Published by the Discussion Bulletin Committee, I.U.C.E.

Send all correspondence to:
DISCUSSION BULLETIN, P.O. Box 1564, Grand Rapids, MI 49501
or
f.girard@iserv.net

About This Issue ......................................................... 2

Facing History: How Working Class Germans Fought the Nazis and How Liberal Foundations
Lie about It, (Part 1 of 2), John Spritzler .......................... 3

Nader Keeps One Foot in Democratic Party — and Both in Capitalism, Eric Chester .......... 7

Letter from Russia, Dmitry Fomin .................................. 9

Letter, Ken Ellis ....................................................... 11

Letter, John F. Ahrens .............................................. 12

Letters, Bill Martin .................................................. 14

Letter, Takis Fotopoulos ............................................. 16

We Are Not Bordigist, MacIntosh for Internationalist Perspectives .............................. 17

Letter, De Leonist Society of Canada ............................. 19
   Reply to the De Leonist Society of Canada, Frank Girard ................................. 21

Unemployed Recalcitrance and Welfare Restructuring in the UK Today, by Aufheben ........ 23

Letter, Adam Buick .................................................. 30

Notes, Announcements, and Short Reviews .................................. 30
DB105 begins with a couple of articles taken from journals in the non-market socialist political sector. First is John Spritzler’s attempt to correct what has become the official mythology about the pervasiveness of anti-Semitism and support for Hitler among the German working class. Spritzler has researched the historical record and contrasts it to the standard account being fed to school children in Holocaust memorials and blames the rise of Hitler on the political rivalry between Social Democratic Party and the Communist Party leaders and the passive acquiescence of German workers.

AFTER 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 breathing of vanguardists and social democrats and the real revolutionaries of our era: the non-market, anti-statist, libertarian socialists. They are organized in small groups of syndicalists, communist anarchists, libertarian municipalists, world socialists, socialist industrial unionists, council communists, and left communists. The perspective of these groups with their rejection of capitalism's wage, market, and money system as well as capitalist politics and unionism constitutes the only real alternative to capitalism in both its market and statist phases.

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

The pages of the DB are open to anyone in this political sector, the only limitation being that submissions be typewritten, single-spaced, and copy 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.

Subscription Information:
The Discussion Bulletin is published bi-monthly. Prices below are in U.S. currency.

U.S.: Individual Subscription $3; Library $5
Non-U.S.: Surface Mail Individual sub $5; Library $10
Air Mail Individual sub $10; Library $15

Back issues: Nos. 1-8 $2 each, Nos. 9+ $1 each plus postage.

Expirations: The last issue of your subscription is indicated by the number on your address label. When your subscription expires, we will notify you.

Sample Copies: A sample copy is sent on request. We mail copies not used to fill subscriptions to people on our extended mailing list.
A popular course for middle and high school students about the Holocaust gives a false account of antisemitism and related events in Nazi-era Germany carefully designed to drive home the lesson that most people are prone to bigotry and are a dangerous force. The course, called “Facing History and Ourselves” (FHAO), is funded by liberal foundations and corporations (and in the past, grants from the U.S. Department of Education) and wealthy individuals. It reaches one million students a year in schools across the country. Foundations and corporate leaders support “Facing History and Ourselves” because it helps discredit the central idea of democracy—that ordinary people are fit to rule society.

FHAO’s main resource book, Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior, is a 576-page collection of short readings and questions carefully selected to convey a negative view of people by lying about the facts. Contrary to the views promoted by FHAO, the true facts about Germany during the Holocaust show that 1) working class Germans fought the Nazis; 2) antisemitism did not come from ordinary people; and 3) anti-semitism was a weapon used by Germany’s industrial and aristocratic elite to attack not only the Jewish minority but the entire working class.

GERMAN OPPOSITION TO THE NAZIS WAS WIDESPREAD

Facing History’s discussion of resistance in Germany to the Nazis begins with an Einstein quote: “The world is too dangerous to live in—not because of the people who do evil, but because of the people who sit and let it happen.” The “Facing History” account claims that only a few isolated individuals resisted Nazism. The truth is quite different.

When the President of Germany appointed Hitler Chancellor on Jan 30, 1933, the Nazis had just suffered a major defeat in the national election. It had become clear that the Nazis could not out-poll their main opponents, the working class Marxist parties. Additionally, Nazi storm troopers were being physically attacked by workers in industrial centers and small towns across Germany. The elite installed Hitler as Chancellor because they feared that working class power was getting out of hand, and they were desperate to find a political leader who could lead the upper classes in a ruthless war against the working classes. Standard histories of this period, such as William Shirer’s classic The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich, describe how this happened.

Every time Germans had a chance to vote for or against Hitler, the great majority voted against him. Hitler ran for President in March, 1932 and got only 30% of the vote; in the run-off election the next month he got only 37%, versus 53% for the incumbent Field Marshal von Hindenburg. Nazi electoral strength peaked on July 31, 1932 when Nazi rhetoric about representing all Germans and not special interest groups lured some voters away from the numerous small, special-interest conserva-
tive parties. The Nazis won 230 out of 608 total seats in the Reichstag (parliament). But their main foes, the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the Communist Party—all of which were led by Marxists and received mainly working class votes—jointly captured 222 seats in the same election. Voting records show that the richer the precinct, the higher the Nazi vote.

Working class Germans not only voted against the Nazis, they fought them in the streets. In the German province of Prussia alone, between June 1 and June 20, 1932, there were 461 pitched street battles between workers and Nazis, in which eighty-two people died and four hundred were wounded.

In his classic account, The Nazi Seizure of Power: The Experience of a Single German Town, William Allen gives a detailed account of events from 1930 to 1935 in a small German rural town with a population of 10,000 mainly middle-class Lutherans.

Allen describes a typical incident. Three weeks before the July 31, 1932 Reichstag elections, twenty-five men in the Reichsbanner (a Social Democratic Party militia organization) got into a fight with sixty Nazi SA (militia) men while crossing a bridge in opposite directions. Homeless people in a nearby Army compound rushed to help the Reichsbanner, and when police arrived there was a surging crowd of about eighty persons pelting the Nazis with stones.

In the next Reichstag election on Nov 6, 1932 the Nazis lost 34 seats, reducing them to only 196 deputies, while the Social Democratic Party and the Communist Party won a total of 221 seats—25 more than the Nazis. This was the last free election before Hitler came to power.

This last free election suggests how little support antisemitism had in the German electorate. The Social Democratic Party condemned antisemitism as “reactionary” and was known for its history of refusing to combine with antisemitic parties in election runoffs even when it would have gained from doing so. The Communist Party also rejected antisemitism. (In fact the Nazis lumped Communists together with Jews as being all part of the same evil conspiracy.) Votes for these two parties were votes against antisemitism.

After this election the Nazis were in steep decline. The party was literally bankrupt and unable to make the payroll of its functionaries or pay its printers. In provincial elections in Thuringia on December 3, the Nazi’s vote dropped by 40 percent. Gregor Strasser, a top Nazi who had lead the party during Hitler’s time in prison, concluded that the Nazis would never obtain office through the ballot. In his diary in December, Hitler’s right-hand man, Joseph Goebbels, wrote: “The future looks dark and gloomy; all prospects and hope have quite disappeared.”

And yet, only one month later, President Hindenburg appointed Hitler Chancellor. Industrialists, bankers, large landowners and the military had pressured Hindenburg to appoint Hitler. They feared the growing strength of the working class and were convinced that only Hitler would do whatever was necessary decisively to defeat workers’ power.

The elite feared not only working class votes, but a general strike that could lead to civil war. Two months before Hitler’s appointment, General Kurt von Schleicher told the current Chancellor, Franz von Papen, “The police and armed services could not guarantee to maintain transport and supply services in the event of a general strike, nor would they be able to enforce law and order in the event of a civil war.” When Hindenburg subsequently dismissed Papen and appointed Schleicher as Chancellor, he told Papen: “I am too old and have been through too much to accept the responsibility for a civil war. Our only hope is to let Schleicher try his luck.” Schleicher, responding to the same Great Depression and the
same kind of working class militancy that forced FDR to offer Americans a New Deal, tried to pacify the German working class with similar promises, but workers didn’t trust him. After just fifty-seven days in office the elite decided that only Hitler could do what had to be done.

Twenty-six days before Hitler’s appointment as Chancellor, Baron Kurt von Schroeder, a Cologne banker, had a private meeting with Hitler, three other Nazi leaders, and Papen. During this meeting Papen and Hitler agreed that Social Democrats, Communists, and Jews had to be eliminated from leading positions in Germany, and Schroeder promised that German business interests would take over the debts of the Nazi Party. Twelve days later, Goebbels reported that the financial position of the (previously bankrupt) Nazi party had “fundamentally improved overnight.”

FHAO explains Hitler’s appointment as Chancellor by telling students that Schleicher, Papen, and Hindenburg represented powerful people with little popular support who made a deal with Hitler: “He had the popularity they lacked and they had the power he needed.”

This sophisticated-sounding analysis is wrong. The election results alone showed that Hitler’s popularity was quite limited and in decline. Millions of Germans were actively, many even violently, opposing the Nazis. What Hitler offered the elite was not popularity, but the determination to lead an all-out attack on the working class.

Within two months of being appointed Chancellor, Hitler arrested four thousand leaders of the Communist Party along with others in the Social Democratic and liberal parties and carted them off to be tortured and beaten. On May 2, 1933 Nazis occupied all trade union headquarters, confiscated their funds, dissolved the unions, and sent the leaders to concentration camps; any known working class radicals were put in prison camps or went into hiding. By 1938 tens of thousands of working class leaders were in the concentration camps or prison and hundreds had been killed. Eventually the Nazis rounded up three million political prisoners.

Even after the Nazis took over the government, destroyed the unions, and imprisoned opposition leaders, the German working class fought them. This resistance is described by John Weiss in his book, Ideology of Death: Why the Holocaust Happened in Germany. Weiss explains that resistance took many forms. No worker loyal to the Nazis was ever elected to workers’ councils by his mates. When the Nazi government escalated its attack on Jews by destroying their property, killing ninety, and sending thirty thousand to concentration camps during the infamous “Kristallnacht” on November 9-10, 1938, workers distributed tens of thousands of leaflets protesting Kristallnacht, and millions of other anti-Nazi leaflets. Red flags flew defiantly over factories, and posters attacked the regime. In working class districts, youth gangs painted anti-Nazi graffiti and regularly beat up members of the Hitler Youth.

