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About This Issue

First an apology: The decision to reprint most of Non-Market Socialism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries as a continued feature was a classic case of biting off more than I could chew. I half promised that the remaining part of Alain Pagnam’s chapter 3, “Anarcho-Communism,” would be published in this issue. Unfortunately DB 103 has no room for it, nor will 104. I have decided to remedy the situation by printing all of chapter 3 and Steve Coleman’s chapter 4, “Impossibilism,” as a separate publication available free to anyone on the mailing list who would like a copy. Knowing that not everyone shares my enthusiasm for the book and to avoid mailing it to readers who don’t want it, I

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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, worker 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 copper 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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QUESTIONS FOR ALTERNATIVES

[Introduction: What follow are pieces from our monthly Hindi language publication Faridabad Majdoor Samachar.

Given that accumulated labour has the capacity to make living labour productive/more productive, there is a position which advocates the elimination of human suffering and creation of a humane society through a qualitative leap in accumulated labour by breaking the bonds that hinder accumulation.

And given that for more than five thousand years now, accumulated labour has been antagonistic to living labour, there is another position that equates human suffering to accumulated labour as such. Pragmatism appears and advocates putting brakes to accumulated labour while avoiding the questioning of the existing social relations.

It is in this scenario that questions for alternatives need to be posed.

Given that the reality that confronts us is both global and dynamic, the pieces here are necessarily fragmentary. Exchanging experiences and ideas of different facets informs that keep the everyday totality within the reach of ordinary beings requires the active involvement of billions. Hence, the fragmentary nature is also an invitation to join in the discussion.]

1. QUESTIONS FOR ALTERNATIVES

(March 99)

The present is extremely painful, it has become unbearable. We manage to live day to day, in a constant struggle for survival that is only buoyed up by the hope that the next generation may see better days. Even as the havoc spreads. Even as the present flounders.

How are we to live? For what kind of a future are we to strive, such that no future generation is forced to witness such a present.

Any worthwhile discussion on - and analysis of - questions for alternatives can take place only after we identify, and reject the pillars of the present, its bricks & mortar, its building blocks. It is in recognition of this reality that we are beginning a regular discussion here.

The Present: pillars, brick and mortar...

Let us begin by broadly identifying these elements that make up our "present".

Factories are the concrete symbols of the present. Ever accelerating speed, increasing workload, mounting insecurity and escalating fear are the fundamental elements of progress and development. The increasing pollution of water, air and land are merely echoes of the spread of the factory system in every sphere of life.

The fortification of homes, offices, neighborhoods, cities and countries has progressed from grilled windows, doors, and fences, to gun toting guards, to ever present surveillance cameras to cannons and tanks, to satellite controlled missiles and nuclear weapons waiting to be triggered off to devastation. Even the sewage disposal and water supply necessities of big to bigger cities have increased to levels that demand extremely authoritarian regimes.

Broad and smooth roads, over bridges, flyovers, red-yellow-green-lights, super thermal power houses, nuclear power plants, wires crisscrossing over thousands of miles, a number of airplanes landing and taking off every minute... all require such specialisation that childhood is increasingly being squeezed, from class I to kindergarten to lower kindergarten to nursery to pre-nursery. With the development of computers, progress has reached such levels that in order to cope students resort to a choice between medication, drugs or suicide.
Amidst the legacy of harshness and hierarchy in rural life, progress is being made in cruelty.

All experience teaches us that the process of identifying these building blocks of the present, of peeling off their layers to grasp their essence, is incomplete without discussions on prototypes of alternatives. To banish the present, visions of alternatives—and accompanying discussions—are indispensable.

2. Factories: the dance of destruction

(April '99)

The essence of human endeavor in humankind's interest has been to reduce human burdens, to lessen the tensions of body and soul, to gain a sense of security, and an overall better life.

Factories, on the other hand, have emerged and expanded guided by efforts aimed at increasing workloads at minimal costs, and getting work done at an accelerating pace. Therefore, factories are:

Wage-workers imprisoned within delineated spaces: security guards at the gates and the police and military outside them.

Drudgery under palpable fear of supervisors/managers/leaders/officers.

Lungs incarcerated in dust-chambers, smoke-chambers, chemical chambers, among gases, fibres, powders and microbes. Acids, electricity, furnaces...burning, scorching, shocking human bodies. Cancer labs of magnetic, electric and atomic radiation.

Centres of endlessly repetitive and tedious movements.

Torture houses where work worth 1000 bucks has to be performed for 50 bucks amidst fear of losing this slavery.

Places of such illumination that every night is awake with toil.

Spaces where body and soul are distorted, where shift work disrupts the cycles of food and sleep.

Non-living beings capable of infinite growth in size and numbers. Apparatuses of universal destruction polluting land, water, air, threatening existence.

3. Supervision - surveillance - regulation - control

(May '99)

Walls-barbed wires-gates-guards-time offices-sirens-clocks-tokens-card punching are the apparent markings of the enclaves. They embody merely the external control; allowing entry in and barring escape from factories.

Within the factory control is efficiently organised into departments that monitor the prescribed quantity of production, the level of quality, speed, via concepts of discipline and disciplinary actions, incentives, increments, promotions.

Supervision, surveillance, control, and regulation are not the lot of factories alone. These operate and are dominant in every sphere of social life: give a report, finish the course, enter a file, sign a register, suffer audit and investigation...where are these not present?

Ever-tightening coils of control - and the means of such control - are inherent in the present. And these means are becoming and are being made more sharp-edged, more wide-spread as this present becomes more hollow and less capable of standing or sights of any.
of standing on its own. Workers harnessed to tasks that require them to operate outside walled enclosures, beyond the sights of supervisors, are still bound to the enclosure by chains of pagers and cell-phones.

The powers of human sight being limited, and the reliability of suspicious eyes not enough, cameras and close-circuit TVs are being arranged at different places for round-the-clock surveillance and detection.

The web of computers and satellites spanned out for moment to moment monitoring of every nook and corner is being made more intricate and sophisticated.

Now and then the cry goes up that there is a lack of adequate supervision, surveillance, control, regulation, and it is because of this that problems abound. More strictness is declared to be the panacea. Whereas it is in the very presence of control that the problem lies. The concomitant expansion and sharpening of control is merely proof of the misanthropic nature of the present.

Attempts to eliminate supervision - surveillance - control - regulation are necessary points of departures for any alternatives.

4. Faster and faster - towards doom

Owen 99

Speed, of course, is one of the fundamental canons of the present but it is also one of its soft spots. 'Fast to faster' as the mantra for better life is loosing its sheen, but lamentations about the necessity of speed for human survival - its sheer indispensability - are increasing.

While at workplaces the mirage of endless acceleration has engendered endless insecurity of life and of earning a living, on roads speed has created such killing fields that loss of limb and life is an ever present reality.

The limit is long past when the champions of discipline could mould bodies to match the required speeds. Even the use of medicines to drive bodies has reached a saturation point. Now scientists are blindly immersed in research that is geared to the very transformation of bodies, such that they could conform to the speed of computers, computerised machines and electronics.

Fast to faster speeds, by engendering obsessions of immediate gratification and extreme pleasures in life, are putting life itself at stake.

The race for speed, more speed, and still more speed has, of course, given birth to those lethal pits of dust, smoke, gases, fibres, powders, microbes, chemicals, acids, electricity, heat, electromagnetic and atomic radiation, that are called factories. It is also propelling the whole world to a factory-like state, posing danger to life on earth itself.

The question of putting reins to this speed-Acceleration-pace is, of course, important, but much more necessary is the task of thinking about its alternatives.

5. Cleaving apart "me" and my body. transformed into things/commodities

(July 1999)

Differences can be said to be superficial. Underneath the surface each person's "I" lies battered. This is the present. And we could only have come to this as the result of a process. A few sprouts of antagonisms between "I" and "we" emerged five-six thousand years ago. Like a poisonous tree they spread between individual and society. The spread of antagonism between living labour and accumulated/dead labour has brought humanity to such a present. Accumulated/dead labour, dressed up as the property of companies and institutions, taking the whole of earth in its stranglehold: this is the present.
The meaning of the antagonism between dead labour (machines, knowledge, etc.) and living labour (people doing work) is work, more work and yet more work. And, today this is at its zenith.

Your work could be to paste a perpetual smile in a reception room or to plough a piece of farmland, row after relentless row. Your work could be the projection of ceaseless charm or it could be operating computer-controlled machines day in and day out. Competing incessantly to be a champion or being harnessed everyday in the laboratory to invent a new each day; weaving cloth in every shift or repeating lessons in the class year after year, treating broken, lacerated, ill bodies or keeping shop with endless haggling over prices...

Work-work-work and the gnawing anxiety that work may cease! This is the present. It can be said that each body has become a commodity today. We all have become items to be sold and bought in the market. The price of each is assessed. Our price is determined by what we do, what are deemed capable of. In this context the difference between wage-workers and managers is merely that of the amount.

The body: useful cog/ not so useful cog

"Up to what capacity can this cog be used?" - this is the yardstick of looking at each other's bodies, this is the measuring rod of the present. The perpetual process of cutting-polishing-molding bodies towards higher utility as cogs has made life miserable for children, young men and women, and the elderly. Obviously, in such a present, interpersonal relations are extremely painful. But to come to grips with this infinite pain it is necessary to consider "How do we look at our own bodies?"

Drive yourself: harder, still harder...

Under the compulsions of the present – where each body's price must increase, each body must stay workable - the body is divorced from its "i". To torment its own body and mind has become the daily routine of each & every "i". Each "i" is seen to be ordering its own body to strain the limbs and stress the mind. If tea, coffee or alcohol cannot do the job take drugs! Don't fall sick if possible, but if you do, then take medicines that will make you fit for work In a jiffy - "rub iodox and get to work". The body, subjected to these therapeutic assaults, becomes increasingly vulnerable. Dye hair for eternal youth, get plastic surgery to remove wrinkles, take tonics, use drugs. Work!

