Like the last issue, DB108 begins with a plan for a unified movement of libertarian socialists. These ideas have a certain attractiveness about them. Who among us wouldn't want to be part of a much larger organization, one with the financial resources and active participants to carry on a higher level of agitation? In fact this is the idea behind the Imagine International proposed by Dan Vogel in DB107. The problem with such ideas, as Red indicates, is the preconceptions and strongly held
convictions of the different “persuasions” or “tendencies” among us. For example, I have a lot of trouble with Red’s idea that the unified revolutionary movement would enter into a reform struggle to improve working class housing and work toward the abolition of prisons. Both strike me as diversions from the revolutionary objective, and both send a message to our class that’s at odds with revolution: the implication that our problems can be solved within the capitalist system.

An evidence that a unified libertarian-socialist movement is a bit farther away than some of us would like is the dearth of responses to Dan Vogel’s DB107 proposal for an “imagine international.” Lauren Otter writes approvingly of the proposal but immediately raises what is probably the major question: What would be the ideological requirements for a group’s inclusion in the I.E.? He goes on (to p. 7)

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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BUILDING A COMPREHENSIVE AND EFFECTIVE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT

by Gulf Coast Red

The last couple of years have seen some encouraging bursts of working class revolt to show us that all are not complacent with the capitalist system. Many at these events, such as the W.T.O. and Democratic and Republican National conventions have had clearly class conscious motivations while others, not so clear, have merely proposed reforms within the capitalist system.

We need to form a more clear and definite anticapitalist movement which unequivocally has as its aim to abolish capitalism and the political state and which seeks to replace it with a classless, moneyless, democratically worker-run society of free access.

In order to build a more clearcut and unified movement, I propose that a North American Convention of Libertarian Socialists be called for the purpose of comparing strategies and methodologies and to rationally discuss ways we can work together more effectively in order to form a more comprehensive plan of action. As Ben Franklin said, "We will all hang together or we will all hang separately." This convention should include anarchists of every stripe, council communists, syndicalists, and ballot-oriented libertarian socialists. At present there are many splintered groups in North America who are aiming at similar goals, i.e. a form of anti-statist non-market socialism. Yet all have different ideas about how society should be set up in a post-capitalist world, and some are not very clear on the subject at all. This needs to seriously be discussed, but more immediately a methodology of getting there requires some relentless discussion.

Every group, be it the anarcho-syndicalists of the I.W.W., Revolutionary Industrial Unionists of the IWW, the Anarchist Communists, or the World Socialist Party U.S. have different ideas about how to get there. They are all good ideas put forth by good and serious revolutionaries, but unfortunately, to some degree, some more than others, each group is somewhat methodologically exclusivist and therefore sectarian. Such methodological exclusivity is inimical to building a real revolutionary movement and says basically, "My method is the only tried and true valid method." This amounts to ideological dogmatic orthodoxy, stagnant and preclusive to building a more fluid movement to address contemporary changes in capitalism. I believe it is important that we study these barriers rationally and open mindedly in order that we may divest ourselves of whatever nonsense stands in the way of attaining our objective.

Two examples that come to mind are anarchists' total refusal to utilize the ballot, even for a libertarian socialist party such as the WSP-US and its sister parties. As well, the latter exhibits an almost total aversion to engaging in direct action protest. For an effective revolutionary movement to grow, it will be imperative to knock off some of these method-exclusive barriers and for people in these different organizations and groups to back one another up. The only possibility we have of winning is if we make working class solidarity our lowest common denominator and work on that basis. As the I.W.W. says, "An Injury to One Is an Injury to All."

*Chain Reaction* welcomes debate from all anti-statist socialists on the subjects of 1) What would a post capitalist society actually look like? 2) How can we arrive at a more unified movement which acts concertedly, agrees on a working methodology, and has the
unified movement which acts concertedly, agrees on a working methodology, and has the
ability to surmount whatever divisions make us ineffective?