Later, even with three million political prisoners in the camps, workers still refused to make peace with the regime. Industrialists reported thousands of examples of slowdowns, stoppages, and sabotage, as well as some strikes and mass protest meetings. During the war, the Krupp corporation alone reported to the Gestapo some five thousand examples of such “treason.” Most work stoppages, the Nazis believed, were used as a safe way to protest their rule. In the first and only elections for factory delegates to the Labor Front, Nazi candidates were overwhelmingly defeated, and Nazi-appointed workers’ “representatives” were scorned. Propaganda meetings were sparsely attended and the Hitler greeting ignored. Workers harassed or beat up workers who supported the regime, and they distributed antiwar slogans and songs. Even as late as 1944 workers fought pitched battles against Nazis in the bombed-out rubble, forcing the SS to seal off the workers districts and capture thousands. The Nazi Security Service itself reported that most workers remained opposed to the Nazis.

Like workers in the cities, many rural Ger-
mans rejected antisemitism, sometimes to the point of risking their lives to help Jews. For example, near the war's end, SS guards marched starving Jewish prisoners to death in zig-zag paths across the German countryside. Despite twelve years of Nazi propaganda declaring Jews to be sub-human enemies of the German nation, and despite threats from the guards to shoot anyone who offered the Jewish prisoners aid, German civilians in the towns of Ahornberg, Sangerberg, Albritten, and Volary offered food and water to the Jews. In Allen's book detailing events in a single town, he reports that, despite the Nazi drive to enroll every school child in the Hitler Youth or the League of German Girls, and the abolition of all other school clubs, nonetheless: "In fact, even pupils sympathetic to Nazism felt enough of a sense of solidarity with fellow-students of the Jewish faith so that they refused to sing the 'Horst Wessel Song' [a Nazi marching song] in their presence."

In FSHAO's book there is no inkling of the mass working class resistance to the Nazis, no hint that Holocaust-era Germany was in a state of extreme class war—a virtual civil war. Instead, FSHAO writes, "Although the [Nazi] storm troopers operated outside the law, they encountered very little opposition. Indeed many openly supported their efforts." The accounts in the FSHAO text all deny the widespread nature of resistance. A typical one is from Primo Levi who claims, "[The German people as a whole did not even try to resist]." To suggest how self-centered and morally weak people are—even opponents of the authorities—FSHAO points to a professor "of Nobel-Prize caliber and impeccable liberal credentials" who replied to a Nazi commissar's banning of Jews from Frankfurt University by asking the Nazi, "Will there be more money for research in physiology?"

In the fantasy world of FSHAO the only resistance to the Nazis came from rare individuals. For example, fourteen students led by Hans and Sophie Scholl and calling themselves "White Rose" distributed thousands of anti-Nazi leaflets before being caught and beheaded. They in fact were part of a massive working class resistance. But this is how FSHAO describes them: "Among the few Germans to act on what they knew were Hans Scholl and his younger sister Sophie." Ignoring working class battles against the Nazis, FSHAO suggests that what little resistance there was came from the upper classes. They write, "Although the Nazis were able to destroy the White Rose, they could not stop their message from being heard. Helmut von Moltke, a German aristocrat, smuggled copies to friends in neutral countries."

Similarly, FSHAO lies about the massive resistance to the Nazis when they ordered doctors and nurses to kill patients with mental or physical impairments that rendered them "unfit Aryans." The outcry against the Nazi euthanasia program spread from relatives of the murdered people to the entire country, and included public demonstrations and press editorials. But FSHAO singles out a minister who "worked behind the scenes" against the euthanasia, writes that his fellow pastors "gave him little support," and asks the student, "How do you account for the fact that few Germans protested 'euthanasia' even though it was directed against 'Aryan' Germans as well as Jews and other minorities?"
Nader Keeps One Foot in Democratic Party ... and Both in Capitalism:
by Eric Chester

Ralph Nader has become the officially designated opposition candidate. He appears on network interviews, and garners coverage in the mainstream press. His potential vote is tracked in the opinion polls and political pundits ponder the chances of his tilting the election to Bush.

With all this media attention Nader has become the symbol of public discontent with the corporate economy and the two-party system. Even among radicals Nader has attracted widespread support. Yet amidst the enthusiastic endorsements land optimistic scenarios very little has been written that seriously analyzes the campaign from a radical, socialist perspective.

Nader is quick to denounce the large corporations for their greed and for the way they maintain their power by "tying the hands of both parties, funding both parties," thereby "controlling our government." He has frequently castigated the two-party system, arguing that there are "few major differences" between the Democrats and Republicans. He has even promised that "after November, there's going to be a significant progressive party in this country."

Yet Nader continues to maintain close ties to influential political figures within the Democratic Party. Two years ago he campaigned throughout Massachusetts for Lois Pines, a state senator who was seeking the Democratic nomination for attorney general. Pines was a 15-year veteran of the state legislature and very much part of the liberal establishment.

This is hardly the only case of Nader using his celebrity to advance the electoral prospects of mainstream candidates. Indeed, these endorsements are consistent with the aims of his own campaign.

Nader sees his ability to gain a hearing as a means of putting pressure on the Democratic leaders, thus forcing them to be more responsive to the concerns of the progressive forces he represents. On a swing through Ohio Nader advised several rank-and-file activists from the United Steelworkers that they were being "taken for granted." Instead organized labor should demonstrate that there is now "an alternative, and the alternative is Nader." Once shown the danger of their core voters defecting, Democrats would respond, "they'll start calling."

An even clearer exposition of this viewpoint surfaced during a recent televised dialogue between Jesse Jackson and Nader. Of course, Jackson had acted as the liberal gadfly during the 1980s. His Rainbow Coalition had remained within the Democratic Party, although it had frequently threatened to bolt. Since then Jackson has been thoroughly integrated into the Democratic Party structure.

During the show Jackson lavish praise Gore while chastising Nader for making it possible for Bush to become president. In an effort to deflect this argument Nader retorted that "the Democratic Party, Jesse, needs to pull in the progressive wing." In the past Jackson had "been trying to do that" from within, while Nader was now "trying to do that with the Green Party outside."

Nader reinforces the illusion that the Democratic Party can be pressured into becoming a force for social change. This has always been a chimera, but in a world of rapid capital mobility and intertwined transnational corporations' efforts in this direction can only reinforce a downward spiral of expectations.

While Nader views his campaign as one component of a broader strategy to pressure, the Democratic Party, he is also interested in assisting the Democrats even as they are currently constituted.

Although he has frequently conceded that his campaign might lead to Gore's defeat, he has also asserted that it could well aid the Democrats in regaining control of the House by attracting disillusioned liberals, who might otherwise not vote, to the polls. Since the Greens are contesting fewer than 10% of the total seats open in Congress, "the outpouring of votes" for his candidacy might well be enough to ensure a Democratic majority in the House. "That's a nice prospect for the Democrats," he says.

Yet the problems with the Nader campaign extend well beyond his ties to the Democrats. Although
issues related to the abuse of corporate power have been at the forefront of his campaign, Nader remains a committed defender of a capitalist market economy.

One of the many ironies of the Nader campaign is its use of the Green Party as an organizational framework. The Greens are deeply divided, organized into two competing national organizations, the Green Party USA and the Association of Green State Parties. Nevertheless, both firmly believe in the need for a decentralized, democratic decisionmaking process. Yet Nader has insisted on organizing a campaign that is top-down and candidate-driven.

This can be clearly seen in Nader's disdain for the platform of the Green Party USA, the more radical of the two organizations. It calls for bringing the 500 largest corporations under public ownership through the democratic control of workers and consumers. This falls significantly short of a socialist program, but it moves well beyond the type of reform that can be won within the constraints set by a capitalist market economy.

Needless to say, Nader does not refer to this demand in his campaign speeches. Indeed, he dismissed the entire Green Party USA platform with the comment that he did not "really pay much attention" to it.

Nader's objections reflect those of the small business owner, squeezed by the huge resources of the global corporations. While explicitly rejecting a democratic socialist vision, Nader looks back to a mythological past of locally-owned small businesses, perhaps like his father's small-town restaurant.

For Nader, the crux of the problem is the lack of competition in markets dominated by a few huge firms which disregard the interests of consumers while acting in collusion to extract unwarranted profits. The remedy is straightforward: the strict enforcement of antitrust laws.

During a recent television talk show Nader was asked if he saw himself as a Marxist. In rejecting such a label he countered that he believed in competition and that he thought "big corporations are destroying capitalism." Small businesses are being "pressed and exploited and deprived by their big business predators."

Thus, the Nader campaign is helping to save capitalism from itself. Accordingly, it is very important that the antitrust laws be viewed as the best friend of a capitalist, free-market system.

Given the many flaws in the Nader-LaDuke campaign, some of which go to the core of its message, it is difficult to understand why many of those on the left have embraced it with uncritical enthusiasm.

Of course, one can always revert to the position that the Nader campaign, with all its faults, represents a step forward. After all, for once the mass media cover a presidential candidate who attacks corporate greed and condemns the two-party system.

In fact, these ideas have become a part of the popular wisdom. Working people understand that the corporations are ripping them off and that both Democrats and Republicans carry out the wishes of these same corporations.

The question that needs answering is what can be done to stop the corporate onslaught and shift the balance of forces. Nader's proposed alternatives are inadequate and, in many cases, counterproductive. His faith in the workings of a competitive market economy, his continuing ties to the liberal wing of the Democratic Party and his insistence on a personality-based, candidate-driven campaign, all of these point working people in the wrong direction.

—from New Unionist, October 2000 (1821 University Ave. W. #S-116, Saint Paul, MN 55104)
LETTER FROM RUSSIA

P.S. Apropos of my 'progressive Marxism.' It's simply the scientific Marxism which we try to study and 'advocate' (as you put it) inside the Marxist Labour Party. Just one example in this connection:

I am not aware of the "Socialist Industrial Unionism," unfortunately, the only thing I can say at this stage of our acquaintance: I was surprised a great deal, Comrade Girard, when reading the letter from the De Leonist Society of Canada in No.101 of your DB (It was entitled "Socialism and the Market").

I don't know what De Leon himself wrote on the subject of "labour vouchers," as you put it, but you are quite right to my mind when stating that the DLS "have departed from..." — I'd only say not from orthodoxy (this term seems to me ecclesiastical) but from the Marxist scientific (in the sense of 'scientific attitude').

The DLS cites Marx's "The Gotha Program" — O.K. it's praiseworthy, so to say, but the point is (the hallmark of their conscientiousness, I should say) how they do it (this citation)! Unfortunately, I don't have the English edition of the most part of Marx's works, that's why I am unable to quote accurately in this language. But you, Comrade Frank, can do that for me, of course.

First of all, let us note that the DLS transpose the paragraphs of the original text of Marx's criticism—their last quotation must go first ("what we are dealing with..."); their last quotation but one must be the last one) the two remaining quotations (those on the pages 17-18 of your DB) must be placed in the middle.

Why do I attract your attention to all these "small points"? Because the DLS unfortunately practice "circumcision" of Marx's thought (thank goodness he was physically circumcised when a baby!)

