**DISCUSSION BULLETIN**

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ABOUT THE DISCUSSION BULLETIN

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

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

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

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What is Missing from New Democracy - Response to Dave Stratman

Dave Stratman seems to fall victim to an array of misconceptions that cloud his view of social relations under capitalism. He lays the problems of all revolutionary movements at the feet of "Marxism". His view of revolution is one of a vague ideal form of democracy that must be achieved in order to realize a future without capitalism. His view of "Marxism" is clearly derived from the failed state-capitalist regimes like the ex-USSR. If one's view of what is Marxism is derived from experience with Stalinist, Trotskyist or Social-Democratic parties, clearly Marxism has failed. Historical materialism is not an ideology, it is a form of analysis meant to cut through lies and ideological baggage, it is meant to be dynamic, constantly analyzing social forces within a historical and material context. In the end his proposals aren't much different from those of past revolutionary movements, not all of which have emanated out of Marxism.

The year 1970 did not see more strikes than at any other time in US history since 1946, the level of strikes were not large. US census bureau figures put the number of strikes at 381, this does not include strikes of less than 1000 people. Even if all these strikes were included in this figure it still would not make for a large wave of strikes. Indeed, the number of strikes appears to be higher in the year 1969 according to government figures. The wave of strikes that peaked in 1946 were the culmination of three years of growing unrest that originated in the movement against the unions no-strike pledge and needless wartime rationing measures. This unrest was quickly recouped by the unions after the war ended. In fact since WWII, strikes have stayed at a consistently low level. Post war prosperity was not meant to control workers, it would be more accurate to say that it was meant to put capitalism back on its feet. None of the movements of the fifties, sixties and early seventies were revolutionary, certainly not those nationalist movements that took power in countries like China in the 40's or Vietnam during the interventions of the French and US war machines.

I agree that Unions are integral in suppressing workers' strikes. Unions help the capitalists maintain order within the working class. Dave Stratman does see the true role that unions have played during strikes. I do not completely agree with his assumptions about government attacks on education. Workers are a part of a class, this includes children, the attacks on schools are primarily meant pull capital out of education to hand it over to the capitalists.

Democracy assumes that there is inequality, it is a compound of two Greek words which mean roughly, rule of the citizen body. There is always an implied distinction between those who are considered citizens and those who are not considered citizens. Obviously, the true citizenship in democracy is given to the wealthiest class of society. The view of democracy as an ideal form is utopian. Like any view of an absolute external ideal form, it cannot exist in a world of concrete economic and political power, it is a mirage that all workers and militants are expected to obediently worship.

Stratman, follows by stating, "the failure of communism has made it appear that there is no possible alternative to the capitalist system." It is unfortunate that he is unable to really look at the nature of the so-called communist countries. He sees the label that both the Stalinists and rulers of capitalist democracy have given it and accepts it. This is where a historical materialist analysis would be particularly helpful, in actually looking at the true class relations of countries that called themselves "socialist". What better way to mobilize workers under the banner of national capital than by simply calling it "socialist".

I also agree with his rejection of reformist solutions, because they do not work, however he continues by putting forward a view of class struggle that sees struggle as a conflict between workers "values" and "capitalist values". I don't think that capitalism values anything but profit and that workers values are as diverse as the working class itself. To talk of values while individualizing class struggle is fine but it seems as if in his historical and political
generalizations that he strays off into a more utopian view of a revolutionary society at the same time that he seems to demonstrate a fear of analyzing social forces at work. The trap which is common today among many militants is that everything even slightly critical of democratic ideology and thought is considered to be innately repressive and evil. It follows in this view that if democratic capitalism is repressive than it is not truly “democratic” enough. I suggest that democracy is a system of capitalism, of the domination of one class by another, like the state-capitalism of the USSR but not usually as overtly repressive.

The vision of a new more “real” form of democracy is one that is too easy for demagogues to plug into. Ex-Stalinist intellectuals like Hobsbawm over the years have effortlessly transformed themselves into lovers of democracy. Social-democracy out of a supposed pragmatism, became an organ of official opposition within the democratic state. The entire history of revolutionary movements within the United States was moved by the idea that by not appearing too “Marxist” or revolutionary that workers would start to flock to them. From the Socialist Party USA expelling its left-wing in 1919 in order to be palatable to “masses” of people. The Socialist Labor Party in the late 1800’s in isolating the more militant, often armed, workers from its ranks did so solely out of pragmatism, worshiping at the altar of electoral politics. In today’s Labor Party social-democrats, Stalinists, ex-Stalinists and Trotskyists all vie in appearing necessary to be seen as palatable to a union apparatus and despite their attempts to avoid suggestions of “Marxism” still are viewed by those they seek to attract as being “too far left”. Expunging the taint of obsolete revolutionary thought is no guarantee that workers will listen to a message of revolution.

When Stratman states that “We have to reach out to the whole world.” It seems as if he is proposing something that “failed” Marxism already proposed before him - a world revolution. How qualitatively different is the plan of New Democracy? A new vision to replace capitalism cannot be that much different from other visions of a world free from the domination of capital, basically, a world without wage-labor, money, poverty, national frontiers or war. At the root, Dave Stratman’s view of Marxism is what state-capitalist and nationalist guerrilla bourgeoisie have reinterpreted it to be.

He blames the failures of all revolutions of the last two centuries on “Marxism” but it is as if workers had nothing to do with these revolutions or that indeed there were no other revolutionary ideas other than those of the Marxists. The first communist uprisings weren’t influenced by Marx’s ideas rather they had there origins in the social upheavals of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The first use of the term communist is found in Babeuf’s call to the people of Paris to resist repression during the French revolution in the 1790’s. The Paris Commune was influenced by the ideas of Blanqui in part, but more accurately it was influenced by the betrayal of the French government in its attempt to disarm the workers of Paris in the face of an invading army. This communism was organized along the lines of the Paris ward system.

The Soviet Revolution likewise was not the product of Marxist ideas but the product of workers fed up with imperialist war. It was organized along the lines of soviets both in the workplace and community wide, this was not the work of workers who read Das Kapital and then decided to start a revolution. The Bolshevik party subsequently betrayed the principles of communism as they were written in the first platform of the Communist International. They betrayed the German Revolution by arming Von Seeckt, who aided the destruction of revolutionary workers at the hands of the Social-Democratic Freikorps. They betrayed the Chinese Communist uprisings in Shanghai and Canton by giving support to the Nationalist Kuomintang. They supported Mustapha Kemal in Turkey as he set up a nationalist government and massacred the young Turkish Communist Party. As the soviets of workers were gradually decimated by civil war, and capitalism was reinforced with the New Economic Policy, the Bolshevik party assumed greater and greater control over the economy. As the world revolution failed so did the perspective of the revolutionary Bolsheviks. Were these failures of Marxism? No, they were
ailures caused by the objective situation in the world at the time. They were betrayals, failures of revolutionary vision, by those that the workers entrusted as leaders. Those who adhered to their revolutionary principals were murdered or forced to recant their positions.

I would ask Dave Stratman of New Democracy just what his vision of a revolutionary society is, what does its organization consist of? His use of the word democracy is a dodge for not enunciating a clear idea of what a revolutionary society is to be. What is this great vision of his? It sounds a lot like other revolutionary ideas of the past. A revolutionary movement should have some sort of link with the past, not to vainly assume that others have not thought of these things before. It is this link with the past that allows for a historical perspective that does not falsely attempt to be neutral. Where theory is derived from experience in struggle. Where the revolutionary vision of a future society does not appear in a puff of democratic smoke but has grown out of experience, not adhering to some textbook state-capitalist idea of one stationary “Marxist” analysis but like the more successful revolutionary groups did after the First World War, to attempt to use this analysis as a vibrant changing method of viewing events and placing them in a material historical context which allows revolutionaries a means of putting the lessons learned into practice. I ask Dave Stratman to clarify his ideas and rebut my criticisms. Thank you.

A. Smeaton  
For Internationalist Notes (P. O. Box 1531, Eau Claire, WI 54702)

(from p. 2)

9, my computer, which had been unplugged for eight weeks, refused to wake up. Finding someone capable bringing it back from its slumber consumed time as did getting material for this issue in a form that could be printed.

The eight-week vacation was spent in India along with another retired teacher, also an ex-SLP member. This was his third trip to India. His familiarity with the country made the trip possible. Although our purpose was mainly sightseeing along with some business on his part, I hoped to visit the two groups in India that share the thinking of the political sector that I call “revolutionary libertarian socialist,” for lack of a better term. These are the World Socialist Party of India, headquartered in Calcutta, a companion Party of the Socialist Party of Great Britain and Kommunist Kranti, an independent revolutionary group with no close political relatives in the West that they or I know of.

Both groups welcomed the visit. The WSP, who were holding their annual conference during February, offered to put us up and allow me to participate in the conference as a speaker. Unfortunately several things interfered with our getting to Calcutta, which is nearly a thousand miles southeast of Delhi, where our trip began. For one thing, I brought the plague to India (actually a bad cough, leftover from a cold I had earlier) and coughed my way through from Delhi through Rajasthan for about three weeks until we decided that I had better go to a doctor. Recovery also took time. In addition my friend was having serious problems with an important part of his reason for the trip, obtaining motor scooter parts and arranging for their shipment back to the U.S. And finally we found that it was very difficult to travel in India without having planned an itinerary and made reservations ahead of time. For example, it took us five hours to get train tickets on one leg of our journey. I regret not having reached the Calcutta WSP conference and hope to publish documents or a report on it when they are available.