No one can say for sure how we will achieve revolutionary success. We can see how
revolutions of the past have come about but not how they will happen. There is no iron law
of revolutionary success as historical contexts and their variables constantly change. In
this writer's opinion, any chance at revolutionary success will necessitate a struggle on
many fronts and that those revolutionaries struggling on different fronts must be thoroughly
knowledgeable about and solid with those on all other fronts. To effectively minimize violence will
require a majoritarian movement which will entail lots of struggle to get more people to
understand how the class system works so they can join in its abolition.

ORGANIZING IN THE WORKPLACE

One of the most important places we need to focus organizing is at the point of production or
the workplace, whether it be in the industries or in the service sector. It is at the point of pro-
duction that the class war is most fundamental because it is at that point that workers are robbed
by the bosses and forced to participate in and reproduce their own exploitation. It is also the
place where workers have the most potential power if they only realize it.

We need to be organizing in the Industrial Workers of the World, the I.W.W. Joining in class
collaborationist unions like the A.F.L. only leads us down blind alleys. What is needed is to get
the working class organized in ONE BIG UNION, not just nationally but internationally. The
I.W.W. is a union of class conscious revolutionary workers intent upon abolishing the wage
system, and we realize that the working class and the capitalist parasite class have nothing in
common. Dues are inexpensive,

and the power of the union resides in the hands of the rank and file. The short term aims of the
I.W.W. are of course to win workers better pay and conditions in the present capitalist context,
but the most important aim is to organize the industrial strength of the working class to such an
extent as to one day be able to lock the boss class out in one massive general strike. At that
point we begin to run the industries for all, and not just for the profit of a few. By building the
I.W.W. we will be 'building the new society in the shell of the old.'

COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

This also falls somewhat under the heading of building a new society within the shell of the old,
and can cover a wide range of activities.

Many working class families can barely afford to pay their rents. No one should have to pay for
a place to hang their hat and keep the rain and cold off. The organizing of rent strikes and
collective reduction of rents would be an empowering project for communities to engage in,
freeing up funds for more useful pursuits. As well, direct actions against the gentrification of old
neighborhoods is needed. At present in many cities big firms are buying up houses in poor
neighborhoods, bulldozing them (as well as their trees) and building drab concrete condos to
rent to rich folk, marginalizing poor people in the process. Support should also be given to
squatter's movements which seek to renovate abandoned buildings and their grounds creating
rent-free communities.

The libertarian socialist/anarchist movement needs to become involved in the struggles
communities of color face, and extend a hand to them. We should support and create
organizations such as COP WATCH in order to keep an eye on and combat police brutality by
those sworn to "protect and serve." Perhaps we could even one day create cop-free zones. At
the same time, people in communities can learn and practice ethical communication and dispute
resolution, as well as non-authoritarian ways to stop working class on working class crime—alternatives to utilizing the state's police forces. We could also work to create some economic empowerment within communities by creating coops, growing community gardens, and helping one another in myriad ways. Groups like FOOD NOT BOMBS who feed homeless people stuck out on the streets could also work at helping to get them organized in the I.W.W. so that whenever they go in for jobs at temporary labor pools, they are organized to get a better wage.

And finally, people can create in their communities autonomous zones in which to come together for community events, whether it be to discuss revolution or to put on community theater—far preferable to sitting at home watching the idiot box like our masters wish.

ANARCHIST BLACK CROSS PRISON SUPPORT

Prisons and the police forces are part of the state social control mechanism. As we build a more effective movement, no member of whatever revolutionary organization will be exempt from police repression and imprisonment. This is why it is important that all revolutionary organizations realize the importance of supporting a strong A.B.C. network. It will be, as it already is, an important integral part of a revolutionary program to support class war prisoners. The A.B.C. should also work to support social prisoners with the intent of helping them gain political consciousness and be assets to the revolutionary movement. At present the A.B.C.s and P.P.W.C. are barely able to keep afloat. Get involved! The A.B.C.s should also be about prison abolition. As we organize industrially and in our communities, we will be policing ourselves, making prisons and police superfluous and useless. Since we won't have or need them in post-capitalist society, why not work toward their abolition now?