Indeed, if we examine the source, then we can see, for instance, that the first quoted paragraph (see the 17th page) is not taken from the very beginning. [From now on I'll try to translate from Russian into English, but you correct according to the original English text, all right?]. But exactly here Marx writes about an "individual labour share" and then continues, "For example the social labour day... [consists of the sum of the individual labor; the individual labor time of the single producer is the fraction of of the social labor day supplied by him, his share of it. He receives from the community a check showing that he has done so much labor (after deducting his labor due to the common fund) and with this check he draws from the common store as much as of the means of consumption as costs an equal amount of labor. The same quantity of labor that he has given to society in one form he receives back in another form.

Evidently, there prevails here the same the same principle that today regulates the exchange of commodities in so far as it is an exchange of equivalents. Substance and form have changed because under the changed conditions no one can give anything except his labor and because, on the other hand, nothing can go over into the possession of individuals except individual means of consumption. But so far as distribution of the latter among the individual consumers is concerned, the same principle prevails as in the exchange of commodity equivalents; an equal quantity of labor in one form is exchanged for an equal quantity of labor in another form." New York Labor News edition 1931, p.29 – fg]

I ask the DLS: Is the society where that which is contributed by a worker is considered as
his labour share, where he draws the means of consumption from the common stock in accordance with the check (and does not buy the commodities for money!), does this society represents a "market economy"? It looks like the DLS didn't understand Marx's thought itself stated in this paragraph; otherwise they would pay attention to the fact that Marx emphasizes: the same principle that (today) regulates the exchange of commodity equivalents, it prevails in the sphere of distribution of individual means of consumption among separate producers (and again: individual means of consumption taken, or better to say, issued from the common store, but not the commodity goods purchased at the market). [This final phrase of the paragraph is not cited by the DLS either!] But what makes this type of distribution resemble the exchange of commodities? – The same final phrase of the paragraph "inadvertently" omitted by the DLS clearly points it up to us: "a definite quantity of labour in one form is exchanged for the equal quantity of labour in another one."

What is the market economy? It's an economy where the overwhelming majority goods and services are produced for sale and are therefore exchanged at the market for money according to their values. And it's not accidental that Marx emphasizes here: "Substance and form have changed!" And as all know from the Marxist philosophy (based on Hegelian categories of Dialectics, by the way) that a thing which has changed both its form and substance represents a different phenomenon!

If we look at the paragraphs which precede the first quotation of the DLS, then we shall see that firstly Marx points out: the collective labour income (in the sense of "product of labour") is an "aggregate social product." The Marx says what must be deducted from it as "economical necessity." Then he tells what must be deducted from that part of the aggregate product which is "designed to serve as means of consumption." And only then there comes the mechanism of distribution of the remaining part of means of consumption, "among individual producers of the collective (association)"

And here we approach that paragraph (It precedes the paragraph beginning with the words "What we are dealing with here...") which must be not only known but adequately comprehended by any "progressive communist" (i.e. scientific marxist). Marx writes: "In the society which is founded on the bases of collectivism [sorry for my possibly inaccurate translation!], the producers do not exchange their products" That's what is meant by "substance and form have changed," comrades from the DLS! And he adds, "Just as little does the labor spent on producing (making) products show itself as the value of these products... [as a material quality possessed by them, since now in contradistinction to capitalist society, the separate labors form no longer indirectly but directly, constituent parts of the total labor. The term, "proceeds of labor," even nowadays rejectable because of its ambiguity, loses all meaning."

And exactly this, not only marketless, but fundamentally, valueless society (i.e. some sort of "pan-community" already!) Marx describes as a "communist society just issuing out of capitalist society"! Oh, this utopian Marx! (Oh, these pragmatical "market socialists and state socialists" – as a matter of fact, neither the first nor the last ones break with capitalism both in their heads and in their practices)

As for "exchange" itself, the point is not in whether it "can and will take place" in a socialist society but in what we imply by it! The commodity exchange won't take place according to Marx, either in the lower or in the higher phase of communism. The "exchange of labour quantity" will but take place in a socialist society. Moreover, the higher phase of communist society will know an exchange too! Marx called it "exchange of activities" when there is no exchange values measured by individual labour time any more! All that the De Leonist Society members can read in in Marx's "Political Economy, Criticism of," October November 1857 (Unfortunately I cannot specify the pages in any English edition!) It's Marx's manuscript first published in 1833-1944 in
two parts under the title "Grundrisse der Kritik der Politischen Oekonomie (Rohent wurf 1857-1858 (by the Russian Institute of Marxism–Leninism))

I could write, dear comrade Frank Girard, much more on the subject of course, but I am very short of time (to earn for life here, in Russia, means to survive) I'd only call for a thorough study of all the "socialist experiences" of the past XXth Century besides comprehending Marx if we want to have any serious talk at all. For example, do the comrades know that before the NEP the Bolsheviks tried to exercise in backward Russia an "exchange of products," then—under the NEP—turned to "commodity exchange" but "fell to the trade," as Lenin put it? The Soviet economy under Stalin and his successors represented just this mixture of "commodity exchange" and trade.

As for the "Market Socialism," it was experienced by the Titoists from Yugoslavia, in particular...

To end this P.S., let me state that "building of any moneyless [but still] market economy" is equal, in my opinion, to getting "dry water." As a result, you can get solid water" — the ice (i.e. I mean to say, another condition of capitalism!) But never "dry water" itself (i.e. socialism as the first phase of communism) — water remains such (H₂O) in any condition.

—Dmitry Fornin

Dear readers,

In DB104, Aufheben's belittlement of shorter hours roughly paralleled the opinions of Marx and Engels, who thought that shorter hours would be better pursued after the revolution. While Aufheben had little good to say about it, Marx in Volume 3 of Capital regarded shorter hours as a prerequisite to freedom.

Shorter hours after a world-wide revolution would have fitted Marx's revolutionary scenario very well, but, after Europe failed to support the Russian revolution with long-lasting revolutions of its own, Marx's plan became obsolete, and it's now time to take shorter hours off the back burner and implement it in the here and now.

As tools of production become so advanced that the times cry out for workers to take the benefits of increased productivity in the form of increased leisure time, just like they did from 1820-1920, winning shorter hours becomes the most appropriate thing workers can do about unemployment, poverty, hunger, overproduction, environmental degradation, etc.

If workers were to more thoroughly share the remaining work by means of shorter hours, interest and curiosity about revolution would decline even further, which would deprive revolutionaries of an audience. Revolutionaries steer workers away from shorter hours hoping that worsening conditions will stimulate a revolution, even though the wholesale replacement of colonies and monarchies with democracies in the past century means that the age of revolution in the West has gone away forever.

Ken Ellis

http://www.geocities.com/kenellis2020
Dear Frank Girard:

I wonder if you would care to comment on questions I have after reading the official history of "The Socialist Party of Great Britain, Politics, Economics and Britain’s Oldest Socialist Party" by Dr. D.A. Perrin. It’s certainly interesting to read but I think it has some flaws. Isn’t the oldest Socialist Party in Britain the Socialist Labor Party of 1903?

The author, with others claims the S.P.G.B. is sectarian. My concept of the S.P.G.B. over the years is they want the entire planet in order to help a working class majority of socialists establish a system of society where everyone can be "individually" different yet socially equal and able to contribute to society according to ability and take according to need. Isn’t this similar to the Socialist Labor Party Position? How a non-reformist Socialist Party can be a sectarian party is something I would like to know.

Perrin claims the S.P.G.B. has not been successful in achieving socialism. I understand this to be the job of a working class socialist majority NOT a socialist party that has only two roles to play - providing socialist education (making socialists) and capturing political control from the capitalist class in order to dispossess them and transfer the means of life to society as a whole. When the socialist workers have successfully introduced a socialist system and are not endangered - the Socialist Party will cease to exist having served its purpose. I think a socialist party is the tool (servant) of a class-conscious working class socialist majority struggling for socialism, and it’s not out of place to point out that the working class as a class is pro-capitalism and anti-socialism and not very friendly as yet.

People who worry about a detailed plan of a socialist society should wait until the working class has a majority of socialists who might have a different plan, and they would not need leaders because they would know where they were going.

The author’s claim on page 195 of "scrupulously democratic wide polls on the expulsion of members" is not borne out on the expulsion of the Socialist Study Group by the Socialist Standard Group in 1991. Three attempts were made to expel them, the final one being 156 - 60 for expulsion out of a membership of around 600, a figure given by S. Coleman, Adam Buick gave me all the voting figures at the time, and claimed the three polls were 'squawkily close'. Obviously, when less than half the members vote for an expulsion, or anything else, it’s high time for a change in "socialist democratic thinking" - and also the function of Socialist polls. Incidentally, the "old" Socialist Studies members were opposed to the name change (since restored) and the party’s support of Poland’s Solidarity movement (and Lech Walesa who as President was wined and dined by Queen Elizabeth) and other reformist leanings, by playing to the galleries.

I still look for improvements in the Socialist Standard Journal. It’s trendy -- glossy and expensive, with the Declaration of Principles getting smaller and struggling to survive.
I enjoyed reading Doctor Perrin's official history of the
S.P.G.B. I also enjoyed reading "The Monument" - the unofficial
story of the S.P.G.B. by R. Barltrop who by the way didn't go for
Perrin's copyright rulings for permission and reservations. His was all
socialist property to be -- held in common -- something we had learned
to like.

Sincerely

John F. Ahrens

P.S. Where can I buy a copy of
the history of the S.L.P.

By Frank Girard & Ben Perry?

Comment: I think D.A. Perrin is correct about the SPGB being the oldest existing party of non-market
socialism in the UK. The British Socialist Labour Party, organized in 1903, a year earlier than the SPGB
is now defunct, having lost most of its membership to the Communists shortly after the end of WWI. A
corporal's guard of hard core DeLeonists carried on sporadically until around 1970 when The Socialist,
its journal, ceased publication for good.

What makes for similarity between DeLeonists and World Socialists, in my opinion, is their
roots in the anti-reform wing of the socialist movement of the turn of the last century. A hundred years
have given them ample time to diverge in many respects.