Medical insurance has allotted so much compensation for the loss of two fingers and so much for the loss of one eye. And what if you die of over-work? Don't worry, you will get compensation...

The "i" appears to stand apart and issue commands to the body. But the "i" itself is being battered and bruised. There are hordes queuing up to consult psychiatrists, and to meet saints, gurus, mahatmas, mediums, spiritualists, priests... For bringing the "i" closer to its body an end to the antagonistic relations between dead labour and living labour is indispensable. For alternatives it is necessary to think about those forms of accumulated labour with which living labour can exist in amity.

6. At night - it is dark no more

(October'99)

Tamso ma jyotirgamaya - let the light of knowledge drive away the darkness - is the mantra. From our childhood the worship of knowledge has thus been inculcated in us. "Knowledge is enlightenment". It has always been presented to us as anti darkness, veritable light. We are made to sing eulogies to scholars, to the wise and the learned. We are taught that to attain eminence and excellence it is necessary to be learned; specifically, to be more learned than our peers.
The bonds-chains-shackles of discipline thus became indispensable. With these came the craving and obsession to outdo others. Competition and rivalry became a part of our temperament.

Soon it became obvious that specialisation in knowledge is a necessity for getting a job. And, a look at the 'good' and desirable jobs made obvious the tasks that the knowledgeable are engaged in:

- Research on armaments and on strategies for war.
- Research on modes to keep humans in check for the maintenance of hierarchy.
- Investigation into the ways and means of increasing the amounts and speeds of work.
  - To invent such tools-implements-machines that human beings can be yoked to more and more work, and the earth can be increasingly plundered.
  - Inventing medicines and medical practices so that work is not hindered by the ill effects of increasing speed and load of work.

And, such similar misanthropic, anti-nature tasks to maintain the present.

In spite of knowledge being put to such uses why does this infatuation with it persist? Why the passion for knowledge? Knowledge acquired and produced by us is worsening our lives. If we want a life in which nights are meant for sleeping, where calculations of seconds and minutes do not drive us, where the ambience is not that of one-upmanship, then it is necessary to discuss the questions of knowledge, what kind of knowledge, how much knowledge?

7. Accelerating speed, widening chasms

(December 99)

Speed, faster speed, still more speed has compressed the world. Accelerating speed has condensed the earth to the size of a village. It is said that speed has brought the world into human grasp. But the chasms between human beings are ever-widening. How does one explain this paradox?

- 500-1000 to be fed in half an hour: a balancing act between a dozen tasks simultaneously carried out by those making the food, those serving it and those eating it
- As the lights turn red, drivers decelerate from a speed of 60 to 0 in a flash, pedestrians cross over within seconds
- Hundreds getting off a train and hundreds embarking in a span of a minute or half a minute
- Class one - upper kg - lower kg - nursery - pre-nursery annual exams - bi-annual exams - quarterly exams - monthly exams - weekly class tests... daily home-work... tuition
- High-tension electric lines... workers carving and ferrying coal miles in the womb of the earth... huge dams that make the earth quake... computer-controlled atomic plants
- Three to four crops in a year... tube well, electricity, canal, dam... chemical fertilisers, insecticides, weed killers
- Vehicles to move mountains of produce and human hordes... wars for oil-oil-oil
- Each worker carrying out 20 bodily movements in 18 seconds on car manufacturing assembly lines
- Automation: one worker weaving cloth on 16 looms simultaneously
Computer... computer... lines of workers with eyes on microscopes manufacturing computers... and workers who operate computers accounting for work done in each second.

Power press... forging hammer... chemical industry... plastic...

This is the schema within which speed is manufactured and processed. Faster speed implies a stricter control by human beings over their sense organs. A miniscule error leading to catastrophes, and the fear of the punishment apparatus, imposes harsher and harsher control over humans.

Severe control over one's sense organs does not lead to transcendence. It merely causes exhaustion to such an extent that the passive viewing of others playing-jumping-dancing-singing on the television becomes entertainment.

Urgent! At once! Immediately! Right now! Instantaneously! (... faster, as soon as possible ...) - thus, the heavy footed destructive omnipresent dance of speed. It demands perpetual alertness of body, mind and soul. Accelerating speed exploits body, mind, psyche and soul to such an extent that increasing lack of desire, time and energy widens the chasms among humans.

Keeping body and soul thus stretched, and the widening gulf amongst human beings, are hardly worthy human aspirations. Accelerating speed and broadening chasms between humans being two sides of the same coin, it becomes necessary to discuss questions like how much speed? what kind of speed? speed for what?

8. Heights, and their vertiginous attraction

(October 2000)

Eulogies of excellence. Creating aspirations to reach the top. Encouraging an upward ascent: higher, topmost, more peaks to conquer... All of this seems natural because it faithfully mirrors the ladder-like, pyramidal, hierarchical structure of our present. The present is, in fact, the supreme embodiment of such an arrangement.

Whereas, what seems far more natural are minor differences, wherein 'A' happens to be marginally better at something while 'B' is just a shade less or more capable at something else, and so on. These unimportant differences between persons and personalities lend themselves to a panorama of multi-faceted interactions; they form the basis for relations of 'not as unequals' amongst humanity.

Audience and Artists: Born of Pain

Hierarchical social systems engender meaningless, tedious, boring and harmful work, and too much of it. Consequently, a majority of humanity is forced into working. This takes place, as it is bound to, in an atmosphere of lies, deceit, misinformation, maneuvers, and force. There is no choice but to steal away from reality and dwell in an imaginary world, the world of entertainment where pathologies of adventure, excitement, or devotion are born. The audience/ listener and the artist/ performer is born.

Extremes of the ladder

Thus begins the process of converting minor natural human differences into ladder-like gaps of the order of ten- hundred-thousand- lakh. The painful process of stretching and restricting that must push or pull people into slots, continues. Most people are bound by the shackles of food, clothing and shelter. Burden of work and lack of resources

ushes them to the lowermost rungs of the ladder. These are the rungs that form a majority of the audience.
The greed of earning awards and honours inspires an ascent that makes stepping stones of other people. The rewards of competition and the fears of punishment in every conceivable sphere forces people to constantly mould and chisel themselves. After all a person can ensure his/her place in the pyramid only by making the difference between self and the rest of humanity as great as possible - increasing the difference of hundreds to thousands, and those of thousands to millions. The measure of a great or successful artist is the number of heads s/he has been able to climb over.

The inferior and the anti human

Increasing sophistication in this process simply changes an increasing number of people into audience. They find themselves inferior in front of great artists. Feelings of inferiority discourage and demoralise. And what pleasure does the artist derive from all this anyway? The fundamentally anti-human pleasure of scrambling upwards over others!

The question for alternatives is not whether someone has reached up by talent, sincerity, hard work and honesty or by dishonesty, manipulation and stratagems. Instead, deliberations on the audience - artist dichotomy itself can be points of departure for alternatives.

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(From p. 2)

am asking that you request it specially. Simply write to the DB at the post office address or send an e-mail to <figirardi@iserv.net>. It should be ready in a couple weeks.

We begin this issue with a selection of articles from Faridabad Majdoor Samachar (Faridabad Workers' News), published monthly and distributed free to workers in the industrial city of Faridabad near Delhi. What surprises me is the content and style of the articles. They seem to be a more generalized critique of the capitalist present than the specific issues we find in leaflets and papers for mass distribution here in the U.S.

Next Cyril May of the SPGB (Ashbourne Court) uses Derek Devine's DB101 satire of certain elements of the socialist movement in the UK as the talk off point for a homily on philosophy and the non-philosophical activity of the SPGB. The controversies generated by the anti-WTO/IMF/World Bank demonstrations continue. Neil Fettes responds to Adam Buick's criticism of "The Call for a Revolutionary Anti-Capitalist Bloc" and the endorsement of it in DB102 by pointing out aspects of the demonstrations that Buick fails to take into account, especially the combat-ready nature of the forces of law and order who were only too willing to begin breaking heads and gassing demonstrators. Anthony Rayson writes supporting Ronald Young's views on the same subject as expressed in his DB101 letter. There is clearly a significant portion of the DB readership who see violence as an unavoidable--if not desirable--accompaniment of any significant resistance to capital, desirable because our masters' response is certain to alienate and arouse our class sooner or later.

Eduardo Smith's article asserts something that strikes me as less than convincing: that an anti capitalist group that rejects Marxism or refuses to describe itself as socialist is ipso facto bourgeois. I can conceive of many reasons for rejecting Marxism including sheer ignorance, and the reputation of Marxism among workers in the capitalist labor movement who are New Democracy's target for recruitment. I'd also like to defend De Leonists from Smith's accusation of "having welcomed ND into the non-market revolutionary milieu." To my knowledge the only De Leonists to take editorial notice of ND was the New Unionist, which was hostile to its ideas. As for the DB, I took the ND's anti-capitalism at face value and see no reason to exclude it from the debates, nor do I have any reason

(To p. 11)
"Philosophers", wrote Marx "have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it" (THESES ON FEURBACH)

Marx could have been talking about Bertrand Russell. In Russell's book, THE PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY (1912), he opens up his account of appearance and reality from "sitting in a chair at a table" while looking "out of the window" onto the social and natural world in front of him. Russell starts with detached contemplation and ends with detached contemplation. An accurate definition of the armchair philosopher. The world onto which Russell gazes, the quadrangle at Trinity College, Cambridge with its elitism, its ruling class, its college servants, its fine wines and urbane and sophisticated education is left intact. Nothing changes.

Socialists, unlike philosophers, do want to change the world. Changing the world means to actively, consciously and politically take part with other workers to transform society from commodity production and exchange for profit into one based upon common ownership and democratic control of the means of production and distribution by all of society. In short, changing society from capitalism to Socialism requires effort and commitment.

What constitutes the political activity leading to revolutionary change from one social system to another? There are sharp differences of political opinion between the capitalist Left (those who claim to be revolutionary) and Socialists.