POLITICAL PARTY

Of course no anarchist considers voting for a capitalist party an option. The "lesser of two evils" argument doesn't wash with anarchists, and both major parties in the U.S. are puppets of capital. In fact, anarchists, for various reasons, most of them good, shun electoral politics altogether. Historically the argument goes back to the split between Bakunin and the anarchists and Marx in the First International in 1870 over the issue of capturing state power first (Marx, utilizing the ballot) or smashing the state outright (Bakunin, using strikes and mass insurrections). Bakunin's argument was basically that people who gain positions of power tend to maximize that power, thus becoming despotic and tyrannical. In short, power corrupts, not excepting socialists. Unfortunately Marx was somewhat nebulous in his writings about how long it was to take the state "to wither away" once the political state was captured by the working class. Later Marxist-Leninist programs certainly tend to confirm Bakunin's criticism, although it is also certain that Marx never intended for anything approaching a Leninist type state capitalist dictatorship to come to pass.

Anarchists have a long history of clashes with state socialists of different varieties, even though they have also at times worked in solidarity with them. State socialists come basically in two varieties, one of which advocates reforming capitalism (the piecemeal reform of capitalism towards a progressive, gradualist evolutionary arrival at socialism) including nationalization of industries and social welfare programs. This type of socialism (social democracy) and its politicians only end up being co-opted by capitalism. Although a more benign form of capitalism, social democracy actually ends up becoming a brake on real working class revolutionary activity, as it will use the police and the military in order to quell strikes and direct action protests. Although these parties may have at one time been revolutionary, they only end up running
capitalism for the bosses now. Some examples are the Green Party, and social democratic
governments in Germany, Sweden, and the Netherlands.

Other state socialists derive from the Marxist-Leninist variety, including Trotskyists, Maoists,
and all manner of Stalinists. They are all authoritarian, and seek state power for the purpose of
setting up state capitalist dictatorships in which a centralized party and bureaucracy plan and run
the state and the economy from the apex of the state hierarchy. At the bottom all the workers
are forced to carry out their dictates. Needless to say, civil liberties are severely repressed in
these governments, which are, to say the least, totally repugnant to anarchists.

Anarchists are right to shun these types of parties, but does all of this suffice as reason for a
total abstinence from electoral politics on the part of anarchists? No! In order to construct a real
working class effective and comprehensive revolutionary movement, a libertarian socialist party
will be a great asset.

By libertarian socialist party, I do not mean one which is reformist, nor one which seeks state
power in order to maintain state power as in Marxist-Leninism. Both are inimical to the libertarian
communist/socialist vision of a stateless, moneyless, society of free access.

By libertarian socialist is meant, a party which is leaderless, un hierarchical, totally
democratically structured, one which has as its sole objective to gain a majority vote at the
polls so that once elected it may set about the immediate dismantling of the state and the
capitalist system. Working in conjunction with revolutionaries on other fronts, it may then help to
usher in a production-for-human-use society. As mentioned above, no one can predict which
revolutionary method will work the surest, but even if the electoral method does not turn out to
be the unequivocal deciding factor in dealing with state power, it will work well in combination
with other initiatives. By no means though should party organizing be seen as a passive
substitute for other forms of organizing.

In order to build a majoritarian movement, it will be necessary to get our ideas more effectively
transmitted into the mainstream consciousness of everyday people. Having competent socialists
publicly debate with capitalist politicians, putting forth the irrefutable logic of the socialist position
will work well towards this end. In fact, working in concert with other initiatives, it may help to
build the revolutionary momentum that makes socialism truly an idea whose time has come.