Fortunately I lack the information necessary for a competent discussion of the internal affairs of
the SPGB

As to the availability of the book on the history of the American Socialist Labor Party, I was afraid
no one would ever ask. The Socialist Labor Party 1876-1991: A Short History by Ben Perry and Frank
Girard (1993 edition, 108 pages with numerous illustrations and appendices) is available in the U.S. from
Frank Girard, 4568 Richmond, NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49544 for $10 postpaid and in the UK from Derek
Devine in Edinburgh Scotland. For info on the price in Britain write to him at 115 Henderson Row (1F1),
Stockbridge, Edinburgh EH3 5BB Scotland or <jmbri@hotmail.com>

(from p. 2)

Next Eric Chester subjects Nader's political behavior to careful scrutiny and finds that he was
unworthy of the Green Party nomination instead of what strikes me as more to the point: an
examination of the Greens concluding that as a party it is just as unworthy of support by class
conscious workers as the Democrats

Dmitry Fomin's letter considers the source of the De Leonist Society of Canada's thinking
about Labor Time Vouchers with special attention to Marx's The Gotta Program and with its effort to
clarify the nature of vouchers, which unfortunately just sowed the kind of confusion exhibited by the
DLSC in its letters in DBs 101 and 103.

Ken Ellis comes out foursquare for a movement to shorten hours of labor. He sees Stop the
Clock's opposition to government, business, and union efforts to grant shorter hours as motivated by
the desire to increase working class resentment and revolutionary consciousness during this era of
computers, robots and just-in-time production.

John Ahrens letter comments on Dave Perrin's history of the Socialist Party of Great Britain
and drifts into a discussion of the SPGB's internal disputes during the past decade or so. I comment
briefly. Next Bill Martin of the SPGB sets me straight on some of my misconceptions regarding
British political language. Still unexplained, to my way of thinking, is the role to be played by the
SPGB after its victory at the polls.

(to p. 15)
Dear DB,

May I thank Friend Girard for his response to my points and, hopefully, attempt to give the clarifications he asks for. I shall be brief, so this may read like the beginning of a transatlantic revolutionary dictionary.

ii. I should think that what and how of production are mutually dependent, and so cannot be entirely divorced from one another.

iii. The difference between representative and delegate is a commonplace of classical political thinking, most famously expounded upon by the eighteenth century liberal Edmund Burke. He noted that when Britons sent an M.P. to Parliament that M.P. was under no obligation to obey their constituents, or even be held to their election promises, but instead free to act on in the name of their constituents as they saw fit.

As opposed to this, delegates would be issued with specific instructions they would be obliged to implement, and would report back to their electors and be under the direct control of them. The former is an elected boss, the latter an elected servant.

iv. By co-operative I was merely using the nearest available word to describe the coming together of people to self-actively & co-operatively engage in specific areas of production, so as a term, IMNSHO, it would cover SIU's. It was certainly shorter than 'whatever bodies of people may be responsible for specific sorts of production.' As for administration, I would suggest I used it as a synonym with functionary, i.e. the person/persons who simply carries out operate procedures, as opposed to executive (in common usage here in place of the Yanklander administrator) as the person/persons who make the decisions and decide policy. While they may at points merge into one another (hence why on different sides of the Atlantic the terms may come to mean their opposites) the basic distinction is clear. Perhaps 'Associations' would have been better.

v. I would emphatically disagree that the role of the working class in the revolution is 'to vote for the SPGB; that was precisely the view of the SPGB's case I was trying to counter. The role of the SPGB is solely to be voted for, but as to what the working class does, it will have to organise itself across the whole community to take charge of social life, and that includes using the SPGB, but not to the exclusion of other forms of activity. The working class makes the revolution, not the SPGB, 'our' poll victory would be a step towards the revolution, not the revolution itself.

Yours for World Socialism,
Bill Martin (SPGB).

Date: Tue, 12 Dec 2000 13:05:34 -0000

Dear Frank,

Our DB arrived a bit late, hence I couldn't include the following in my earlier letter. I'm sending them as an FYI to you; you can include them as an addendum to my original piece if you have time, space, and the inclination.

1: In your reply to Cde. Buick you suggest the party's position on the state is confused; in fact at our
Conference of 1984, the following resolution was passed:

 "This conference affirms that Socialism will entail the immediate abolition of and not the gradual
decline of the state."

2: Richard Little asserts that Cde. Perrin is in breach of a conference resolution on his use of the Party's
name in his book (and implicitly, that this party undemocratically sanctions breach of its own rules). The
resolution in question read:

 "This conference resolves that the Party's full name, 'The Socialist Party of Great Britain', be used
in the following cases:

 a) Legal documents, Forms A to G, membership cards. b) The World Socialist Movement Listing
Box, the World Socialist Movement Publications Box, the 'Address of the Party' box on the inside page of the
Socialist Standard giving details of E.C. meetings, etc.

 The Socialist Party be used in the following cases: 1) On the cover of the Socialist Standard. 2) Generally
in the texts of articles and pamphlets. 3) On all occasions where the address of Head Office is given, e.g.
headed notepaper, adverts for socialist material, etc., except in b) above. 4) All advertising and publicity
material, posters, media adverts, etc. 5) In the titles of meetings and debates, and as organiser of them.
6) Generally by speakers at indoor and outdoor meetings. 7) Manifestos, election addresses, etc. 8) On the

This motion in no way disbars members from using the term Socialist Party of Great Britain for academic
purposes, or even for political purposes.

(from p. 13)

Bill Martin

My comments in "About This Issue" tend to get me into trouble as the letter by Takis
Fotopoulos demonstrates. He corrects my remarks on the relationship between Inclusive Democracy
and Bookchin’s Libertarian Municipalism and rebukes me for my “think tank” comment.

The letter by Macintosh of Internationalist Perspective points out the mistakes about one of the
strands of what John Crump calls the “thin red line” of non-market socialism, the left
communists. One problem for me and I suspect other English speaking readers of the DB is the non-
existence until quite recently of left communism as a political element in the U.S. and the U.K.. The
only source I had was the Adam Buick’s chapter on Bordigism and Mark Shipway’s on Council
Communism in Non-Market Socialism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. I discontinued the
serialization of the book in the DB because of the length of the chapters and the difficulty reading the
small type in the format I have to use. If there is a demand I will print the two chapters up as free
booklet as I did with the anarchism and impossibilism chapters. Anyone interested should e-mail the
DB or send a note.

The De Leonist Society of Canada returns to the debate on labor time vouchers, which has
spread to the matter of the socialist dictatorship. And I reply, “Unemployed Recalcitrance” is the
term Aufheben uses to describe the various forms of resistance being used by the “beneficiaries” of
British capitalism’s state charity. This is a rather long article taken from Stop the Clock, Aufheben’s
collection of essays from various Western European revolutionary journals and reviewed in DB’s 103
and 104.

Adam Buick takes me to task for what he sees as my insulting comments on the SPGB’s
revolutionary scenario in DB104. I don’t think that my comment accused the SPGB of being Leninist
any more than did my comments on the DLSC’s advocacy of labor time vouchers. I do think though
that the SPGB’s idea of using elements of capitalism’s political state in the establishment of socialism
(to p. 18)
Dear Frank,

Many thanks for the copy of the latest issue of the DB which I've just received and your presentation of the Inclusive Democracy project. I think however that your introduction is partly inaccurate and it would therefore be useful if you could publish the following letter in the next issue of DB.

* First, it is not true that we collaborated with Murray Bookchin in the publication of S&N. Murray was a respected member of the International Advisory Board (as several other prominent people in the broad Left) but D&N was never an organ of social ecology (though obviously influenced by libertarian municipalism) as we have made clear from the very first issue of the journal.

* Although there are some similarities between the social ecology and the Inclusive Democracy projects there are also significant differences, which, at the end, led to the resignation of Bookchin from the IAB (see for an account of these differences my exchange with John Clark in vol 5 no 3 of D&N). Briefly, apart from the philosophical differences related to the 'objectivism' of social ecology, the ID project envisages an economy based on a scarcity society in which democracy extends to the economic field, whereas libertarian municipalism envisages a 'moral' economy based on a post-scarcity society which is run by moral principles (there are no serious decisions of allocating resources to be taken in a post-scarcity economy) rather than by the democratic decisions of its citizens.

* Third, it is stated in your introduction that 'like libertarian municipalism (ID) appears to be academically based, strictly the product of a think-tank rather than a social movement.' Question: Do we know of any political project (by this I mean the ensemble of a theoretical analysis of the situation, the vision for the future and the transitional strategy) which is the product of a social movement? It is of course true that political projects are based on traditions and demands developed in social struggles (the ID project being no exception as it is stated in the very first paragraph of the text published in DB), but to state, in a rather dismissive way, that the ID project is 'strictly the product of a think-tank rather than a social movement' is simply perpetuating the myths of some activists, who nevertheless keep repeating the main ideas developed by 'think tanks' of the past (Marx, Proudhon, Kropotkin, Bakunin et al) or the present (Bookchin, Marcos of the Zapatistas et al).

I hope the above comments will be helpful in developing a dialogue between DB and D&N.

Best wishes,

Takis

Takis Fotopoulos
Democracy & Nature, Editor
20 Woodberry Way
London N12 0HG
fax: +44 (0) 208 446 1633
e-mail: takis@fotop.demon.co.uk
website: www.geocities.com/democracy_nature
Dear Discussion Bulletin,

Although we appreciate the comradely fashion in which you have related to Internationalist Perspectives, and intend to actively participate in your discussions in the future, we want to signal your mistaken identification of us (on at least two occasions) as a Bordigist group. Nothing could be further from the truth! Bordigism, as the Bordigists themselves (Programma Comunista and its various offshoots) proudly proclaim hold a series of core positions that Internationalist Perspectives unequivocably rejects. These include: an ultra-Leninist vision of the Party as the repository of class consciousness and the instrument for the seizure of state power, a substitutionist perspective that we have always vigorously opposed; a belief in the invariance of Marxism since 1848, the view that Marxism is a completed theory/doctrine, the integrity of which it is the obligation of Marxists to defend, a position that excludes the theoretical innovation, and yes, revision of Marx that we believe is an ongoing task of revolutionaries; a belief that in the Third World it is the bourgeois revolution that is on the historic agenda today, with its commitment to so-called national liberation struggles, something which we have always rejected and against which we have fought both theoretically and politically; and a belief that the trade unions remain organs of the working class in the present epoch, despite their "reformist" leadership, whereas we have identified the unions as an integral part of the apparatus of capitalist class rule today.

