About This Issue

The lyrics of John Lennon's *Imagine* on page 3 managed to pass me by when the song first came out. I can remember my kids saying that Lennon had written a socialist song, but I could never make out the words of their kind of music and didn't pay it any attention. Since reading the lyrics that introduce Dr. Who's Manifesto, I'm really surprised by the world Lennon imagined and its close resemblance to the kind of society we all espouse. Does anyone know anything about his exposure to socialist ideas? But of course the important thing in the Manifesto is Dr. Who's idea that we squabbling advocates of a socialist world can approach each other closely enough to consider the

ABOUT THE DISCUSSION BULLETIN

The Discussion Bulletin is affiliated with the Industrial Union Caucus in Education (IUCE). It serves as the financially and politically independent forum of a relatively unknown sector of political thought that places the great divide in the "left," not between anarchists and Marxists but between capitalism's statist leftwing of vanguardists and social democrats and the real revolutionaries of our era: the non-market, anti-statist, libertarian socialists. They are organized in small groups of syndicalists, anarcho-communists, 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 capitalist 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 and gain some understanding of their history and future possibilities. Among the latter might be movement toward at least limited co-operation.

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

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Manifesto for the Imagine International
(for lack of a better name, subject to change by its constituents)
by Dr. Who (2001)

From "Imagine" by John Lennon (1971)

Imagine there's no heaven,
It's easy if you try,
No hell below us,
Above us only sky,
Imagine all the people
living for today...

Imagine there's no countries,
It isn't hard to do,
Nothing to kill or die for,
No religion too,
Imagine all the people
living life in peace...

Imagine no possessions,
I wonder if you can,
No need for greed or hunger,
A brotherhood of man,
Imagine all the people
Sharing all the world...-

You may say I'm a dreamer,
but I'm not the only one,
I hope some day you'll join us,
And the world will live as one.

Imagine a radical coalition capturing the imagination of people everywhere. Something so irresistible that it becomes the only alternative political force for humans living anywhere in the world. It could happen. Imagine it. Unlike prior movements for social change - the feminists, the Greens, the Left - this coalition would actually consist of all groupings which actually stand for the free society, so of course it would have a bit of those aforementioned movements within it. This would be a coalition of all people who actually wish to be done with the current order of private property and replace it with a society in which the means of producing wealth are owned by the entire population - not the state - and in which production for use replaces production for profit. When all the political entities which currently entertain such a vision of the future actually unite under one umbrella, imagine its effect upon both the public and upon the groups which profess to be radical (Leninists, Trotskyists, Maoists, Stalinists, Labor Parties, Green Parties, parties which call themselves Socialist or Communist yet actually stand for state capitalism, Social Democratic parties, and even those anarchists who are not communist but possess some vague notion of a decentralized society in which the market economy and wage labor persist). Why the very existence of the sort of coalition I propose would create a remarkable and beautiful tension among all those groups.
For example, imagine that to be a member of that coalition you would have to actually stand for real socialism, real communism, real anarchism - a moneyless, stateless, wageless society of common ownership and democratic control of the means of producing wealth. Imagine the tension this would create for those leftist groups previously mentioned who are only on the left of the political spectrum, of the existing social order of buying and selling, of wage labor, and not actually standing for its abolition. These groups would all want a piece of the action. And yet the only fundamental rule for membership into the coalition would be this: you must actively work to educate fellow workers about the moneyless and stateless society and be against state capitalism and the idea that the market system can be reformed in the interests of working people. So what are the Leninists, Maoists, leftists or the Greens, to do? Maintaining membership in or maintaining the political positions of those groups would be a clear admission that their socialism, communism or grassroots democracy is a sham. Desperate to be a member of the hippest coalition around, many would agitate from within their ranks to alter their positions to allow for coalition eligibility. But Leninism or Trotskyism, as examples of leftist animals, are completely incompatible with real socialism or communism unless they abandon their theories of the vanguard party and of state capitalism. So to abandon those principles would be in effect to abolish their reformist and Leninist character, to render them more democratic organizations, to replace their demand for fair wages with the revolutionary demand for the abolition of the wages system. Those members who do not succeed in altering the Leninist, Leftist or Green organization would just jump ship in favor of any group to its liking within the coalition. Maybe the ex-Leninist who departs from the Leninist party would maintain his or her interest in a so-called Marxist analysis, such as the materialist conception of history. No matter. If joining a political group in the coalition meant adhering to one whose theory was somewhat informed by the analysis of Marx and Engels, it would also mean abandoning Lenin's theory of vanguardism in favor of a truly democratic working class organization, and abandoning a theory of reformism for a theory in which, as Marx taught us, commodity production is incapable of meeting the needs of the population.

Take the Green who experiences this tension. He or she would be able to extend the theory of grassroots democracy, social justice, nonviolent action and ecological harmony into that of a movement which stays democratic, nonviolent, and environmental, but recognizes that democracy is only truly attainable when pure communism or socialism has been established, and the world is no longer divided into workers and employers, and that environmentalism is likely an unrealizable pipe dream: the Greens and environmentalists are wasting their time over as long as production for sale rages, and the Earth is only a commodity like any other. If the Green party does not budge towards a green communism, as we find in William Morris'"News From Nowhere," then its discontent members wishing to be a part of this coalition would again have to find a party, it does not matter which, which satisfies both the desire for the end of our rape of Mother Earth, and the desire for a social system, democratic and free, in which production of wealth, even at a level of abundance unimaginable today, is maintained totally in harmony with principles of conservation, recycling, elimination of pollution, health, biodiversity, and the return of forests and wildlife.

In 1987, an important book came out. It was "Non-market socialism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries," edited by Maximilien Rubel and John Crump, published by St. Martin's Press, New York. This was the first book ever to discuss several existing movements for real nonmarket socialism - anarchocommunism, the World Socialist Movement which emerged after the founding of the Socialist Party of Great Britain in 1904, Council Communism, Bordigism, the De Leonists, and the Situationists, among others. These movements were examples of the nonmarket trend in socialism to be found in its earlier period of the nineteenth century with the
analyses of Marx, Engels, William Morris and Kropotkin. The book illustrated the diverse ways in which nonmarket socialism emerged from different soil around the Northern Hemisphere otherwise dominated among the working class by state capitalist, social democratic, versions of socialism or communism which had distorted the definition of socialism to mean a society in which the state takes the helm of the economy allegedly in the name of the working class. Leninism, Maoism, Trotskyism, Labor Parties, Socialist and Communist Parties of the world which advocated state capitalism, and the Social Democratic movements, were among the most damaging examples of reformist movements which steered human history for at least a hundred years away from the potential of being delivered from the clutches of class society for ever. The burgeoning movement of workers to liberate themselves from the slavery imposed by wage labor became sidestepped thereafter into a hundred years of reformism as we found throughout the twentieth century - and from which the workers, who had become increasingly organized from the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries, could not prevent the world from plunging into two world wars, ecological devastation on a frightening scale, mass starvation, nuclear nightmare, immune suppression disorders, poverty, racism, sexism, mental illness, and alienation on a level unimaginable to the radicals of the prior century. Large opposition movements in recent decades, such as the anti-nuclear movement, the peace movement, the feminist movement, the Green movement, are modern examples of opposition to excesses produced by capitalism - unequal power between men and women, the system's military needs, commodity production's effects upon the planet - without questioning the fundamental causes of these problems in the nature of a society of haves and have-nots, of buying and selling, of wage-slavery for the majority, of minority ownership of the means of production.

The Rubel and Crump book identified radicals inspired by both Marx and the anarchists who managed to preserve the original conception of a human society in which the means of producing wealth was owned and democratically controlled by the planet's people (not the government), in which abundance would at last be possible without the waste and scarcities imposed by the market system, and in which the social foundations for the freedom of the individual to work, create, live and love have been firmly established for the rest of human history. The book not only identified such a burning desire of working people to achieve emancipation from the slavery imposed by having to sell their energies to an employing class in several richly illustrated theories of liberation, but also showed how these different trends concluded that the free society would be rid of state, money, wage-labor, buying and selling, and other paraphernalia of capital society which are not only its essential features in both private or state forms, but which also serve to limit production to economic demand (crudely, how much money people have) rather than meet the needs of the citizenry (and with today's technology and know-how, human need alone and an ongoing monitoring and careful measuring of our available resources may become more effective guides in determining how much to produce than economic demand which has always failed to meet even the crudest human needs for too many, initially due to immature productive capacity (for a population which had been robbed of their land and became wage workers for survival) but today unforgivably.

Over the years, working people organizing for such freedom from capital (from having to work to an owning class merely in order to survive) have expressed this desire in several theoretical frameworks. These have tended to fall into certain distinct categories: those socialists or communists who advocated a majority of the population taking hold of the state (via voting) in order to keep it from being used against the population when the latter moved to take over the productive machinery for itself, and those socialists who advocated council or
syndicalist action as a means of returning power to the people and allowing them to take over the means of production directly, the latter including both syndicalist or libertarian Marxists and of course those anarchists with a strong socialist character. So long as both advocated not a minority but the entire population of the world either using the ballot box or taking direct control of neighborhoods and workplaces, both represented democratic movements with the same goal of abolishing the wages system, and replacing it with a moneyless, stateless, society in which production for need replaces production for sale and profit.

Today there are dozens of movements and groups advocating the abolition of the wages system, though they may differ in how they perceive this goal being realized, either in the organizational form the movement should take, or in the manner in which the population of the world should take over the factories and farms. But when one investigates the theories being proposed, and actually discusses the fundamentals of each theory with its proponents, one realizes that all these forms are not necessarily incompatible with each other, they merely reflect differences in means but not in ends. Now each of those groups would argue that the means are critical in determining the ends. The anarchists maintain that if the new movement is hierarchical, it will only reproduce the power society. They also argue that if the oppressive state is used as a means of achieving the free society then the movement to take control of it will necessarily evolve a new power elite. The socialist who advocates the population taking control of the machinery of government, assuming there is sufficient democracy in that country to vote for socialism, feels that if the state is not taken over, then the forces of oppression may always be used against the population. But both these traditions agree that the state is oppressive, which is why one wishes to avoid its capture, and the other considers such a capture strongly advisable. Both consider the state to act as the executive officer of the capitalist class, managing its economic and security affairs, and both therefore view the free society as without it, replacing it with more democratic forms of organization. Whether one uses such terms frequently employed by anarchists such as “affinity group,” “council,” or “federated autonomous bodies,” or engages in a socialist insistence upon delegated positions which are elected merely to represent the will of the majority, the implications are clear - the free society and the means of achieving it will involve attempts to take power and maintain it in the hands of the actors of this historical event as much as is feasible, thus rendering it in the hands of the masses and NOT of experts or leaders.