At present there exist some parties which come close to the ideal I advocate. They have
good class conscious solid members, yet they fall short of the mark in some respects, mostly
theoretical and methodological inflexibility. The U.S.P.-U.S. basically theorizes that the ballot is
all that is necessary to achieve socialism, shuns direct action, and doesn’t quite grasp the notion
of a totalistic revolution on all fronts. This is a chimera because any serious revolutionary party will
require backing both industrially and in the streets. The New Unionist Party somewhat fetishizes
nonviolence, and by implication legalism. Nonviolence is a fairly nebulous turn that could include
all manner of activity, including direct action or even self defense. Such a stance is reminiscent
of the old reformist S.P.U.S.’s expulsion of i.W.W.s for advocating sabotage and direct action.
No party, no matter how such it clings to legalism will be exempt from police repression once it
becomes a palpable threat to the capitalist hegemony. Such a bent precludes struggle
which will gain working class respect. Any revolutionary party worth its salt will have to get its
feet wet once in a while.

It remains to be seen whether or not these parties will be able to transcend their ideological
straight jackets and get solid with other groups moving along the same path. Either way, a
libertarian socialist party will be important. Such a party ideally would struggle right along side
direct actionists, work in close solidarity with revolutionary unionists and community organizers.
Whether it be direct action against police brutality, clear-cutting, or toxic racism, libertarian
socialists can help to stave off these immediate encroachments of capitalism while helping to
bring the victims to a clear revolutionary perspective.

At present, unfortunately, Marxist-Leninist parties fill to a great extent this void misleading
people into believing that the totalitarian state, complete with secret police, gulags, and BIG
BROTHER equals socialism. Anarchists also have their ideological straight jackets, though, if
they refuse to rationally consider the idea of a libertarian socialist party simply because of
dogmatic anarchist orthodoxy. That type of conformity should be questioned rationally by
anarchists, not to be too heretical or anything.

DEMOS, DIRECT ACTION IN THE STREET

The working class needs to take to the streets whenever possible. It needs to flex its collective
might and make a showing. Its empowering experience for its members to become cognizant
of its mass power in the streets. "Whose streets? Our streets! Our streets!" Protests and direct
action are statements and deeds which send a clear message that people are standing for their
ideals against the injustices of the system. Direct actions expose injustice, get people to ask
what all the fuss is about, and expose people to new ideas. The ruling class likes to keep us all
in our own little square box hovels, watching television drive—stupid, passive, and out of touch
with what is really going on and with one another. And on top of that stew pot is the lid of the
police forces, always a tacit threat in the back of our minds when, we walk the streets. The stew
pot needs to boil over more often, and it has been more frequent recently, I'm glad to say. The
ruling class and their monopoly on the media and ideas try their best to make sure it is only their
words and deeds which are the last heard. When we take to the streets we ensure that theirs is
not the only voice or action heard. If we keep going out into our streets en masse, it may be that
one fine day we'll find that there will be a whole lot more of us than there are of them. Then we
will drown out the voice of capitalist tyranny forever!

Consider these ideas! Work to build the solidarity needed to build a real revolutionary
movement and jettison the baggage that prevents this!

OUR DAY WILL COME!!!

(From Chain Reaction No.6, c/o South Chicago ABC Zine Distro, PO Box 721, Homewood, IL
60430)

(from p. 2)

to illustrate his point with reference to the requirements for membership in the Socialist Party of Great
Britain.

"Profit Kills" strikes me as a perfect example of the kind of advantage we could get from
closer cooperation in our political sector. The essay appeared a couple of years ago in the left-
communist journal Internationalist Perspectives. I scanned it immediately for inclusion in the DB,
and then set it aside because of more pressing material. But I think it is the sort of thing that could
appear in any journal in our political sector. It is well written and persuasive—Worthy of being
formatted and published as a leaflet. The same is true of Adam Buick's "What Is Capitalism?" from
the December 2000 Socialist Standard. Buick uses as his point of departure the anti-capitalism we
hear voiced in demonstrations at meetings where our masters write agreements for the new global
capitalism. Here too we have a potential article for publication in any non-market socialist paper and
a leaflet for any group.