For the capitalist Left political activity consists of slogans, marches and riots. It means attending every strike and every disturbance in the misguided belief that a local incident could be the spark for insurrection, the erection of barricades, the take-over of factories and the armed confrontation with the forces of the State. It is a political activity which leads either to a bloodbath or to a

We say that a majority of workers actively desiring Socialism has to exist before a Socialist revolution is possible. And we say that a revolutionary socialist movement has to gain control of the machinery of government through the ballot. Our activity, unlike the capitalist Left, is to discuss Socialist ideas with workers and convince them of the necessity for establishing Socialism. Having no reasonable reply to our critique of their politics, the capitalist Left write us off as ARMCHAIR PHILOSOPHERS, as though persuading someone to become a Socialist is the same as gazing out of a college window.

So it comes as no surprise to find the Socialist Party of Great Britain being derided by Mr. D.Devine. He refers to us as THE SPECIAL PHILOSOPHERS OF GREAT BRITAIN (Discussion Bulletin No. 101 May-June00)
although what is so special about our philosophy he does not say.

Unfortunately for Mr. Devine the armchair is empty. You will see us arguing the Socialist case as and when we can, using every political forum open to us. You will see us debating with the enemies of Socialism. You will see us giving indoor lectures in London. And you will see us at Trade Union meetings, political conferences and public meetings discussing Socialist ideas with the working class and persuading them to become Socialists and to take part in Socialist political action. We are engaged in all this political activity because we are convinced that until there is a Socialist majority actively desiring Socialism then there will be no revolution and no change in society.

The cynical sneer of ‘armchair philosophers’ or ‘special philosophers’ thrown at the Socialist Party of Great Britain shows our critics as neither people interested in understanding the world in which we live nor in changing it. Of course, it is easy to ridicule the SPGB’s political activity, but what practical alternative have these critics to offer in its place. We suggest, absolutely nothing.

Yours sincerely,

Cyril E. May.

General Secretary, Socialist Party of Great Britain, 71
Ashbourne Court, Woodside Park Road, London N12 8SB.

(From p. 9)

to believe that non-Marxist groups like ND, anarcho-communists and anarcho-syndicalists should be excluded from the ranks of non-market socialists.

Next Lynn Olson takes me to task for what he sees as my unfair comment on Ed Stamm, and I try to defend myself in the “Reply.” The De Leonist Society of Canada sees my tentative departure from the ranks of labor voucher proponents as desertion to utopians. My reply is an attempt to point out the errors in the DLSC’s article. Mike Hargis’s letter is a point by point refutation of Ed Stamm’s letter regarding Ronald Young. Mike Ballard defends the IWW against the Aaron Smeaton’s charge that by failing to maintain a high level of ideological uniformity it has given up any claim to the label “revolutionary.” Like Smeaton I have problems with the Industrial Worker’s failure on occasion to live up to the implications of the Preamble to the IWW Constitution. Unfortunately class consciousness does not always make a worker revolutionary.

Dave Perrin has written a full length history of the Socialist Party of Great Britain, a part of the non-market socialist persuasion since 1904, the year of its founding. The book was mentioned in DB102’s brief reviews. John Spritzler defends his DB99 article on Marxism and the Communist Manifesto against Eduardo Smith’s critique in this issue. As usual we end with some notes, announcements, and short reviews.

Finances

We seem to have almost reached that economic condition Dickens’ Mr. McCawber yearned for.

(To p. 22)
Dear DB

In responding to Adam Buick's letter in DB # 102 I'm tempted to ask for a broom to try to sweep up all the straw men Comrade Buick throws out.

Adam's bone of contention is the clause in the call which argues for "the individual's right to act autonomously however they see fit against our real enemies..." He then constructs a scenario whereby 'some group' bring weapons to a demonstration to protest/attack its enemies and then asks: do you support people's right to militarily attack the cops thus endangering innocent civilians in the name of "the right to act autonomously?" This attempted reductio ad absurdum argument only skirts the real issue and quickly comes apart as Adam constructs his case.

Parenthetically, it's the cops who bring weapons to events to attack people in the name of defending democracy yet when people defend themselves they are attacked as 'violent.' After an anti-poverty demonstration in Toronto media observers held up the fact protesters wore swim goggles as proof of their violent intentions. The fact that cops use pepper spray as a matter of course was not considered worthy of reporting.

Adam argues that if the "anti-capitalist movement were a structured movement", which he admits it isn't, and if a vote were taken, then he suspects that a vote by those participating in an action would go against these 'violent miscreants.' In the final paragraph "some anarchists" presumably the authors of the RACB, are thus condemned for ignoring majority decisions which were never taken. Come on Adam!

Let's look at what this idea means. First of all in a mass demonstration, which is what Seattle, Washington and more recently Windsor, ON were, it is not possible to script all the moves in advance. Second, why should only one tactic be acceptable? In the case of Seattle upwards of 2,000 demonstrators broke away from trades union contingents and were part of the group that actually shut down the WTO meeting (It is ironic there is an IWW cartoon illustrating this point just a few pages later). No doubt the 'democratic' decision made by the heads of the unions was ignored by demonstrators because they didn't agree with it.

Why was such a formulation included in the call? The authors of the call argued for a separate anti-capitalist bloc in Washington because of disagreement with the politics and tactics of some of those who had appropriated for themselves the role of 'organisers' and 'peacekeepers' for April 16. In Seattle peacekeepers did act as an auxiliary for the police in trying to keep the radicals in line. And who can forget a similar example during the so-called Poll Tax Riot in London where the 'organisers' of the Militant tendency initially offered to cooperate with the Police in finding those deemed responsible?

I should also refer to the comment chastising Ed Caldwell, Curtis Price and myself "for going along with this" and the suggestion that this attitude is in contradiction to the advocacy of workers' councils. I think it's clear that there's something of a difference between a workers' council and the actions we've been discussing, but in both the principle is of a flowering of different opinions and discussions rather than one idea being imposed.

As to whether the demonstration was reformist or revolutionary, a clear cut line is not so simple. Clearly at these events the reformist message dominated even as the media chose to focus on the flashier stories. Did the events in Seattle abolish the WTO? Of course not and surely few thought it would. In a sense any action which falls short of the abolition of capitalism is a failure. Even if all of the windows in downtown had been broken, capitalism would have survived.

It is too early to tell if these actions represent the beginning of a new wave of protest which will go beyond the feeble levels of protest of the recent past or if it will find an echo in the factories and other areas of social struggle. Many accounts I read noted that as the state mobilized its forces, the was a general radicalization of the demonstrators. Images of police attacking demonstrators cannot but undermine faith in the forces of law and order, at least in the short term. It seems to me that rather than guerilla insurgencies, the danger for the advocates of direct action lies in getting caught up in an
ongoing series of demonstrations. When the next action is six months or a year away, the far less glamorous prospect of sitting in a room with a small group of people trying to organize a much smaller action, tends to be demoralizing.

Neil Fettes/ Red & Black Notes
POB 47643 - 939 Lawrence Ave E
Don Mills, ON, M3C 3S7, Canada

Dear Readers,

I think Ed Stamm's attack on Ronald Young was bogus. Saying "Young's position is that anyone he disagrees with has no rights" is ignorant. I know Ronald. He's a very articulate, anarchist prisoner locked down at Huntsville Texas. Georgie Junior executes about a person a week, there. He, many other prisoners and most black folks already live under fascism! Ron did not declare class war - the government has! But Ron does have the awareness to recognize it and the courage to respond to it. I must say, I know Ed a little too, like him also, but must go with Ron on this one.

Ed seems to me to be basically a "leave me alone with my gun" libertarian. He's the one who sounds Leninist, what with his "armed proletariat" talk. Mostly though, he sounds like a do-nothing liberal. The American people may or may not be "stupid" enough to tolerate police brutality, but if so, they are politically ignorant and oblivious to their own danger - or just plain gripped with fear and apathy.

The government doesn't need a provocation, like a few precious busted windows. Look, at the Gulf of Tonkin Incident. That lie set up the genocide of Southeast Asia, the murder of millions, lasting ecocide, etc. without so much as an apology or a nickel in (promised) reparations. They've dropped atomic bombs on down! How do you "reason" with self-righteous, "humanitarian" mass murderers?? - of children!

I'm a worker, too. When I talk about Seattle at work, people bring up the cladders. I say stuff like, "Well, maybe they got tired of seeing old ladies beat to shit and gassed by the pigs!" Then I tell them all about the real crimes committed by the government and business, in Seattle and around the globe.

Frederick Douglass said, "If there is no struggle, there is no progress." Ed has zero faith that capitalism/fascism can be overcome. If that's true, we are all doomed anyway and we won't "evolve" into voluntary collectives - so we might as well go down fighting! Anarchists are committed to action - not inaction. Ed takes the moral high ground of don't rock the boat and possibly disturb my relative "autonomy." I can't believe we wasted so much hand wringing on this and not used it to organize to fight this monstrosity. Time's a wastin'.

We've got to maximize what time we may have to do our damndest to succeed, finally.

Anthony Rayson

- proud to call myself an anarchist*

*Ronald, Gulf Coast Red, I, and others collaborate on the excellent anarchist prisoner magazine "Chain Reaction." I was a member of Ed Stamm's ASEA until recently, as they stopped wanting to be called "anarchists."
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“NEW DEMOCRACY” - VEHICLE OF BOURgeois IDEOLOGY

The Jan-Feb issue of "Discussion Bulletin" (1) contains an article by New Democracy with the unequivocal title "The Communist Manifesto Is Wrong." Although the content of the article has no real surprises, adding nothing new to the permanent attacks and slanders against Marxism which characterized the political line and orientations of ND, it has persuaded us of the urgency on taking position regarding the political nature and activities of this group.

What is New Democracy?

