1918. But it had taught them the lesson that neither the Social Democratic Party, nor the trade unions was the instrument of their liberation; both turned out to be instruments for restoring capitalism. So what were they to do? The Communist Party did not show a way either; it propagated the Russian system of state-capitalism, with its still worse lack of freedom.

Could it have been otherwise? The avowed aim of the Socialist Party in Germany—and then in all countries—was state socialism. According to program the working class had to conquer political dominance, and then by its power over the state, had to organize production into a state-directed planned economic system. Its instrument was to be the Socialist Party, developed already into a huge body of 300,000 members, with a million trade-union members and three million voters behind them, led by a big apparatus of politicians, agitators, editors, eager to take the place of the former rulers. According to program, then, they should expropriate by law the capitalist class and organize production in a centrally-directed planned system.

It is clear that in such a system the workers, though their daily bread may seem to be secured, are only imperfectly liberated. The upper echelons of society have been changed, but the foundations bearing the entire building remain the old ones: factories with wage-earning workers under the command of directors and managers. So we find it described by the English socialist G.D.H. Cole, who after World War I strongly influenced the trade unions by his studies of guild socialism and other reforms of the industrial system. He says:

"The whole people would no more be able than the whole body of shareholders in a great enterprise to manage an industry... It would be necessary, under socialism as much as under large scale capitalism, to entrust the actual management of industrial enterprise to salaried experts, chosen for their specialized knowledge and ability in particular branches of work... There is no reason to suppose that the methods of appointing the actual managers in socialized industries would differ widely from those
already in force in large scale capitalist enterprise... There is no reason to suppose that the socialization of any industry would mean a great change in its managerial personnel."

Thus the workers will have got new masters instead of the old ones. Good humane masters instead of the bad, rapacious masters of today. Appointed by a socialist government or at best chosen by themselves. But, once chosen, they must be obeyed. The workers are not master over their shops, they are not master of the means of production. Above them stands the commanding power of a state bureaucracy of leaders and managers. Such a state of affairs can attract the workers as long as they feel powerless against the power of the capitalists: so in their first rise during the 19th century this was put up as the goal. They were not strong enough to drive the capitalists out of the command over the production installations, so their way out was state socialism, a government of socialists expropriating the capitalists.

Now that the workers begin to realize that state socialism means new fetters, they stand before the difficult task of finding and opening new roads. This is not possible without a deep revolution of ideas, accompanied by much internal strife. No wonder that the vigor of the fight slackens, that they hesitate, divided and uncertain, and seem to have lost their energy.

Capitalism, indeed, cannot be annihilated by a change in the commanding persons, but only by the abolition of commanding. The real freedom of the workers consists in their direct mastery over the means of production. The essence of the future free world community is not that the working masses get enough food, but they direct their work themselves, collectively. For the real content of their life is their productive work; the fundamental change is not a change in the passive realm of consumption, but in the active realm of production. Before them now the problem arises of how to unite freedom and organization; how to combine mastery of the workers over the work with the binding up of all this work into a well-planned social entirety. How to organize production, in every shop as well as over the whole of world economy, in such a way that they themselves as parts of a collaborating community regulate their work. Mastery over production means that the personnel, the bodies of workers, technicians and experts that by their collective effort run the shop and put into action the technical apparatus are at the same time the managers themselves. The organization into a social entity is then performed by delegates of the separate plants, by so-called workers councils, discussing and deciding on the common affairs. The development of such a council organization will afford the solution of the problem; but this development is a historical process, taking time and demanding a deep transformation of outlook and character.

This new vision of a free communism is only beginning to take hold of the minds of the workers. And so now we begin to understand why former promising workers' movements could not succeed. When the aims are too narrow there can be no real liberation. When the aim is a semi- or mock-liberation, the inner forces aroused are insufficient to bring about fundamental results. So the German socialist movement, unable to provide the workers with arms powerful enough to fight successfully monopolistic capital, had to succumb. The working class had to search for new roads. But the difficulty of disentangling itself from the net of socialist teachings imposed by old parties and old slogans made it powerless against aggressive capitalism, and brought about a period of continuous decline, indicating the need for a new orientation.

Thus what is called the failure of the working class is the failure of its narrow socialist aims. The real fight for liberation has yet to begin, what is known as the workers' movement in the century
behind us, seen in this way, was only a series of skirmishes of advance guards. Intellectuals, who are wont to reduce the social struggle to the most abstract and simple formulas, are inclined to underrate the tremendous scope of the social transformation before us. They think how easy it would be to put the right name into the ballot box. They forget what deep inner revolution must take place in the working masses; what amount of clear insight, of solidarity, of perseverance and courage, of proud fighting spirit is needed to vanquish the immense physical and spiritual power of capitalism.