Aufheben continues to be a frustrating journal for the DB. Typical articles run to 20 pages or
so making them far too long for inclusion in the DB. Issue #9 is no exception. The two major articles,

(to p. 11)
Dear Comrade,

I am interested by your basic idea, anything that would draw a clear line between the libertarian Left & the rest, and which would convince the sectarians of the libertarian Left that their real enemies are those outside that line not their rivals within it would be beneficial, but I think your proposal as it exists falls down; on the one hand it is over-simplified in its rejection of the motives of others, & on the other hand, it would need a more hard & fast, objective definition, of who constitutes the libertarian left than you give, if it is to work.

I think for one thing you would need to spell out a better case against reformism; there are reformists who only want a few palliatives within capitalism, (& obviously they can be dismissed in the terms which you use,) but the main stream of those whom socialists call reformists, have always been people who suffer from the misconception that capitalism can be gradually reformed, until it no longer exists. That is no doubt a fallacy, but it doesn't mean that those who hold it (particularly those who have just come to socialism, & just joined the ranks of the reformists,) do not really want to achieve a society with neither private ownership nor state ownership, & do not appreciate that when such is achieved the state would wither away.

Mutatis Mutandis what applies to social democrats, applies equally to Greens.

By the same token the Leninist conception of the transitional state may be a fallacy [obviously I believe it is,] (and it may well be true that by the time someone is a leader of a Leninist, they know full well that it's a fallacy and are just using a theory for their own power ends,) but there are undoubtedly sincere and honest younger Leninists who believe that theirs is the only effective way of achieving a society of common ownership. Indeed I would go so far as to insist that you will find small dissident Leninist factions, who have considered anarchist, councilist, "impossibilist," etc., objections to Leninism, accept some of what we say, & are prepared to accept that checks and balances need to be inserted into their Leninism, while arguing that they believe that Leninism is more true than any other theory. Again it is not sufficient for us (if we are attempting to draw a line such as you want) to talk of all Leninists as if they consciously reject our aim of a libertarian socialist society.

Nor should the Leninist (or other) conception of the Transitional State be too closely identified with the similarly sounding "Transitional Demands," (which again are equated with Leninist theory though it's possible to show that Luxemburg & others who were perhaps nearer us than Lenin also thought in such terms,) A transitional demand is defined as one which aims at mobilizing mass action, which, if that action succeeds, would make the transition from one society to another. Obviously the prevailing Leninist interpretation of this, is that a seemingly reasonable, reformist demand is made, but it cannot be implemented in the reformist context, since its implementation would call in question the realities of power.

Posing a transitional demand in that way may well be considered authoritarian. It appears to presuppose that the working class are morons there to be fooled. So we can say absolutely those who would pose a demand in that way are at least potentially authoritarian. But what about those who did not pose it in the first place, but who, supporting both the ostensible reforming aim & the undisclosed (by the launchers,) ulterior revolutionary aim, join the campaign, explaining all the while to their fellow campaigners that if they are serious they must realize that it involves more than just demanding a reform?

Let me give you an example. Obviously no government (or governmental system) would willingly abandon its major weapon of coercion, (& if it so did unwillingly, that would only be because it was
about to be overthrown anyway,) so unilateral nuclear disarmament is a transitional demand.

It is just untrue that the activist members of CND were only concerned with "excesses" of militarism and capitalism. Though, at the time, sectarian pacifists & anarchists thought that saying: "You do not cure measles by scraping the spots," was adequate argument against work in CND; there was a simple answer: "Most people realize they need medical advice when they see the spots." Many people who had grown up believing that war is a necessary evil, (who would have taken it as self evident truth that "Hitler had had to be resisted" & wouldn't have understood the case that Hitler was just the product of an evil economic, state & military system, prevalent throughout the world,) & so, were conditioned not to consider the anti-militarist case, could, nevertheless, see that the arguments posed in favour of nuclear weapons did not add up. Once they started to question this, and joined in the arguments provoked by CND, they went on to question more.