I was able to spend about three days total with members of the Faridabad and Delhi KK groups. Much of this time was spent in discussion of the ideas in their pamphlet The Self-Activity of Wage Workers, reviewed briefly in DB92. DB95 will contain a report of my thinking on what strikes me as an entirely new approach to “socialist” agitation. Along with this I intend to publish major parts of Loren Goldner’s “Revolutionary Termites in Faridabad” as well as KK’s response for the benefit of those
In the most recent DB FW Girard suggests that Libertarian Labor Review is uncritical of Noam Chomsky, perhaps "as a result of Chomsky's public expression of his political sympathies with anarcho-syndicalism and -- we learn from the review -- his membership in the IWW." I think this is somewhat unfair, as LLR has on several occasions criticized Chomsky's positions. That we prefer not to repeat ourselves in every review hardly means that we have abandoned our critical faculties.

We interviewed Chomsky in LLR #8. One exchange ran as follows (Chomsky's responses edited for space): "In some of your work you speak of efforts such as labor parties and other forms of participating in existing political structures as providing openings for education and organizational efforts of a more radical character. Some have argued that people become enmeshed in these efforts and are likely to lose sight altogether of whatever radical vision they once possessed and to perpetuate illusions that capitalism and the state can be made to work in the interest of the population as a whole.

Chomsky: "I sort of understand the point, but I'm not really sympathetic with it. ...

"Let's be quite concrete about this. If there were a labor party in the United States, I'd be against it. But I want it to exist, because it would create options that do not now exist. For example, it would create ways of focusing dissenting activity within something close enough to the mainstream to gain real power. And that would be important. ... Nevertheless, if such a structure existed I would be against it because it would be another form of coercion and control, which we should try to transcend. In fact, there's nothing wrong with saying that whatever exists I'd be against, because whatever exists I'll be trying to find out what's wrong about it and make it better. That's the kind of position one ought to take all the time. There's nothing wrong with saying I'm against everything, meaning I'll work within it, I'll try to improve it, I'll be happy if it gets improved, I'll then be against it because I want to improve it further.

LLR: "But isn't it possible that rather than working within these channels -- specifically political channels -- I think most people have concluded already cannot be made to work in their interest, I think that's why so many people don't vote, for example. The alternatives of direct action, organizing on the job, community in the efforts to recreate the working class oppositional culture we've talked about -- albeit on a new footing -- seem to have at least as much potential as working within existing legislative structures.

Chomsky: "But see, they're not alternatives. They are in parallel. ... Of course, everybody has finite energies and you have to decide how to distribute them. But it's not an alternative, in fact, you do just everything you can do."

The interview format does not lend itself to debate, but I cannot believe any readers did not understand that we disagreed with Chomsky on these points. Similarly, in a review of Chomsky's Class Warfare (LLR 20), we disputed Chomsky's argument that it was necessary to strengthen the federal government in order to defend against corporate power.

"In this instance FW Chomsky is not thinking very clearly. Setting aside the question of whether the U.S. government is actually responsive to the public (a rather dubious proposition), it seems quite clear that advocating a stronger state as a counter to the ruling class which controls it is not only inconsistent with our ideals, it moves us in exactly the opposite direction from where we wish to be going. Instead, we need to be building genuinely public institutions -- revolutionary unions and community organizations -- to counter the totalitarianism of the ruling class, and put an end to their power while we're at it."

Elsewhere in that review, we noted that "while Chomsky talks eloquently about the ways in which the current political debate is both debased and dangerous, he is on rather shaky ground when it comes to discussing solutions." It would be easy to cite several other examples.

So while we believe Noam Chomsky has made and continues to make important contributions and one of the few dissenting voices to reach a broad public, we have been critical of his views both on specific issues and on his general orientation. We intend to continue exploring these differences in future issues.

Jon Bekken, editorial collective
Libertarian Labor Review
PO Box 2824, Champaign IL 61825
Dear DB:

The DB02 issue contains much that in our opinion is off the mark. For instance:

According to Internationalism (as quoted by New Unionist):

"The essential elements of the revolutionary process demonstrated by the history of the workers movement are these:

* The working class develops class consciousness through a long and difficult struggle at the point of production and in the streets, moving towards political autonomy from other classes and an understanding of its historic tasks..." (Page 14.)

We take working-class class consciousness to mean working-class awareness of its historic mission to bring class rule to an end. Contrary to Internationalism's assertion, the history of the workers' movement does not appear to have demonstrated a developing class consciousness in the workplace. Rather than class consciousness it appears that job consciousness has to date occupied workers' minds front and center when at work.

Nor does it follow, as Internationalism would have it, that workers' struggles "in the streets" would help develop their class consciousness. Here, too, it seems to be a case of "otherwise and to the contrary." For the record demonstrates that when the political field became available for socialist propaganda, street struggles became thoroughly discredited as a working-class tactic. Is Internationalism not conscious of THAT development in workers' history? Let Engels bear witness to it, thus:

"The Communist Manifesto had already proclaimed the struggle for the general franchise, for democracy, as one of the first and most important tasks of the militant proletariat..."

"During the election agitation, it furnished us a means, such as there is no other, of getting in touch with the masses of the people that are still far removed from us, of forcing all parties to defend their views and actions against our attacks before all the people..."

"And so it came about that bourgeoisie and Government feared far more the legal than the illegal action of the workers' party, more the successes of the elections than those of rebellion.

"For here too the conditions of the struggle have essentially been altered. The rebellion of the old style, the street fight behind barricades, which up to 1848 gave the final decision, has become antiquated."

"Already in 1849 the chances of success were rather poor. Everywhere had the bourgeoisie gone over to the side of the governments, 'culture and possessions' greeted and feted the military marching out against the insurrections. The barricade had lost its charm; the soldier saw behind it no longer 'the people,' but rebels, agitators, plunderers, dividers, the drags of society..."

"Since then, much more has been changed, all in favor of the military...."
"On the side of the insurgents, however, all the conditions have become worse."

--Frederick Engels, 1895, in his introduction to Marx's *Class Struggles in France, 1848-1850.*

A sea change removed from Internationalism's "essential elements" is Charmian Skelton's *Revolution with the Ballot Box.* Speaking for the Socialist Party of Great Britain, Skelton correctly points out that "to abolish the state, you need first to gain control of it--you need political power." (DB92, page 5.)

So far, so good. But there is a problem. The SP of GB doesn't go far enough! The reader is left with the thought that the weight of public opinion, expressed through a majority vote for Socialism, would in and by itself ensure the desired control. It is here that De Leonists part company with the SP of GB and adopt the conclusion so forcefully explained by De Leon, thus:

"The futility of the ballot alone, however triumphant, was strikingly illustrated nine years ago during the first Bryan [William Jennings Bryan, Democratic party hopeful in the 1896 U.S. presidential election] campaign. The political temperature against the plutocratic rulers of the land had risen to a point that they, for a moment, considered the battle at the ballot-box lost in advance. That, however, did not disconcert them. Through their national mouthpiece, Mark Hanna, they threatened to stop production. In other words, they threatened to go on strike. The threat was no idle bombast. They could. It was known that they could. Craft unionism placed it in their power to do so. The threat had its effect. But let the capitalist attempt, under the pressure of the political temperature raised by the ballot of labor--let him attempt to strike. In possession of the might conferred and implied by the industrial organization of their class, the working class would forthwith lock out the capitalist class. Without political organization, the labor movement cannot triumph; without economic organization, the day of its political triumph would be the day of its defeat." --Daniel De Leon, in a 1905 address titled *The Preamble of the I.W.W.*

There is a final point that we wish to make at this time. It concerns the IWW's abandonment of the political process--its 1908 scuttling of the political clause which had appeared in the preamble to its constitution, which preamble had been adopted at its founding convention just three years before, to wit:

"Between these two classes [the working class and the employing class] a struggle must go on until all the toilers come together on the political, as well as on the industrial
By this act of dismemberment the IWW militated against the socialist movement. Repudiation of the political field meant and continues to mean repudiation of the one means of reaching the millions mass with a message aimed at awakening class consciousness among them. But this is not all. By chopping off the political clause the IWW threw away the political umbrella under which it had been permitted to preach revolution and, as De Leon had warned, became little more than a "conspiracy." Time after time De Leon pointed up the idiocy of this anarchistic, "bullets for ballots," "direct action" approach to resolution of the social question, action which, contemptuous of the political arena, would (and did) merely succeed in exposing its perpetrators to harsh State retribution.

In short, Frank, we think it was no narrow or petty posturing by De Leon and the SLP that characterized their castigation of the IWW for having deserted the political field. For this reason we are puzzled by your charge that the De Leonist exposure of the desertion was (and presumably in your opinion remains) a "sectarian" exercise. Quoting you as follows:

"As for De Leon stigmatizing the IWW as anarchist, certainly that is true, a typical sectarian charge." (DB92, page 9)

"Why did De Leonists stigmatize the IWW as anarchist? For the same reason the IWW referred to De Leon as a dictator; it was a convenient weapon in the sectarian rivalries of the early part of the century." (DB92, page 21.)