Reading the extensive propaganda published by this group (if it is really a group) in Discussion Bulletin and on its Web site, one would hope to find some references regarding its origins, political evolution or some claim of political affiliation. Wishful thinking! ND actually seems to have come from nowhere with some ready-made ideological remedies to the problems of today's society. This political attitude of hiding one's past, or pretending to be discoverers of political principles, is already quite suspect about the real political motivations of this group, mistrust that only grows as one goes to the essential content of its printed materials.

Reading ND documents one learns that it stands for, as developed in its "Statement of Principles," "a revolution to create a real democracy," this revolution is necessary and possible, basically, because the present system is unjust, and "most people want the new world that only revolution can bring." And what is the social force of this revolution? "Ordinary people." It affirms that "revolution is possible because the struggle of ordinary people to humanize the world is the force that drives history."

On the other hand, by its own assertions, ND is "firmly opposed to marxism" and communism. In fact, as they say their raison de etre is to fight marxism: "Our goal in New Democracy is to spread an alternative to marxism" which to ND's despair "unfortunately continues to be the only coherent and systematic model of social change posed as a revolutionary challenge to capitalism." And certainly, true to this open declaration of intentions, ND does not waste any opportunity in its documents to sneer at all the basics of Marxist theory, from historical materialism to communist revolution, proposing instead ND's own alternative "model of social change and revolution" based on the "working people's values of equality, solidarity, and democracy."

Thus ND is a group which poses as revolutionary, but whose real function is -even by its own account- to attack marxism: Attacks which it carries out quite well with the historically characteristic class hate that, ever since the appearance of the Communist Manifesto, the bourgeoisie has shown against marxism all over the world.

The methods of these attacks are -as they have been before ND- the most outrageous falsifications of marxist views, as well as the most servile repetition of the mountains of lies that the bourgeoisie has heaped against the working class movement during the last century.

Among these lies ND privileges, just as the bourgeoisie has done worldwide in the 'democratic' capitalist countries as well as in the "communist" ones, the lies that equate the
now disappeared monstrous state capitalist regimes of Russia and its satellites with communism, and Stalinist ideology with Marxism. In a flyer entitled "The future of democratic revolution: why did communism fail?" ND essentially repeats these lies, adding its own little contribution to the bourgeoisie's campaign that equates stalinism with communism. According to ND the Russian Revolution of 1917 failed not only because it was communist but "because it was undemocratic" and guided by marxism which has "a negative view of working people, seeing them as "dehumanized" and motivated merely by self-interest. (Leading it) to play an anti-democratic and counterrevolutionary role." Of course ND is not referring here to the actual failure of the Russian revolution at the beginning of the 1920's due to the isolation of the Russian proletarian bastion brought by the defeat of the revolutionary uprisings of the working class in other main capitalist countries of the epoch, but to the collapse of the Stalinist regimes at the beginning of the 90's.

So again what is New Democracy? Since we understand, in accord with marxism, that political groups are the organized political expression of class interests, we recognize ND—because of its political activity—-is in a general sense a bourgeoisie group, whose main function is to spread distrust in the revolutionary traditions of marxism. However, ND, in its main field of action, seems more precisely to be an organized effort of the bourgeoisie to infiltrate, the so-called "non-market, anti-statist, libertarian socialist" political milieu of which Discussion Bulletin is the main forum. And one cannot but be amazed by the welcome given to ND by people such as the DeLeonists that still have not officially renounced marxism. It is not accidental that ND has targeted this milieu and particularly its DeLeonist components. In fact, ND is preying in the DeLeonist milieu's own confusions about bourgeoisie democracy and marxism, which we have often criticized. We think that it is time for this milieu to react and take a stand against ND's activities and in particular for "Discussion Bulletin" to stop being a willing vehicle of the propaganda of this group.

Lastly, we want to express our solidarity with the criticisms that comrade ASm from Internationalist Notes (2) has made of this group in the Jan-Feb issue of "Discussion Bulletin." In particular, he is probably right to say that [the] ND "platform is hardly more than a substitution of words ... of those statements from organizations that spring from a marxist background." In other words ND has not really an alternative theory to marxism, and it's obliged, in order to sound meaningful and coherent, to STEAL some marxist conceptions, taking them out of context and emptying them of revolutionary content, and then presenting the result of this abortion as ND's own "theoery of social change".

Eduardo Smith.

1.-Discussion Bulletin. PO Box 1564, Grand Rapids, MI 49501.

2.- Internationalist Notes PO Box 1531 Eau Claire, WI 54702

(From Internationalism, No. 112 April-May '00, PO Box 268, New York, NY 10018)
Dear Frank Girard,

Your comments about the contributions to the DB are usually fair and informative.

But your comment about Ed Stamm’s “Response to Ronald Young” (in the DB 102) in which you state: “...his accusation that the action of Black Clad Block constituted persecution—presumably of the authorities... led me to re-read Ed Stamm’s contribution several times. And I still cannot find where he accused the “Black Clad Block” of persecuting the authorities or anyone else. Your other comment: “...his affirmation of what is known... as ‘compassionate capitalism’... the idea that we owe our living to the boss’s kindness... leaves me wondering how you ever found such an affirmation in anything Ed Stamm said. His comparison of his own employment conditions to those of the Nike workers, how they both have to accept what he correctly calls “...a rotten deal...” can hardly be called anything like “...we owe our living to the boss’s kindness...”

Ed Stamm's submission was actually a pertinent discussion of the long-range effects of the behavior of that minority of demonstrators who choose to exhibit violence. His statement was an appropriate and timely outline of the unfortunate consequences of violent demonstrations and they deserved a summary free of distortions and unwarranted conclusions.

Yours for a future of accurate, factual and pertinent submissions, contributions and comments, and thanks for all your hard work at maintaining this forum of discussion. I particularly appreciate your reprinting of the book: Non-Market Socialism which we could all study for its analysis of the major currents in its field.

Lynn Olson

Reply to Lynn Olson

Dear Lynn and Readers,

I tried to be fair to Ed in DB101. If I didn’t succeed it was because I misunderstood his letter— that and an unfortunate choice of words. First, isn’t it true that Ed is protesting Ron Young’s defense of the Black Cladders on grounds that their actions placed the police and others in the position where they were forced—presumably against their will—to repress the marchers? In other words Ed cast the police and other agents of the state as the victims in the events in Seattle. Unfortunately I used the word persecution when harassment would have been more nearly what I actually meant. It seems to me that Ed’s real message is that we should not resist our masters. If they are meeting to plan further encroachments on our civil rights, cuts in our standard of living or degradation of the environment, our resistance constitutes aggression.

The same holds true for workers who complain about starvation wages. Ed’s position that we voluntarily made a deal with our masters and are lucky to have jobs. Were it not for our capitalist masters, we’d go hungry — or hungrier. Again he ends by warning us that resistance is futile.

The class war Ed accuses Ron of advocating has existed since the beginning of class divided societies. I think its too early for Ed and other peace-oriented workers to surrender. For one thing our class might win with no violence. — Let’s hope so.

—Frank Girard
Dear DB:

UTOPIAN SOCIALISM--"NON-MARKET" VARIETY

In your "Comment on 'Socialism and the Market'" (DB101), you say that "somehow the De Leonist Society of Canada and I seem fated to disagree." So it would seem--especially so now that you have in our opinion allowed yourself to be lured away from Marxism--De Leonism by the siren song of what we can best describe as Utopian Socialism--"Non-Market" Variety.

To begin with we find the "logic" of your explanation concerning your recent drift away from "the idea of labor vouchers" hard to accept. For not only do the problems which you mount against vouchers appear trivial and easily rectified but you have high praise for their role as a socialist "mechanism" with which to transform "the real slackers in capitalist society, the capitalists and their business and political bureaucracy, who do no useful labor at all," into useful producers. If you throw labor vouchers overboard, how then will you prevent the aforesaid slackers from continuing to take what they want from society untroubled by the necessity of having to work for it?

We are even more bewildered by the thrust of your concluding comment! Whatever possessed you to dress us in Leninist garb? For since when (as you imply) has the De Leonist Society been a party to the "two-stage transition" fiction? Let's be absolutely clear on this point. We have NEVER, repeat NEVER, subscribed to this monstrous distortion of Marxism which, as shown by Arnold Petersen in his work "MARXISM versus SOVIET DESPOTISM," was inexplicably set on foot by Lenin himself. Recognizing that clarity is more than ever the need of the hour, we cannot abide this "two-stage" mare's nest--especially not today when circumstances are thundering a warning to workers that they should begin preparations for a swift and direct transition from Capitalism to Socialism!

No, Lenin to the contrary, Marx does NOT lead down the garden path of a "two-stage" transition from Capitalism to Socialism. In his Critique of the Gotha Program, wherein he discusses the "mechanism" of labor vouchers, Marx makes it perfectly clear that his context is simply the "first phase" of a "Communist" (i.e., socialist) society that is newborn from Capitalism. Imagine our dismay, therefore, to discover that Crump has inadvertently or otherwise linked Marx with "the notion of a supposed 'transitional society' between capitalism and socialism." Quoting from "Non-Market Socialism in the Twentieth Century" by John Crump, as follows:

"In 1930 the Group of International Communists of Holland (GIC) borrowed some of Marx's speculations in the Critique of the Gotha Programme and envisaged a 'transitional society' based on exchange and labour-time calculation."

What a mess is thus brewed! In our opinion, Crump's failure to
challenge GIC's apparent perfidy in transplanting "exchange and labour-time calculation" from Marx's Gotha Program context to a Leninist "transition society" context is a failure he should not be proud of. For he should know that Marx would not have detailed the labor voucher "idea" as he did if he had not considered such vouchers (and exchange) to be essential ingredients of what he termed Socialism's "first phase!"

Incidentally, important as is the foregoing to the task of setting the record straight, there is nevertheless a vital point concerning the question of transition that has yet to be made. It is brought to the surface by Crump, in his above treatise, wherein he reminds us that because a capitalist economy and a socialist economy cannot "coexist" (or rather, we would say, cannot coexist within the same national policy) it follows that a transition from the former to the latter must needs be accomplished within the briefest possible time or not at all--our only difference with the "Non-Market" school on this point being that we do not agree that such transition must necessarily entail a synchronized, supranational transition by the whole industrialized world. In any case, so much for the two-stage "transition society" theories and their obviously extended transition periods!