The workers of the world nowadays have two mighty foes, two hostile and suppressing powers over against them: the monopolistic capitalism of America and England, and Russian state capitalism. The former is drifting toward social dictatorship camouflaged in democratic forms; the latter proclaims dictatorship openly, formerly with the addition "of the proletariat," although nobody believes that any more. They both try to keep the workers in a state of obedient well-drilled followers, acting only at the command of the party leaders, the former by the aid of the socialist program of socialist parties, the latter by the slogans and wily tricks of the Communist party. The tradition of glorious struggle helps keep them spiritually dependent on obsolete ideas. In the competition for world domination, each tries to keep the workers in its fold, by shouting against capitalism here, against dictatorship there.

In the awakening resistance to both, the workers are beginning to perceive that they can fight successfully only by adhering to and proclaiming the exactly opposite principle—the principle of devoted collaboration of free and equal personalities. Theirs is the task of finding out the way in which the principle can be carried out in their practical action.

The paramount question here is whether there are indications of an existing or awakening fighting spirit in the working class. So we must leave the field of political party strife, now chiefly intended to fool the masses, and turn to the field of economic interests, where the workers intuitively fight their bitter struggle for living conditions. Here we see that with the development of small business into big business, the trade unions cease to be instruments of the workers' struggle. In modern times these organizations ever more turn into the organs by which monopoly capital dictates its terms to the working class.

When the workers begin to realize that the trade unions cannot direct their fight against capital they face the task of finding and practicing new forms of struggle. These new forms are the wildcat strikes. Here they shake off direction by the old leaders and the old organizations; here they take the initiative in their own hands; here they have to think out time and ways, to take the decisions, to do all the work of propaganda, of extension, of directing their actions themselves. Wildcat strikes are spontaneous outbursts, the genuine practical expression of class struggle against capitalism, though without wider aims as yet; but they embody a new character already in the rebellious masses: self-determination instead of determination by leaders, self-reliance instead of obedience, fighting spirit instead of accepting the dictates from above, unbreakable solidarity and unity with the comrades instead of duty imposed by membership. The unit in action and strike is, of course, the same as the unit of daily productive work, the personnel of the shop, the plant, the docks; it is the common work, the common interest against the common capitalist master that compels them to act as one. In these discussions and decisions all the individual capabilities, all the forces of character and mind of all the workers, exalted and strained to the utmost, are co-operating towards the common goal.
In the wildcat strikes we may see the beginnings of a new practical orientation of the working class, a new tactic, the method of direct action. They represent the only actual rebellion of man against the deadening suppressing weight of world-dominating capital. Surely, on small scale such strikes mostly have to be broken off without success—warning signs only. Their efficiency depends on their extension over larger masses, only fear for such indefinite extension can compel capital to make concessions. If the pressure by capitalist exploitation grows heavier—and we may be sure it will—resistance will be aroused ever anew and will involve ever larger masses. When the strikes take on such dimensions as to disturb seriously the social order, when they assail capitalism in its inner essence, the mastery of the shops, the workers will have to confront state power with all its resources. Then their strikes must assume a political character; they have to broaden their social outlook; their strike committees, embodying their class community, assume wider social functions, taking the character of workers' councils. Then the social revolution, the breakdown of capitalism, comes into view.

Is there any reason to expect such a revolutionary development in coming times, through conditions that were lacking until now? It seems that we can, with some probability, indicate such conditions. In Marx's writings we find the sentence: a production system does not perish before all its innate possibilities have developed. In the persistence of capitalism, we now begin to detect some deeper truth in this sentence than was suspected before. As long as the capitalist system can keep the masses alive, they feel no stringent necessity to do away with it. And it is able to do so as long as it can grow and expand its realm over wider parts of the world. Hence, so long as half the world's population stands outside capitalism, its task is not finished. The many hundreds of millions thronged in the fertile plains of Eastern and Southern Asia are still living in pre-capitalist conditions. As long as they can afford a market to be provided with rails and locomotives, with trucks, machines and factories, capitalist enterprise, especially in America, may prosper and expand. And henceforth it is on the working class of America that world-revolution depends.

This means that the necessity of revolutionary struggle will impose itself once capitalism engulfs the bulk of mankind, once a further significant expansion is hampered. The threat of wholesale destruction in this last phase of capitalism makes this fight a necessity for all the producing classes of society, the farmers and intellectuals as well as the workers. What is condensed here in these short sentences is an extremely complicated historical process fitting a period of revolution, prepared and accompanied by spiritual fights and fundamental changes in basic ideas. These developments should be carefully studied by all those to whom communism without dictatorship, social organization on the basis of community-minded freedom, represents the future of mankind.