This list should clearly demarcate the political positions and theoretical vision of Internationalist Perspectives from anything remotely resembling Bordigism, including groups such as the ICC and the CWO which you also designated as Bordigist. While neither of them deserves that appellation, despite their theoretical links to the Italian left (which is a broader category than Bordigism), there is, however, a crucial theoretical link between them and Bordigism. It is constituted by a dogmatic conception of Marxism, a vision in which Marx has provided us with the TRUTH about history and society, a truth that is as valid today as it was in Marx’s own time. Our own vision is diametrically opposed to such a perspective, a version of the invariance of Marxism, which the ICC and the CWO share with Bordigism (even if their particular understanding of the "truths" in question differ somewhat). For IP, there are two problems with such a conception of Marxism. First, it overlooks the fact that Marx's own writings, to say nothing of those of other Marxists, Engels or Lenin, for example, must be subjected to a rigorous critique. Thus, Marx himself is not free from tendencies to productivism, a teleological vision of history, a crude base/superstructure model of social reality, that we reject. Second, social reality itself, capitalism and its social relations, have been transformed in the epoch since Marx lived. We have witnessed a veritable transformation of capitalism, from its phase of formal to the real domination of capital; a Fordist phase, which began only in the early twentieth century, has given way to a post-Fordist phase of capital; we are seeing a dramatic recomposition of the working class, the implications of which Marxists are only beginning to appreciate. And while Marx may have anticipated some of these changes, at least in their broad outlines, he did not, and could not, have foreseen what the capitalist landscape of the twenty-first century would look like. In that sense, the kind of dogmatism to which we are pointing, condemns its practitioners to theoretical and political irrelevance.
And to sectarianism of the worst kind as well, as was again demonstrated by the ICC in its condemnation of New Democracy as "an organized effort of the bourgeoisie to infiltrate the so-called 'non-market, anti-statist, libertarian socialist' political milieu" (DB 103, p.15). New Democracy does not need to feel singled out: there are scores of groups, ourselves included, which the ICC sees as part of a vast conspiracy of the bourgeoisie against the "true revolutionary organizations", by whom the ICC means in the first place itself. The constant recourse to conspiracies is itself a telltale sign of an incapacity for real analysis, so typical for a group imprisoned by dogmas and schemes. For such a group debate has no sense, except to recruit new militants, since it possesses the truth already. Its sectarianism towards groups and individuals that it cannot hope to recruit is therefore quite logical. By rejecting the ICC's sectarianism, we don't mean to imply that the positions of ND ought not to be criticized. In fact, we see a parallel between ND's wholesale rejection of Marxism and the ICC's wholesale rejection of everything that is not their brand of Marxism. Neither approach is conducive to clarification. Both are schematic in their thinking and entail erecting strawmen for the convenience of easy demolition. John Spritzer of ND for instance characterizes Marx' view of class struggle as "a tug of war over competing self-interests", to which he opposes a view of a working class fighting for its own values, equality, solidarity and real democracy. But it is eminently Marxist to see values as shaped by class. To oppose these class values to the struggle for class interests creates a false dichotomy, contrary to Marx' views. Much more could and should be said on this discussion, but it is not the topic of this letter. Our main point is to distinguish ourselves clearly from Bordigism and all its party-building, dogma-loving derivatives.

With comradely greetings,

Macintosh for Internationalist Perspectives

(from p. 15)

and that of the DLSC of using LTVs to control the working class both require some thought and further discussion by non-market socialists. As usual we end with some announcements, notes, and short reviews.

Finances

For the DB the downturn in the economy promised by George the Second and the system's economic pundits has already arrived. Income during the past two months declined by nearly two thirds. Fortunately we had no credit card debt, nor were we making car payments, unlike many in our class. Also we had money in the bank to pay for our big ticket item, the $100 annual bulk mailing fee. As usual much of our income came from donations.

Contributions: Joshua Freeze $7; John Cassella $4; Lise Benjamin $10; Giorgos TPTG $5; Joseph Tupper "for the abolition of capitalism" $20; Charles Davis $3; Machado xxxxx $5. Total $51. Thank you, comrades.

BALANCE          October 27, 2000          $ 551.27

RECEIPTS
Contributions  $ 51.00

(to p. 22)
Frank Girard
Discussion-Bulletin

Dear Frank:

Responding to your "Reply to the De Leonist Society of Canada"--which reply appeared in DB103 appended to our article, UTOPIAN SOCIALISM--"NON-MARKET" VARIETY.

In your introductory blurb you state: "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." What errors? Are you saying that we were wrong to group you with the Utopians? If wrong, we sincerely regret it. But where is your proof? Your effort to dissociate the EXCHANGE function from Marx's labor voucher concept not only confirms our conclusion that you are indeed on a slide to Non-market Utopia but it also exposes a number of errors that you yourself appear to have made in the exercise. For example:

(1) As to your cooperative vegetable garden illustration: Granted that "there has been no buying nor selling"--at least not in the commonly accepted sense of the terms. However you cannot use this as a springboard from which to claim that there has been no exchange! The fact is, at harvest time you would receive vegetables in exchange for your voucher of hours worked.

(2) You state that you knew that the SLP pamphlet Socialism: Questions Most Frequently Asked and Their Answers suggested that in place of money workers would use labor vouchers in "exchange"(!) for goods and services. You also state that "When this was called to my attention, I explained it as an unfortunate mistake in the pamphlet." You right and the pamphlet wrong! Here you have certainly bitten off more than you can chew, for the best you can offer by way of proof of your correctness is a flawed attempt to pull Marx to your side, thus: "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." But the pamphlet does not quote the entire Program! A further passage states: "Evidently, there prevails here the same principle that today regulates the exchange of commodities, in so far as it is an exchange of equivalents." (Our emphasis.)

As to our charge that you "unjustly implied that [we] shared the 'two stage transition fiction advanced by Lenin and his followers.'" The charge sticks! You did indeed "misread" our article, Socialism and the Market! We suggest that you reread the article, this time with more care. So doing you will discover that you blundered by asserting that we "quote approvingly from Marx's The Gotha Program on the need for a two-phase [i.e., two-stage] transition to communism..." What's more, your error in this instance leads us to conclude that you have been laboring under a veritable logjam of misconceptions. No wonder you say you are "at a loss"!

Then what material could you study which could help you free
yourself from your predicament? Apart from The Gotha Program itself we can recommend no finer treatise than the SLP pamphlet Marxism versus Soviet Despotism. As traced back by Arnold Petersen in this work, it was Lenin himself who fathered a train of confusion by assigning different meanings to the terms Socialism and Communism! Quoting as follows:

"Having given credit to Lenin where credit was due, I now find it necessary to show that in certain important respects he distorted Marxism and to that extent corrupted the Russian movement and revolutionary thinking, followed by similar corruption elsewhere, particularly among the American robots, who mechanically and stupidly toed the Bolshevist line..."

"It has become an article of faith with every blind worshiper of Lenin that Socialism is [was] established in the Soviet Union, and that this 'Socialism' constitutes the first or initial stage of Communism—and I use the term here in its scientific Marxian sense....Lenin is guilty of having perpetrated this fraud, though his reason for doing it remains somewhat obscure. However, the reason for its having been picked up by Stalin and his robots is not at all obscure. For it is [was] used as a justification for labeling the Russian setup as 'Socialism,' which, so the rationalization goes, is that lower stage of post-capitalism which precedes 'Communism.'"

"The brazenness with which Lenin projects his fraudulent invention that there is a 'scientific difference between Socialism and Communism,' invoking Marx as an authority for this 'scientific difference,' takes one's breath away! For Marx never—and I repeat, never—made any such distinction."

Well then, in the light of the foregoing revelations what has puzzled you should puzzle you no longer! In short, we do NOT "quote approvingly from Marx's The Gotha Program on the need for a two-phase [or two-stage!] transition..." and we do not do so for the good and sufficient reason that, contrary to your premise, The Gotha Program does NOT harbor the Leninist "two-phase transition" fantasy! Accordingly, if you also recognize that Marx (and Engels) took Socialism and Communism to mean exactly the same thing, you will perceive that:

(1), A "transition" from one to the other has to be a non sequitur;

(2), Marx's terms "first phase" and "higher phase" cannot differentiate between Socialism and Communism but must merely refer to different stages of socialist (i.e., communist) development;

(3), The "need" Marx is talking about here is of course not a need for "transition" but a need for labor vouchers in the first stage of a socialist (i.e., communist) society. Quoting Marx:

"What we are dealing with here is a Communist society, not as it has developed on its own basis, but, on the contrary, as it is just issuing out of capitalist society; hence, a society that still retains, in every respect, economic, moral and intellectual, the birthmarks of the old society from whose womb it is issuing."
As to your concluding question: "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?" Why indeed? Our answer is staring right at you out of the pages of our article which you claim to be replying to! Apropos, your reply is still due to our question: "If you throw labor vouchers overboard, how then will you prevent the aforesaid slackers [the old parasite class] from continuing to take what they want from society untroubled by the necessity of having to work for it?"

In sum, Frank, we think you have been trying to defend the indefensible! It appears clear to us that the Non-market Utopians, thinking they know better than Marx, do not help equip workers for socialist victory but help divert them instead into cul-de-sacs of defeat!

Sincerely,
THE DE LEONIST SOCIETY OF CANADA

Reply to the De Leonist Society

Dear Comrades,

As Dmitry Fomin points out elsewhere in this issue, Marx, in The Gotha Program, is not describing an exchange function, as you term it, but rather an exchange principle. According to this principle the individual producer contributes a certain amount of labor time to the collective effort that produces the totality of social production and, after certain deductions, receives back his share (the equivalent) in the form of other products and services that took an equal amount of time to produce.

Wouldn't you agree that Marx is saying that the exchange of labor time for money (wages) and then for goods and services is the same in principle (exchange of equal values) as takes place in the market under capitalism? But of course no market is involved in the socialist society. Markets, whether using money or barter, assume owners and buyers and sellers. The individual producers in a socialist society--no matter what the stage of socialism--will simply be taking their rightful share of the social product, not buying it. Who or what would they buy it from? They, as a part of society, are already the owners.

Now to what you regard as my charge that the DLSC has adopted the idea of a two-stage socialism held by Marx and Lenin: Let me begin by saying that I do indeed believe that the problem of scarcity--the only currently legitimate excuse for the idea--has been solved planet-wide. The sweat and suffering of our class over the past 200 years has created the conditions that will enable us to produce goods and services for everyone--in excess of needs. There is no need now to ration consumption of goods and services, nor to construct a social mechanism to do so.

I followed your advice and reread your article "Socialism and the Market" in DB101 and found the following, beginning at the last paragraph break on page 18:

Not the least moral hangover from capitalist society that could be expected to plague a newborn socialist society would doubtless be a continuing belief, shared by the dethroned capitalist class and its supporters, that the wages system had been too rewarding a system to be scrapped. It should go without saying that this element, a repulsive element, would stop at nothing in order to abort a socialist
revolution. And how does Marxism prepare to meet such eventualities? Marxism safeguards the "first phase" of Socialism with a market economy that revolves around the labor voucher. On the other hand, Crump etc. "safeguard" the new social order by rejecting the labor voucher and moving directly to non-market Socialism—that is to say, by providing free access to consumer goods for one and all including the aforesaid destructive element bent on the restoration of wage exploitation!

This raises all sorts of questions, not the least of which is just how a "stage-one" socialist society will go about repressing the "dethroned capitalist class and its supporters... a rapacious element." We know how Lenin and his successors went about it. I'm not suggesting that the DLSC, with its roots in the SLP's anti-Stalinism advocates the dictatorship that the Bolsheviks used to maintain social control. But it seems to me that further explanation is necessary.