Sincerely,
THE DE LEONIST SOCIETY OF CANADA

REPLY:
I would argue that the DeLeonists left the IWW in 1908 has far more complex reasons than the removal of the political clause from the Preamble at the convention that year. For one thing the direct action majority that voted to deny De Leon his delegate status and thus his seat at the convention was the result of an internal political struggle, a falling out between the leadership of the SLP and that of the IWW. The SLP's opponents in the IWW headquarters who engineered the arrival at the convention of the "overall brigade" that provided them with the majority: Trautman, St. John, and Edwards were not anarchists. Nor, in any real way, were the overall brigade. In fact, the IWW continued to be run for the next ten years by staunch members of the very political left wing of the Socialist Party, including Bill Haywood. None of these were anarchists. Rather, the IWW leadership were concerned about what they regarded as the unproportionally great influence of the tiny SLP in the union. They felt that this, along with De Leon's authoritarian reputation and the SLP's hostility to the Socialist Party, prevented their recruiting in the latter. They seem not to have considered the possibility that De Leon's disciples would organize as the Detroit IWW and compete with them. But to say that elimination of the political clause in the Preamble made the IWW into an anarchist organization is simply wrong. I should add that the word partisan rather than sectarian more accurately expressed my meaning in my comment.

--Frank Girard
Dear DB

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Just to drive the point home about fascism that I made in my last letter, here are some quotes from a freshman university text called EUROPEAN DEMOCRACIES, written by Jurg Steiner. For those who do not understand the nature of fascism, or have been mislead by the propaganda of the authoritarian left, let this "Dick and Jane" of political science open your eyes.

The position of Neofacists is at the authoritarian extreme (as opposed to the other extreme, individualism, LG) because for them, authority has the highest priority. The nation counts more than the individual, whose main task is to serve the fatherland... the label (extreme right-winger) is in many ways misleading... They are rather spread all the way from the left to the right. This ambivalent attitude to the free market could be seen with Mussolini and Hitler... The notion of competition was too disorderly for them. Fascists advocated a strong state that would show leadership in economic matters...(and)... deep down felt only a disdain for the capitalist mentality... Mussolini was most explicit in the implementation of corporate ideas... A national assembly should bring together the interests of farmers, business, workers... It would only be necessary for Il Duce to give clear directions which way the country should go.

It should be obvious that the opinions of Libertarian, tax protesters, militias, Freemen, etc bear no resemblance to fascism whatsoever. They are extreme individualists - the opposite end of the spectrum. The authoritarian left with its desire that government should run everything is far closer to being fascist than they are. Slanderous opponents as fascists is an old trick the Leninists perfected back in the 1920's (eg., anarcho-fascism, social-fascism, and Trotskyite fascism) and is being used today by their children, the Political Correctness Squad. They hate the individualists because they are the greatest opponents of the authoritarian left's cherished dream - society completely dominated by state capitalism.

Frank questions a couple of points in my last letter. Yes, Germany was politically backward - compared to Britain, France the USA etc. Its governmental system, while not totalitarian was highly authoritarian. Much of the country was backward economically - some 40% peasant in the 1920's - and it was in the most backward areas like Bavaria and Junker-controlled East Prussia that Nazism flourished. Italy, especially the South, was a poor Third World country, with landlords and the Church dominating a poverty-stricken peasantry. Everywhere that fascism prevailed, (and Leninism too,) the Church long prior, had imposed a corporalist and collectivist world view upon the population. The individual was of secondary importance to Church and State. This was not the case in the USA, Canada, Australia etc, where the tendency was more the primacy of the individual. No one would ever call turn-of-the-century Germans "Rugged Individualists", but the label certainly applied to Americans. Totalitarian state capitalism, whether Leninist or Fascist, is the result of particular social, historical and economic conditions which simply do not exist to any great degree in the contemporary "democracies".

Larry Gambone
UNIONS: WEAPONS OF THE RULING CLASS

The main question in Frank Girard's text, which we want to respond to, is the union question – one of the most crucial issues facing the workers' movement. But first we want to clear up a few other issues raised in the text.

First Girard says that the Discussion Bulletin is a "libertarian" and not a DeLeonist publication. Girard's ongoing, strenuous defense of De Leon and his political legacy, as well as the many texts concerned with De Leon and DeLeonism regularly published in the Discussion Bulletin, had long given us the impression that it was linked to the DeLeonist political milieu, or an expression of DeLeonism. We meant no harm.

Regarding DeLeonism's serious confusions on the nature of bourgeois democracy, we refer readers to "Ballots vs. Revolution" in this issue of Internationalism.

Does the Ruling Class Conspire?

In his criticism of the ICC's statements on the bourgeoisie's 'conspiring' against the working class, Girard makes a mockery of what we said. He insists on an insidious vision of conspiracy. His comment on our leaflet around the time of the UPS strike is simply: "The difficulty I have with this leaflet is that it infers from events a ruling class conspiracy, whereas I think that our masters are just doing what comes naturally."

Yes it might just as well seem 'natural' for the ruling class, which insists on spreading and defending an illusion of "freedom" and "democracy", on making efforts to teach workers lessons: such as, follow the lead of the unions, the handmaidens of capital in this epoch....such as, vote in bourgeois elections can be an effective way to get your interests addressed.

The reality which Girard seems so reluctant to recognize is that the facade of elections and of the unions in this period, are expressions of systematic efforts to control the working class and to keep it from fighting on its own terrain. Yes, throughout this most of this century, it has been 'natural' for the bourgeoisie to make decisions and plans in a conspiratorial manner. Clearly, when the government and industry are preparing attacks on the standards of living of the vast majority of the population, the working class, they use lies and distortions and get the state-regulated, state-controlled unions to help sell the bad news.

Conspiracy is not simply the work of three crazy guys in a basement. Among the definitions in the dictionary for 'conspire' is the following: "to act or work together toward the same result or goal." A conspiracy is defined as "any concurrence in action; combination in bringing about a given result." *

Girard has no difficulty dismissing the Russian Revolution as the result of a Bolshevik "conspiracy" or of accusing the ICC of seeking to create revolution by a conspiratorial putsch, but finds it impossible to believe that the bourgeoisie "conspires" against the working class. Here he falls for bourgeois propaganda, for it is the ruling class which wages an ideological campaign to deride proletarian revolutionaries as conspirators, and to insist that it is the bourgeoisie which open, and democratic. The bourgeois media portrays a caricatured distorted image of "conspiracy" in order to cover up the real nature of the way they work to perpetuate their domination of society. And Girard apparently agrees with them. And yes, the ruling class does "network" and communicate in arenas and at moments where we are not allowed to hear or to participate. Whether it was the Trilateral Commission or various the political and 'civic' organizations and 'think-tanks', the ruling class does work out strategies, and does determine when it is time to insist that an LBJ should not run for re-election because he no longer had the confidence of a powerful portion of the ruling class....And it will determine if a Bill Clinton will have to step down before his term is over, or, perhaps, that a Newt
Gingrich should step down as Speaker of the House. We are not referring to a few super-powerful individuals deciding what happens in the world, but we are saying that the ruling class does what comes naturally and does, in fact, make decisions which will have social, political and economic impact.

The Unions as Enemies of the Workers

Girard sees the union leaders of the present period as having “succumbed to both cynicism and the ‘brotherhood of labor and capital’ solution.” But to see the independent growth of this partnership of capital and labor a conspiracy is to misread the significance of events.” Here DeLeonism is incapable of understanding the union question in its historic context.

Historically, the unions did start out as expressions of the struggle of the workers. At the time of the first world war, the socialist parties of the second international and the unions in all the major industrial nations supported the war and their own particular national bourgeoisie, irrevocably crossing the class line and betraying the working class. In the caldron of world war, state capitalism surfaced in the major nations, as the civil economy was subsumed by the needs of the war economy. Production was reoriented to provide for the state-dictated war effort. Having crossed the class line, unions worked hand-in-hand with the state to keep the factories going under intensive speed-up and incredibly dangerous conditions for the proletariat. It was the role, willingly played, of official unions in the US and the other major industrial powers, to support the war effort and deliver the sacrifice of the workers at home on a plate. The workers, who were inducted into the war directly as soldiers, obviously suffered as the workers from one-side were put on the battlefields to kill or be killed by other workers in other uniforms. The unions and the socialist parties were integrated into the state apparatus of capitalism and got the blood of the working class on their hands. Blood which these institutions shall never wash off.

In the thirties the Wagner Act was used by the federal government to insure that unions could be legitimated and regulated by the state machinery, and imposed on recalcitrant employers. The Wagner Act helped to insure that industrial workers would not be left free to fight for their interests on their own terrain but to assure that unions would be in place, claiming to represent the workers interests but really defending the general interests of capitalism and the state. If such unions were not imposed, the danger of independent struggles by workers would disrupt the needs of capitalism. As the major powers moved toward a second world, the state needed the unions to mobilize the workers for World War II. During the war it was the unions that took on the job of suppressing strikes.

Clearly, today management and unions work together - sometimes preaching peaceful relations between management and workers - and sometimes doing fake battle in confrontations. When the unions in this period are embroiled in confrontations with management or the government directly, it is only to keep the workers from fighting collectively and independently on the proletarian terrain. Neither the unions nor management, nor the government represent separate and distinct class interests. They are all today aspects of the capitalist ruling class. The unions today serve as the arm of the state which keeps labor peace, and, when necessary to protect bourgeois interest, allows venting of anger within certain limits. Today, the working class struggle must be fought outside of and against the unions. The real outpouring of the class struggle has come in opposition to what unions have told the workers to do. Whether it was the sit-down strikes in Detroit of the thirties which or the wave of wildcat strikes in the late sixties which marked the reopening of the path of real class struggle, to the independent movement of workers against capital, outside of the official, state-sanctioned unions - it was workers collectively taking action outside and against the unions that marked real steps forward in the class struggle. When the unions lead struggles their function is to limit and undercut the ability of
the workers to genuinely defend their interests.