Where then is the Work Force to find a transition model that would enable it to switch economies virtually overnight? Two such presently vie for workers' attention. One is the Non-Market Socialism prescription described by Crump in his above treatise. Rejecting labor vouchers, it institutes free access to consumers' goods in the belief that "the revolutionary enthusiasm of millions of socialist men and women" will alone be sufficient to carry the day despite temporary shortfalls. Naive to the core, it turns a blind eye to the probability that these millions will be opposed by millions of anti-socialist men and women. The other model is the Market Socialism plan described by the De Leonist Society in our DB101 contribution, "Socialism and the Market"--a projection that combines "revolutionary enthusiasm" with labor vouchers in order to minimize anti-socialist predations.

But to return to your final paragraph and your curious imputation that our ideas about "the destructive element in the new society" are also "borrowed from Leninism." It should be obvious to you that we do not need to go to Lenin to learn that there is a destructive element, a rapacious element that, carrying over within a dispossessed capitalist class, would if given the chance be only too happy to destroy a fledgling socialist society! Nor do we have to look beyond our own shores to conclude that "millions" of workers, still harbouring anti-socialist sentiment, would themselves contain a destructive element--an element eager to aid any capitalist re-active attempt to destroy "the new society." The dangers appear real!

Or are you dismissing the labor-voucher safeguard on the ground that the dangers posed by the above "destructive elements" have been greatly exaggerated? Here's an enigma!
In conclusion, Frank, there is a further comment of yours in DB101 which lends additional credence to your observation that "somehow the De Leonist Society of Canada and I seem fated to disagree." It appears in your blurb, as follows:

"I believe that the exchange between Richard Lloyd and the De Leonist Society of Canada raises more questions than it answers. A question for both Lloyd and the DLSC: Are we to believe that a working class suffering in the midst of a collapsing capitalist system will stand around until election day before taking over the means of production and organizing to satisfy human needs?"

Your inference is that the DLSC, for one, believes that the Working Class should thus "stand around." How utterly wide of the mark you position yourself! A presumed revolutionary agitator on behalf of a "suffering working class," how can you end this suffering by means of incendiary talk inciting workers to jump the political gum? Presumably acquainted with De Leon, a master tactician, how can you ignore his warning that the socialist movement must "give a chance to the peaceful solution of the great question at issue" because "the Socialist ballot is the emblem of right"? Has it not occurred to you that were the Work Force to attempt control of industry without an "election day" mandate to do so, their impetuous action could well be expected to precipitate social disaster!

We hardly need add that it would be an entirely different matter if the capitalist class, anticipating a socialist political victory, were to put "election day" on indefinite hold or otherwise wage overt war against the franchise! In such case the Socialist Industrial Union would of course not "stand around" but would instead act in accordance with the polls of its members as to their readiness to take over the means of production.

But this is obviously not the context of the ill-considered question that you put to us. As we said before, amant "Non-Market" Socialism, so we repeat here as regards your apparent contempt for the political ballot: SOCIALISM DOES NOT BUILD FOR DISASTER!

Sincerely,

THE DE LEONIST SOCIETY OF CANADA
P.O. Box 944, Station F
Toronto, Ontario M4Y 2N9.

NOTE: The cost of a one-year subscription to Internationalism was given incorrectly in DB 102. The correct price is $8.50 from Internationalism, P.O. Box 288, New York, NY 10018.
Dear DLSC and Readers,

Let me begin by explaining that for over half a century I have understood labor vouchers to be a system of accounting, a device to measure one’s contribution in labor time to the store of goods and services produced in a socialist society, not a means of exchange. Now it’s true that a person can easily be wrong for fifty years. But please consider this “micro” example of how I understand the voucher system as Marx describes it in *The Gotha Program*:

If my neighbors and I decide to make a garden together and to share the produce in proportion to the amount of work each of us contributed, we would keep an account of the number of hours each of us contributed to the collective effort. Then at harvest time each of us would take his or her share of vegetables in proportion to the amount of time we had put into the project. In this case there has been no buying or selling. Keeping track of time was just a device used in this cooperative venture to ensure that we shared the fruits of our labor equitably.

Over the years in discussions about socialism, opponents would argue that labor vouchers would be just the same as money – we’d get our wages in the form of vouchers instead of dollars. I would then cite the same arguments the DLSC advances.

I knew there were passages in our literature that suggested that vouchers would indeed be used like money as in the SLP pamphlet *Socialism: Questions Most Frequently Asked and Their Answers* where the answer to the question “How will people be compensated... Will there be money?” begins by saying, “There will be no money under socialism.” and then goes on to speak of “labor time voucher which a worker may “exchange” for goods and services, will take the place of money.” (p. 20) When this was called to my attention, I explained it as an unfortunate mistake in the pamphlet. It’s worth noting also that the pamphlet also quotes the passage in *The Gotha Program* where Marx explains the use of labor time vouchers without comparing them to money or using the word “exchange.”

Now to the DLSC’s charge that I unjustly implied that they shared the “two stage transition fiction advanced by Lenin and his followers.” Here I am at a loss. Did I misread your article “Socialism and the Market”, on pages 17-19 in which you quote approvingly from Marx’s *The Gotha Program* on the need for a two-phase transition to communism and reproach John Crump because he “leapfrogged over” market socialism, (the first phase of a socialist society)...” (p.18 of DB101). You argue further that Marx spoke of a voucher system as characteristic of the first phase of socialism, again avoiding the word stage. How does a first “stage” of socialism differ from a first “phase”? And why can’t our class simply use the means of production we built up to produce goods and services needed by a socialist society and make them available to everyone including the old parasite class without recourse to exchange or the forced labor we find in capitalism?

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Income almost equalled expenditure during the past two months.

**Contributions:** Margaret Ahrens $2; Richard Evanoff $5; Kari Heck $10; Frank Girard $22; William Cashin $10; Ralph Forsyth $22; Joe Tupper $20 for the abolition of capitalism. Total $91. Thank you, comrades.

**BALANCE**  
June 23, 2000  
$ 377.42

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-Frank Girard
Dear DB Readers,

I would like to respond to Ed Stamm’s response to Ronald Young in DB #102 as it raises a clear dividing line between revolutionary anarchism and reformist pseudo-anarchism (a.k.a. classical liberalism).

Right off the bat Ed reveals that he cannot tell the difference between a meeting of governmental ministers and a meeting of ordinary citizens. He asks, “Do anarchists respect the rights of people they disagree with, or do we attempt to prevent or destroy any form of expression that we disagree with?” The WTO Ministerial in Seattle was a meeting of ordinary citizens to discuss their opinions on the merits of the WTO or its policies. They were governmental trade ministers there to set the agenda for further meetings to make trade law that will adversely affect millions of working and poor people around the world and further fill the coffers of multi-national capitalists. Disrupting the meeting of the WTO was an act of self-defense. Does Ed view the sessions of Congress as a simple meeting of ordinary people to discuss their opinions on war, taxation, etc.? I thought the whole point of anarchism is to prevent governments from governing. That’s what people were trying to do in Seattle in November, Washington D.C. in April, and will be doing in Prague in September.

Next, Ed defends the violence of the police as simply “heavy-handed law and order”, justified by the street blockades. He defends the imposition of the “state of emergency” so that the WTO (an organization established by law for the regulation of international capitalist trading in stolen goods) could go about its business undisturbed. He goes on to compare the Seattle demonstrators to anti-abortion protestors and offers that police action against either should not be considered “political repression.” As a matter of fact police action against anti-abortion protestors as well as against the Seattle demonstrators is, indeed, “political repression.” Both were demonstrating against policies of the State so were “political actions”, which the forces of the State acted to suppress. Anarchists do not call upon the police to ban demonstrations at abortion clinics nor do we call on the cops to remove anti-abortionists when they blockade. No, we use direct action to defend the right of a woman to choose and remove the blockades ourselves.

Ed’s third point is more serious and harder to deal with. This has to do with public perception of anarchists. Perhaps Ed has done a poll to determine people’s response to the actions in Seattle. My own informal poll (the pollee being a “non-political” African co-worker) revealed that the public thought that what happened in Seattle was great. But seriously, I can guarantee you that the public reaction was all over the map. Some folks think that anything other than voting is wrong. Others, while supporting peaceful public demonstrations, frown on civil disobedience (after all the law is the law and it must be obeyed). Then there are still others who support civil disobedience but disapprove of property destruction; and, I’m sure that there are many who think that destroying property is okay but that violence toward people, including cops, is wrong. In other words there is a continuum and I would guess that the vast majority of people, in North America anyway, would fall into the second category. To guarantee that we don’t turn anybody off we would have to do nothing. I wonder which is a worse image for anarchists: crazy, black-masked trashers or bespectacled, tweed-suited pacifists. The fact is both images are true and both are false and both images are the only ones that will ever appear in the capitalist media. That’s why we need our own media.

Ed feels that “public disorder” has the potential of provoking a loss of civil liberties or even a dictatorship. Ed suggests that the way to effectively oppose the policies of the WTO is to “organize opposition to concrete acts of oppression.” I agree 100%. Nike, Gap, McDonald’s, are all major corporations that daily carry out concrete acts of oppression against workers. Smashing their windows is not the best way to oppose them. Organizing the workers employed by them would be much more effective. Is Ed aware that attempting to organize workers in this country is almost a guarantee of losing ones job (economic repression)? In places like Indonesia, Nigeria, Mexico, it can mean death at the hands of police, soldiers or private gun-thugs, or prison (i.e., political repression). The only way to guarantee that we don’t provoke repression is to do nothing except what is acceptable to the Masters.