Pannakoek's text first appeared in the American journal Politics, (Vol 111 No 8, September 1946, pp 270-72).

This version is taken from the English translation of Pannakoek and the Workers Councils by Serge Bricanier. (Telos Press, St Louis, 1978). It has not been checked against the version in Politics.

Another version appeared in a usenet group on the internet which may be taken from the version in Politics. Though it is similar there are a number of differences, and it closer to the rather "dutch" English of Pannakoek's translation of his Workers Councils. It suggests that this version may have been corrected in some way. Clarification by anyone who knows would be most welcome.
NOTES, ANNOUNCEMENTS, AND SHORT REVIEWS

*Reflections on Marx’s Critique of Political Economy*, Kamunist Kranti’s thinking on aspects of Marxism, reviewed in DB86, have arrived at PO Box 1564 two weeks ago and are now available free and postpaid from the DB. Just send a card requesting a copy or an E-mail order at figrard@iserv.net.

*Internationalist Perspective* has a new U.S. address: (mention no name) PO Box 4023 | Staten Island, NY 10304. IP apologizes to readers who wrote to the New Jersey address and had their letters returned and asks them to try again.

*Internationalist Notes* is the publication of a group in sympathy with the Communist Workers Organization in the U.K. It is published in a four-page 8 1/2 by 11 inch format. Of the twelve issues published to date, numbers 11 and 12 are available. Articles in #11 include “Syndicalism and Revolution,” a highly critical view of the IWW and “Should Revolutionaries Work in Reactionary Trade Unions? A Reply to Lenin.” Number 12 features “Russian Strikes,” along with a review of Goldner’s “Communism Is the Material Human Community” and a note on wildcat strikes. Free from P.O. Box 2044, Madison, WI 53703.

*Red & Black Notes: A Magazine of Socialist Discussion* has developed into an interesting eight-page publication oriented, like *Collective Action Notes* toward council communism. It is gratifying that a political position with no English language voice except occasionally published translations of the French journal *Echanges* has blossomed so vigorously in the past couple of years. The winter 1998 issue contains “Some Remarks on the Re-organization of the Revolutionary Left” by Cajo Breidel as well as articles on “Means and Ends” and on Czech treatment of its Roma minority and some short reviews. Five dollars for four issue; $1 for a sample; from PO Box 21013, 665 8th Street, SW, Calgary, Alberta T2P4H5 Canada.

*Socialism and Religion* was published originally in 1910 by the Socialist Party of Great Britain. *Common Ownership*, a journal connected to the New Zealand branch of the network of World Socialist parties published this edition. In the first section, “The Need for Frankness” the author tries to head off the objections that I and apparently many other non-religious socialists have leveled at the open anti-religion of the Socialist Party of Great Britain and its Companion Parties, namely that this position puts an unnecessary barrier between the socialist movement and the working class. His argument is simply that since Marxism is a materialist world view, only hypocrites, political tricksters, and opportunists who are guided by political expediency would refrain from openly avowing their atheism. What the author seems to forget is that socialism and its goal, the emancipation of our class is not exclusively Marxist. Thus to deny membership in the party of socialism to religious, non-Marxist workers is unjust.

The author argues his point well in the pamphlet’s 32 A4 pages, using the same historical approach one finds in *How the Gods Were Made*, the pamphlet John Keracher wrote on the same subject with more sparkle and less dogmatism, pointing out that socialism was an “unreligious movement.” (Charles H. Kerr, Chicago 1929)

A sentence in Adam Buick’s introduction would seem to confirm the futility of pamphlets like this. “In other words religion cannot disappear until the conditions of which it is an ideological reflection disappear.” In still other words, the revolution will be accomplished by a working class,
many of whom are religious. L2 plus postage (L3 [S$] including postage for overseas orders) from the Socialist Party of Great Britain, 52 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7UN, England.

*The Eclipse and Re-Emergence of the Communist Movement* by Gilles Dauve and Francois Martin was first published in English by the Detroit publisher, Black & Red, in 1974. The “revised edition” contains a new foreword, omits a preface, and—for what it is worth—omits two appendices and truncates a third (Appendix 2, “Notes on Trotsky, Pannekoek, Bordiga” becomes “Note on Pannekoek and Bordiga.” The body of the pamphlet consists of the three essays in the 1974 edition. The first, “I. Capitalism and Communism,” reads like a socialist study guide with basic instruction in history and economics. Headings include “A. Wage Labour as a Social Relation,” “B. Community and the Destruction of Community,” “C. Commodities”, and on through “K. Communism as a Present Social Movement.” “II. The Class Struggle and Its Most Characteristic Aspects in Recent Years” deals largely with workers’ struggles in France and Europe in the late sixties and early seventies. The introduction to “III. Leninism and the Ultra-Left” begins, “The invaluable merit of the German Left and a myriad of ultra-leftist grouplets has been to hammer in the primacy of workers’ spontaneity. The potentialities of communism lie in the proletarian experience and nowhere else.” The section goes on to contrast Leninism with the revolutionary theory developed by the German communists who rejected Leninism in the years immediately after the Russian Revolution, when the USSR was consolidating its hegemony over the revolutionary wing of the socialist movement throughout the world. 85 pages, 3L (S$) from Antagonism Press, c/o BM Makino, London WC1N 3XX, England. (Send cash or leave payee blank on checks) U.S. readers might contact AK Press Distribution, PO Box 40682, San Francisco, CA 94140. I was told AK sells it although it isn’t listed in the 1998 catalog. Antagonism Press expects to publish soon a collection of texts by Bordiga and “For a World without Morality” by La Banquise, both free.