The working class will make the revolution on its own terrain, with its own workers councils, or the class will not be able to make the revolution. Those in the political milieu, those who consider themselves to be marxists, must recognize that the world has changed during the past century. The unions cannot be on the side of the working class today. They are our enemies.

*Random House College Dictionary, Revised Edition
(from Internationalism No. 105, December 1998-January 1999, PO Box 288, New York, NY 10018)

ON CONSPIRACIES AND UNIONS

Does the Ruling Class Conspire?

The problem with this question lies in the word “conspire.” If, as Internationalism has it, I have accused them of “an invidious vision of conspiracy” and actually they intended to imply no more than that the ruling class “act or work together for the same result,” it seems to me I can be forgiven for misinterpreting such examples of Internationalism’s overheated rhetoric as these which appeared in their UPS leaflet (DB86). There Internationalism asserts as facts such speculations as these: 1) “Clearly the government wants this strike to proceed,” 2) “A central political goal of the bourgeoisie in the current period is the strengthening of the left to control the working class in the years ahead,” and 3) “The unions and the media conspire together to hide the unions own complicity in imposing the two-tier wage system in UPS.” All this without a shred of proof.

My reservations about Internationalism’s conspiracy theories have another source. For Internationalism the proof of a conspiracy is the action or the attempt to accomplish action. Examples include capitalism’s conspiracy to get workers to “follow the lead of the unions” and “vote in bourgeois elections” and “force Gingrich and Clinton from office.” The only evidence of a conspiracy in these cases is that efforts were made to accomplish the goal of the alleged conspiracy. No documentary or eye witness evidence was produced. Instead, like the allegations in the McCarthy hearings on the “communist conspiracy” a half century ago we have only an explanation of the cause based on speculation.

Instead of a conspiracy, what appears to operate among the ruling class is the creation of a general consensus on each issue as it arises based on the common goal of the entire capitalist class: maximum profits for capital and maximum control of the working class. This consensus building develops in the political system at all levels and in the think tanks, corporate board rooms, and the like. However, each economic sector, each geographical area, each industry and enterprise, each sector of the capitalist state has its own special interests, which very often collide. The ruling class terrain where the disputes are settled is the political system, and it is there that the consensus develops. As Marx pointed out, the political state is the executive committee of the ruling class.

Except where bribery, including campaign contributions and the like are concerned, the struggle to influence the consensus is carried on openly in full view of the ruling class, which has much at stake—and of us, the working class. In fact our masters want nothing more than to interest us and to get us to take sides in their ongoing political struggle. By doing so we strengthen the illusion of democracy.
Certainly we are in no position to affect outcomes. The point here is that a major ingredient of a conspiracy—secrecy—does not exist in the struggle to formulate ruling class policy.

Looking over past articles I have written about the ICC (International Communist Current of which Internationalism is the U.S. section), I don’t find where I “accused the ICC of seeking to create a revolution by conspiratorial putsch,” but I may very well have done so. The ICC and Internationalism trace their roots back to the Third International and pattern their political tactics after the major player in the TI, the Bolsheviks. Under the political structure of Tsarist Russia the Bolsheviks were forced to use conspiratorial political methods and did indeed successfully conspire to seize state power.

Are All Unions Enemies of the Workers?

It is true, as Internationalism points out, that “historically the unions did start out as expressions of the struggles of workers.” Unfortunately the next sentence of Internationalism’s article doesn’t consider the possibility that class conscious workers can organize revolutionary unions and have done so in the past. In the U.S. this happened in 1905 when workers in several such unions came together to organize the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). These unions opposed WWI and paid the price in the persecutions during and after the war, as did the Socialist Labor Party and the left wing of the Socialist Party to which many of them belonged. The IWW still exists, is growing, and retains its revolutionary stance.

In general I agree with most of the rest of the article on unionism. Certainly I agree with the thought that “The working class will make the revolution on its own territory.” And what is that territory if not the workplace, the point where its potential power is concentrated? Here our class can take over the means of production and begin producing goods and services for use instead of for profit. This is the revolution. No need for vanguards, revolutionary elites, or theoreticians. —Frank Girard

(from p. 5)

Readers who do not have access to Collective Action Notes.

KK gave me a stack of copies of the pamphlet to take back with me for free distribution. Readers who don’t already have a copy are invited to drop a card to PO Box 1564 or e-mail me at <fgirard@iserv.net> for their free copy.

This issue begins with letters and article continuing our ongoing debates. First A. Smoot takes issue with Dave Stratman on the accuracy of some of his statistics and more importantly raises questions about the nature of the “New Democracy” that will replace capitalism. Jon Bekken sets me straight on the Libertarian Labor Review’s position on Noam Chomsky’s political views. Next the De Leonist Society of Canada enters the debate about some ideas expressed in DB92: 1) calling into question Internationalism’s views on the development of class consciousness and quoting Engels on the electoral road to revolution, 2) noting the failure of Chaumon Skelton and the Socialist Party of Great Britain to accept the De Leonist strategy of organizing both politically and industrially, and 3) questioning the accuracy of my explanation for the 1908 split in the IWW. And I respond briefly.

Next Larry Gambone uses a textbook quotation to re-enforce the take on fascism he expressed in DB92 and also provides evidence to support his contention about its “unique roots” which I had questioned. Internationalism takes issue with the ideas in my DB91 article “Conspiracy or Instinctive Response,” and I reply in the next article. Mike Ballard’s comments in DB92 drew a response from A.

(to p. 17)
On Mike Ballard's Response to my Article "Syndicalism and Revolution"

I explained the pitfalls of the IWW's path to a revolutionary society. As I outlined in my article, this view of struggle that seeks a separate victory in each workplace engenders isolation and concentrates militant energy into an endless series of isolated actions. To quote Marx in the context of today's unions is to place Marx's comments in a modern context in order to justify entryist tactics that are in essence the same as those of the Trotskyists or ex-stalinists (great lovers of democracy) only giving the IWW a democratic veneer. The ultimate goal being to organize all workers into a separate Industrial Union and to wage actions separately. I think I stated this very clearly in my article "Syndicalism and Revolution." [in DB91]

When it comes to ridding ourselves of this turn of the century political baggage, the IWW is certainly not alone. It is not that unions don't challenge wage slavery but that they cannot and will not. Radical unionism is almost exclusively confined to union organizers alone. In this respect they complete the task of the trade union apparatus by lending them more practical potential than they are capable of. If a real movement is not attempted in the workplace, outside of structures like unions or electoral politics, militants will never be in a position to define themselves as different from the rest of the official left.

Also, I stated that a revolutionary society by it's very definition cannot be one that destroys the planet. To place "living in harmony with the earth" in the preamble of the IWW is to fall victim to a fordist notion of the working class or at the least is simply a redundancy. Most of us are aware by now that the very existence of the planet is jeopardized by the capitalist class.

Wobs voting for the Green Party and Dennis Peron? What happened to organizing "on the job where you are robbed". As to the support of IWW members for the struggle in Chiapas, it is one of national liberation that seeks little for workers in the rest of Mexico. Leaders like Comandante Marcos have sold out their supporters for the promise of a new reformed electoral democracy.

I still maintain that cooperative job shops fall into the role of small businesses and foster a small business mentality in the IWW. They thus isolate potential revolutionaries from the workplace. Although I am willing to debate this any wobs who care to discuss these issues, I cannot join a rudderless organization that is too concerned with organizing the perfect union than agreeing on and following a course of action, which I guess would be too "leninist" or totalitarian or something. In this respect a standard collective (democratic) decision-making process is used as a cover to relinquish any responsibility for any unity of theory or united action. What remains of the IWW, for the most part, is a coalition of regional activists

Thanks for the response.

A. Smeaton (Internationalist Notes, PO Box 1531, Eau Claire, WI 54702)
Dear DB Readers,

Lenin was not the only one who saw fascism as a tool of capitalist oppression. A quote from Buenoventura Durruti, "For us, it is a matter of crushing fascism once and for all. Yes, and in spite of the government. No government in the world fights fascism to death. When the bourgeoisie sees its power slipping from its grasp, it has recourse to fascism to maintain itself. The liberal government of Spain could have rendered fascist elements powerless long ago. Instead it compromised and dallied. Even now at this moment there are men in this government who want to go easy on the rebels. You can never tell, you know, the present government may yet need these rebellious forces to crush the workers' government."

Without outright adopting a form of fascist economic corporatism, no revolutionary group, be they ballot oriented or other should discount how fascist and right wing groups can be utilized to subvert workers' movements, and we should not overlook what is fascist in many state agencies, some of which contain outright fascists.

Right wing Christianity and fascism do have some common ground; for instance they both contain nationalistic sentiments as well as a psychology of obedience, and both have exhibited patriarchal attitudes, sexism, and extreme sexual morality. German, Italian, and Spanish fascism all had different characteristics, but German fascism appealed to "family values" and extolled the patriarchal nuclear family.

In 1923 the Institute of Social Research in Frankfurt Germany became interested in measuring authoritarianism but were forced to into exile by the rise of Hitler in 1933. They came to the U.S. to continue their research at Columbia University and U.C. at Berkeley. T.W. Adorno working with a team of scientist at Berkeley came up with a measure of authoritarianism called the F Scale or Fascist Scale to measure authoritarian sentiments in people. Here are the nine dimensions of the F Scale:

1. Conventionalism: Rigid adherence to middle class values
2. Authoritarian Submission: Submissive, uncritical attitude toward idealized moral authorities of the group.
3. Authoritarian Aggression: Tending to be on the lookout for and to condemn, reject, and punish people who violate conventional values.
4. Anti-intraception: Opposition to the subjective, the imaginative, and the tender minded.
5. Superstition and stereotyping: The belief in mystical determinants of the individual's fate; the disposition to think in rigid
categories.