Ed contrasts the “bad” publicity obtained by the Seattle demonstrations, due to the trashing, with the “good” publicity given the very respectable Million-Mom March (for gun control). Ed fails to note that
the agenda of the Million-Mom March coincides with that of the police and the State. Of course the media is going to promote it. None of the various agendas demonstrated in Seattle coincide with the State’s agenda, except for, maybe; the AFL-CIO’s "Fix it or Nix it" program. If it had not been for the blockades (the trash was a sideshow) and the police’s violent response, I think that it is safe to assume that the AFL-CIO’s parade would have gotten little coverage if not ignored altogether.

(In an aside Ed notes that he supports an armed proletariat. What does he expect the proles are going to do with their arms? Can you say insurrection? Can you say defend their revolutionary conquests? But that would be illegal and it might turn off the middle class. We can’t have any of that, now can we?)

Finally, Ed seems to feel that we should be grateful to Nike and other employers for providing us all with jobs, especially those teenage girls in Indonesia. After all working for wages is a free choice. Isn’t that what the capitalists keep telling us?

"Ideally we'd all be working in self-managed, worker owned cooperatives, but that's not the case yet." And it never will be if we don't struggle to make it so. Ed doesn't feel that "class war" has achieved anything for the working class. Well, how about the legal 8-hour day, legal minimum wage, the legal right for form unions and any number of other "legal rights" achieved in the 20th century. None of these were given to us out of gratitude. They had to wrung from the masters through hard, sometimes violent, struggle. Many of these concessions are now being eroded, or taken away altogether, because the working class has gotten lazy and shies away from "class war". How does Ed propose that we achieve The Ideal, if not through struggle and, yes, revolution?

Let me finish by saying that anarchism is nothing if it is not revolutionary. Evolutionary anarchism is an oxymoron if there ever was one. It guarantees the perpetuation of Church, State and Capital by reducing anarchism to a lifestyle. To get rid of this Trinity of Oppression requires a revolutionary movement of the vast majority of humanity. It will be a movement that takes control of the means of production and consumption. It will be a movement that prevents any party from erecting a new State on the ruins of the old. It will be a movement free of superstition and obeisance to authority. It certainly will entail confrontation with the enemy.

In Solidarity,
Mike Hargis

(From p. 11)

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| BALANCE | August 26, 2000 | $387.16 |

Fraternally submitted,
Frank Girard
Dear Discussion Bulletin,

In DB101 A. Smeaton wrote: "The historic fact of the organizational nature of the IWW is its nature as a federation. this was a historic reaction to the problems of trade unions and the political party domination of the trade unions at the turn of the century. The problem is that if the IWW voted to become the Boy Scouts of America they would do so, and it would be democratic."

But then, either the IWW would cease to be revolutionary, at which point all the current Wobblies would leave, or the BSA would start to become revolutionary, at which point, we could all check them off on our United Way contribution chart.

Quite frankly, this is one of the biggest differences between A. Smeaton and class conscious workers such as myself. While I can perfectly understand and sympathize with much of what Smeaton and his gang say and the goals which they profess, they apparently cannot reciprocate.

An association of free producers is just that. It is an association which is free; free even to disagree about certain points of history and the current struggles of the oppressed against their oppressors. Comrade Smeaton's constant put down of principled, democratic action within the organization I have chosen to freely associate with and which is trying to organize a new society within the old at the same time as it is organizing to fight the class battles of daily life now, is unacceptable to me. Fellow worker Smeaton apparently has no use for a union committed to the self-emancipation of the proletariat. And yet he says, "the main priority of revolutionaries to build a revolutionary press and to try to encourage (them?), whenever and wherever possible, to form their own organizations of struggle."

We do have a newspaper; but as it does not meet all of Smeaton's ideological criteria and it is democratically controlled, it does not measure up, in his eyes. By way of explanation, I should like to point out that the editorial board of the "Industrial Worker" is delegated to get our union's COLLECTIVE activities and views known by producing a newspaper. We don't have a "line", and because we freely associate, we don't always say exactly the same thing. As Comrade Smeaton has pointed out, we are a diverse organization of workers; but more than this, we have come to a consensus that the principles embodied in the IWW Preamble are the necessary ingredient to keep a classwide movement on track towards ending wage-slavery. And yes, we are irresponsibly democratic whether it comes to editing the "Industrial Worker" or on other assorted issues. We encourage the praxis of self-management. We are not perfect. We take chances, Comrade Smeaton.

But this is "irresponsible", according to FW Smeaton. If his fellow workers don't agree 100% with him (perhaps, it's only 99%), he won't "unionize" with them. This is clear. However, the fallacy of Comrade Smeaton's position lies in its praxis, essentially, the praxis of a sect at work. What I'm advocating, which happens to be what the IWW advocates, is a classwide organization, which is democratic enough to allow for differences of opinion on some political/tactical questions; but which is still steadfastly dedicated to the strategic goal of abolishing the wages system of slavery. As for all the things Comrade Smeaton wants to do, I say, "Right on! Go for it, fellow worker." What fellow worker Smeaton says to us in reply is, "You're wrong. You're wrong. Me and my pals in this org have all the answers here in our back pockets. Take a leaflet." Sound familiar, DB readers?

Aaron also wrote:
“It is indicative of the method of the IWW to maintain that it is possible to vote to achieve universal health care, like most of the left it fails to take into account the historical realities of the present period in which such social reforms represent expenditures that the capitalists as a class can no longer afford to make, essentially being viewed by the ruling class as a waste of capital. It is something that today cannot happen, and yet the "left" refuses to give up its grand dream of a functioning social democratic capitalism.”

I'm dreaming of a red Christmas too. But really now... the capitalist class has the dough-ray-me. Enough with this fatalism. One bears this crap all of the time via the corporate/state media apparatus.

We bloody created the GDP and it does keep growing faster than our numbers as worker/producers in the population! Screw the bosses and their rate of profit. When we struggle and win a class battle over the social product of our labor, it can and often does come back to us via liberal vs. conservative divisions of it through the State apparatus; at other moments through better union contracts, laws, constitutional amendments and the like. I don't buy into the notion that we can't get parts of our own socially produced product back either. The class struggle comes down to a test of power over the product of our class's labor. To my mind, that would include universal health care, paid for by "dem's dat got", as well as overtime pay for work in excess of 8 hours and other assorted "social reforms". Its really a question of how much class conscious organizational power we can muster when these issues come to the bargaining table, the streets, the workplace or whatever other venue we happen to be exerting our class power in.

Oh and yes, on voting... Whether some Wobs take two minutes out to vote or not or even, "My gods!" go to church or practice Witchcraft, for that matter, is really their own private business. We realize that a classwide democratic organization could never be composed purely of Saints, Jesuits, graduate students of communism or Boy Scouts. It is the case with the actually existing working class that they don't devote 100% of their free-time to the "cause" and to be realistic, it probably never will be their approach. However, it is realistic to see that those "social wages" which we now enjoy came about as the result of real movement in the class struggle. The only reason ANYTHING or any PART of the product of our collective social labor is taken away from us now is because we let it happen; because we are not organized powerfully enough as a class for ourselves. The other side, the ruling class, is weak compared to our potential. The more we get class consciously organized, the more power we will have to win class battles.

And further, I should like to reaffirm Comrade Smeaton's observation that the IWW does not control the EZLN and that Marcos has more credibility than all the Wobs doing solidarity work down there in Mexico combined. This situation may change though when and if the sub-commandante breaks out his LITTLE RED BOOK of Quotations from Chairman Mao. T

Seriously though, I would advise all readers to take another look at "DB 100" and read FW Bekken's comments for further elucidation on the topic of the relation between the IWW and the EZLN.

Comrade Smeaton went on to criticize and bait a whole lot of tendencies on the left in the rest of his polemic: the CNT-FAL,anarcho-syndicalists, council communists and I guess by implication, DeLeonists, World Socialists, NUPer's and the rest of the people who like to read the "Discussion Bulletin" because it is non-sectarian. And then he finished his polemic with the following statement of purpose:
"What is needed is to take an entirely different political path, to lay the basis for a world revolutionary party whose job is not to take power in anyone’s name but to draw out the historical lessons to be learned from the struggles of the past and to point a way forward to practical activity that seeks to bring about the downfall of capitalism worldwide. This polemic between myself and FW Ballard has illustrated quite clearly the differences between our respective groups."

Of course, it is the case that I would not be a bit surprised if I ran into anarcho-syndicalists, council communists or even anarchists in the IWW. And while I would refuse such labels for myself, I am and would be proud to associate with these workers, yes even including workers with views like Comrade SMEATON, in a classwide DEMOCRATIC organization like the IWW. This is probably the most crucial difference between our two approaches to the problems posed to revolutionaries by the rule of Capital. As I’ve said, I believe the path FW SMEATON is on leads only to the dead end of sectarian praxis. On the other hand, I’m convinced that together, we class conscious workers can win, if we’re ready to freely and democratically associate to get what is essentially our property and our lives back under our control and that we are conscious that this can only be accomplished by our own efforts to abolish the wages system of slavery. Otherwise, it’ll be more of the same and to turn an old leftist slogan around, “the workers divided will always be defeated.”

For an end to wage-slavery,
Mike Ballard
X334260

INDUSTRIAL WORKERS OF THE WORLD *** FOR A WORLD WITHOUT CAPITALISTS,
WAGE-SLAVERY OR COMMODITY PRODUCTION. FOR A CLASSLESS CO-OPERATIVE
COMMONWEALTH WITH PRODUCTION FOR USE BASED ON NEED, WHILE LIVING IN
HARMONY WITH THE EARTH. LET FREE-TIME RING!

(From p. 32) http://www.iww.org/demystify/

the various way in which the capitalist class seeks to dominate us and second, the methods we ourselves use to struggle against that domination. He shows how reading Marx can provide a guide both to understanding and opposing capitalism. The book’s introduction includes a brilliant overview of working class struggles in the past century and the development of ideas of Autonomy."...... "First published in 1979, this second edition includes a new preface by the author.” Available in the U.S. for $17 (including postage) from Collective Action Notes, POB 22662, Baltimore, MD 21203. Make checks payable to “Curtis Price,” although we can handle “Collective Action Notes” checks as well.