—Frank Girard

(from p. 18)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subs and Sales</th>
<th>$82.00</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$133.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DISBURSEMENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Postage</td>
<td>$143.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank Charges</td>
<td>14.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printing</td>
<td>36.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postage Due</td>
<td>6.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refund to bank</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual bulk mailing</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>$309.95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**BALANCE**

| December 23 | $374.32 |

Fraternally submitted,
Frank Girard
1 Introduction
In recent years, unemployment and similar welfare benefits—the dole—have become a focus of struggle in the UK. The small group which produces Aufheben has been involved in this struggle. As proletarians who at times use the dole as a means of subsistence, fighting to defend it is an expression of our own needs. But such a fight has consequences beyond the particular needs of the unemployed. The main tack we took up in fighting on this issue was to assert the connection of the dole and wages. The dole tends to act as a floor to wages. Undermine that floor and wages are also undermined. Thus we argued that the current government attack on the dole needs to be seen as part of a broad restructuring programme designed to re-orient the class to accept more work, worse conditions and less money.

This article describes how the dole arose through the inclusion of working class needs in the social democratic state. With the retreat of social democracy, the British state has repeatedly sought to ‘reform’ welfare. The recent ‘New Deal’ for the unemployed is an example of this. While carried out by the Labour Party, traditionally associated with social democracy, it is a policy of ‘welfare reform’ which accepts many of the ‘neo-liberal’ premises of the previous (Conservative) government but which seeks to develop a new agenda. We suggest that, despite the peculiarities of the UK, what has been happening here is relevant to developments in the rest of Europe.

2 The triumph and retreat of social democracy in the UK
The Second World War was the turning point for UK capital and the working class this century, in that it cleared the way for the consolidation of Fordist mass production and mass consumption (“pile ‘em high, sell ‘em cheap”). Before the war, these production relations had been a source of intense class conflict, especially in the United States, where they were pioneered. War, and the US victory, cleared the way for introducing these relations throughout the Western bloc. However, this restructuring of capitalist relations of production and reproduction could not simply be imposed on the working class, particularly in the victorious countries. Unions and social democratic parties were needed to integrate the working class into these new relations.

The previous ‘mode of accumulation’ was based on restricting the supply of commodities in order to obtain monopoly prices with which to accommodate the demands of skilled and organized sections of the working class. (1.) The capitalist mode of production is, of course, an essential category for grasping the present form of class society defined by generalized commodity production and wage-labour, where the ruling class extracts surplus-labour in the form of surplus-value (which is divided into profit, rent, interest etc.). But beyond this level of analysis it seems necessary to periodize the capitalist mode of production to grasp the changes that are occurring.) By contrast, Fordism entailed the unfettered expansion of production. Capital’s real domination and ‘scientific’ development of the labour process allowed a continual rise in the productivity of labour. In return for conceding control over the labour process, the working class was virtually guaranteed continually rising real wages within the limits of the growth in productivity. These higher wages then provided the demand for the ever increasing production of commodities - cars, washing machines etc. by Fordist industry. The new mode of accumulation was given stability through the UK, along with other Western economies, signing up to the Bretton Woods system of fixed exchange rates, according to which each national currency was committed to maintain a fixed parity to the dollar. All this was the basis of the Keynesian economic strategy of demand management and investment in the public sector adopted by successive British governments of both main political parties. (The concept of a ‘mode of accumulation’ is a means to do this. However, it must be remembered that this concept has been developed by the academic Regulation School in a structuralist and technological deterministic framework. For us, when describing the features of such periods it is essential to recognize that the foundation is the balance of forces in the class struggle and not the objectified expressions of this. Thus, though finding the concept of ‘Fordism’ useful for grasping the nature of the post-ww2 boom, we don’t accept the concept of ‘post-Fordism’, which is often taken to mean
post-capitalism. For an interesting discussion of this, see F. Gambino, 'A critique of the Fordism of the Regulation School' in Common Sense 19.

Socially, an essential precondition of Fordism was the establishment of a 'postwar settlement'. Pressure from the working class, and ruling class fear of revolution, led to the provision following the second world war of comprehensive and inclusive welfare, corporatism (tripartite organizations and trade union rights), full employment and wealth redistribution through taxation. In effect, the working class exchanged the desire for revolution or further social changes in return for the inclusion of its demands within the state and capital. The 'gains' for the working class - for example, free health care, universal welfare system, social housing - necessarily involved its demobilization. Working class communities were broken up as new housing estates were built. The old networks of mutual aid and solidarity were replaced by the bureaucratic administration of welfare etc. At the same time, rising real wages necessarily involved an intensification and monotonization of work.

With these 'gains', social democracy - that is, the representation of the working class as labour within capital and the bourgeois state, politically through social democratic parties, and economically through trades unions - had finally triumphed. The precondition for any revolutionary movement thus became an attack on this representation. The working class had to overcome the social democratic containment of its struggle.

The post-war settlement could only be sustained through the economic conditions of the post-war boom; yet it also tended to undermine these very economic conditions. By the late 1960s, the terms of the post-war settlement were an increasing burden on UK capital and served to strengthen the hand of the working class. Workers' demands for more money and less work began to exceed the limits of the social democratic compromise. In 1974, a strike by the miners, the strongest section of the UK working class, toppled the Conservative government. The incoming Labour government tried to defuse class militancy within the terms of social democracy. In order to restrain rising wage demands, a 'social contract,' mediated by the unions, attempted to impose equality of sacrifice on all sectors of the working class. However, this collapsed in the winter of discontent (1978-9) when many of the key sectors of the working class struck, bringing the country almost to a standstill.

Subsequently, the Thatcher government abandoned the post-war consensus and asserted instead the right of capital to manage. Central to Thatcher's restructuring was both anti-strike legislation and an abandonment of any attempt to mitigate or curb mass unemployment. From the point of view of capital, the Thatcherite restructuring was highly successful. Britain moved from the country leading the industrialized world in terms of strikes and worker 'bloody-mindedness' to one having the lowest level of strikes and the most cowed workforce. Much of the leadership of the labour movement in effect accepted Thatcher's assertion that there was 'no alternative'; the idealistic illusions of progressive social democracy gave way to the 'new realism' of accommodation to the market. Politically, the development of 'New Labour' has been the result.

3 Mass unemployment and 'dole autonomy'
'New Labour' represents the recognition by the political leadership of British social democracy that the re-definition of the post-war settlement begun by Thatcher was irreversible but incomplete. One reason that the re-definition is incomplete is that many sections of the working class have yet to be fully re-integrated into the discipline of the market. To understand this, and hence the importance of work to the 'New Labour' project, we must look at some of the unforeseen consequences of Thatcher's strategic use of mass unemployment.

Mass unemployment certainly had the desired effect on many sectors of the labour market - eliminating at a stroke some of the most militant. The virtual eradication of the mining industry is the key
example. Yet the other central aim of the strategy of mass unemployment - to rein in wage levels through creating reserves of unemployed workers that possessed a discipline that the bosses considered acceptable, without just 'skills' but basic work discipline. So rather than this reserve army of labour creating competition and pressure on wages, the 'recalcitrance' of the unemployed had the effect that, in many sectors, existing workers were simply poached across enterprises and were still able to command relatively high wages. Large sectors of British capital therefore remained uncompetitive.

Most unemployed people certainly sought work, if only because they needed the money. Others, albeit a minority, tried to turn the dearth of jobs to our advantage. Thus, in the 1980s, the dole was the basis of a number of creative projects and movements, some of which were overtly political. In effect, the dole became the trouble-maker's grant. This has continued into the 1990s. For example, many of the most committed anti-road militant groups would not have been able to occupy trees etc. without the dole. One could say that the 'refusal of work', a militant tendency which had developed in the workplaces in the 1960s and 70s, now became displaced onto the dole. With such displacement came a certain degree of marginalization, however. While the earlier 'refusal of work' threatened to spread across workplaces and thus form links between different workers and to those outside the workplace, the new 'dole autonomy' too often entails forms of individualism and lifestyle. This becomes clearer when we examine the fragmented responses of people to the current attacks on the dole.

Throughout the 1990s, there had been various attempts to tighten dole regulations. Most had little effect, largely through dole-workers' preferences for an easy life. In 1996, the Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA) was introduced as a more concerted attempt to deal with this problem of the recalcitrance of the unemployed sector of the labour market. The JSA entailed a harsher benefits regime, codifying and systematizing the pressure on unemployed claimants to seek work (or get off the dole). The JSA was partly part of 'neo-liberal ideology', being designed to increase the effectiveness of the industrial reserve army and hence competition on the labour market, driving down wages at the bottom end.

The main organized opposition to the JSA took two forms. First, a small anti-JSA network of anarchist and similar groups from around the country was formed. These 'Groundswell' groups were often connected to claimants' unions or community action groups. Most participants were unemployed themselves, and had an important sense chosen to be so. Although the Grounds:all network held a few marches, pickets and occupations, attempts to build local solidarity through leafleting and advice (e.g., on getting through Jobcentre interviews) were more prevalent.('Neo-liberal' ideology is an expression of the freedom of global finance capital. In response to the class struggles of the 60s and 70s and the difficulties in maintaining accumulation, states took actions (e.g., by abandoning Bretton Woods) which in effect created the conditions for the development of the relative autonomy of global finance capital. Through taking this more autonomous form, capital could outlack areas of working class strength. A situation was created in which governments of nation states could claim that they had no freedom of manoeuvre but rather had to compete in terms of labour flexibility, social costs etc. to maintain competitiveness and attract investment. The 'neo-liberal' ideology and practices which Britain and the USA promoted were only the harshest examples of this move by states to present aggressive measures against their working classes as dictated by an external force. The 'Third Way' policies these states now champion are largely a continuation of the same attacks with a softened rhetoric but similar appeal to 'new global realities' opponents of 'neo-liberalism' and 'globalization' fall into the trap of opposing the state to capital and then appealing to the state to tame the economy. They are also wont to whine about the irresponsibility of capital and complain that democratic institutions are being undermined. It must be remembered that democratic states have participated in the creation of the structures of the global economy and the current relation between finance and industrial capital. The political and economic, rather than distinct spheres, are two sides of the same coin of capitalist domination. From the proletarian perspective it must always be remembered that finance capital even in its more autonomous global manifestation is not a separate entity but is simply a form that capital takes. It is ultimately dependent on always coming back to concrete labour - to exploitation and subordination. The class struggle must be fought out with real workers in concrete situations.)