So though no doubt the initial inspiration which brought most people to CND, may well have been that they said: "thus far & no further." They were immediately faced with the problem - "You cannot fight tanks with bows & arrows, nor nuclear weapons with tanks," - so, the campaign conferences straight away began expanding the policy, and in the case of the British CND, after 24 years wrote a policy statement saying "In the modern age war must be abandoned."

That doesn't alter the fact that the people who founded the CND Campaign hadn't even seen it as a transitional demand. They said (quite openly in the New Statesman) that what they wanted to do was to "harness the radicalism of youth," in order to "rebuild the Left" [of the Labour Party] which in turn would enable them to get "a better compromise" with Gaitskell [the Labour Leader] & that in order to do this, they "needed to harness the radicalism of youth" which could best be done by "posing an impossible demand." "Unilateral nuclear disarmament was such a demand" & so they were launching the campaign on that slogan, (though they tried to make the demand implicit rather than explicit and were outvoted at the founding conference on that.)

Those with libertarian and revolutionary aims (anarchists, pacifists & marxist humanists,) who joined the campaign, did so, saying to their fellow campaigners & to those we canvassed as part of our campaign work, "We cannot achieve unilateral ND, unless we change the whole nature of society, abandon the aim of war altogether, & that in turn means challenging the whole state system." We made many converts on that basis. We never pretended that ND could be achieved as a reform within otherwise unchanged society. So I insist that this was a revolutionary libertarian strategy, even though it involved campaigning within the context of a movement based on a transitional demand. Most campaigns based on a transitional demand are probably susceptible to that sort of intervention.

In saying why I think your line on policy is insufficiently clear, may I risk appearing rude & sectarian, & illustrate it by reference to your party—or rather its British co-thinkers—not as an intended attack but because it provides us a place where we both know the material. I was once, [Winter '47-'48] a candidate member of the SPGB, remained in touch with party members when I ceased to be a candidate member, & have known Eddie Grant & other, now leading members of the party, for fifty years.

While it has long been the characteristic facet of SPGB propaganda that the party does not believe in a transitional workers' state/government, this does not in fact appear in the party's "Declaration of Principles," & the plain reading of the wording of clause six of those principles would suggest the need for such a state/government. So though an anarchist may know that most of those who are now influential within the SPGB may not intend to form a government, (& those of us who know the process involved in joining, may be aware that those who advocate a transitional workers' state might now have difficulty in joining, there is no guarantee that that will remain the case.
It is not just a question of saying because rejection of the transitional state does not appear in the Declaration of Principles, that Declaration is in fact compatible with many forms of Leninist or similar theory, and so the party cannot logically permanently debar all Leninists from membership, unless it changes that declaration. Look at the recent secession that formed the SPGB(r). Though the latter party would also claim that it rejects any idea of a transitional state, the arguments that it has published disagreeing with the main SPGB on that point, show that it does believe in a government; it just says that this is not a transitional government. (It may be difficult to see how a government which supposedly is making the transition to socialism, is not transitional, but that testifies to the fact that there is a semantic misunderstanding.)

Given that most of the members of the SPGB(r) were very prominent members of the SPGB, from the early 60s to the late 80s, the fact that these leading members can & did believe that despite the fact that in its litt. (though not in its Declaration of Principles,) the SPGB generally repudiated any belief in a transitional society, this was nevertheless compatible with advocacy of a government that would in fact supervise the transition to socialism, and testifies to the fact that the repudiation of a transitional government does not necessarily mean for all party members, what the more anarchist-inclined members might think.

"That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organize consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into an agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic."