Despite the differences between these diverse factions of the working class to emancipate itself from class society, the important consideration is that they all desire a society which has abolished wage labor and buying and selling, they all feel the time has come for the next stage in human history when the technology provided us historically by the capitalist system may at last be rid of the economic limits imposed by the demands of buying and selling, and liberated to meet human needs. For the days in which the capitalist class was progressive in its scientific ingenuity are gone today. The vast majority of the technological inventions today come from the waged and salaried members of the working class, which has come a long way from the days of its ragamuffin ancestors lining the country roads to make their way in the city. The capitalistic class and its economic system has become a burden on the needs of humankind. We have achieved a technological know-how which at last can feed, clothe, house, attend to the health of, hook up to the communications systems of, and transport, every man, woman and child on the planet. But the sheer waste imposed by the market system holds back this human progress and promise. It squanders people, resources, time and energy in totally unproductive endeavors such as selling, buying, insuring, advertising, ticketing, policing, militarizing, broking, taxing, consulting, invoicing, renting, banking, fundraising. Probably a billion human lives in the twentieth century alone were totally wasted in war, unemployment,
starvation, and unproductive occupations. The urge to abolish the market system is thus not
only to free the world of war, starvation, poverty, unemployment, ecological despoilation
forever - but also to free the individual from mindless and needless occupations so that our
productive tasks are focused uniquely on producing what people want in goods and services.
And, once all individuals freely give of the little time this will require (probably a day or two at
most compared to the five days currently sacrificed by workers to serve the profit needs of their
employing masters), people will be free to spend the bulk of their time in other creative and
pleasurable pursuits (and let us not forget, once we all work for ourselves, without the
economic coercion which forces us to work each morning at present, such work will in and of
itself appear highly pleasurable).

Such are the goals of the diverse nonmarket socialist organizations. And since these
goals represent the only true vision of a socialist, communist, or anarchist society, unfettered
by the distortions of the words "socialism" or 49 communism" to mean bureaucratic and
despotic state capitalism and the word "libertarian" to mean freedom in the market place for the
capitalist class, it makes perfect sense for all those working for the nonmarket future which
faces humankind (if the latter is ever to actually begin enjoying one) to take a common stand.
Because of the theoretical or organizational differences, it is not likely, at least not at this time, that
the differences will be ironed out. So that would not be a realistic goal for the partners of any
such coalition. Indeed, it would be a primary and at times hefty task to keep the coalition from
crumbling under the weight of animosities engendered by differences. The goal of the coalition
would not be to iron out any theoretical differences in the question of means. Rather, it would
simply be to unite over goals, and goals alone. We are not used to thinking this way. But it is
the only way the coalition could survive. It would still be up to each coalition partner to
propagate its own distinct argument in its media. The coalition would only be an identifier of the
goal of that group - the moneyless and stateless future of the world that its members are
working towards.

Many of you may be familiar with the logo found on the side of most tuna cans these
days (at least this is the case in the United States, I am unaware of the extent of this practice in
other lands) that says the tuna is "dolphin safe?" That is what our coalition would be, a sort of
"logo" that indicates that all groups in that coalition are working uniquely for a moneyless and
stateless society of common ownership and are "socialist safe." Indeed, one member of the
World Socialist Party of the United States once designed several flags which though not taken
up for use by the party could in theory provide a symbol for use by this coalition. The one I liked
the best was the libertarian socialist colors (black and red) divided by an S for Socialism
instead of the more traditional straight line. The other was simply our blue planet we mistakenly
refer to as Earth when it should be called Water, floating in black space.

In theory if we agree on the goal, we can also potentially agree with our methods, for
example by uniting our methods, as a longer-term goal (although the feasibility of this coalition
does not in any way rest upon any success in such an endeavor). Take the anarcho-
communists for instance. As long as we, anarchists and Marxists, both agree on our goal of
liberation, there is no reason why the anarcho-communists should not agree to vote with the
real socialists (as committed socialists themselves, not as blind followers obviously) AS LONG
AS WE AGREE THAT POWER MUST REMAIN WITH THE PEOPLE, a contention of both
our respective movements. Some, like an anarchist friend of mine frequently insists in our
com correspondence, might feel there is no point in voting if the people remain organized at the
growth roots, level, but assuming this agreed conception might under those conditions not
intrinsically object to voting as they would under the present voting conditions when all parties
are by nature hierarchical and seeking power. Similarly, we could agree that while we should all
vote for socialism due to our views on the role of the state as the executive of the capitalist class which must be destroyed, we the people should also BE ORGANIZED ALONG LIBERTARIAN SOCIALIST LINES (i.e., as non-hierarchically as the World Socialist Movement already is). These differences are not all that great when one actually gets down to them, once we have cleared our mistrust, theirs about us as "statists", and ours about them as "ignoring a political solution." This is not to say that the socialists will agree with the anarchists on these points, nor will the latter with the former. But by founding a coalition that pronounces that all groups in it are committed only to a moneyless and stateless society of common ownership, we in a sense open the channels for a deeper understanding of each other, and become like a beacon to people looking for change everywhere. Let us not forget that the anarchist critique of "socialists" or "Marxists" is a critique of parties who never were socialist to begin with, such as the Labor Party in England, or the many falsely termed "Communist" Parties of the world.

Now begin to imagine the implications of such a coalition. It would be excluding the parties that call themselves socialist or communist yet are state capitalist, so members of those parties or prospective members of them would have to think twice about those state capitalist aims. This could lead more members or prospective ones of those state capitalist groups or non-communist anarchist groups to join any group within the coalition that most appeals to them, and could also potentially create riffs within those parties of members who want to be part of our coalition and so would work to further radicalize their parties towards true socialism. Think if such a move were to influence the ecologists, for instance, or state capitalist parties which falsely use the terms "socialist" or "communist" to identify themselves.

The coalition could have a newspaper of its own that would force a crossbreeding among all nonmarket socialists. I know that there aren't a lot of nonmarket socialists anyway. But if there was a coalition of all of them, that could attract members from all the different perspectives. The aforementioned Rubel and Crump book did something at the close of the 20th Century that had not been done throughout that century. Perhaps it pointed the way for something more participatory and more exciting than just a book that might typify us socialists in the 21st Century. Perhaps like the radicals in the Red/Green/Blue Mars Trilogy by Kim Robinson (most of whom were not socialists by the way) we visionaries of the future society will do more to radicalize other groups than by actually banding with the other nonmarket socialists. When multidisciplinary professionals get together in a mental health center to agree on a treatment plan for a patient, they frequently agree on the totality of their goal without having to abandon their specific tradition, and often leave the meeting enriched by the value of each unique perspective. Several members from the few dozen nonmarket groups should arrange a meeting to found this coalition, to resolve upon our goal to educate fellow workers of the nonmarket social alternative before us, and to pledge to stand together in different ways, perhaps via a journal or at political demonstrations or other propaganda events.

These coalition ideas arose in part and originally as a mental experiment in reverse psychology, like paradoxical techniques are employed in psychotherapy with difficult couples trying to work together. Truly socialist organizations such as those in the World Socialist Movement of which I am most familiar, being a member of it, have tried in the past 100 years to get everybody to join them in competition with the other nonmarket socialists. What if all nonmarket socialists actually met and forged a coalition thinking "so what if people end up joining us or that coalition group - in the end, it is a member working for nonmarket socialism!" Think of it, an attractive name for the coalition, a coalition logo perhaps, and coalition journals in every small radical bookstore and even big news agents across our lands! It would be like an open invitation to begin a new world, it would symbolize different approaches to the problem of realizing a classless society cooperating in the interests of a society where cooperation rules.
Such a project would of course not be without its problems. Many of the other nonmarket socialists might not be in the least bit interested. Especially those that don’t see working for reforms in the present as contradictory with their goals as some of us do (such as all of us in the World Socialist Movement). But perhaps that is what this move towards a coalition would do - force that issue upon the table, and urge all its members in the wider movement for nonmarket socialism to take this goal of socialism seriously - those groups that do not place the goal to the fore as much as others do might realize the value of that approach.

Perhaps Level 1 in this coalition paradigm would be coalescing with all other nonmarket socialists with the same goal but potentially different means of achieving it (membership status). Level 2 could be meeting with the MARKET socialists/communists/ ecologists/ anarchists (the majority of these tend to be market varieties) and other reform organizations about their own transformation towards Level 1. The reformist movements in particular (environmental, feed the hungry, peace, etc.), who after all possess millions of followers, might concede that socialism is a preferable but only long-term goal, but still insist on continuing to work within the framework of the present market economy. In theory, any such even mild acknowledgment of the nonmarket alternative would allow us to list them as a Level 2 that would be open to a socialist alternative when our support numbered in the few millions, not quite sufficient to achieve socialism but sufficiently impressive that it seemed a realizable objective in our lifetime. Even Level 2 organizations with tens of millions of members and supporters would be a positive reality for us, since it would mean that sufficient bodies were now available to realize socialism with intensifying propaganda efforts through and by those bodies and their members, so that a jump to socialist consciousness might be closer than we imagine.

In the worse case scenario, our consultation with them might get written up in their media for their members to read, allowing them to learn of the socialist position. Such exposure could catapult our nonmarket position into public consciousness in a manner never achieved before. Level 3 are the groups that cannot bend towards this goal at all due to some view or political form of organization incompatible with socialism (most blatantly capitalist and reformist groups). In theory a large movement with nonmarket goals could be mobilized towards more effective local and national organization than a small isolated group can expect to attract everybody else.

A cursory (and I do stress cursory) examination of possible members of such a coalition was conducted on the internet over a period of just a few days last summer. Groups which made either frequent or occasional specific reference to the abolition of wage labor and money were the World Socialist Movement, Council Communists - Collective Action Notes (Curtis Price), Kemunist Kranti from India, Wildcat, Subversion, Autonomists - Midnight Notes, Aufheben, Common Sense, World of Free Access, DeLeonists, Anarchist Communists – for example the Anarchist Federation in Great Britain, New Democracy (David Stratman), some left-green groups - Reclaim the Streets, Social Ecology - Murray Bookchin - Situationists - ICC - I.W.W. and other anarchist groups (there are a lot of anarchists out there, many familiar with the nonmarket alternative, well read in Kropotkin), Socialist Industrial Unionists. Some of these groups might not in fact be eligible for such a coalition, and there may be others I have not mentioned. My examination of the websites of such groups was brief, with a more detailed analysis yet to be undertaken. Nonetheless, these are examples of groups abounding which profess the political goal of the abolition of capital and power.