Second, many Jobcentre (dole) workers themselves were opposed to the JSA, since the new regime...
threatened to increase the policing aspect of their work and hence bring them into conflict with claimants. The Jobcentre workers' strike in the winter of 1995-6 was not over the JSA as such (due in part to the terms of the antistrike legislation mentioned above), and certainly did not lead to a direct victory for the workers. But it served both to delay the implementation of the JSA by three months and to undermine its effectiveness, particularly the ability of management to impose performance-related pay, whereby delegworkers are rewarded according to the number of claimants that they pressurize off the dole.

The Jobcentres in Brighton came out on indefinite strike. Those of us involved in the anti-JSA campaign in Brighton argued that shared action with dole-workers was a practical necessity. Moreover, Jobcentres are a section of the civil service which has seen increasing proletarianization; many delegworkers are on low pay and short-term contracts, and are very similar to the claimants they process. Claimants in the anti-JSA campaign group therefore joined workers on the picket line. We explained to other claimants that the strike was in their interests. A victory for the Jobcentre workers would strengthen their hand against management, and hence against the implementation of the JSA.

On the basis of the joint action during the Jobcentre strike, the Brighton claimants action group established links with militant delegworkers. Support from organized claimants encouraged delegworkers to resist management demands; and delegworkers passed on information and discussed tactics with organized claimants. On the day the JSA was finally introduced (October 1996) over 300 people laid siege to all the town's Jobcentres; delegworkers used the siege as an opportunity to down tools, bringing the new regime into chaos. Unfortunately, however, such scenes were not repeated elsewhere. Since then, although the JSA is now in force, Brighton Jobcentres are among the most lenient in the country; Jobcentre workers here have a reputation for discreet acts of solidarity at the counter when it comes to filling in JSA forms.

The demonstration against the JSA was perhaps the high point of the claimants' 'movement'. Since then, there have been a number of minor successes against a small-scale workfare scheme, 'Project Work', in which a number of claimants were forced to work for their dole for local charities. Militant pickets and occupations forced many of these charities into humiliating climb-downs. Yet this workfare scheme was poorly funded and lacking popular legitimacy; it was easy for small groups of militants to damage it.

Our problem is that the claimants 'movement' has simply failed to take off. It has been enormously difficult for those of us on the dole to compose ourselves collectively. Most claimants feel that they can avoid the sanctions of the JSA through their own initiatives. Moreover, even most of those who treat the dole as the troublemakers' grant likewise adopt almost exclusively individual solutions: bluffs, signing off, moving away, petty entrepreneurship, going to the university, etc. For all the vigour of recent dole-based movements (ecological, 'Do It Yourself' etc.), collectively they fail to defend the very conditions that make their lifestyles and movements of resistance possible. As a movement, they think they can simply ignore the threat to the dole. (Do it Yourself. See our articles 'Kill or chill? Analysis of the opposition to the Criminal Justice Bill' in Atifsheh 4, Summer 1995, and 'The politics of anti-road struggle and the struggles of anti-road politics: The case of the go M1! Link Road Campaign' in DIY Culture: Party & Protest in Nineties Britain (ed. George McKay, Verso, 1998). (Text version available from Aufheben.)

The government's problem, however, was that the JSA itself was not enough in the face of general unemployment recalcitrance. The lack of 'job readiness' among too many people, whether conscious or otherwise was needed to deliver more employable workers to the labour market. The 'New Deal' represents such a push.

4 A New Deal 'for the unemployed'

Most attempts by the Conservative government to attack benefits were met by cynicism and passive resistance. Labour, on the other hand, as the party that 'created the welfare state', claims to be the one that can be trusted to 'reform' it. The 'New Deal' for the young unemployed - a 'menu' of job-counselling,
subsidized employment and work experience placements - is part of New Labour's 'Welfare to Work' strategy. Welfare to Work is described as the government's flagship policy, since it embodies New Labour's key 'values', 'partnership' in place of class conflict (because New Labour wants business to participate in the socialization of the unemployed); the social role of work and the importance of the work-ethnic in providing self-respect; and the fair exchange of rights to benefits for the duty to seek and accept the work or placements offered. The New Deal represents a departure from the overly punitive 'neo liberal' approach of the last government, to a more integrative approach - but not the integration of social democracy.

By offering people 'training' and personalized job-counseling, the New Deal claims to give claimants what they want - a toe-hold in the labour market. Yet it is a work-experience programme which doesn't actually create any jobs, and its bedrock is the harsh JSA sanctions regime: refuse the counseling or the New Deal 'options' and you lose all your benefits.

The origins of the New Deal lie in old Labour-left job-creation programmes, themselves part of broader economic strategies. Such old left strategies included Keynesian policies of investment in the public sector which would increase the demand for labour. This reflation of the economy would characteristically be combined with controls on imports and capital movements. A programme like the New Deal would be the supply-side counterpart of such an economic strategy, training the unemployed to take the newly created jobs. But New Labour entails the dumping of left Keynesian economic strategies in favour of a rigid 'neo-liberal' economic orthodoxy. For example, the setting of interest rates has been handed over to the Bank of England, and public spending is to be kept strictly within limits determined by inflation targets. However, the 'training scheme' part of the old strategy, in the form of the New Deal, is retained from the past.

Within a broad strategy of abandoning social democracy, what function is served by retaining the 'training' element of an old left programme? Ideologically, ripping this kind of policy out of its social democratic context fits with the New Labour values of rights and responsibilities. Thus, the government offers claimants the ability to make themselves competitive on the labour market; in return, it expects us to compete harder for the existing jobs. This is what they mean by 'empowering job-seekers' and ending their 'social exclusion'. The New Deal is a social democratic policy in appearance which is tuned to the service of labour market flexibility. Its principle aim, as with the JSA, is to enhance the effectiveness of the industrial reserve army and so increase competition in the labour market. (Some businesses responded by dosing alarm clocks and bars of soap.)

In practice, the 'skills' that the New Deal is supposedly equipping 'job-seekers' with are for the most part not what most claimants want. Like previous make-work and workfare schemes, for most claimants the New Deal won't provide anything more useful on the labour market than the ability to get out of bed in the morning. However, for the employers, of course, the inculcation of work-discipline is essential. True, there is a skills shortage in some sectors (Information Technology and construction); but many of the jobs which cannot be filled or which have high turnover, particularly the lowest-paying ones, require reliability more than special skills. The New Deal is intended as an ideological offensive according to which the work-ethnic is to be drummed into even those sectors previously considered outside the labour-market - such as single parents and those on sickness benefits - so that the labour market as a whole learns the value of hard work and flexibility.

The JSA was easy to criticize. But the fact that the New Deal has had some success in presenting itself as what the unemployed want has meant that it has become even more difficult for claimants to compose themselves as a movement of opposition. Many of the Groundswell groups either collapsed or degenerated back into their claimants union origins instead of discussing how to build an oppositional movement. The problem is that no new claimants are coming forward to join the groups - particular not young claimants,
the group most affected by the New Deal. The remaining claimants' action campaigns largely comprise small groups of ageing politicians with little basis outside particular narrow scenes. Such problems of opposition have been compounded by the government's apparent success so far in winning round many dole workers with a 'new ethos' of 'customer care'.

Despite the weakness of the opposition, it seems that the New Deal might in fact fail for other reasons. The much-vaunted new ethos is likely to come into conflict with government attempts to increase cost-effectiveness, most notably by privatizing some Jobcentre functions. For example, the Reed private employment agency has taken over provision of the New Deal in parts of London. Reed's Job counselors' are much more reliant than are Jobcentre dole-workers on bonuses for shoving people into jobs (any jobs). Where the Jobcentres have to compete in a 'job-counselling' market, the 'new ethos' and hence the credibility of the New Deal will not survive.

Second, and perhaps more serious for the prospects for the New Deal, is the state of the economy. Although employment is rising and unemployment falling, the pictures vary according to region and sector. In areas of already high unemployment, where the manufacturing base is being eroded still further, the number of New Deal placements will start to dry up, just as more 'clients' need to be 'placed'. Only the least attractive and least credible 'options' will remain; and, in a much tighter labour market, the replacement of normal jobs with workfare placements will become more contentious.

5 Is the British situation peculiar?

In Europe there is much talk among leftists, both 'reformist', and 'revolutionary', about a guaranteed minimum income and reduced working time. The closest parallel in Britain is perhaps the demand to increase the level of Britain's (belatedly-introduced) minimum wage for those in employment. The minimum wage needs to be understood as part of the Government's attempt to shift welfare payments from non-workers (e.g., unemployed, single parents; disabled) towards those in work. In the context of benefits becoming in effect wage-subsidies, a minimum wage is a safeguard against employers shifting the cost of reproducing labour-power onto the state. The leftists who try to mobilize around increasing the level of the minimum wage (currently £3.60 an hour for those over 21) try to maintain the illusion that its recent introduction is a social democratic reform which can be built upon, rather than an integral part of the New Labour project of re-imposing work.

The current attack on the dole, a key component of this project of re-imposing work, is part of the British state's particular response to the global autonomy of finance capital which emerged from the class struggles of the 1960s and 70s. Yet the imperatives imposed by this international power of capital are shared by the UK with all the other countries in Europe. All nation-states are experiencing broadly similar political-economic pressures due to the apparent externalization of the imperatives of capital accumulation. Cuts in benefits and the introduction of workfare-type schemes are reflections of the shared context. Although in different degrees and from different starting points, in the UK and other European nation states, the old social democratic forms have been in retreat.

Yet, of course, the UK situation differs from the rest of Europe in certain crucial respects. Nowhere else in Europe was there an equivalent of the precipitous and class-confrontational Thatcherite restructuring. In the UK, with its historically important finance-capital sector, the backward manufacturing sector could be sacrificed, since surplus-value could still be creamed off from abroad through the money markets. By contrast, in Germany, for example, there were no Keynesian policies to abandon, and no alternative to continuing to base the economy on manufacturing. Hence Germany, unlike Britain, retained key social democratic strategies such as corporatism, even during the decades during which it was forced, like Britain, to pursue policies aimed at controlling the money supply.

The differences between Britain and the rest of Europe persist. Whereas the election of New Labour in
the UK was taken as the consolidation of the 'neoliberal' achievements of the Thatcher period, the re-emergence of the 'socialists' elsewhere in Europe was interpreted by many, including isolated social democrats in Britain, as a partial resurgence of social democracy. There is no 'new reformism' here in the LJK, then, but rather the open drive towards labour market flexibility in the form of a new post-socialist 'consensus'.