Clause 6 - Declaration of Principles

Of course when that was first adopted the SPGB was a dissident faction within the De Leonist tradition and so the implication was that the government proposed would be by some form of industrial union federation; later when the SPGB turned round and argued that it could not--so far in advance of the event--endorse a blueprint, De Leon's or any other, the party didn't notice that though its motivation, in dropping SIUism, was libertarian, it was left, having dropped it, with a Clause promoting a purely governmentalist perspective.

Later in Tony Turner's time he argued that mass refusal to join the forces & similar bodies would make capitalist government unworkable & that in a sense, Clause Six was--like the General Strike--a Sorelian political "motivating myth", working for it would make it unnecessary.

While Eddie Grant says Clause Six only operates to take away the legitimacy of the anti-socialist forces, though elected, socialists would never actually attempt to form a government, but would add directly (roughly on council-communist lines,) to reorganise society. Fair enough—that is certainly an anarchist strategy, but I am not certain that it is wise to give that sort of notice to the capitalists of the date on which the workers intend to act; but I can agree that that is a libertarian socialist strategy & would happily give it the appropriate kites-mark & it's not for me to judge whether that is a permissible interpretation of the Clause.

But on the other hand:

(1) I spoke to a party branch about three years after the split. Though the majority of those present attacked the minority party in vindictive terms, they all, with the exception of the Chair—the only person who did not condemn the seceders out of hand—insisted that socialism could only come about through the actions of a
actions of a government. Nothing they said distinguished this government from a transitional regime; one
said that the transition might well take millennia, (two people said "hear, hear," & as the chairman could
not impartially disagree, no party member repudiated the idea.)

(2) If you read Dave Perrin's book you will have noted that he avoided discussing the issues dividing
the SPGB(r) from the majority party, &, when elsewhere, he had to touch on the subject he gave no hint
that that had been an important issue of recent debate within the party. Elsewhere again it appeared that
he considered the party had made too much fuss in repudiating transitionalism & implying that obviously
some form of government transition was inevitable.

(3) When I quoted Eddie's gloss on the Clause, one SPGB member, professedly on the extreme
libertarian wing, so much so that he claims the term anarcho-socialist for the party, with whom I
mistakenly thought I could work, a few years back, said "well yes, the state would be overthrown that
way, but then we'd have to restore it & have elections, so as to elect a socialist government. So presuming
that this was all to conform to Clause Six, he envisaged that the workers would overthrow capitalism by
direct action, so that there would then be no government, but then the SPGB would restore capitalism so
as to be able to have a government ("... government... exists only to conserve the monopoly by the
capitalist class,") & would then have elections to produce a government which would supposedly then
abolish capitalism!

(4) I would suspect that less than a third of the SPGB would agree with Eddie, Adam & others in
totally rejecting any idea of a government. No doubt the rest would repudiate the concept of a transitional
workers' state, but that may well be due to a failure to understand what the Leninists say. Obviously I am
not competent to comment on the make up of the WSP-USA. As I said above, I cannot see valid grounds
under which your tradition could permanently refuse to allow all dissident Leninist factions to join you, if
there were conditions which made them think it was worth their while so to do. Obviously as each
faction joined, the criteria would be relaxed to allow more mainstream Leninists to join, so that long
before you will be in a position to contemplate an electoral victory, you will be taken over by
governmentalists.

Years of capitalist and pre-capitalist society have alienated governmental systems from ordinary
people; there is no known way of maintaining an external mass control over elected members and
imposing a mandate on them; (any attempt to do this in Britain under our existing system is construed as
"contempt of parliament" and trade union officials who have done no more than threaten to withhold their
financial support from M.P.s they had sponsored have been sent to prison; so that any elected government
is going to be divorced from its constituency. If there is to be an SPGB governmental transition, by
definition, capitalism will still exist when it is first elected. There can be little guarantee that a
government so elected will remain socialist long enough to make any change; far more likely that its
members will decide (as have all previous supposedly radical governments) that they understand the
needs of the workers, better than the workers do themselves.