Imagine if each group elected a coordinator for the coalition - to share information, consider new applicants, pool articles or other resources. But the main goal of the coalition would be to do what we must to speed the arrival of the free society - spread the world, spread
the word, spread the word, that we are tired of the crumbs and want to take over the whole bakery, and that we will not rest until the world is ours, ours, ours!

If you are interested in this project, please write to Daniel at worldsocialismchicago@hotmail.com

(From p. 2)

posibility of forming some kind of association that would inspire our class with the very basic ideas of socialism as we understand it. The idea isn't new; in fact it is implicit in the DB's page 2 announcement. About ten years ago when Steve Coleman and Richard Donnelly of the SPGB came to the U.S. and spoke at a conference in Chicago sponsored largely by "market socialists," they and some DeLeonists produced a leaflet, "Market Socialism: Don't Buy It," written, signed and distributed on the spot -- an example of the cooperation that circumstances can engender. I hope that interested readers will write to Daniel at the e-mail address and, if they wish to share their thinking on the matter, to the DB.

The genesis of the summary of Carl Miller's discussion with Adam Buick on labor time vouchers is described in some detail at the beginning of "Message:2." Carl Miller ends his part in the discussion by promising to produce a critique of the idea of "free access." The primary opponents of free access have generally limited their arguments to a defense of the LTV system rather than an attack on the alternative. Next Lynn Olson's letter compares the basic economic ideas of Hutterite communities to those of the sort of system non-market socialists envision. He points out that the lack of concern about the niggling details of each person's contribution to the common stock of goods and services among the Hutterites [-as within a family--fg] will be mirrored in the needs oriented system of the socialist society.

"The Socialist Program" is the direct descendent of a succession of the old four-page, 9 by 12 inch leaflets, printed in the SLF's printing plant when it was located in New York. Titled "Socialist Industrial Unionism: the Workers' Power," they were designed to illustrate graphically the nature of representation in the socialist society and to contrast it with the outdated system of political representation established by the Constitution. They were printed on newsprint and, like other SLF leaflets, distributed free by the hundreds of thousands. Unlike "Economic Democracy," which occupied the centerfold of DB106, "The Socialist Program" does not call for any community, non-industrial formation that could be called a political state.

Dr. Who's "Brief Critique..." provides a detailed catalog of the kind of complications and contradictions that could arise in a socialist society that chose to retain what the author regards as an ipso facto wages system. It is especially useful for the examples given. Charmian Skelton also raises a couple of theoretical points, the most important being that LTVs would almost certainly develop into money. [One has only read explanations by LTV proponents of how their system would work to realize that the language of the system is that of the market: exchange, buy, value, commodity... -fg]. The De Leon Society of Canada returns to the fray still convinced of the soundness of the idea of a "socialist market" in which workers will use LTVs to buy goods and services in a manner almost identical to a capitalist market. Wouldn't you think that far more dangerous to socialism than a few ex-capitalists getting more than their share of the vast bounty of this planet would be the possibility of the rise of a new and powerful bureaucracy with the special skills needed to work out deductions and pay rates and prices in the socialist market economy.

Next John Ahrens looks back at the history of socialism in Britain and the U.S. and sees the danger to the movement of splits and deviations that only interfere with the only legitimate activity of

(To p. 13)
Date: Thu, 01 Feb 2001

Subject: Re: Labor Vouchers

Carl Miller of the SLP internet discussion group in Houston Texas replied to Adam Buick's post on labor time vouchers (LTVs) published in DB106. At Adam's suggestion I e-mailed Carl with what I assumed was a pro forma request for permission to publish his reply in the DB. After waiting over a week for a reply, I made another assumption that later turned out to be just as unwarranted as the first: that silence implies consent. I then began the task of scanning and otherwise preparing Carl's reply for publication in the DB.

I had completed the task and pasted it up for printing when an e-mail from Carl arrived politely but firmly refusing the request on the grounds that as a former SLP member I was as capable of presenting the party's position on LTVs as he and that party policy forbids members to have their writing published in non-SLP journals. This strikes me as an absurdly self-defeating policy guaranteed to increase still further the SLP's isolation. He also declined my subsequent request that he seek a special dispensation. The following summary is an effort to respect Carl's wishes in the matter and also to publish a sampling of current SLP thinking on LTVs.

The style often used in replying to an e-mail posting in these discussion groups is to quote a portion of a message that one wishes to answer and then, having written the reply to that portion, go on to quote the next portion and reply to that, etc. This is the method Carl used, and it would have required my reproducing Adam Buick's entire e-mail article, which is already available to DB readers in DB106, page 27, but I was concerned that omitting it completely would make Carl's reply unclear because of the lack of connective tissue to relate it to Adam's posting. To avoid this, my original plan called for me to note his points briefly before each part of Carl's reply and also to give the number of the paragraph of Adam's essay it follows. Now of course I must also summarize Carl's response. Readers will find Adam's original posting in DB106 on page 27; those with internet access will also find the complete text of both Adam's posting and Carl's response at the internet address in the title of this article. I will italicize all material that is not a part of the summary of Carl's reply. – fsf]

[Para. 1 – Here Adam argues that setting labor time prices for consumer goods and services will prove a difficult and complicated process.]

Carl Miller accepts Adam's use of the word "price" in this context and emphasizes the simplicity of the process of determining the exchange value of a commodity. One has only to calculate the amount of socially necessary labor time contained in it.

[Para. 2 – Here Adam observes that working out the number of LTVs each worker would be entitled to should be easy and that payment for goods and services could be made with plastic bank debit cards.]

Carl agrees suggesting that technological advances will be used to facilitate the LTV system as well as production in general.

[Para. 2 – Adam suggests that attempts to assure equal effort by each worker will require a new bureaucracy.]

Carl "conjectures" that workers will be paid according to the value of their labor time, the more skilled and trained a worker is and the greater his production, the higher his "compensation."
I find it interesting that Carl accepts Adam's use of the word "price"—in my experience almost always used to denote the monetary exchange value of a commodity. Carl's conjecture as to the value of a person's labor time differs from mine when I was a proponent of LTVs. I assumed that people would be contributing time—a part of their lives—to the social effort needed in production and that the value of one person's time away from activities he would prefer to be doing—like riding a bike, reading, visiting with friends, hiking, playing a guitar, and the like—was equal to that of another. De León, incidentally, had an even more equitable conjecture. He argued (in Fifteen Questions About Socialism, written about 100 years ago) that the people engaged in the most exhausting physical labor would receive multiples of the standard LTV and that the appropriate multiple could be determined by the willingness to take such jobs. -fg-

[Para. 3 – Adam points out specific problems involved in setting fair levels of entitlement for various skill levels. How would an hour of hair-cutting compare with an hour of watch making or brain surgery or school teaching or LTV calculating?

Carl believes that such decisions will be made by the workers' representatives in their Socialist Industrial Unions, not by a far-off bureaucracy. He also emphasizes the grassroots nature of decision making in the SIU and the fact that the SIU system of organization is designed to prevent power gravitating to the top.

[Para. 4 – Adam raises further questions about details of LTV valuation including whether it just involves value added in a particular factory or the total labor time embodied in an article as well as such problems as over-production which he believes might complicate the smooth working of the LTV system.]

Carl, having used the 90 hours of labor crystallized in a car as an example, points out that the price in LTVs will equal the total labor time embodied it. Over-production could occur, but would not have the consequences we find in the market system. He also cautions Adam against viewing this system as a "market situation" rather than "labor exchange.

[Para. 5, Sent. 1 – Here, for some reason, Adam expresses fear that the value of LTVs will be subject to inflation or deflation—like money under capitalism—unless the number of LTVs exactly equals in value the amount of goods and services produced.]

Carl argues that since the amount of labor time contained in each commodity will equal the amount expended in its production, there can be no inflation.

[Rest of Para 5 plus Sent. 1 of Para 6 – Next Adam brings up the need of non-workers—children, handicapped, the aged—for the commodities and services that must be purchased with LTVs.]

Carl replies that the support for the retired and the handicapped will come from labor time deducted from each active worker's labor time account and that this has always been a part of the LTV system. Workers will get the full social value of their labor in the form of goods and services.

[Para. 6 to the end – Adam goes on to discuss the efforts of Dutch left council communists to design an equitable and workable LTV system. (See the website <www.geocities.com/Athens/Agamemnon/6579>) and argues that neither what he calls the ‘decentralized’ LTV system of the Dutch nor the SLP’s ‘centralized’ LTV system abolishes the wages system because of the unsolved problems inherent in LTVs. He concludes—as does Carl below—by saying that those around at the time of the revolution will have to make the decisions about how goods and services will
Like Adam, Carl believes that the decisions about production and distribution will have to be made when the time comes. But Carl is confident that the LTV system in tandem with socialist industrial unionism makes more sense than any other that can be devised and promises to comment in the future on the “free access” system championed by Adam. Carl goes on to say that we might better devote our time to convincing workers of the need for socialism than discussing the details of a socialist society.

[It seems to me that Carl has given a reasonably good defense of LTVs. My main problem with this debate was raised briefly by Carl: The discussion was couched in the language of the market/wage-labor system. Both Carl and Adam are speaking of “prices,” “commodities,” “compensation,” “slackers on the job,” “deductions” and other terms associated with the capitalist market system.

My doubts about the LTV system have already been recorded in the debate with the DLSC in earlier DBs. I would like to comment on one of Carl’s final points though: that these debates divert us from what should be our primary objective, which is to agitate for socialism among the unconverted members of our class. Unfortunately they have had a century to read about or witness the operation of the two great statist perversions of socialism: social democracy and soviet communism. Many of them are not going to be convinced of the socialist solution until we persuade them that socialism is a practical solution, not the road to a new form of slavery. High on the list of questions they will be asking are those involving work and the distribution of goods and services. –[x]

(From p. 10)

a socialist party: agitating for socialism. When I wrote to the Communist Workers Organization for a review copy of their Trotsky pamphlet a few months ago, it was sent with an expression of concern that I would repeat what they saw as my past errors in explaining and understanding leftwing communism. Aaron Smeaton’s letter makes it very clear that I have lived up to CWO expectations. My comment in response attempts to rescue my faltering reputation.