*Beyond Capitalism, Socialism, Anarchism: Auto-Narchy – The Ultimate Democracy* by A. Orr. In his introduction the author suggests that the fall of the USSR demands that “Those who oppose oppression, exploitation, and inequality must now suggest alternatives to Socialism as well as to Capitalism, to Nationalism as well as to Privatisation.” Orr’s solution is rooted in modern technology and a profound belief that the people are capable of solving their problems best without the aid of managers. His suggestion is direct democracy on a global scale via electronic communication. The physical constraints that limited direct democracy to the number of voters whose hands could be counted in even the largest hall has been overcome by the possibility of electronic voting. No need to abolish private ownership, capital, and the state; we need only decide to make the “leap into democracy so participatory as to make all former political systems look like so many varieties of dictatorship.” “Electronic communication can turn the whole country into a parliament and every citizen into a member of parliament. This is not a-narchy but auto-narchy.” Write to Akiva Orr, 25 Oranim St., Kfar-Shimron, Israel 46910 for information on how to obtain this 20 page, 10 by 7 inch, pamphlet or download it from 1) http://www.autonarcy.org.il 2) http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/8778

*Aufheben* No. 6, Autumn 1997. 49 A4 pages, contains a major article on the nature of the Soviet system: “What was the USSR? Towards a theory of the deformation of value under state capitalism” which includes two long articles, “Trotsky’s theory of the Soviet Union as a degenerated workers’ state” and “The theory of the USSR as a form of state capitalism within Trotskyism.” The other articles are “Death of a Paper Tiger...Reflections on Class War” and a review article, “Whatever happened to the Situationists?” L2 (S$), subscriptions 3 issues UK £5, Europe £6.50, Elsewhere £8 from Aufheben, c/o
Prior House, Tilbury Place, Brighton BN2 2GY England

Perennial Books has just issued three catalogs of discount books with price reductions ranging from 40 to 70 percent. The catalogs are “Social and Political Theory & Philosophy” with titles by Castoriadis, Connolly, Chomsky, Bookchin, Freire, and others; “Marxism, Anarchism, Utopian Studies” with books by Luxemburg, Gramsci, Avrich, Stirner, Ricardo Flores Magon, Marx, Fourier, and others; “Radical History and Biography & Labor Studies” with books on the Spanish Civil War, the Russian Revolution, Peasant Uprisings, the Radical Press, Mondragon and much more. Available from Perennial Books, P.O. Box BI4, Montague, MA 01351.

Red & Black: An Anarchist Journal, No 27 Autumn 1997. This issue consists of a review of the Ken Loach film “Land and Freedom,” with the bulk of the review consisting of the reviewer’s take on the political side of the Spanish Civil War. In a twelve-page, well documented article by Greg Mallory, “The Industrial Workers of the World” the author proposes “to trace the ideas and actions of the IWW in the USA and Australia in order to see how these affected the emerging Communist Party.” The article discusses at some length the role played by the DeLeonist branch of the IWW, the Detroit IWW later the Workers International Industrial Union (WIUI). Actually the article doesn’t show much evidence of IWW involvement in the founding of the CP of Australia except that a couple of members were present at its founding convention. Most of the article is about the activity of the two IWWs in Australia prior to about 1920. 43 pamphlet-size pages. $5 for a single issue from PO Box 12, Quaama, NSW, Australia 2550. Make out checks to J. Grancharoff.

Amsterdam Chronicle Volume 1, Number 4 is an English language journal published by Grace and Mike Hogan in the globally famous city of sexual freedom. “The Amsterdam Chronicle makes available ideas not on offer in other publications. The history of ideas reveals the diet of illusion we all consume. The Amsterdam Chronicle is a survivor’s guide that examines the totems and taboos of our time.” With the cover headline “POLICE SPY ON: <PEOPLE IN COFFEESHOPS, <FOREIGNERS,” (to p. 24)