We Dare Be Free: New England Anarchist Agitation for International Social Revolution, Issue #6 Spring 2000. The political statement of this twenty-page tabloid begins, “As revolutionary anarchist-communists, we seek the complete abolition of capitalism and the unconditional overthrow of the state and work toward a worldwide classless society of free and equal social existence.” Among the articles in this issue is one calling for a “Northeastern Federation of Anarchist Communists (NRFAC);” information on activities in New England, Alain Pemag’s entire chapter “Anarcho-Communism” from Non-Market Socialism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, several celebrating the upsurge of demonstrations and direct action in the past year, and others. $1 from We Dare Be Free, P.O. Box 230685, Boston, MA 02123. Back issues 1-5 $2 from the same address

- fg
The Socialist Party of Great Britain: Politics, Economics, and Britain's Oldest Political Party by David A. Perrin; 215 pages; L13.95 postpaid from the Socialist Party of Great Britain, 52 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7UN UK. In the U.S. $20.00 postpaid from the World Socialist Party, PO Box 440247, Boston MA 02147.

David Perrin has chosen to write the history of a political party that technically lies outside the bounds of politics as people have grown to understand the word. Conventional political parties claim to represent the interests of people who believe they have a stake in the political and economic system. Such parties have programs and plans for reforms in the government that they claim will benefit their members and sympathizers. The Socialist Party of Great Britain has no such program because its purpose is not to reform the British economic and political system but to convince the working class to overthrow and destroy it.

Around the turn of the century the holder of the largest social democratic franchise in England was the Social Democratic Federation, a reformist political grouping typical of the socialist parties of the time. The circumstance that brought the SPGB into existence in 1904 was the realization among some members of the Social Democratic Federation that the advocacy of reforms—the step-by-step path to socialism favored by the SDF leadership—was going nowhere. The same awakening was occurring in many of the other social democratic parties around the world. And the split that resulted in Britain and produced the SPGB occurred elsewhere around this time including the U.S. and Russia; in fact the Menshevik/Bolshevik split in the the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party took place a year earlier in 1903 (at a conference in London of all places). The split in the U.S. took place in 1900.

The revolutionary socialist rebels in the UK were concentrated in the Scottish and London branches of the SDF. Unfortunately the two groups were unable to coordinate their plans for a split, the Scottish group leaving in 1903 and the Londoners in 1904. The Scots, who had been strongly influenced by the American Socialist Labor Party and its paper The People, edited by Daniel De Leon, called their new party the Socialist Labour Party. The Londoners who left in June 1904 organized as the Socialist Party of Great Britain. Perrin devotes considerable space to the similarity of views that could have led to a unified revolutionary socialist movement in Britain and chronicles the bars to unity between the two parties that arose in the years immediately following. Chief of these seems to have been the British SLP’s acceptance of the Socialist Industrial Unionism advanced by the American SLP beginning in 1905.

In any event resentment at what seems to have begun as an error in the SLP’s judgement—jumping the gun by provoking their expulsion from the SDF in 1903—had hardened into mutual sectarian hostility so that the cooperation that might have flowed from their common revolutionary opposition to WWI never came to fruition, minor differences preventing cooperation. Perrin makes the point, though, that both parties despite persecution came out of the WWI intact, the SLP, in fact, having made relatively large membership gains as a result of its activities in the Scottish industrial areas and support of the Bolsheviks in the Russian Revolution.

It was events in Russia beginning in 1917 that brought out the differences between the SPGB and the other revolutionary socialists in Britain including the SLP. Within four years the latter, 500 strong at
the end of the war had practically dissolved into the newly organized Communist Party of Great Britain. From this point on the SPGB carried the revolutionary socialist banner nearly alone. The CP in Britain, now under the aegis of the Third International, adopted the peculiarly Bolshevik political strategies demanded by the Russian controlled International.

The SPGB continued the isolated political course reserved for groups that oppose both Leninist and social democratic variations of reformism. Perrin notes two aspects of the party that deserve comment. One is the lack of an apparent organizational leadership. You look in vain for the names of national secretaries and members of the Executive Committee as well as authors of the major pamphlets issued by the party and in general the kind of reverence for leaders past and present that has led to the coining of terms like Marxism, Leninism, and DeLeonism in other groups. The other is the ongoing political and economic analysis of capitalism that has produced an evolution in party policy and positions. A case in point is the very early description of the Soviet system as state capitalist and the Russian Revolution as a step out of feudalism rather than a movement toward socialism.

Perrin notes other such analyses at odds with the accepted wisdom of the establishment left, among them the SPGB’s rejection of the idea of the impending collapse of capitalism during the 1930s depression and 2. its explanation of the rise of fascism as simply another capitalist reform movement. The SPGB’s wide open atmosphere promoted theoretical discussion at all levels in the party, a circumstance very much at odds with the situation in most left groups which require adherence to certain articles of theoretical faith derived from the wisdom of a Marx, Lenin, or De Leon that could not be questioned. Whatever the advantages of a highly disciplined revolutionary vanguard party, the SPGB’s stability for nearly a century speaks well for the advantages of internal democracy.

We see the SPGB’s willingness to tackle the hard questions about the nature of a post-revolutionary society in Perrin’s last chapter, “Socialist Planning.” It is the most problematical chapter in the book for several reasons: though based on the thinking of Marx and Engels and internal discussions in the SPGB, it appears to be—in part at least—an exposition of Perrin’s own thinking. A world revolution certainly needs revolutionary changes in the organization of production. The party has argued the question of a global plan vs. avoiding centralization. Looking for administrative machinery leads Perrin to look to the United Nations and NGO’s for bureaucratic structures socialism can press into service. As planning is presented by Perrin, it would seem to be the work of a nameless, faceless multitude of expert bureaucrats whose expertise will be the basis for orders handed down to the lower levels of production. This together with another problem that isn’t adequately handled: the SPGB’s view of the mechanism for revolution raises some real questions about the nature of a socialist society as visualized by the SPGB. As nearly as I can see it relegates the role of the working class to casting a vote and uses the ready-made electoral and parliamentary machinery of capitalism’s version of democracy to accomplish the revolutionary act of abolishing capitalism.

Perrin’s most detailed explanation of the SPGB’s ideas about organizing production begins with a system similar to the party’s own governance (p. 184):

If we are to avert any possibility of centralized control, where decisions are made centrally, flow outwards, and are imposed upon the wider community, we must adopt the principle of ‘delegated function’ which is the working basis of the Party’s constitution.

This principle of delegated function has served the party well; it allows decisions to be
made by majorities within the basic unit of the organization. Once these decisions are made they flow throughout the organization for implementation according to the system of delegated function. With this procedure, decisions flow in a practical way from the majority. In the case of the party the basic unit of organization is the Branch. In socialism it would be the local community.”

The problem I have with extending the SPGB’s system of organization to production is that it sounds remarkably like the system that governs production under capital. The stockholders in the enterprise elect members of the board of directors who make decisions democratically and then let them “flow throughout the organization for implementation.” What’s missing from both systems is any control over the production process by the producers.

In a discussion several pages long Perrin also presents the SPGB’s rebuttal to the arguments of capitalist economists who argue that a moneyless, non-markeet economic system would result in chaos in production for lack of the statistics and accounting that make coordinated production possible under capitalism. Internal party debates on the subject ended in the consensus the party now advances: that the needs for goods in a socialist society would be determined by the same mechanism used in capitalist enterprises to maintain stock control. In a subsection of the chapter headed “Organizing Production for Use” he describes again what the party considers a defense against central control, but it appears to consist of the same “delegated functions” system mentioned above.

Perrin’s conclusion includes some criticisms of the party’s nearly century-long agitation for revolutionary socialism. Among these are its frequent sectarian stances, its emphasis on the electoral struggle for political power, and what he regards as the unsolved problem of the distribution of consumer goods in short supply. But he makes no effort to conceal his pride in the SPGB and his own confidence in both the party and our class.

My conclusion to this review must begin by commending it to all readers interested in the history of non-market socialism. I believe it could serve as a model for the authors of future histories of other strands of revolutionary non-market socialism. Perrin has managed to resist the temptation to write an institutional chronology of splits, internal factionalism, and election campaigns; instead he has related the evolution of the party’s theoretical positions to the events of the last century of capitalism. I am personally grateful to Perrin for a historical insight to which he gave the name “revolutionary social democracy, which he describes as “the politics of democratic classical Marxism transposed from the backwaters of immature capitalism into the more favorable and developed conditions of the twentieth century and beyond.”

Having said all this and commended the book to readers, I feel obligated to point out a couple of flaws in regard to his treatment of the SLP, both on page 31. One is a nit to be picked: The SLP of America did not embrace socialist industrial unionism until 1905 when the IWW was organized. The other is his implication that the political arm of the socialist movement, the SLP, contested elections to gain control of the political state. This was not true after 1905 when the SLP adopted what came to be called Socialist Industrial Unionism.

—Frank Girard
Dear Eduardo Smith and DB Readers,

As the author of the New Democracy article "The Communist Manifesto Is Wrong," I would be happy to engage in a dialogue with you about the pro's and con's of Marxism as a theory for understanding and changing the world. This dialog will require that you say why you think Marxism is right and why my criticisms of Marxism are wrong; unfortunately your reply to my article only casts silly aspersions on my supposedly ulterior motives. I will address the issues of the motives and the background of New Democracy last. Let's deal with the substantive questions first.

My article enumerated several examples from the Communist Manifesto which illustrate the fundamental problem with Marx's view of people and class struggle: Marx thought working class people and capitalists are both motivated by the same thing — self-interest. Marx understands the conflict between these classes as a conflict between the self interest of people who exploit others versus the self interest of people who are exploited.