Joshua Freeze, although writing about the Industrial Workers of the World, raises a subject worthy of much wider discussion: how we should approach workers, given the success of the ruling class in demonizing words like socialism, anarchism, class, Marxist, and the like. The idea of avoiding negatively charged words has also been discussed among De Leonists in the U.S. where anti-communism has been a serious impediment at times. The New Union Party, for example tends to avoid language that will give a false impression of its goals. As a union the IWW is in better position to avoid such political language.

Finances

The gradual erosion of the DB’s bank balance has been reversed, and I’m beginning to believe the economists. Perhaps it was only a glitch, a brief business downturn, and we should ignore the layoff announcements we see in almost every issue of the daily paper. Part of the good news for us has been a substantial increase in what is the real economic lifeblood of all revolutionary periodicals: contributions.

Contributions: Patricia Bjorklund $40; Walter Petrovich $25; Daniel De Culla $10.09; H. & L. Frantin/Edwards $14; Louis Prisco $6; Eugene Rodriguez $10; Robert Blau $11; Christopher Paatz $7; Perry Sanders $7; Lois Reynolds $20. Total $150.09. Thank you, comrades.

(To p. 22)
In DB 106 Ronald Young presents an excellent analysis of the labor-time voucher proposal and how these vouchers would work out in actual practice. And how the labor-time vouchers only change the name of the wages system without changing its essential character. He also presents an excellent outline of "what is meant by anarchist communism where each is a member of the same extended family -- the family of communist society." In a family no one expects to be paid (either in wages or in vouchers) for their contribution. And each family member receives what they need from the available resources without any reference to their contribution.

The advocates of labor-time vouchers protest about the slackers who will not work---as though slackers were a significant portion of the community. The advocates argue that only after production has achieved a certain high level can we allow free access to the community supplies.

The argument for a high level of production is met by examining our history and pre-history. For almost a million years our primitive ancestors contributed their labor to the community according to their abilities. And they received from the community supplies according to their needs. And all without wages paychecks, labor-time vouchers or any other accounting. The few remaining primitive societies today still rely on this principle. These primitive societies survived with a level of production that often provided little more than mere subsistence. If one went hungry, they all went hungry. If one feasted, they all feasted. The level of production had no bearing on the practical workings of free access.

Moving from our pre-historic past to the historical record we might consider the Hutterites. In Europe about 400 years ago, long before capitalism flowered and Marx wrote, the Hutterites formed a religion-based community in which all property was held in common, where everyone contributed to the community without wages or any kind of payment and where everyone received from the community supplies according to their needs. They based their belief in common property on certain passages in the Acts of the New Testament. As might be expected, they were brutally persecuted by the other Christians. To escape persecution they moved to Russia and then to the United States and to Canada. Because of their refusal to bear arms they were persecuted during World War I.

The Hutterites have survived persecutions, have thrived and continue to operate as communist agricultural communities with no private property. Each adult contributes their abilities to the community and each receives from the community according to their needs. Each newly wed couple receives a house from the community and all eat in a common dining room. And all without wages, labor-time vouchers or any payment system.

The Hutterites have several religious and social practices that we would consider archaic and unnecessarily confining. But they are living proof that wages and labor-time vouchers are not required to protect society -- regardless of the level of production. They have nothing we would call a government (no politicians, no police no prisons) and they would probably not call their society anarchist or socialist. But they have made communism work for 400 years under the most severe persecutions and meager levels of production.

Consideration of Ronald Young's analysis and of these historical and pre-historical facts should put to rest the argument for labor-time vouchers.

Lynn Olson
The Socialist Program

What It Is and How It Developed

Trade unionism has its roots in the class struggle; specifically, in the day-to-day struggle between workers and capitalists over wages, lengthened hours of exploitation and massive layoffs. That struggle dates back at least 200 years, to the time when modern capitalism got its start in England. As time went on, capitalism came to America, and as the working class and capitalism developed, permanent organizations were built, and the workers fought for increased wages and shortened hours.

In the process, however, the unions lost sight of their original purpose. They became business organizations that accepted capitalism, locked out most workers, and merely haggled over the terms of exploitation for their own memberships.

Daniel De Leon, a great American Socialist, saw this when he entered the labor movement. He also saw that the continued acceptance of capitalist unionism by the workers meant that their struggles for permanent improvements in their condition were doomed to failure. The near-total decimation of the trade unions today shows that De Leon and the Socialist Labor Party were right on that score. At the same time, however, the underlying principle that in unity there is strength and that disunity breeds weakness is still valid. The union principle is still sound, but for unions to work properly they must be built on sound principles and organized in such a way that they unite all workers in their struggles with capital.

The formation of unions by workers proved that capital and labor have conflicting interests. When unions fell under the control of leaders who spoke instead of a "brotherhood of capital and labor," a struggle began to build a "new unionism" based on sound principles.

The New Unionism

It was the SLP that championed this "new unionism," and that put it into practice with the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance in 1895. De Leon spoke of it in his famous 1898 address to the striking textile workers of New Bedford, Mass., What Means This Strike? Samuel Gompers, founding president of the American Federation of Labor, saw in the ST&LA a "corroding influence...." The genuine militancy and class-consciousness of this new unionism aroused fear among labor leaders of the AFL, headed by Gompers. They foresaw the end of their income from dues, and of their power and prestige.

Gompers boasted in his autobiography that he followed De Leon to New Bedford, saying that he "succeeded in materially changing the false impression made by De Leon." But this was a false statement. Gompers spoke to the New Bedford strikers first. It was De Leon who succeeded in changing the impression Gompers made, and encouraging the strikers in their struggle with the capitalist, while imparting sound and easily understood lessons in the class struggle.

As history relates, however, Gompers & Co. made a comeback, not through the "virtues" of their false unionism, but as a result of their loyalty to capitalism and the capitalists' under-the-table appreciation of this. In time, the capitalist state was to give official recognition to the false unions, as well as to provide them with legal means of forcing maverick capitalists to deal with them, through the National Labor Relations Act.

The Original IWW

Again, in 1905, it was De Leon who developed the new unionism into a force that enabled it, potentially, to become the instrument of social change for the better. He did this through his creative work in developing the concept of socialist industrial unionism, which had its organizational origins at the founding convention of the Industrial Workers of the World. In The IWW, A Study in American Syndicalism, a standard work on the subject, Paul Brissenden noted that "the De Leon element" dominated the convention. "The dominance of De Leonism," he wrote, "was then a supremacy of ideas...." Concerning the original IWW program of political and industrial action for building socialism, Dr. Brissenden quoted Eugene V. Debs (whose Socialist Party rejected the IWW) on the "SLP faction." "This faction," said Debs, "is cornerstoned in the true principles of unionism in reference to political action."

By this, Debs meant the De Leonist principle incorporated in the original preamble of the IWW's constitution, that between the capitalist class and the working class "a struggle must go on until all the toilers come together on the political, as well as on the industrial field, and take and hold that which they produce by their labor through an economic organization of the working class...." We italicized the phrase "on the political" because that was an essential part of the socialist program to the De Leonists and to the majority of the delegates to the first IWW convention. The phrase became a bone of contention to the anarchists who rejected political action and who relied upon "direct action." To sum up, the anarchists within the IWW succeeded in repudiating political action, and the IWW—while gaining a romantic glamour in the eyes of many—lost its effectiveness.

However, Debs was right. Socialist industrial unionism must include the principle of political action, for in no other way can the police spy be neutralized, the socialist revolution be advocated in the open, civilized procedures be followed, and a peaceful trial of strength be waged with the forces of capitalism.

The SLP of today continues to advocate this program because it is the socialist program. It is the only one that will provide for workers' ownership, management and control of the economy, and thereby provide the basis for the complete democracy of socialism.

Socialist Industrial Unionism

Specifically, socialist industrial unionism aims to organize all the workers as a class. Accordingly, it will organize the skilled and unskilled, the employed and unemployed, all the workers of brain and brawn in all the industries and services of the land—the mines, the mills, the factories, the railroads, the hospitals, the schools—all the workers in all the indus-

(Continued on back)
INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY OF SOCIALISM

The Revolutionary Act

The revolutionary ballot will establish the right of the people to establish socialist society.

The Socialist Industrial Union will create the power to back up that right.

"Industrial unionism is the Socialist Republic in the making; and the goal once reached, the industrial union is the Socialist Republic in operation."
— Daniel De Leon

NOT A BLUEPRINT

The chart below is not a blueprint. Rather, it is intended to illustrate graphically the principle upon which socialist industrial unionism and the future socialist industrial democracy rest, using the auto industry as an example. A similar chart could be used for any socially necessary industry or service. A chart at right depicts the flow of representation in socialist society.

The Socialist Industrial Union unites workers for the establishment of socialism. And it provides the governmental framework through which to organize and administer social production for the benefit of all the people. Council members at every level of government will be elected from industrial constituencies which coincide with the subdivisions of the integral industrial union of all the useful producers. This industrial self-government of the producers provides a viable means for society to operate the economy collectively and democratically, without social classes or any form of state oppression.

THE STRUCTURE OF SOCIALIST INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM

New Society

After the revolution, the administration of all production and distribution will be the function of the democratically elected Socialist Industrial Union government.

As industry is organized for production, so will be the administration of the new socialist society:

Reprsentation

Cast your ballot in your shop or office for:

- Plant Council
- Local Industry Council
- National Industry Council
- All-Industry Congress

Socialist industrial unionism is the only certain safeguard against bureaucratic usurpation. In socialist society final authority will rest with the rank and file of useful producers.

The useful producers will elect administrators and representatives to all levels of government, and they will have the ready and immediate exercisable power to recall and remove any administrator or representative who, in their judgment, fails to serve their interests in office.

The Socialist Industrial Union, in full possession of the industries and services of the land, will ensure that all power remains the only safe place for power to be wielded by the rank and file of society's useful producers.

Today in the precapitalist unions, union leaders are almighty and union members are virtual subjects. But in the Socialist Industrial Union each individual worker has an effective voice as well as a veto. Everything from the operation of the place to the administration of society will be for use and the benefit of all.
INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY OF SOCIALISM

Program

The Revolutionary Act

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THE STRUCTURE OF SOCIALIST INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM

All the industries and services will be represented.

New Society

After the revolution, the administration of all production and distribution will be the function of the democratically elected Socialist Industrial Union government.

As industry is organized for production, so will be the administration of the new socialist society:

REPRESENTATION

Socialist industrial unionism is the only certain safeguard against bureaucratic usurpation. In socialist society final authority will rest with the rank and file of useful producers.