6. Power and Toughness: Preoccupation with dominance/submission, strong weak/leader follower dimension. Identification. with power figures; overemphasis on conventionalized attributes of the ego; exaggerated assertion of strength and toughness.


8. Projectivity: The disposition to believe that wild and dangerous things go on in the world; the projection outward of unconscious emotional impulses.

9. Sex: Exaggerated concern with sexual "goings on."

The reader can no doubt see where right wing groups, right wing Christians, and fascists hold in common some of these attributes.

I liked also the topic Tony brought up in his article on "The IWW and Marxism" regarding Daniel De Leon's anti-anarchism being irrational. Strangely enough, the SLP's paper The People, which has a lot of good qualities, still carries on their diatribes from time to time against anarchism. In the December issue letters column speaking on Anarcho-Syndicalism, The People accuses the IWW of being advocates of "propaganda of the deed" and a lot of other things. I've never once come across any such advocacy in any IWW literature. Cheap shots and calumnies such as these and twists of truth such as I've read in Internationalism when referring to the IWW as well as DeLeonists can serve no useful purpose in building a strong solid revolutionary movement. Criticism is useful in building theories to act on, but maliciousness is a detriment. We need to put aside some of the old baggage and look at what we can do now in solidarity befitting revolutionaries. Let's build a real workers' movement!

(from p. 14) --Kevin Glover

Smeaton criticizing the IWW's tactics as non-revolutionary.

Kevin Glover writes to us on Fascism, the IWW, and De Leon's anti anarchism, all major topics in this issue. Next Derek Devine disagrees with my definition of syndicalism and asserts that the IWW never advocated the abolition of the state. I'm sure my reply, which follows his letter, will convince him of his error. Robert Zani's letter comments on KK's Self Activity of Wage Workers and related matters.

Dave Stratman who detects a conspiracy in capitalist emphasis on educational testing, explains what he sees as the underlying purpose of the emphasis on tests of this kind by the educational establishment. And Dawn Mastino sends us an academic analysis of "neo-colonialism" by a Muslim expert. Next we have two leaflets on the bombing of Iraq, one from New Democracy, the other from Los Angeles Workers' Voice. As usual we end with some notes, announcements, and short reviews.

(to p. 30)
Dear Frank/DB

In DB92 you attempt to define syndicalism thus: those advocating worker control, direct action, and "the abolition of the state." This may be a reasonable, partial stab at defining syndicalism or some kind of anarchism, but by your own limited definition the IWW cannot be considered syndicalist because it never advocated "the abolition of the state." In terms of social transformation the IWW is a non-political organization partly because it has no political theory of capturing the State. Despite this, the IWW and some of its prominent members have often been labeled as anarcho-syndicalist (syndicalist).

If I may, I would like to define what I consider to be the key characteristics of syndicalist organizations:

1. Hostility to elections, the electoral process and all political parties (without exception).

2. Anti-statism and support for anti-statist campaigns. An ideological and political alignment to anarchist organizations and political campaigns against authority. Advocate the abolition of the state.

3. The focus of organizing (when workplace oriented) is often trade, craft, or single-workplace oriented. Autonomy to the "syndicate" — focus not necessarily industrial.

4. Federalism. Local/regional organizations (whether workplace or not) have the right to determine their own political identity or campaigns they engage in.

5. Tactics may include "direct action," non-involvement with the state apparatus, contracts with employers; advocacy of the general strike, etc.

   The consciousness of the majority (the working class) is not really considered. Activity or activism is the key. Focus on a radical minority.

I would argue that none of the above apply to the IWW because it is not a syndicalist organization. While there are people in the IWW who advocate something like the above (WSA members, LLR) and might like the IWW to advocate this political creed, that is not what the IWW is about.

Lastly, on terms: I would suggest that anarcho-syndicalism and syndicalism mean exactly the same thing. The only slight difference could be that syndicalism, as in the Swedish SAC, is used as a term by that organization because it is embroiled in pension funds, contracts, and the Swedish State apparatus, hence its anti-statist credentials are a little weak.

The one definition of syndicalism that I've come across in recent years (from LLR), that makes a distinction between syndicalism and anarcho-syndicalism suggests that syndicalists ignore the state while anarcho-syndicalists (IWA) seek to abolish it. To me this makes no sense as the SAC still seeks the abolition of the state but has had to be pragmatic in day-to-day relationships with employers. LLR's definition of syndicalism is synonymous with "Revolutionary Unionism," an attempt to incorporate all unions without party ties under this loose umbrella-term. Syndicalism and anarchism would still loosely be the dominant ideology and anarchism would still loosely be the dominant ideology.
On the I-99 Solidarity Conference: This conference has been initiated by the tiny WSA (IWA). The SAC have been invited. The IWA has a policy of no contact with the SAC. For IWA sections to contact the SAC or adopt their pragmatism is grounds for expulsion as happened in Spain 1986 when the French and Italian sections were expelled. This may provide an explanation as to why the conference is no longer called “syndicalist.” The fact that they’ve tried to push it through the IWW might be to avoid this close association between the WSA and SAC. Alternatively they may have chosen to launch the conference in this manner for a more obvious reason of size — they couldn’t carry it off with just 30 members in the USA.

Yours fraternally,  
Derek Devine

P.S. Chomsky is certainly not the most famous “wobbly” alive (DB 93), as few people outside the IWW know that he joined in January 1996, paying one year’s dues. He has done nothing in or for the IWW. I’m not sure he is still a member. But didn’t LLR do a nice job of portraying him as an anarcho syndicalist?

REPLY:
As I pointed out in DB92, the very fact that the IWW has always advocated replacing political government (the state) with an industrial government makes it clear that it advocates the abolition of the state. It’s true that the IWW, in an effort to alienate as few workers as possible, soft pedals this aspect of its ultimate goal. (See its current introductory flyer, “The Wobblies” where its revolutionary objective can only be inferred by the reference to “...forming the structure of the new society in the shell of the old” in the Preamble.

One difficulty with any attempt to define the principles of the IWW is that its official theoretical statements are few and far between. Probably the most authoritative official statement is the Preamble of the its constitution. Immediately after the IWW was organized in Chicago in 1905, De Leon, who had been a delegate to the convention and involved in writing the constitution, went on a speaking tour that took him to Minneapolis. There he delivered the speech titled in its earliest years Preamble of the Industrial Workers of the World. It was published in 1905 by the SLP’s New York Labor News and has been in print ever since with only a title change (to Socialist Reconstruction of Society in 1928). This quote from his speech (Socialist Landmarks, p.231) should help to explain the IWW’s position on the State:

“The shops, the yards, the mills, in short, the mechanical establishments of production, now in the hands of the capitalist class—they are all to be “taken,” not for the purpose of being destroyed, but for the purpose of being “held”; for the purpose of improving and enlarging all the good that is latent in them, and that capitalism dwarfs; in short, they are to be “taken and held” in order to save them for civilization.”

“It is exactly the reverse with the “political power.” That is to be taken for the purpose of abolishing it” [emphasis in the original]

Both Bill Haywood and Vincent St. John, wrote letters praising and endorsing the speech shortly after it was given.

As to the five “key characteristics of syndicalist organizations” listed above, I wonder if Derek Devine would agree that while they may define syndicalism as it developed in Spain, they were not handed down from on high as a pattern for all syndicalist organizations?

—Frank Girard
Frank/DB,

I received the *Self-Activity of Wage Workers* publication of KKL/Collectivities in Faridabad India. Thank you. Our Faridabad friends have a wealth of on-site personal knowledge and personal experience. They have produced a product of theoretical elaboration of practical lessons of class struggle of the proletariat. It’s a most thought provoking and incisive publication. All DB readers should have a copy.

No doubt you heard the not-so humorous joke about Ronald Reagan. He went to India in 1980, returned here, and said, “I have seen America’s future and it works. Most certainly Reagan, Bush, and Reagan-Bush clone, Clinton (and the powers behind their throne) have done their very best to transform America into another India. That being the precise case, it is well to read the Faridabad publication as as something of a preview of coming attractions/distractions/conflicts. Including management circulars reading “Increase productivity OR perish.” The publication could also be have been titled Living Dialectics with its synthesis that the key to workers’ control is self activity. No one can/will represent your absolute self interest/self preservation nearly as well as you yourself. Or said another way, it is foolish to expect someone (s) to do for you that which you are unwilling to do for yourself. “Domination -- Free Labor as others have called it.

Even so, and with a wealth of hard core activist personal experience, our Faridabad friends are not dogmatic, and recognize that one size (answer) may not fit all situations. They say that their conclusions are presently open *for discussion and debate.* After all, the wise man is never certain of anything -- as the fool is of everything. Some parts of this booklet do not comport with my personal experience as a card-carrying member of an American union; but I was never a worker in India, and we are moving back to the future at a rapid rate.

In his *One World, Ready or Not: the Manic Logic of Global Capitalism,* William Greider paints a terrifying picture of ruthless, predator capitalism with raw greed its only moral response. All DB readers know the situation and its cause. Our Faridabad friends are to be complimented for innovatively attempting to cope with a HUGE Frankenstein monster run amuck. And for letting us know what has worked and what has not worked for the worker.

Additionally, America’s present national soap opera reminds me of one of Karl Marx’s best known quotations. First President Andrew Johnson and now clone Clinton impeached. From the grave Marx reminds us:

“Hegel remarks somewhere that all great world historical facts and personages occur, as it were, twice. He has forgotten to add: first time as a tragedy; the second as farce.”