I disagree. People who are exploited certainly object to their exploitation; but most real living and breathing working people object to exploitation not out of self interest but because they think it is wrong for anybody to be exploited. There is a working class culture based on the values of solidarity, equality and democracy, and these values are the opposite of the capitalist values of inequality, competition and top down control. Class struggle is a struggle over what values should shape society, not a tug of war over competing self-interests.

If Marx had seen the conflict in society between capitalists and working people as fundamentally a conflict over what values should shape society, he would never have spoken about capitalists as a positive force in its early years. But the Manifesto does just that. In section I ("Bourgeois and Proletarians") the Manifesto says, "And here it becomes evident that the bourgeoisie is unfit - any longer - [my emphasis] to be the ruling class in society and to impose its conditions of existence upon society as an overriding law." The "any longer" refers to the dominant theme in the Manifesto: whatever increases economic production is good; whatever fetters it is bad.

The bourgeoisie, according to the Manifesto, was "fit to rule" in the period when it "created more massive and more colossal productive forces than have all preceding generations together." At that time, according to the Manifesto, the positive values of the day came from the bourgeoisie: "Entire sections of the ruling classes are, by the advance of industry, precipitated into the proletariat... These also supply the proletariat with fresh elements of enlightenment and progress." Towards the peasants (who, in 1640 England as the "diggers", tried to establish egalitarian communal living by challenging aristocratic rule) the Manifesto expresses only contempt: "[The bourgeoisie] has created enormous cities, has greatly increased the urban population as compared with the rural, and has thus rescued a considerable part of the population from the idiocy of rural life."

The reason the Manifesto objects to bourgeois rule in 1848 has nothing to do with any change in capitalist values, only with concerns for economic productivity. The bourgeoisie, it says, is "unfit to rule because it is incompetent to assure an existence to its slave within his slavery, because it cannot help letting him sink into such a state, that it has to feed him, instead of being fed by him."

The Marxist preoccupation with economic productivity, and its failure to see conflicting class values, has had terrible consequences for the revolutionary movement. When in power, Marxists (from Lenin on up) have been anti-democratic because they defined revolution as maximizing economic production. Since most people do not think economic production is the end all and be all of human life, and care more about things like equality and solidarity, Marxist rulers have never believed in letting the majority of the population actually rule.

When not in power, Marxists are hampered by their Marxism from building a truly revolutionary
movement. Building such a movement means, above all, giving working class people confidence in themselves as the source of what is good in society, and clarity about capitalists as a class that depends for its existence on attacking people's most positive and humane values. This confidence and clarity is what enables people to see that revolution is really possible. When people believe revolution is possible, they will take the steps to make it happen. Unfortunately, Marxists disagree with this approach.

The dream of an egalitarian, mutually supportive, democratic society without class exploitation existed before Karl Marx claimed to have discovered the science of the rise and fall of capitalism. Marxist "science" gave revolutionaries hope and confidence; it told them that objective laws made a capitalist "crisis" and revolution inevitable. Marxism told revolutionaries the new world would come, not because most people wanted a better kind of society and that a social movement with this goal could therefore win, but because capitalism was fettering the means of production, could no longer assure an existence to its slaves, and would soon go into a terminal crisis. Marxism gave revolutionaries hope, but at the price of destroying what the idea of revolution was all about. Once it was the idea of making society and human relations be the way most people have always wanted them to be. Marxism turned it into a method for increasing productivity. The most anti-democratic and elitist forces, whose goal was economic productivity -- not democracy or equality or solidarity -- learned how to make Marxism serve the purpose. They used it to justify their dictatorships as "revolutionary." Objecting that "They were not real Marxists" misses the point entirely. An ideology that truly reflected revolutionary goals and values could never have served such a counter-revolutionary purpose in anybody's hands. My condemnation of Marxism pales next to its condemnation by history.

As for the origins and motives of New Democracy, there is no mystery. David Stratman recounts his experiences in the 1970's in Boston in his book, We CAN Change the World. In 1974 most Boston members of Progressive Labor Party (myself included) split and formed the Party for Workers Power which in turn dissolved completely after about a year, David was not a member of PLP or PWP, but he was friends with some. Also he was active in a group of black and white parents during these School Bussing days, and experiences with these parents led him to question the Marxist view of working people. David discussed these ideas for several years with friends, some of whom had belonged to PWP, and he published his book in 1990. Another ex PLPer, David, and myself formed New Democracy in 1992. We started mailing people flyers in 1993, started our newsletter in 1995, and in 1998 we and some people who worked in UAW plants in the Midwest met in Madison, Wisconsin, decided to form New Democracy as a membership organization, and wrote our Statement of Principles which is on our website at www.newdemocracyworld.org. We don't trace our thinking to any particular individuals from the past.

We are trying to figure out how to build a revolutionary movement, and that includes trying to understand why the communist movement has failed to create the kind of world that so many people hoped it would. We have found that in order to move forward, we must identify the ideas from the past that led to failure, and replace them with ideas that make it possible to understand and change the world. We don't criticize Marxism to attack the idea of revolution; we criticize it to put the idea of revolution back on the public agenda in a way that can inspire millions of people to build the revolutionary movement and make it succeed where the old movements failed.

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NOTES, ANNOUNCEMENTS, AND SHORT REVIEWS

Chain Reaction: Unshackling Captive Minds, #4 is written by prisoners in the Texas State Prison System and produced and mailed by South Chicago ABC Zine Distro. "Chain Reaction stands in solidarity with all class-struggle revolutionary prisoners." Most of the articles relate to publishers' and writers' conditions as prisoners. But beyond that is a wide awake consciousness that sees the prison as a necessary and growing part of capitalism in the first year of the new millennium. Among the articles are DNA: Where Will It End? which considers the new power DNA testing gives to prison authorities. "From the Trenches..." is the letters to the editor section with personal stories about inmates' experiences with the Texas state legal system and prison system. In addition readers will find a comic section, a well thought out article on the U.S. Constitution, and a two page "open letter" from John Bissett of the World Socialist Movement (SPGB). The Editor's reply suggests that he doesn't differentiate much between the WSM and the anarchists. Single copies $2 from Anthony Rayson, South Chicago ABC Zine Distro, P.O. Box 721, Homewood, IL 60430

Collective Action Notes has returned after a two-year hiatus. Number 16-17 appears in the same 32-page tabloid format as before. The lead article by Curtis Price, "Fragile Prosperity? Fragile Social Peace?" draws conclusions from a mass of information about ongoing developments in the workplace and working class responses. He sees the statistical evidence of labor peace in the U.S., for example, as the result of manipulated statistics along with rapidly changing hiring practices that make almost any job temporary. The article provides a survey 13 tabloid pages long of new labor procedures to increase production, new sources of labor, and the reindustrialization of parts of the old industrial centers — Detroit, Pittsburgh and the like, where a less combative working class where labor experts proclaim a new reputation for docility. But the reality Price finds is that resistance is taking other forms, the kind of guerrilla warfare typical of the U.S. decades ago before the union leadership sold out completely. Organized in 21 sections, among them "Everyday Resistance," "The Refusal of Work: Myth or Reality," "Hidden and Open Resistance in the U.S. Today," "Are Informal Stuggles Apolitical?" the article ends with "What to Do," which seems limited to analysis and perhaps encouraging workers to publicize the struggle through local newsletters.

Also in this issue: two articles from India, an analysis of the French 35-hour week, and another look at the Black Panthers. $2 from Collective Action Notes, PO Box 22962, Baltimore, MD 21203

The Black-Clad Messenger #10: Actualizing Industrial Collapse. "Open to those who want to hasten the disappearance of this whole stinking order. Everyone who is fed up with the masochism of trying to reform a fundamentally destructive techno-tality. Everyone who wants to live, to breathe, to banish the cancer of divided, deformed existence." The BCM is a part of what appears to be a well developed anarcho-primitivist youth movement in Eugene, Oregon. This 24-page issue contains articles on the April 16 Washington DC demonstration, which was a big disappointment to the members of the Eugene String Collective who wrote this article deploring the spirit of non-violence that animated this crowd. Much of the BCM appears to be aimed at high school age people. Other articles urge readers to opt for home schooling, update readers on Ted Kaczynski's case, and provide detailed instructions on how to mine hell, an apparently acceptable substitute for revolution. Issues 1-10 $1 each from PO Box 11331, Eugene, OR 97440.

Communist Left: Review of the International Communist Party No.12/13 is the English language
journal of a section of the badly splintered Bordiga wing of the Italian Communist Party that rejected Bolshevik domination in the early twenties. Since the mid 1920s the Bordigists in various groups have carried on an organizational existence outside the Stalinist/Maoist/Trotskyist hyphenations of Leninism. Among them are the International Communist Current, Communist Workers Organization and Internationalist Perspectives and others. This issue has an especially interesting article on the Second Congress of the Third International in 1920. This was the first full scale conference of what was supposed to become the new international revolutionary party. Representatives from all the old parties and factions of the movement gathered in Moscow under the aegis of the Bolsheviks and received the “21 Conditions of admission to the Communist International.” The Italian Left eventually accepted the conditions. Observers from both The Socialist Party of Great Britain and the Socialist Labor Labor and the IWW and various syndicalist also attended as well as 218 delegates from 37 countries. The authors of the article “The Italian Left and the International” see the actions of the Congress which placed control of the new International in the hands of Lenin and the Bolsheviks as a step needed to wean the world movement from the tactics of the Second International. This Congress was to have important repercussions for the revolutionary wing of the movement. The SPGB and the SLP rejected the conditions as did most syndicalists, and the IWW. Of course most of the article related to the Italian Left and Amadeo Bordiga who played an important part in the subsequent history of the International. 58 pages £2/$5 from ICP Editions, PO Box 52, Liverpool L69 7AL U.K.

How to Read *Capital* by Harry Cleaver [from the cover blurb] “In a detailed study of the first chapter of *Capital*, Harry Cleaver reveals how we can directly apply Marx’s categories to study in depth, first

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