The useful producers will elect administrators and representatives to all levels of government, and they will have the easily and immediately exercisable power to recall and remove any administrator or representative who, in their judgment, fails to serve their interests in office.

The Socialist Industrial Union, in firm possession of the industries and services of the land, will ensure that all power remains in the only safe place for power to be—with the rank and file of society's useful producers.

Today, in the procapitalist unions, union bureaucrats are almighty, and union members are virtual subjects. But in the Socialist Industrial Union each individual worker will have an effective voice as well as a vote in everything from the operation of the workplace to the administration of society.

This will be a social organization in which the people who do the work will have complete democratic control of their tools and products—thus production will at long last be for use and the benefit of all.
THE INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY OF SOCIETY

Revolutionary Program

The Socialist Labor Party has a twofold program for building a socialist society. What follows is a brief summary of its main points.

POLITICAL ACTION

To establish socialism, political unity under the banner of a mass political party of labor is needed. The role of the party is to educate workers to the need to abolish capitalism, to agitate for the formation of class-conscious industrial unions, and to express the revolutionary mandate of the working class at the ballot box. The party must also aim to capture and dismantle the political state—the present territorial form of government—and thus pave the way for a new form of government, a participatory democracy based on industry.

ECONOMIC ACTION

To establish socialism, workers must unite as a class, by organizing new unions. These democratic, rank-and-file-controlled unions, built along the lines of industry, would not only fight day-to-day battles for better wages and conditions. Based on the principle that the working class is involved in a class struggle with the employing, capitalist class, a struggle that cannot be ended under the capitalist system, a Socialist Industrial Union movement would be motivated by a higher goal: replacing capitalist ownership of the industries and services with social ownership and democratic workers' control.

Thus, while fighting day-to-day battles, these unions would move toward that goal, mobilizing workers' real strength as the sole productive class in society by building the greatest possible unity and solidarity. When the majority of society is in favor of socialism, the Socialist Industrial Union would back up the decision made at the ballot box by taking, holding and operating the industries and services of the land in the social interest.

Socialist Industrial Unions would then become the governing bodies of socialist society. We would have a truly democratic government in which society's useful producers would be in control of their own economic security and well-being.

The Revolutionary Act

The revolutionary ballot will establish the right of the people to establish socialist society. The Socialist Industrial Union will create the power to back up that right.

"Industrial unionism is the Socialist Republic in the making; and the goal once reached, the industrial union is the Socialist Republic in operation."
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THE STRUCTURE OF SOCIALIST INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM

All the industries and services will be represented.
tries. The form or structure of the Socialist Industrial Union (SIU) will follow the lines of industry and production. The subdivisions needed for logical and efficient organization will be determined by the tool used and the product produced. But all these necessary subdivisions will be integrally united in one SIU, with a common purpose and a common goal.

All the officers of the SIU will be democratically elected by the rank and file by direct vote. There will be no “appointees.” And all the officers of the SIU will be directly and constantly responsible to their industrial constituents. They will be subject to recall at the will of the majority. Neither the SIUs nor their elected officers will become involved in capitalist business. Their energies will be devoted solely to advancing the interest of the workers as a class. And the guarantee that this will be so is the fact that the SIU must, and will, be composed of class-conscious workers who will know and understand their socialist goal and the correct structure and tactics that their industrial organization must embrace in order to achieve that goal. Class-consciousness is the only thing that will enable them to retain complete democratic control over their organization and to use it to serve their class interests.

**The SIU’s Tactics**

Tactically, the SIU will operate squarely on the fact of the class struggle. It will completely reject the false theory of the “brotherhood of capital and labor.” Rather, it will emphasize at every opportunity the fact that the working class and the capitalist class have absolutely nothing in common. Insofar as it is possible, at this late date in capitalist decadence, it will fight for the amelioration of conditions and against the encroachments of capitalism, but without losing sight of its real goal, which is to effect the complete emancipation of the working class from wage slavery by abolishing the capitalist system at the earliest possible date. And, it should be emphasized that this class union will fight the encroachments of capitalism with the full weight of its strength. It will operate on the principle that an injury to one worker is an injury to all the workers. The workers in the SIU will not be divided by meaningless contracts, nor forced or coerced into organized scabbery. However, at times the SIU will understand and be guided by the fact that such battles are at best rear-guard actions forced upon it by economic conditions under capitalism and that nothing short of the abolition of capitalism can lead to freedom and abundance for the working class. As De Leon expressed it:

“...Industrialism (i.e., industrial unionism) is that system of economic organization of the working class that denies that labor and the capital class are brothers; that recognizes the irrepressible nature of the conflict between the two; that perceives that that struggle will not, because it cannot, end until the capitalist class is thrown off labor’s back; that recognizes that an injury to one working man is an injury to all; and that, consequently, and with this end in view, organizes the whole working class into one union, the same subdivided only into such bodies as their respective craft tools demand, in order to wrestle as one body for the immediate amelioration of its membership [as far as that may be possible today] and for their eventual emancipation by the total overthrow of the capitalist class, its economic and political rule.”

Furthermore, the SIU will teach and proclaim the need for the political organization of the working class in order that they, the vast majority, may be able to establish via the ballot their democratic right peacefully to accomplish the socialist reconstruction of society.

**The SIU’s Goal**

The avowed goal of the SIU is the Socialist Industrial Republic of Labor or the Socialist Industrial Commonwealth. It will be the power that will back up the political victory of the workers by taking, holding and operating the means of production and distribution in the interests of society as a whole. It will thereby become the instrument of SIU government. In De Leon’s words:

“Industrial unionism bends its efforts to unite the working class upon the political as well as the industrial field—on the industrial field because with the integrally organized union of the working class the revolutionary act is impossible; on the political field, because on none other can be proclaimed the revolutionary purpose, without consciousness of which the union is a rope of sand. Industrial unionism is the Socialist Republic in the making; and, the goal once reached, the industrial union is the Socialist Republic in operation. Accordingly, the industrial union is, at once, the battering ram with which to pound down the fortress of capitalism, and the successor of the capitalist social structure itself.”

To repeat: it must and will be the industrial organization of the working class, and not the political organization, that takes over the reins of government in the Socialist Republic. And this government will, accordingly, be based upon industrial constituencies and will be administered by industrial representatives elected democratically by the workers in all the industries. As De Leon described it:

“Civilized society will know no such ridiculous thing as geographic constituencies. It will know only industrial constituencies. The parliament of civilization in America will consist not of congressmen from geographic districts, but of representatives of trades throughout the land, and their legislative work will not be the complicated one which a society of conflicting interests, such as capitalism, requires but the easy one which can be summed up in the statistics of the wealth needed, the wealth producible and the work required—and that any average set of workingmen’s representatives are fully able to ascertain, infinitely better than our modern rhetoricians in Congress.”

This brings us to the question: Where does the SLP fit into this picture?

The SLP is the political party of the working class. This is so because the SLP is the sole protagonist of the program and principles which the working class must adopt if it is ever to achieve its complete emancipation from wage slavery and, at the same time, save society from catastrophe. The SLP is the only organization demanding the abolition of capitalism and advocating the socialist reconstruction of society. It has been doing so for over 100 years. It is, in short, the organization through which the workers can establish their majority right to recognize society. At the same time, through its agitational and educational activities, it is the recruiting agency for the SIU—the workers’ power.

For more information write:

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I did not find the De Leonist Society of Canada's critique of Frank Girard's critique of labor vouchers in DB #105 very convincing. I find this lifting of Marx to biblical dimensions, even as one who has been often highly informed by Marx, highly alienating. When reading these endless interpretations as we have read in prior issues of what was meant here in the Gotha Program or there in some other text, I can't help but feel like shouting "so what?" If it turns out that Marx really did feel that labor vouchers were to play a part in socialism (and incidentally, finding a few references on often quoted two or three pages of his entire life's work hardly proves to me that he felt this way on the other 10,000) this merely reflects Marx's thinking with the data available to him at the time he analyzed them. He was a social scientist, and it is supremely unscientific in my view to demonstrate that his position based on the data he examined "sticks" for all time thereafter. Those of us who live in the here and now have different data available to us. We examine the numbers from different United Nations bodies, and at times merely speculate based on approximate levels of current resource use and waste of today's class society to conclude that we could support an entirely moneyless, wageless, society, today.

But the only part of the De Leonist Society letter that actually provided a rationale for maintaining labor vouchers (which seem to me no different than wages when described, and hence more of the hell-like existence we currently face as waged workers) was at the end with the words: "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?" Now I always imagined (from Marx, now that I think of it!) that our understanding of human behavior was based on an analysis of the mode of production, so that one class is parasitic (lazy) BECAUSE it lives off rent, profit and interest, while another was highly productive because it has to to obtain the much-needed wages to buy back some of the most essential parts of the wealth it produces for its own survival.

We even argue that socialism will work based on this social scientific hypothesis. We believe that deprived of the minority ownership of the means of production, the drudgery of work (and even within such a system, our natural creativity shapes our work day into as pleasurable and challenging an endeavor as possible) will be replaced by a harmony between our product and our relationship to it. In short, we will all want to work as much as possible because the distinction between work and art (or free time) will have been eradicated. Why should this apply only to former members of the working class and not former members of the bourgeoisie (both of whom are products of class society), if our social analysis of behavior holds (and as a psychologist by profession, I must say it agrees with all I have studied from social psychology as well)? To postulate the same ongoing lazy behavior for prior members of the capitalist class would be to force one to summon some other explanation, such as perhaps a biological one? It would be to take on a Hobbesian view of human nature which Marx himself would fiercely object to. (We must also remember that socialism will have forced these prior parasites out of their parasitism, preventing them from living in hundred room mansions on hundreds of acres all to themselves and flying their own planes, so their access to resources will be the same as that of anybody else, insufficient to live quite the same life as they were accustomed to).

But let's face it. Today we have no problem with one quarter of the workforce engaged in socially necessary products and services while the remaining three-quarters either produce unnecessary services such as accounting, banking, ticketing or policing, or are unemployed, or...
are being massacred in wars, or are dying of illnesses secondary to malnutrition. If a relatively small percent of workers' labor is able to maintain the millions of unemployed, "socially unnecessary" workers, ill workers, starving workers, or murdering workers, then it will hardly be such a bad thing if all of humanity, now liberated of wage labor forever, sustains an ongoing percent (perhaps even half of the population at a time would be a realistic figure for all we know) whatever class they were in before. In fact, laziness, as Paul Lafargue once argued, should be the ethic replacing the current workaholism. I mean, we want socialism to be free, don't we?