--Robert J. Zani  (No. 328938, Michael Unit, PO Box 4560, Tennessee Colony, TX 75886)
YOU’LL NEVER BE GOOD ENOUGH:
SCHOOLING AND SOCIAL CONTROL
by Dave Stratman

A couple months ago these sample questions from the new MCAS (Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System), given to all Massachusetts students in grades 4, 8, and 10, appeared in the Boston Globe:

MUSIC: Write a piano concerto. Orchestrate and perform it with a flute and drum. You will find a piano under your seat. BIOLOGY: Create life. Estimate the difference in subsequent human culture if this form of life had developed 500 million years earlier, with special attention to its probable effect on the English parliamentary system. Prove your thesis. HEALTH: You have been provided with a razor blade, a piece of gauze, and a bottle of Scotch. Remove your appendix. Do not suture until your work has been inspected. You have 15 minutes.

The "sample" was a parody, of course, but it made an important point: the test was impossible. Students were subjected from 11 to 13 hours of tests in 17 days—longer than the tests required for college, graduate school, and law school combined. Some school systems, concerned that young people would not have the stamina to get them through day after day of test-taking, supplied high-energy snacks and drinks to the kids. Parents were encouraged to get their children to bed early. Teachers were told not to assign homework during the weeks of testing.

These are "high-stakes" tests. When they are fully operational, students in grades 4 and 8 will need to pass the state tests to be promoted; students in grade 10 will have to pass to be eligible to graduate. Teachers will be "held accountable" for their students' grades. (Forty percent are expected to fail.) Schools in which students perform poorly on the tests can be placed in receivership by the state and their faculties dismissed.

The contents of the MCAS are secret: no educators in Massachusetts except certain officials of the Department of Education and the Board of Education have been allowed to examine the tests for their age-appropriateness or their relationship to what is actually taught. The tests were devised by a company which had recently been fired by the state of Kentucky for major errors in the design and marking of tests it had administered there.

In literature circulated to parents and students before the tests, corporate backers of "higher standards" boasted that "These are very, very tough tests—the toughest that most Massachusetts students have ever taken" and that "good attendance and passing grades" no longer entitle a student to a high school diploma. To prepare our students "to compete with children from all over the world," said the corporations, much more is required.

Tests similar to MCAS are being required of young people in state after state. President Clinton is fighting for national assessments along the same lines.

What's behind this rush to testing and "higher standards?"

MAKING SCHOOLS "LEAN AND MEAN"

As is often the case, these developments inside the schools reflect events in the wider society.

In the past two decades, corporations have adopted new management techniques designed to undermine worker solidarity and integrate workers more thoroughly into the
company machine. Known variously as “continuous improvement” or “management by stress,” or “kaizen,” the Japanese term for it, the technique consists essentially of dividing the workforce into competing “teams” and “stressing” the production system by imposing higher and higher production quotas. As workers work faster and faster to meet the quotas, the company achieves several key goals: production is increased; jobs are eliminated; “weak links” in the system break down and are replaced.

Most important, “continuous improvement” creates great anxiety in workers about their ability to meet the ever-increasing goals, and encourages workers to replace solidarity among themselves with loyalty to the Company Team. It forces workers into constant speed-up. Workers are kept running so fast to meet company goals that they don’t have time to think or talk about their own goals or work together to pursue them.

Corporate-led education reforms use similar strategies. They use “School-Based Management” to isolate teachers in each school from their colleagues around the system. Teachers are then encouraged to join with management as a “team” to compete for students and survival with other schools.

The reforms use testing to keep raising the standards which students and teachers must meet, far beyond what their parents were expected to achieve and beyond anything that would be of value. The purpose is the same as “continuous improvement” in a factory: raise the anxiety level and keep students and teachers running so fast to meet the goals set by the system that they have no time to think about their own goals for education or for their lives.

These reforms will have terrible effects. Many students who would otherwise graduate from high school will drop out. (In Texas and Florida, where “high-stakes” testing is in place, high school drop-out rates which had been dropping have already begun to rise.) Young people who fail to meet the new standards will be condemned to marginal jobs and told to blame themselves.

The reforms redefine education as a process whereby young people constantly “remake” and sell themselves to the corporations. The reforms attack the self-knowledge and understanding of unsuccessful and successful students alike, as young people are encouraged to redefine themselves—their own goals, their own thoughts and hopes and desires—out of existence, to make themselves acceptable to our corporate masters.

Our children have qualities more important than those desired by corporate Human Resource directors. Education conceived in this way makes economic productivity the goal and measure of human society and makes the corporations the judges of human worth. It undermines the notion that human beings individually and collectively possess goals which transcend capitalism.

CONFLICT OVER EDUCATIONAL GOALS

There is no more vital issue to understand in education than this: The corporate and political elite who dominate education policy have goals for education which contradict the goals of the people who populate the schools: teachers and students and their families.

Public schools were supported by the industrial elite in America with the explicit intention of strengthening elite control over the working population. In the middle of the nineteenth century Horace Mann, the founder of the “common school,” explained the rationale for public schools: “...common schooling would discipline the common people to the point where they would not threaten the sanctity of private property or practice disobe-
dience to their employer.” Public schools
have been used ever since to instill in young people a respectful attitude toward those in power. William Bennett, while Secretary of Education in the Reagan Administration, explained, "The primordial task of the schools is the transmission of social and political values." In a class society, the values which the schools are designed to transmit are the values of the dominant class—competition, inequality, the sanctity of private property, and the belief that the good things in society trickle down from the elite.

At the heart of the education system, there is a conflict over its goals. On one side stand educators and parents and students, most of whom share democratic values and want to see students educated to the fullest of their ability. On the other side stand the corporate and government elite, the masters of great wealth and power. Their goal is that students be sorted out and persuaded to accept their lot in life, whether that be the executive suite or the unemployment line, as fitting and just, and that social inequality be legitimized and their hold on power reinforced.

This conflict over the goals of schooling is never acknowledged openly, yet it finds its way into every debate over school funding and educational policy and practice, and every debate over education reform.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE SCHOOLS?

The corporate critique of the schools has served to cover up what's really wrong with them; the schools promote inequality, competition, and unquestioning acceptance of the social order.

The elite pursue these educational goals in many ways. Shortages in school funding undermine the work of students and teachers and tell them that they are not valued. School-business partnerships promote business values in the schools. Textbooks teach that history is made by presidents and kings; ordinary people are dismissed as passive victims or a dangerous problem.

But many of the means of achieving elite goals for education are far more subtle:

* The schools assume that there are big differences in people's intelligence and that most people are not very smart, and are designed to "prove" these low expectations. Teachers are trained to find supposed differences in children's abilities; standardized, "norm-referenced" tests are designed to sort kids out and produce a range of test scores which match the social hierarchy—in other words, which show that richer people are smarter. Shortages of teachers and textbooks, lack of support for their work, and countless other devices are means by which students and teachers are set up to fail.

* The schools use competition and ranking to legitimize the social hierarchy. Students reluctant to compete for approval get low marks: what is really a conflict over values is seen as a failure of students' intelligence. For teachers, school life consists more often of an isolated struggle to survive than being encouraged to join with other teachers to nurture students.

* Course content often has no value except as a measure of students' willingness to master it. Much of the content consists of "facts" torn out of their social context, with all the life sucked out of them, because their life is rooted in the class war the elite seek to obscure.

These and other means are used by schools to prepare most students for working lives spent performing boring tasks with unquestioning
obedience in a "democracy" in which the goals of society are not up for discussion and in which the idea of people acting collectively for their own goals is considered subversive.

WHAT'S RIGHT WITH THE SCHOOLS?

Teachers and students and their families share goals which contradict the goals of the elite, and they work to achieve these goals in every way they know how in spite of elite domination. The gigantic effort by corporate and political leaders to impose education reform is necessary precisely because the people in the schools have worked for their goals with enough success to threaten elite control.

When teachers stimulate and challenge; when they encourage all their students to learn and inspire them to think about the world as it really is; when they create a nurturing environment; when they fight for smaller class sizes; when they offer each other words of support: when they do any number of things they do every day, they are opposing elite goals for education and working for the shared goals of ordinary people.

When students help each other, or raise critical questions, or refuse to join in the race for grades and approval; when they exercise their curiosity and intelligence; even when they hang on the phone for hours, talking about "life," they are resisting elite goals and working for a better concept of life.

When parents listen sympathetically to their children, or talk with their friends or each other about the school or raising kids: when people do these things that they do every day, they are resisting elite goals and working for the opposite values of solidarity and equality and democracy.

To the extent that students succeed in real learning and teachers in teaching and parents in raising their children to be thoughtful and considerate, they succeed in spite of the education system, not because of it.

The remarkable thing about the public schools isn't that some teachers become demoralized and "burned out," or that some students drop out or do poorly, but that so many teachers and students achieve so much in the face of a system designed to fail.

EDUCATION AND REVOLUTION

Capitalist society is based on slavery: the enslavement of workers to the wage system and the enslavement of human beings to things. Education worthy of the name must help set us free, not further bind us in chains.

The conflict over the goals of education is part of the class war over the goals of society. Only a movement which challenges the goals and values and power of the elite can change education.

There are a thousand questions about society which elite institutions will never raise but which are critical to our future. The revolutionary movement must consider anew the goals of human society and the measures of human achievement. It must re-examine our relationship to technology and to Nature. It must enable people to transform work and play into sources of creativity and fulfillment.