However, the relation between the form of some of New Labour's policies and their ultimate aims points to a crucial parallel between the UK and its European counterparts. As we have shown, the 'new ethos' of personalized job-counselling etc. which the unemployed supposedly demanded from the New Deal is part of an agenda in which the price is harder work, lower pay, casualization and a tougher benefits regime. While some might imagine that the calls in Germany and France for reduced working time might serve as a crucial advance for workers' rights, as other articles in this collection point out, the reality is increased flexibility and more work in the guise of a progressive demand. The realities of 'time reductions' negotiated by German unions became apparent when they were imported from 'social Europe' into the British context. Here, BMW's introduction of more intensive working practices from Germany into the factories of their Rover subsidiary was rightly seen as a fundamental attack on existing working conditions, overtime payments etc. It was only imposed through the blackmail of threatening factory closure and complete withdrawal of BMW from Britain.

Similarly, we see the demand in Europe for a guaranteed minimum income as something which is likely to be utilized by capital to its own ends rather than serving as some kind of 'transitional demand'. What is actually guaranteed about such an income is that it would be set at a level which would maintain or increase the competitiveness and profitability of the economy in question. Also, even if political pressure could set such a guaranteed income at a reasonable level it is likely over time that the state could push it down below previous benefit levels. Any 'radical' intervention on this terrain would thus simply result in helping the state to restructure its welfare system.

In this sense, the social democratic appearance of the current demands is in fact being fetishized by those demanding a reduction in working time and a guaranteed minimum income; the actual substance of the proposed developments represents the reversal of the social democratic 'gains' of the past. In all cases, what we are witnessing is the use of apparently social democratic principles or policies as part of an overall strategy of acceding to the pressures imposed by the autonomy of global finance capital. The 'new consensus' that both New Labour and the apparently more social democratic European left governments are seeking to create is more work intensity and greater flexibility of the labour market - by any means necessary! While New Labour is honest about abandoning social democracy and imposing market imperatives, the policies of the European left governments represent the hollowing out of social democracy.

Whether in form or in substance, social democratic concessions are not inherently progressive but are forms of mediation and recuperation of working class demands. What is particularly effective about such concessions from the point of view of capital is that they function to make the working class demand and organize its own alienation.
Dear Frank,

You've been an industrial unionist all your life and you are evidently not going to learn any new tricks at this stage! But, for the record, the SPGB has already made it absolutely clear, even though we hold that the working class (not a party separate from it, but the working class organised politically, ie as a party) should capture and use the state in the course of the socialist revolution, that once socialism (as the common ownership and democratic control of society's productive resources) has been established (fairly rapidly in our opinion) both the state and the socialist party will be immediately disbanded.

You say we should ask ourselves "just how this scenario differs from the trajectory of the Russian Revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat". Quite a bit actually! The Russian Revolution involved the seizure of power by an insurrectionary minority which then imposed its dictatorship over the proletariat. What we are talking about is a majority revolution in which the majority has expressed its desire for socialism by democratically voting to send a majority of mandated socialist delegates to elective assemblies to end capitalism.

This could never develop into a dictatorship as in Russia under the Bolsheviks. If you want to be an anarchist and insist that things must by definition go wrong if anyone tries to use existing political institutions to end capitalism, at least put forward a more reasonable scenario such as "the trajectory of the French Popular Front of 1936 or of the British Labour Government of 1945". That would be wrong too and we could easily spell out why, but at least you wouldn't be insulting us by likening us to the Bolshevik dictators and mass murderers.

--Adam Buick, Brussels.

NOTES, ANNOUNCEMENTS, AND SHORT REVIEWS

The "Renegade" Kautsky and His Disciple Lenin by Gilles Dauve'. From 1883 to about 1917 Karl Kautsky was regarded as the master theoretician of the socialist movement worldwide. As editor of the theoretical journal of the Social-Democratic Party of Germany, the largest and most successful party of socialism before WWI, his articles and pronouncements on socialism had the authority and standing close to that of Holy Writ. When he wrote a pamphlet condemning the Bolsheviks in Russia for their repression of non-Bolsheviks including dissenting socialists at just the time that the Russian Revolution was in dire need of support from the international socialist movement, Lenin wrote a polemic attacking him: Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky. The pamphlet would seem to remove Lenin from the list of Kautsky's admirers, but Dauve's point is that despite what Lenin regarded as Kautsky's treason against the revolution, he remained a faithful adherent of a basic Kautskyian principle: the idea that left to their own devices the working class were incapable of developing a revolutionary class consciousness and that the intellectuals in a revolutionary party were necessary to carry these ideas to workers. Lenin developed the idea at some length in his 1903 pamphlet "What Is to Be Done?" and it has remained an article of faith to Leninists of all stripes ever since. The pamphlet goes on to describe the results of this Kautskyian infection on the Soviet successors of Lenin as well as the Trotskyist dissenters. A Red & Black Notes Reprint, twenty pages, $2 postpaid from Red & Black Notes, PO Box 47643, 939 Lawrence Avenue East, Don Mills, ON, M3 3S7 Canada.

With Fate Conspire: Memoirs of a Glasgow Seafarer and Anarchist by John Taylor Caldwell. This is the second volume of Caldwell's memoirs. The first published in 1993 dealt with his childhood in the slums of Belfast and Glasgow which ended typically with employment at age 12. This volume begins,
about 1928 with his getting work on the trans-Atlantic passenger liners as a bellboy at about age 15. By this time he had become an autodidact, as had many working class children who read to escape the miserable reality of their lives and graduated from dime novels to more serious fare. Caldwell was lucky in that somehow his thirst for knowledge also led him to Guy Aldred the flamboyant speaker, writer, and leader of a large group of Glasgow anarchists and libertarian socialists. By 1938 he became a full time "activist"—as we would call him now—in Aldred's group. Activism with Aldred involved the publication—including the printing—of journal leaflets and books as well as publicizing the outdoor and indoor lectures that were the agitational tool of all radicals prior to WWII. Caldwell provides fascinating insights and historical details on the groups and their members in the heyday of Glasgow's radical milieu. 230 pages, L8.95 from Northern Herald Books, 5 Close Lea, Rastrick, Brighouse West Yorkshire WF15 7NB, England and in the U.S. from AK Press PO Box 40682, San Francisco, CA 94140.

*Trotsky, Trotksyists and Trotskyism: From Revolution to Reform,* by the Communist Workers Organization. After the Russian Revolution when the Lenin and the Bolsheviks were struggling to retain state power, Lenin called for a new International of revolutionary groups to replace the discredited social democratic Second International. Invited to attend the first Congress of the proposed International were all revolutionary elements of the pre-war socialist movement that had opposed the war. The purpose was obviously to create an organization that could provide a focus for international support for the Bolsheviks. Support for the Russian Revolution was almost universal among revolutionary workers, including some anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists. The new international was indeed created, albeit without the immediate inclusion of many of the anti-war factions of the western social democratic parties and the independent revolutionary groups that had split from these parties prior to the war. The Third International (the Comintern) immediately became the instrument through which the Bolsheviks controlled the other parties and imposed on them those policies that the Russian party regarded as important to its welfare. Among the early rebellions against Bolshevik domination of the member parties was that of the Italian Communist Party, whose left wing in the person of Amadeo Bordiga battled it out with Lenin. In 1926 the Left Communist faction was expelled from the Communist Party of Italy and reorganized itself as a group in exile in France, the Fascists having taken power in Italy. Trotsky was expelled from the Russian Communist Party around 1926 and sent into exile, his followers in the Soviet union were hunted down and imprisoned or executed. His followers abroad were able to organize dissident elements in the Comintern parties and create a sizable international movement. The Italian Communist Left, organized in 1926, carried on its opposition movement on a much smaller scale and entirely on the continent through the thirties, through the war years and on to the present.

As one might expect, there was little love lost between the two dissenting factions. This polemic by the Communist Workers Organization, a British left communist group, against Trotskyism argues that 1) Trotsky's opposition was not based on any policy or theoretical differences with the Stalinists but was rather a factional fight by Trotsky for control of state power after the death of Lenin and 2) that the history of Trotskyism with its innumerable splits demonstrates that there is no unifying Marxist theoretical principle that the Trotskyists advance against the Soviet successors of Lenin. Although they don't develop the idea at any length, the authors contrast Left Communism's the principled opposition to economic policies pursued by the Soviet government (the extension of state capitalism) and its policy of rapprochement with the social democracy in the United Front of the thirties. The Left Communists, on the other hand, have maintained a consistent Marxist approach to the developments under Soviet state capitalism. As might be expected, the authors fail to discuss the Leninist legacy shared by both the Trotskyists and left communists of the idea that the intellectuals in the party are the bearers of revolutionary consciousness to the uninformed working class. (*See the review of the Red and Black*
Notes pamphlet above). It is this aspect of Leninism that provides the theoretical underpinning for the dictatorship of the proletariat under which millions of workers lost their lives while receiving their education in how to become socialists. Thirty-six A-4 pages, L2/$4 from Communist Workers Organization, PO Box 338, Sheffield S3 9YX, England.

The African Socialist: A Journal of the World Socialist Movement (Africa) is the newest periodical in the non-market socialist political sector. For some years the Socialist Party of Great Britain’s Socialist Standard has carried a few African contact addresses. Although widely scattered geographically (Gambia, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Uganda, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Swaziland, and South Africa), they have accepted the basic ideas of the Socialist Party of Great Britain and have cooperated in producing this journal, the first issue of which has been published in the U.K. The hope is to produce a regular quarterly that will emanate from Africa. The content of issue Number 1 (late 2000) includes articles on AIDS, African debt and the World Bank, Black Consciousness and others. Readers interested in obtaining a free sample copy can write to the African Socialist c/o the Socialist Party of Great Britain, 52 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7 UN England.

Capitalism’s Future... Collapse? Reformed? Abolished? Prominently displayed on the cover are the words, “THIS PUBLICATION INCLUDES A REPRINT OF THE PAMPHLET WE PUBLISHED IN 1932” along with a reproduction of the cover of the 1932 pamphlet. The purpose of this slender booklet is to dash the hopes of readers who expect capitalism to cooperate in its abolition by falling down and dying. The introduction begins with a recital of collapse predictions by prominent “Marxists,” past and present, including Rosa Luxemburg, Eugene Varga, and Tony Cliff, all of whom seem to have ignored Marx’s assertions that capitalism could recover from its periodic downturns. The last sentence of the intro expresses a position upheld by the “Reconstituted” Socialist Party of Great Britain and, so far as I know, the unreconstituted SPGB as well as most other groups in our political sector: “...until a Socialist working class majority takes positive action to establish Socialism there are no crises from which capitalism cannot recover.” The 1932 pamphlet, published at the bottom of the 1930s depression, lists at great length the authoritative announcements of capitalism’s impending collapse and the utter failure of the efforts to organize any meaningful worker movement to take advantage of the collapsing condition of capitalism. As the publishers point out, the results of a depression are more likely to be the growth of authoritarian movements like fascism and racism. Twenty-eight pages, 50p ($1) from 71 Ashbourne Court, Woodside Park Road, London N12 8SB England.