But if we had labor vouchers, how would they be dispensed and who would dispense them? If we had no classes anymore, how to determine whether my two hours of fishing measured up to somebody else's two hours of cleaning the sewers to somebody (say a prior member of the capitalist class) painting the house a new color? Would all two hours be the same? Without commodity production, it seems irrational. How to measure it all of a sudden if exchange has been abolished? I can see the wages system being perpetuated this way or evolving quickly out of it since people will only get vouchers based on the time they worked (presumably) and so how to measure the actual voucher cost of the objects being consumed with the voucher? For example, how many vouchers would a TV cost? A new computer? Organic strawberries (I hope we start to go organic with all food immediately)? A trip for a week at a resort hotel in the Bahamas? You see, you would ultimately have to ration the objects since many would contain many hours of work beyond those immediately achieved by the voucher worker. Would we have to save vouchers for years to get that Bahamas trip like we do now with wages? And who would stop me if I get on a plane without the necessary vouchers? Are there going to be voucher police? Voucher prisons? Voucher crimes? A voucher underground? And what of the class of people dishing out the vouchers? They would necessarily be involved in a useless, nonproductive occupation living off vouchers which came from the surplus labor of the "workers," proving that the "worker" would never get the value of his work. And that some people would still be workers and others not. This troubles me.

But if the system is based on need instead of sale, then you orient production differently, towards meeting the needs of the society, and with each person individually stepping forward to meeting those needs. You would then no longer require money or labor vouchers since there would no longer be an exchange. Someone working to make this toy would not be exchanging that work to obtain say the delicious food in this market. Rather, he would be giving what he knew to be essential labor to meet other needs (of the children), and later taking freely of the food which some other people freely prepared to meet the needs of others to eat. There would not be any point in having a voucher to measure one's work since there would no longer be any reciprocal direct relationship between work and consumption as everything would be owned by the same, world's, people. That is why hundreds of native societies never required labor vouchers and managed perfectly fine without them, because their work was based on meeting needs within a collectively shared group, rather than exchanging the fruits of their individual work between members in order to obtain them.

Dr. Who
Dear Editor,

Be the DLSC's argument that in a socialist society - at least at first - labour time vouchers would be necessary, if only in order to prevent "slackers" - the former capitalist class - from continuing to act as parasites.

It seems that the DLSC regard Socialism as being founded on the principle of "he who does not work, neither shall he eat", also known as the old capitalist principle of "from each according to his ability, to each according to his work".

This principle is used to justify big salaries for the fat cats and extreme stinginess towards state pensioners, the disabled and the unemployed. If labour time vouchers were to be relied on in Socialism, it would cause serious problems, both of a practical and a theoretical nature.

A practical problem, since only those who worked would qualify for these vouchers. The principle says nothing about the needs of those who are unable to work - the sick, the disabled, the old, the young. There are indeed large numbers of these in the population, probably a far greater number than the tiny minority of the population which constitute the capitalist class.

The DLSC assume that none of these former capitalists would be willing to work at all. But there is plenty of evidence that many of them are willing to work - and work hard - where they think their interests are involved. Is it too much to suppose that, in a situation where the old class system has been got rid of and there is a new sense of community, that in such a situation, these former capitalists will find they would have no place, no role to play, except - like everyone else, contributing according to their ability? And, since work is a basic human need, it is hard to imagine many of them actually wanting to do nothing, especially on a long-term basis.

Also, the voucher system would fail to take account of the fact that the sick and the disabled are precisely the people whose needs are greater than average. So there would be a strong case for more 'goods' being provided for those least able to work: the very opposite of what would happen under a labour time voucher system.

As you pointed out (FG, DB no. 105, p.21), capitalism has already solved - potentially, at least - the problem of scarcity, so that rationing would not be needed in a Socialist society. But, to be realistic, Socialism may be confronted by serious problems from time to time - earthquakes, epidemics, crop failures, etc. - which would put temporary and unusual pressure on a system based on 'free access.' Then, there may be local situations where some form of rationing might be necessary on a temporary basis. In such a situation, if the Socialist principle of "to each according to their needs" applied, priority would be given to those most in need, and - if their need was less not necessarily to those who work hardest. But the voucher system would also fail this, practical, test.

On a theoretical level, these labour time vouchers would surely acquire the function of money, being exchange of a certain amount of human labour - measured by time - against a certain quantity of goods. These vouchers would be functioning as a medium of exchange, one of the characteristic functions of money, whether the money be in the form of coinage, paper notes or, as in the ancient Maya civilisation, cacao beans. What's more, in using such vouchers, it
is hard to see how they could avoid acquiring that other function of money and become a measure of value.

Worst of all, the labour time voucher system would perpetuate the practise of exchange, with the idea that so many hours or units of labour time would count towards an equivalence in terms of goods or units of wealth produced. Yet surely an essential distinction between capitalism and Socialism is that the latter will be a social system where goods will be produced for use, not for exchange.

No doubt the DLSC would think this is purely Utopian, but if Socialism is worth struggling for, it is precisely because it will be based on the principle of "from each according to their ability, to each according to their needs". And capitalism, with its reliance on exchange, utterly fails to satisfy the real needs of the vast majority of the human race.

Yours for Socialism 1 Adelaide Villas
Charmian Skelton Copse Road, WOKING
Socialist Party of Great Britain GU21 1ST, England

(From p. 13) February 21, 2001 (per bank statement) $172.43

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BALANCE April 22, 2001 $266.43

Fraternally submitted,
Frank Girard

(From p. 32) concerned with the cause of economic downturns. The authors argue along with Marx that periodic economic recessions are inherent under capitalism, first because of the anarchy of the capitalist system, the natural laws of capitalist competition guaranteeing that each enterprise will produce fullsteam ahead until the market is glutted, whereupon it and its competitors will cease production. Secondly because no economist or battery of economists can predict the effects events can have on the economy. Numbers 1 and 2 – L1 ($1.50) each from SPGB(R), 71 Ashbourne Ct., Woodside Park Road, London N12 8SB U.K.

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Dear DB:

THE MARXIST MARKET ECONOMY

In the January-February 1999 issue of the then De Leonist Review we published an article titled SOCIALISM'S MARKET ECONOMY. The article also appeared in DB97 (the Sept-Oct 1999 issue of Discussion Bulletin.) Quoting from that article as follows:

"Of all the dust raised by the defenders of Capitalism with which to confuse the working class, thus check the advent of Socialism, none appears thicker than the dust raised by the mass media around the term market. Here the phrase "market economy" is dished out as a synonym for the phrase capitalist economy and as an antonym to what is labeled 'Soviet-style command economy.'

"Anyone who has given thought to the matter will know that whereas market economy is descriptive of a capitalist economy, it will also correctly describe any other economy wherein, directly or indirectly, an EXCHANGE OF PRODUCTS PREVAILS."

Today, our description of the term market economy is being challenged by devotees of what is termed non-market Socialism. Thus in DB105 (Jan-Feb 2001) Frank Girard maintains "But of course no market is involved in the socialist society," while with an eye upon Marx's Criticism of the Gotha Program, Dmitriy Fomin appears to explode a socialist market concept by pointing to the following paragraph:

"Within the cooperative society, based on the common ownership of the means of production, the producers do not exchange their products; just as little does the labor expended on the products appear here as the value of these products..." (The words do not exchange are emphasized by Fomin.)

What now? In order to be in tune with Marx, will we have to recant our claim that a socialist economy will be based upon an exchange of products? It would certainly seem so, but let's not be too hasty for in the paragraph immediately following the above, Marx states: "What we are dealing with here is a Communist [i.e., a socialist!] society, not as it has developed on its own basis, but, on the contrary, as it is just issuing out of capitalist society..." (Perhaps the point would be even more readily perceived with the addition of a single word, thus: "What we are dealing with here [however] is a Communist society, not as it has developed on its own basis...")

The matter now seems clear. With cogent reasoning Marx, in The Gotha Program, projects not merely one but two scenarios of socialist society--two 'phases' of 'Communist' (i.e., socialist) development. The first phase features a socialist market economy, the second or 'higher phase' features a socialist non-market economy. At the same time it appears to us that the non-market Socialists who propose to bypass the Marxist socialist market are not only creating problems where none need exist but are sidetracking from answers that they wish not to hear. For example:
* Girard asks: "Wouldn't you [we] 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?"

Here is a pretty kettle of fish, containing as it does a redundancy which was obviously not intended! Reworded, the question now becomes: "Wouldn't you [we] agree that Marx is saying that the exchange of labor time for labor time vouchers and then for goods and services is the same in principle (exchange of equal values) as takes place in the market under capitalism?" Do we agree? Yes, apparently, and quote Marx to this effect as follows: "So far as the distribution of [individual means of consumption] 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."

At the same time, while recognizing the above "exchange of equal values" principle, we would draw special attention to quite another principle concurrently at work in the above scenario—a principle determining the value of the "equal values" being exchanged—a principle inherent in Girard’s phrase, "the exchange of labor time for money (wages)." We refer to Capitalism's extraction of surplus value from the wage worker!—a process wherein, as demonstrated by Marx, the Capitalist sponges up all the value of the worker's product except that part (a small part at that) which the wage represents—an exploitive principle which all true Socialists decry by calling for "Abolition of the Wages System!" (As De Leon would say, Stick a pin there!)

* Meanwhile what becomes of Girard's assertion that "Of course no market is involved in the socialist society."

(1) Quoting from The Gotha Program wherein Marx describes some economic transactions that he suggests would take place in the first "phase" (the first stage) of a "Communist" (i.e., socialist) society: "He [the individual producer] 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 of the means of consumption as costs an equal amount of labor." Wouldn't Girard agree that these exchange relations typify in principle the relations that obtain in a market economy?

(2) Girard has it that "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." This is Girardism, not Marxism! "Taking their rightful share signifies the "higher phase" of a socialist society—a phase wherein society may at long last "inscribe on its banners: "From everyone according to his faculties, to everyone according to his needs!" Not so in the first phase! Here the "rightful share" of the individual producer will be determined by the quantity of labor that he or she has contributed to the social store! Finally....

(3) Nor can Girard back up his assertion with proof by simply observing that "Markets, whether using money or barter, assume owners and buyers and sellers." That is, by simply ignoring the
fact that the Marxist market economy replaces money with the labor voucher as the medium of exchange, which voucher will enable its owner to make purchases from society's stores of consumer goods which he or she has helped create.