We do not have the power at this point to change education, but we can begin to pose these questions. The most liberating and humanly fulfilling education for all of us will come as we take part in the struggle to overthrow elite rule and recreate human society. ♠

*Thanks to Bill Griffen for the H. Mann quote.

NEW DEMOCRACY, SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 1998
POLITICAL CORRUPTION AND GLOBAL CAPITALISM

One of the myths perpetuated by American business is that wealth is somehow created out of nothing. Wealth, under-capitalism, is not “created,” it is merely transferred from one segment of the population to another.

This can easily be seen on a global scale. When Asia’s economy was booming, the American economy was lagging behind. Now that Asia is struggling to maintain itself, the American economy is “robust” (according to Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan).

The Middle East has been a key contributor to American prosperity at its own expense. Dr. Ilyas Bayunus, professor of sociology at SUNY Ithaca, explains it this way:

“When looked at from a Muslim and Third World viewpoint, we can see an . . . answer: that of neocolonialism, or the use of local proxies to exploit local resources for the former colonial master’s benefit. Muslim countries, regardless of their colonial past . . . are now submitting to neocolonialism . . . [which] seeks indirect rule through rationalizing, apologizing, seeking excuses for its actions. However, the option to intervene with force is always open. It is a form of remote-control colonial rule and is far more economical and cost effective in terms of men, machines, and time invested.

“In essence, colonialism and neocolonialism serve those multinational industries that are (or were) in the vanguard of creating western global hegemony. Both seek to ensure perpetually dependent “peripheries” ruled by a technologically superior industrialized western global economic system. Hence, colonialism and neocolonialism use “underdeveloped” countries as reservoirs of cheap resources and dirt-cheap labor, and thus actually discourages any significant industrialization in the Third World. . . What this means is that western economics and industrial progress depends on the rest of the world remaining impoverished.

“In this respect, the west lures, intimidates, bribes, and props up insecure and archaic monarchs, undereducated but arrogant military rulers, and opportunistic pseudodemocrats. This is especially so in the Muslim world, where the West sometimes even handpicks ‘yes men’ to rule on its behalf . . .

“Americans are the inventors as well as the greatest beneficiaries of neocolonialism. . . As the economic interests of American multinationals expanded, American power also expanded. In the Middle East, this was especially true after WW II. Those who resisted and continue to resist this policy of neocolonialism were called ‘fundamentalists’ and other names, ostracized internationally, and branded as practitioners of ‘state-sponsored terrorism.’ Iran, Sudan, Libya, and Syria are cases in point . . .

“American multinationals are the dynamos behind and the main beneficiaries of American neocolonialism. Some of the major American multinationals are legends: Exxon, General
Electric, General Dynamics, Union Carbide, General Motors, Bank of America, and IT&T. Today, there are new players, such as IBM, Microsoft, CNN, Texas Instruments, Smith Corona, McDonalds, CocaCola, and Kentucky Fried Chicken. We now speak of the “McDonaldization,” “Colaization,” or “Marlboroization” of the world.

“If highly developed western businesses expand in the Third World, they invest in poor countries and provide jobs. In this transaction, however, Third World countries become partially or totally dependent upon the investing business, which entails negative consequences. . . In general, the multinationals’ influence is seen in their contribution in terms of investments, taxes, bonuses, and other charitable contributions if and when it suits them. They invariably try to bribe or intimidate host officials to create monopolies, even though this means tampering with the host country’s power apparatus both economically and politically. Whoever challenges their hegemony faces great personal risk: President Allende of Chile, a highly reform-minded and elected leader was overthrown and murdered by his military, which was believed to have been carrying out the orders of IT&T [which was recently indicted for corrupt business practices].

“Even if a Third World worker finds a job paying subsistence wages, he or she remains vulnerable, because of job insecurity, to employer blackmail. Economic investment in the Third World, however sizable, remains under the auspices of these multinationals and does not constitute progressive development [in spite of the claims put forth by the U.S. government and its involvement with GATT and NAFTA]. . . It creates serious wage stratification and differentials and, especially in smaller host economies, engenders inflation to such a degree that those who are unemployed or have low-paying jobs have to resort to illegal means to survive. Whenever or wherever these multinationals have been given a free hand, they create monopolies [illegal in the U.S.], pay the lowest possible wages [why we have a set minimum wage in the U.S.], fix prices [also illegal in the U.S.], and take excessive profits [immoral]. Obviously, none of this benefits the host economy [except the politicians who accept the bribes and perks offered.] And so most of the Third World remains Third World, even almost fifty years after de Gaulle coined the term.” (Islamic Horizons, September/October 1996)

The turbulence in the Middle East will not end until America -- the bully, the “Great Satan”-- removes its presence and stops interfering in Middle Eastern culture, religion, politics, and economics.

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WHY IS THE U.S. BOMBING IRAQ?
A New Democracy Flyer

There's much more to the bombing of Iraq than a diversion from Bill Clinton's impending impeachment.

SOME HISTORY

After the revolution against the U.S.-supported Shah of Iran in 1979, the U.S. armed Iraq to the teeth to stop the spread of revolution in the Middle East. For eight years the U.S. supplied arms and intelligence to both sides in the Iraq/Iran war, which resulted in the death of a generation of rebellious young workers on both sides and stabilized the Hussein regime in Iraq and the Ayatollah Khomeini regime in Iran. The U.S. supported Saddam Hussein's use of poison gas against Kurdish rebels. According to a 1994 Senate Report, the U.S. supplied Iraq with biological agents suitable for germ warfare up through 1989. Only later, when George Bush needed a villain for Desert Storm, did the U.S. object to Hussein's use of the weapons it had supplied.

SAVAGE HYPOCRISY

President Clinton claims that the bombing of Iraq is meant to prevent Iraq's use of "weapons of mass destruction." But Iraq no longer possesses such weapons or the means to deliver them. Raymond Zalinskas, a former U.N. Weapons Inspector in Iraq and Associate Professor in the Biological Institute of the University of Maryland, reported that weapons inspectors had already wiped out any possible chemical and biological weapons sites in 1995. (NPR, 2/13/98) These sites are still monitored. In addition, all of Iraq's missile launchers and engines have been destroyed.

And yet the U.S.-led sanctions are in effect weapons of mass destruction being used against the Iraqi people. A UN Report of June, 1997 verified that sanctions have resulted in the deaths by starvation or disease of 1.2 million Iraqis, 750,000 of them children under five. The Iraqi people are not our enemies, yet it is they, not Hussein, who are suffering.

Why has the U.S. waged nearly 10 years of savage war against the Iraqi people?

CREATING A LEADER

The Middle East not only contains huge oil reserves. It also contains millions of angry and rebellious working people. The choices for them are stark: either nationalism, where they line up behind "their own" elites to fight other workers or some foreign power, or democratic revolution, where working people of every nationality—Arab and Jew, Iraqi and Iranian—unite to overthrow all elite rule.

The goal of U.S. policy has never been to kill Hussein or overthrow him. The real goal has been to wipe out effective opposition to Hussein within Iraq and to establish him as an "anti-U.S. imperialist" leader throughout the Middle East, to lead millions of people up the blind alley of nationalism.

Only by claiming to represent the interests and the views of the American people can our leaders get away with their repeated atrocities. Only by systematically misinforming and deceiving the American people can they maintain the charade of democracy. Even so, millions of people see through the lies. This same government which has given us NAFTA and welfare reform and corporate-led education reform no more represents ordinary Americans than Saddam Hussein represents ordinary Iraqis.

Our real enemy is the merciful elite which rules in every country. The only answer is a democratic revolution which unites us all.

Please copy this flyer and pass it on.

For free info, write New Democracy, P.O. Box 427, Boston, MA 02130 or Newdem@aol.com. Webpage: http://users.aol.com/newdem
Bombing for Oil, Profits, and Imperialism

The US war machine is unleashing another veritable rain of ruin on Iraq. A US naval armada backed by fleets of land based B-52 bombers has fired hundreds of deadly Cruise Missiles into Iraqi cities and industries. There can be no doubt that hundreds of innocent civilians are being killed and maimed so that the most powerful sections of the US ruling class will cripple the Iraqi regimes ability to become a regional power and compete with US and British oil companies in the presently saturated oil market. A market where the price of a barrel of crude has dropped from $23 to $11 in the past year and a half. This mainly due to a falling demand from the East Asian capitalist states in economic and political crisis.

Also the US and British rulers are using this state sponsored techno-terrorism in the Gulf to warn off rival imperialist powers such as France, Russia, China, Japan and Germany who have deals to revive more profitable co-operation with the Hussein regime in Baghdad, etc. In addition there is the rising competition of these major capitalist and state capitalist powers to get their claws into the huge oil reserves in the nearby Caspian Sea. This has made Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Tukmenistan again the focus of deadly competition between big powers as well as small regional powers like Iraq.

There is an ongoing battle for dominance in this region and a key issue now is which corporations will control a big pipeline to pump oil from the Azeri capital of Baku to the West. In a couple of months the Azerbaijan International Operating Company (AIIOC) which is a "partnership" headed by the state Oil Company of Azerbaijan but also including US firms like Amoco, Unocal, Exxon and Pennzoil announce their plans on a big oil pipeline which the US oil capitalists consider to be of huge importance as to who will control this strategic area in the world oil market in the 21st century. French, Japanese, Russian and Chinese companies are involved in rival schemes to gain hegemony in drilling and shipping oil from the Caspian. (World Socialist Web-site, 11/16/98)

But all one can get is mostly lies and cover-ups from the corporate-owned US and other media. Is it not amazing that we can hear hours of 'reports' on the war by Dan (the Blather) Rather, and the more liberal Jim Lehrer, on CBS, NBC and PBS et.al., and the subject of the control of markets and profits in oil hardly ever even comes up at all?
Yes, these millionaire news hacks and also the bosses Sunday morning gas bags like George Will, Sam Donaldson, and Cokie Roberts rant a lot about Saddam Husseins nerve gas supplies/weapons vs. US 'democracy' (but never about US support for Hussein when he used gas on the Kurds in 1988 or US use of nerve gasses in their Vietnam war crusade!).