* As for Fomin, we have to confess that we found difficulty here and there in getting at his meaning. Nevertheless he, too, appears to reject the labor voucher exchange function which Marx considered essential to the first phase of socialist development. As Fomin put it: "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.'"

* In our article Socialism and the Market (in DB101), we held that:

"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 deposed capitalist class and its supporters, that the wage system had been too rewarding a system to be scrapped. It should go without saying that this element, a capacious element, would stop at nothing in order to abort a socialist revolution. And how does Marxism prepare to meet such eventuality? 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 afore-said destructive element bent on the restoration of wage exploitation!"

To which Girard responds in DB105 by stating: "This raises all sorts of questions, not the least of which is just how a 'stage-one' [i.e. a first phase] socialist society will go about repressing the de-throned capitalist class and its supporters.... 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."

Accordingly, we oblige by pointing out that whereas both Girard and the DLSC have our roots in the SLP's Marxism-De Leonism, that "further explanation" should be as well known by him as it is by us. It of course lies in the promise of ECONOMIC POWER that is latent in Daniel De Leon's magnificent concept of Socialist Industrial Unionism!—a concept elaborated by De Leon in his immortal 1905 address titled Socialist Reconstruction of Society.

* Arising from the question of how to safeguard a socialist victory against capitalist reaction is a question of how long such protection might be deemed necessary. Quoting from our above article on this point: "As Marx makes clear [in The Gotha Program], there is a lot more than adequate productive forces required to warrant society's transition from market Socialism to non-market Socialism!" And how does Girard handle this matter? In DB105 he seems to be itching to have done with a labor-voucher economy, stating his be-
lief that:

"The problem of scarcity—the only currently legitimate excuse for the ['two-stage socialism'] 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."

No "two-stage" Socialism? No socialist market? In the first place we believe Girard skates on thin ice with his assertion that the problem of scarcity "has been solved planet-wide." Beyond that, try tho we do, we are totally unable to see how Girard's scenario (marked as it is by rejection of labor voucher protection against capitalist greed) could do other than subject our class to countless more years of "sweat and suffering"!

*

The riddle of the LABOR VOUCHER should riddle no longer. This voucher (a)—Confronts the erstwhile capitalist parasites and their hangers-on with the choice of having to work or go hungry; (b)—Unlike money, is not exchangeable for means of social production hence is not transmutable into Capital; and (c)—Replacing money, hails both the demise of the wages system and the advent of a Socialist Market Economy!

Sincerely,

THE DE LEONIST SOCIETY OF CANADA

Dear DB,

Anyone interested in the case for socialism should at least read the history of the Socialist Labor Party of America—1876-1991 by F. Girard and B. Perry and the History of the Socialist Party of Great Britain—1904-2000 by D.A. Perrin. Both parties have the aim of a socialist society outside the framework of capitalism. They vary in the socialist perception—approach it by different means and methods—but neither has AS YET become lost in the swamp of reformism. The two histories are interesting to read but carry a sad note from which important lessons can be learned. They have suffered from destructive splits—resignations and expulsions that indicate that some party members challenged their party's position (for lack of workers' support) when in reality the working class should be challenged for being so apathetic and politically ignorant. Capitalist propaganda and the wages system make the workers docile supporters of capitalism and brain-washed opponents of socialism. But they can learn. A real socialist party should hold its own valid position (in order to make socialists) and never trim its sails or play to the gallery, because a reformer is not a socialist and a socialist is not a reformer. Capitalism has no future—its contradictions and cultural decline prove this, so it will only stagger on. The only real alternative is real "revolutionary" socialism, which has never been tried. Incidentally—and on a point of information—the case for "scientific" socialism has never been scientifically disproved. All civilized societies including capitalism were never designed to work in the interest of society as a whole. That's what puts socialism on the map—because it can do the job. All it takes is a majority of dedicated socialist workers who want a real democracy to live in.

-J. Ahrens
Dear Frank,

You recently reviewed the pamphlet, *Trotsky, Trotskyism and Trotskyists*, put out by our comrades the CWO [Communist Workers Organization]. You condensed the history of the Italian Communist Left down to a confused jumble of misconceptions. This is partially understandable especially since most groups coming from the communist left have not been represented here in the US with the exception of the ICC [International Communist Current] section Internationalism. This is perhaps a source of what troubles proponents of other political tendencies about us. Lacking a firm grasp of Internationalism as a political tendency, they grasp at straws and attempt to tar us with labels like "Leninist". A further problem is that you treat the Communist Left as if it were just another "Leninist" tendency competing for power alongside Trotsky and Stalin. You should know more about the history of the period the pamphlet covers than your statements in your short review seem to reveal.

Among the various grouplets that each lay claim to the political heritage of the Italian Communist Left it is often common to rewrite the history of the political tendency in such a manner that would seek to justify the practice and positions of present day groups loosely referred to as the Communist Left. Bordigists tend, naturally to emphasize those aspects of the history of the Italian Left that would tend to support what they respectively view as in line with the classic positions of Bordiga. The ICC, descended from the French Fraction of the Italian Left in exile and later the group the French Communist Left, tend to write their version of the history in such a way that portrays their political forebears as following the "true path" with others being the opportunists. It is not surprising that misconceptions can be spread and repeated so readily.

In your short review other historical errors come out as well. The Third International did not "immediately" become a tool of the Bolshevik party. Neither was the Third International the exclusive creation of Lenin. The Third International was created as a part of a break with Social-democracy. Not only did it attempt to break with Social-democracy but of necessity it excluded elements to the left of Social-democracy that were simply pacifist or that otherwise did not actively seek to end the imperialist war by putting forward the historic alternative of the overthrow of the belligerent powers. One of the steps on the course of the Third International towards counterrevolution occurred in part when accommodation with the pacifist centrists was forced on the Communist Parties through the fusion with such groups of the left of social-democracy that refused to fully oppose the imperialist war. The elements who joined the Third International came out of the left-wing of Social-democracy. The stand of the Italian Communist Party was not a stand against "Bolshevik" domination of the International, at least not in such a simplistic sense. The Italian Communist Left stood by what they believed to be the positions of the Communist International against what they saw as an opportunistic and counterrevolutionary deviation. As these opportunistic tendencies within the Communist International began to become doctrine, the Italian Communist Left witnessed the new international begin to make the same errors of Social-democracy and worse and only a few short years after the creation of the Third International.

When Mussolini came to power this did not result in a total exodus to France. Many militants went to Belgium and a few even made it to the US, to New York and Philadelphia. Many of those comrades of the Italian Communist Left did not leave Italy at all, like our comrades who first put out the publications Prometeo and Battaglia Comunista, but went through the ordeal of the fascist prisons and internal exile. The relationship between Trotsky’s "opposition" and the Communist Left was not simply strained or merely a factional fight between "Leninists". Trotsky did not even begin to oppose Stalin in an
organized fashion until the late twenties and early thirties. When he did form an opposition he did so without including the largest faction of the opposition within in Russia, the Democratic Centralists. The disagreements weren’t simply tactical petty squabbles. Trotsky first told his loyal followers to rejoin Social-democracy when this failed he told them to go and rejoin the Stalinist parties. Trotsky was among the first to advocate the militarization of all labor as early as 1920. Trotsky’s “opposition” was composed more of party functionaries and factory managers than of workers. What the pamphlet covers is how the Trotskyist opposition lost its program to Stalin’s “left turn” which in effect took what Trotsky proposed but took his program to the extreme. It was Trotsky that presented the case against the Worker’s Opposition at the 10th party congress of March 1921. This resulted in the banning of factions within the party and aided the destruction of the opposition. Of course, all these things are covered in the pamphlet.

Worst of all you finish your review by saying that:

“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 unformed working class... 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.”

This is an undignified and poorly supported statement that I would have hoped have been beneath you. The idea that intellectuals would dispense class consciousness to the working class was in its origins an idea of Social-democracy. Many in the Bolshevik party carried this Social-democratic baggage with them when they became Bolsheviks but it did not begin with the big bad Bolsheviks. Indeed similar elitist conceptions to that which you refer can be found imbedded in DeLeon’s writings and even among anarchists because their origins are found within social-democracy. The pamphlet “fails to discuss” this “Leninist legacy” because the pamphlet is primarily a study of the evolution and decay of Trotskyism as a movement as the title of the work implies. Our political tendency does believe that a revolutionary party will always be a minority, not an elite minority but a minority within the working class as a part of the working class most prepared to fight against the capitalist system. If you will, a party of revolutionary workers not a party of an intelligentsia standing above the workers dispensing nuggets of divine knowledge like priests. If this concept can be viewed as Leninist, then we must plead guilty. Still to speak of a “Communist-Left” today is in some ways an anachronism. The times when this was simply a beleaguered opposition tendency are long gone. I hope that readers of the Discussion Bulletin are willing to give the pamphlet a chance and get themselves a copy. It really does cover the history well and explores the myths that surround Trotsky and Trotskyism. I would recommend it as readily as I would recommend F. Girard and Ben Perry’s history of the SLP.

MacIntosh of Internationalist Perspectives also perpetrates these false conceptions of our political tendency saying that we share a conception of the “invariance” of Marxism in common with the ICC. This could not be further from the truth. In fact the theoretical thrust of our journals has long revolved around putting forward a historic materialist analysis of the current situation of the working class in this world. The CWO and the whole of the IBRP has never viewed Marxism as a talismanic body of thought that must remain unchanged. In fact a topic long covered in past theoretical journals of the IBRP is the restructuring of the working class and perspectives for revival of class struggle (see note). He speaks of our comrades of the CWO without mentioning that they are a part of the IBRP. This in part betrays the origins of IP as a part of the ICC which never forgave the CWO for joining with Battaglia Comunista in the creating the IBRP. MacIntosh here reveals his political origins in the very same groups he condemns. Rather than simply direct his clarification towards the ICC he takes a jab at us. IP, having derived its own existence from the ICC, is at its essence politically wounded. In fact, MacIntosh was a founding member of the ICC which was at least as sectarian when he was a member (if not more so then) than it is today. Like New
Democracy, they come from a politically deformed sect and in the attempt to grapple with their experience they arrive at a new set of idealistic conceptions.

Surely, the communist left as a whole is included as one of the tendencies listed in "About the Discussion Bulletin." We would hope that such inclusion would indicate a genuine attempt to correctly portray the history of the Communist Left when the attempt is made to do so or at least to allow the tendencies of the Communist Left to present their own histories. Internationalist Notes is grateful that you give us space in your journal. We may perhaps publish this letter ourselves in hopes that you will give our positions some consideration.

A. Smearson for Internationalist Notes
ibrp.usa@ibrp.org
P. O. Box 746
Lafayette, IN 47902

Note
"Towards the Revival of the Proletariat: The Recomposition of the Working Class after Restructuring," Internationalist Communist #13. 1995. Available by writing to: P. O. Box 338, Sheffield, S3 9YX, UK

Comment: Aside from a couple of stumbling sentences, I can't see that my short review on page 31 of DB105 is very far off target. I may have got some important details of the history of the Italian left wrong, but as Aaron points out, it has never played a part in U.S. labor history nor even had a presence here until the late 1960s when the ICC established a grouplet and a journal. Perhaps someone will offer to write an authoritative sketch of the tendency for the DB. My only source was the essay "Bordigism" in Non-Market Socialism in the 19th and 20th Centuries. I have sent for the ICC's The Italian Communist Left, recommended in the aforementioned essay. Perhaps this will clear things up for me.

To see the Third International as anything but an instrument of Bolshevik foreign policy from the very beginning requires a very special reading of history. Called as a conference at the instigation of Lenin to discuss the organization of a new International to replace the (social-democratic) Second International, it was held in a meeting room in the Kremlin and had only one official delegate from a Western revolutionary group. Its 35 members were stamped into organizing the Communist International at Lenin's behest and its work was guided by Lenin — according to Angelica Balabanoff, a leftwing member of the Italian Socialist Party who was present at the conference in her capacity of secretary of the Zimmerwald conference. The 21 Conditions of Affiliation with the International forced revolutionary parties that wished to join the International to adopt Bolshevik tactics and direction from the Moscow headquarters.

The DB does indeed list the Italian Left among the anti-market revolutionary groups in the DB's standing announcements on page 2. Internationalism, the ICC's U.S. section and Adam Buick's article on Bordiga in Non-Market Socialism... made it clear that the Italian left held nearly the same positions as the other tendencies included. I had serious doubts about the dictatorship-of-the-proletariat proclivities of Internationalism but had concluded some time earlier when the SLP was going through some theoretical contortions that the D of P can mean anything people want it to.

--Frank Girard
Dear Fellow Workers and Comrades,

There have been several discussions about the ideology of the IWW in the few years I've been reading DB, the most recent being the letters from former wob Derek Divine and fellow worker Kevin Glover. This most recent exchange is better than many; in that it goes beyond the simplistic question of whether the IWW is or is not anarchist, but it still remains based in the past, in organizations that even if founded at the beginning of the 20th century were still firmly rooted in the 19th.

It is high time radicals recognize that there is no purpose to arguing whether anarchism or some variety of Marxism is the superior ideology. We can certainly learn a great deal from the history of both, but they are schools of thought that are fixed in the past and mean very little to workers of today. If they mean anything, it is generally not what we mean.

Understand I am not suggesting we quit using the ideas promulgated by Marx, Luxembourg, Bakunin, etc., but we use language the audience we are trying to reach will understand. I'll provide a personal example. Until last year, I had been a bus driver for 12 years. I was a member and eventually officer in Amalgamated Transit Union local 1549 in Austin Texas. When I first started driving there, I would periodically hand out anarchist leaflets with pithy titles like "The Black Banner". People liked me but didn't really have the foqiest idea where I was coming from and certainly weren't going to start a general strike.

Eventually, I was drafted to run for office and got elected. I began doing the grunt paperwork necessary to keep the union running, but I also began thinking about how to use the position to undermine the effect of the conservatism of the ATU International on our local. I began putting out the local's newsletter, which had stopped a few years before. I got myself on the negotiating team and helped derailed a completely concessionary contract. The reason that drivers and mechanics listened to me then and not earlier was because I had shown that my politics were not strictly theoretical. They took a leap of faith based on my work and forced the representative from the International to get out of town.

A short time later, in the face of rampant and biased discipline by the company, I suggested the union have a picnic on a payday Friday afternoon with free beer and food. It was a grand success and the whole bus operation was shut down for four hours. This picnic demonstrated to the workers their power, and we used that memory to convince people to stand together firm and the next contract was not only non-concessionary, we won everything the drivers told us they wanted. The word "picnic" at the bus shop now means "wildcat strike". Does it make a bit of difference that most drivers don't know what "wildcat" means? Of course not.

The same thing is true of words like "anarchism" or "socialism". The important matter is the ideas, not the specific words. When I stopped using the word anarchism at work, I was able to talk about anarchist ideas and people would not only listen, they would take action because they saw that it would win in the real world. By the time I left the bus company, with a few exceptions, drivers agreed that there was no reason to have a company making decisions, but that the drivers and mechanics should elect from our own ranks those who would do the useful tasks done by my supervisors and managers, and that we should directly coordinate with the passengers on matters affecting the system.

If the IWW is to be relevant to workers, it cannot go around calling itself anarchist or Marxist or socialist or anything else that conjures an unintended image in workers' minds. The reason I don't use the word anarchist to describe myself much anymore is that it doesn't mean anything. To the mainstream, at least in the USA, it means chaos and destruction, rampant violence and terrorism. To most on the left, it means the refusal of organization. And most calling themselves anarchists have adopted the 19th century caricature of the anarchist as their definition and combine the above two definitions. They fetishize violence and consider organization repressive on their individualism. So there is little reason to use the
word. Likewise with socialism or Marxism, the common image is of a bureaucratic totalitarian state.

While there are sections of the anarchist and socialist movements that do not fit these images, the impressions are so widespread, we will be more successful if simply leave these words behind. We use the useful portions of the theories, but do not elevate them to dogma and most anarchists and communists have done. Read the history and theories of Marx, Kropotkin, even Trotsky had some good ideas, as long as you recognize that he was decidedly different during the time he was at the helm of the Red Army. His writings before and afterwards are much more interesting than during that time!

But if we go around calling ourselves or our organizations anarchist or socialist, they aren’t going to get very far. As I understand the history there are a few main reasons the IWW does not name itself after some ideology. The earliest, is that it did not want to be controlled by a party (the Deleonnists). There is little question of that now, but the other reasons are that it did not want to again be decimated by internal factionalism and it wanted to appeal to all workers and not alienate those who didn’t consider themselves of one ideology.

These are valid reasons and to this day I regularly have to remind members that although the IWW is compatible with some anarchist and socialist schools of thought, we are not an anarchist or socialist organization. We are a labor union that seeks to create industrial democracy. If we wish to be the One Big Union, then we absolutely cannot define ourselves based on an ideology of 100 years ago that means little to today’s workers.

Joshua Freez
IWW General Executive Board Chair

NOTES, ANNOUNCEMENTS, AND SHORT REVIEWS

Correction! More than one letter has reached PO Box 1564 pointing out my mistakes in writing about the history of Left Communism and related matters. The most recent involved my DB103 “short review” of “The Italian Left and the International” in Communist Left, published by the International Communist Party. I included in it some supplementary information from my obviously failing memory. For the record let me state that it was the Third Congress, not the Second, to which the SLP sent observers and that, so far as I can learn, the SPGB sent observers to neither Congress. I call on readers to wipe from their memory banks contrary information gleaned from the DB.

Onward, (Volume 1, Issues 1, 2, and 3) describes itself as a quarterly revolutionary Anarchist newspaper featuring “Anarchist News, Opinion, Theory, and Strategy of Today.” Much of the news in these three issues concerns demonstrations in which anarchists were involved—like Seattle last year as well as efforts on behalf of Mumia and other political prisoners, a tent city in a Richmond Virginia park, and the activities of the Zapatistas in Mexico. Several of the twenty tabloid pages in each issue are devoted to “Opinion” and “Theory.” Among the articles are “Democracy Is Direct,” “Counter Institutions,” “From Protest to Popular Power,” and “The Need for a Revolutionary Anarchist Federation.” This last speaks of the rapid growth of anarchism over the past two decades and calls for a return to the kind of anarchist organization that disappeared when Love and Rage broke up a few years ago. The author emphasizes the failures of “network” organizing and the superiority of a federation, pointing out that “A united Anarchist group is needed and we have to move beyond abstractions about organization and start dealing with the realities we profess to understand.” Single copy $2, one-year sub $7-$10 (U.S.); $10-$13 elsewhere from Onward, PO Box 2671, Gainesville, FL 32602 <theonwardcollective@hotmail.com>
The Northeastern Anarchist: Magazine of the Northeastern Federation of Anarcho-Communists doesn’t have to discuss the need for an anarchist organization. “[I]t is the English-language magazine of the Northeastern Federation of Anarcho-Communists (NEFAC),” and... “identifies] with the communist tradition in anarchism.” Despite its New England-sounding name it is international in scope with a branch in Quebec. The thirty-nine-page premier issue of the Northeastern Anarchist contains articles on anarchist activity in Prague, Korea, Zimbabwe, Turkey, and The Netherlands, not to mention Chattanooga and Baltimore—and of course Chiapas. I find the anarchist fascination with the Zapatistas incomprehensible. Led by Maoist activists like Sub-Commandante Marcos, the EZLN, so far as its announced objectives are concerned, seeks only a more just and equitable Mexican government. Also interesting is a reprinting of Jon Bekken’s essay, “Peter Kropotkin’s Anarchist Political Economy,” published originally in numbers 11 and 12 of the Libertarian Labor Review (now the Anarchist-Syndicalist Review). I’ve had it pegged for reprinting in the DB for some years now, mainly because Bekken presents Kropotkin’s economics as an superior alternative to Marx’s explanation of the workings of capitalism. Single copy $4, 4-issue sub - $16 from The Northeastern Anarchist, c/o Sabate Anarchist Collective, PO Box 230685, Boston, MA 02123.

Economic Crises: Special Supplements 1 and 2 were published a couple of years ago as supplements to Socialist Studies, the journal of the Socialist Party of Great Britain, Reconstituted. This time of nervous uncertainty about the economy is ideal for examining the SPGB(R)’s take on economic crises. Number one (28pages) deals with the theories about the solutions for the problem. The pamphlet compares the ineffectiveness of capitalism’s two major methods of dealing with depression: Keynesianism or “demand management” and monetarism, the policy of allowing market forces to solve the problem over a period of time. An especially interesting section compares the effectiveness of the Keynesian measures used in the U.S. during the Great Depression of the 1930s to the monetarist policies prevalent in Great Britain. They were equally ineffective in such categories as employment and investment. Supplement Number 2 is