But if the topic is chemical weapons, it is the big powers, headed by the USA that again holds the aces for unleashing these weapons of barbarism. The USA in fact controls a major share of the world's chemical and biological weapons depots and research labs. An Associated Press report a few days ago (12/15/98) concerning spillage of 140 gallons of Sarin nerve gas at the Tooele (Utah) "Chemical Disposal Facility" was of course played down by the US Army spokespersons and their views dutifully parroted by the corporate media gas bags. But don't expect the deceitful and hypocritical UN created UNSCOM inspectors to visit these US military bases looking for chemical and biological weapons labs/stockpiles soon! The 'peace loving' UN inspectors are far too busy pinpointing targets for the US and British Navies and Air Forces to obliterate.

Working class people and activists cannot trust the lies and double talk of the bosses Democrats or Republicans and their media apologists. We need to build up our own new oppositional organizations of struggle, political and industrial, to oppose the attacks on our livelihoods -- and our lives. Leaving matters to the "experts" bribed by capital only means means letting the profit system destroy the environment, pauperize more millions, speed up those on the job, promote reactionary patriotism & nationalist divisions, and capitalisms wars for oil and profits.

Los Angeles Workers' Voice, Box 57483, Los Angeles, CA 90057
Internationalists Web: http://www.ibrp.org 12/19/98

For working class revolutionary analysis of world events and marxist programme you can never get from the bosses ragsheets and TV media monopoly, subscribe to Revolutionary Perspectives magazine for $20/yr. CWO, Box 338, Sheffield, S3 9YX, United Kingdom

or you can receive for free the Internationalist Notes journal by writing IN, Box 1531, Eau Claire, WI 54702.
Constructive Interference Microbroadcasting Conference is scheduled for April 9-11, 1999 in Memphis Tennessee. "This spring in Memphis veterans of the micro-radio movement come together with newborn broadcasters, gestating DJs, and alternative media Divas to communicate, commiserate, and take over the known and unknown universe!" For info write to P.O. Box 102, 111 S. Highland, Memphis, TN 38111 or e-mail <cie_frm@hotmail.com>

_Sabotage in the American Workplace_, "a collection of firsthand accounts of workplace sabotage" edited by Martin Sprouse, is out of print according to people at AK Distribution who carried it as recently as last year. I am in dire need of a copy. If any DB reader has one he or she is willing to sell, I'd be ever so grateful. Please drop me a card c/o the Discussion Bulletin or e-mail me at

(from p. 17)

**Finances**

The eight-week vacation did nothing to help the DB financially. In fact, income for the three months since December 22 was about $60 less than that of the previous two months. On the brighter side, though -- perhaps because of my absence -- expenditures declined considerably -- by over a hundred dollars. As usual there is a discrepancy between the balance shown by the DB's check book and that of the bank. Again as usual, I will use the bank balance. (This problem doesn't always arise from my poor grasp of sixth grade math; part of the problem lies in bank charges and remittances of non-U.S. funds, both of which I sometimes forget to include and sometimes include twice.) But actually, we are still in excellent financial health due mainly to the DB's contributors.

**Contributions:** Greg Hall $4; Joe Tupper $45; Kevin Glover $10; John V. Craven $7; Steve Peterson $1. Total $67. Thank you, comrades.

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Fraternally submitted,

Frank Girard for the DB
Against Civilization: Readings and Reflections is the most recent weapon in John Zerzan’s ongoing effort to drive planet Earth back to the Stone Age—the OLD Stone Age. I expected his 215 page collection of short pieces by some fifty-one writers to be a series of boring repetitious rants on a single theme. It isn’t! Zerzan has chosen wisely and organized his material well. The five headings: “Before Civilization,” “The Coming of Civilization,” “The Nature of Civilization,” “The Pathology of Civilization,” and “The Resistance to Civilization,” describe the general logic of Zerzan’s neo-primitivism so that it emerges as a kind of historical progression. Many of the authors don’t really meet the criteria for hard line primitivists. Besides the expected like Rousseau, Marshal Sahlins, Fredy Perlman, and the Unabomber, we find Sigmund Freud, Ivan Illich, William Morris, Friedrich Schiller, Kirkpatrick Sale, and Charles Fourier. The mix produces an interesting variety of insights, made coherent by the book’s organization. Unfortunately the final section does not provide the solution that I have previously wanted in Zerzan’s material. Some idea of the means by which Zerzan and others believe our species can regress to a primitive state successfully. One difficulty in this final section as well as others is the wide variation in the authors’ perception of civilization. Zerzan and some of his closest ideological seem to identify civilization with the domestication of plants and animals while other authors in his collection like Kirkpatrick Sale and William Morris, see industrialization alone as the source of civilization’s evils. The result is that for the latter the solution involves a cooperative struggle against capital, the source of industrialization. For the neo-primitivists like Zerzan, Feral Faun, and others resistance must be an individual act or, more accurately, an individual change in thinking, an internal revolution against all civilization. The book is available from the publisher, Uncivilized Books, P.O. Box 11331, Eugene, OR 97440. Price: $11.50 postpaid.

Consent or Coercion: An Anarchist Case for Social Transformation and Answers to Questions About Anarchism, a publication of the Affinity Group of Evolutionary Anarchists, defines anarchism as “the belief that people can voluntarily cooperate to meet everyone’s needs, without bosses or rulers, and without sacrificing individual liberties.” And here I had always identified these ideas with socialism. Ed Stamm, whose original draft served as the basis for the pamphlet, has written a persuasive argument for a socialist society. This is especially true of his analysis of the state, laws, crime, human nature, and the like. The pamphlet is less than absolute in its treatment of the economic system anarchism would create, the authors apparently believing that socialism and individual private ownership could co-exist. The questions and answer section discusses such matters as “What about those who argue ‘abolish work’?, “Are people so good they can live without government?,” and “How do you propose to achieve anarchist social relations?” Twenty pages, $1 each for 1-4 copies; $6.00 for 15 or more from Dick Martin, Affinity Place, Argenta, B.C. V0G 1B0 Canada or Ed Stamm, PO Box 1402, Lawrence, KS 66044 USA.

Anarchy, A Journal of Desire Armed, #46/Fall-Winter ’98-9, opens with what strikes me as an amazingly wrongheaded article on the Unabomber, the thesis of which is that “…violence, insurrectionary violence, is a powerful and effective tactic.” Nevertheless this is a great issue with three pages of alternative media reviews as well as the usual slash, burn, parr and thrust letters column, fourteen pages this time and featuring such masters of the literary kill as John Zerzan, Bob Black, Jason McQuinn, Gary Cox, and some new contestants. But the crown jewel is the first detailed non-laudatory article on the Zapatistas that I’ve ever read. In a fourteen page article, “Behind the Balacalavas of the Mexican Southeast,” Sylvie Deneuve and Charles Reeve examine the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist origins of the group that became the Emiliano Zapata Liberation Front as well as the role played by the Maoist
cadre and the Catholic Church in the politics of the group and the essentially nationalistic policies it is now promoting. Also worth reading are Bob Black's review of a book that questions the primitiveness of the Kalahari desert bushmen, the San, and an article on the Sem Terra, a Brazilian peasant movement that is successfully occupying unused land. $6 for a single copy by mail, $16 for a four-issue sub from C.A.L., PO Box 1446, Columbia, MO 65205. Makes checks payable to CAL.

Internationalist Notes, (No. 1, December 1998) "is published by a small nucleus of Left Communist workers...Our aim as workers is the establishment of a stateless, classless, moneyless society without exploitation, national frontiers or standing armies." This eight-page issue contains articles on Pinochet, the 1998 Canadian elections, and the end of WWI. IN expects to publish regularly in French and English. Free from Internationalist Notes, c/o C.P. 266, Succ "C", Montreal, QC, Canada H2L 4K1.

Aufheben: Revolutionary Perspectives (No. 7 Autumn 1998) contains three major articles: "Social Democracy: No Future?" This is billed as the introduction to a coming series of articles on the "retreat of social democracy." The twenty-page "State of the Unions: Recent U.S. Labour Struggles in Perspective" begins with a quite detailed examination of U.S. labor history from 1877 on. The wide ranging discussion contrasts what the authors see as growing working class militancy in the U.S. to the relative quiescence of British during the last decade. Although Aufheben has no illusions about the role of the unions and the union leadership in controlling the working class, it seems to attribute the recent increase in strikes to changes in the union leadership and wonders whether our rulers are getting ready to throw us the social democratic bone that was the prescription for calming us in the Thirties. The article has some interesting political and economic insights that deserve a wider audience. Unfortunately it's a bit long for the DB to pirate. The third article is "What Was the USSR? Toward a Theory of the Deformation of Value under State Capitalism, Part II: Russia as a Non-Mode of Production." Part I dealt with the Trotskyist view of the USSR as a deformed worker's state, this sixteen-page section deals with another Trotskyist view, that of Hillel Ticktin. A third part of the series will discuss the left communist view of the former USSR. Available for £2.00 ($3.00) from Aufheben, c/o Brighton Unemployed Centre, Ltd., P.O. Box 2536, Rottingdean, Brighton, England.

--fg