Fraternally, Laurens Otter

(from p. 7)

one on Chiapas (26 pages) and the other Aufheben's contribution to the four-part series "What Was
the USSR?" (19 pages) couldn't be included in the DB without crowding out nearly everything else for
or more issues. On the grounds that more readers are likely to be interested in theories about the
nature of the USSR than "A Commune in Chiapas?: Mexico and the Zapatista Rebellion" this issue
concentrates several pages on the former, printing portions of the introduction and the conclusion.

Neil Pettey's review of Working for Wages appeared in a shorter version in Z Magazine. The
book expresses the authors' conviction, one held by many DB readers, that the class struggle is

(to p. 14)
PROFIT KILLS

The engineer was interviewed amidst the rubble of the earthquake in Turkey. "How many of these buildings would still be standing if the proper materials would have been used in their construction?" the TV-reporter asked. "All of them", the engineer answered with a tired voice, "all of them". Thousands were killed in Turkey and hundreds of thousands made homeless, not by an earthquake but by profit. The purpose of building houses in this society is not to shelter people. It is to make profit. If this can be done by providing people with a sturdy home, fine. If not, the cheapest materials are used to knock together houses that are doomed to crumble when the earth moves in Turkey or Taiwan, when a hurricane hits Florida or when rivers overflow in Mexico or China. The builders plead innocence. If they followed proper procedures, they say, their rates of profit would be so low that investors would shun them, and they could build no more houses and millions more would have to live in shanty-towns. Would that be any better?

The purpose of producing medicine is not to fight disease either. When earlier this year, South-Africa started to make cheap medicine to slow the epidemic of AIDS which had infected millions of South-Africans and killed millions there and in neighboring countries, the entire pharmaceutical industry of the US rose in protest and the Clinton-administration threatened economic sanctions. No matter that people are dying like flies because they can't afford the prices which the pharmaceutical multinationals are charging, intellectual property-rights were infringed! If this became a common practice, so these companies say, they would be greatly discouraged from investing in the development of new medicines, and diseases would spread. Would that be any better?

Similar examples of the crazy dilemmas which capitalism is imposing on society can be found in any sector of economic activity. The purpose of agriculture is certainly not to feed the hungry. Otherwise, how can it be explained that the most productive countries are sitting on mountains of and are paying farmers not to farm, while each year 30 million people die of hunger and hundreds of millions suffer malnutrition? And so on, and so on. Producing for profit, the basic rule of our society, has become truly absurd, completely irrational. To hide this absurdity has become the prime function of all mass media and assorted ideologies. In the US, where this article happens to be written, it has become customary, even on the left, to characterize the present state of the economy as "good times", while in fact statistics of the Congressional Budget Office show that, for the majority of Americans, net-income has shrunk considerably since 1977 and homelessness and hunger have risen. Only through the window of the ruling class are we allowed to look at the world.

Profit kills. That is nothing new. It always has, throughout capitalism's history. Not because capitalism is blood-thirsty per se, but because, when faced with a choice between profit and other considerations, it doesn't hesitate. Nothing is more fundamental to this society than the drive for profit. That doesn't make us nostalgic for pre-capitalist days. For centuries, the drive for profit was also a creative force, unleashing a tremendous growth in productivity and human development, freeing mankind from the inevitability of scarcity and all its implications. Even in human thought, capitalism brought "enlightenment", the establishment of the rational progress of humanity as a conscious goal for society. The slogans "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity" or "Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness" were never to be taken too literally and always were subordinate to the preservation of profit, but still they represented a giant step forward.

Then came the bloody turning point of 1914. Just as capitalism had enlisted all social forces in production, it now enlisted them all in destruction. The purpose remained the same: profit. More then three quarters of the war fatalities of the last 500 years have occurred since 1914. And the number grows every day, in the
Balkans, in Timor, in Ethiopia, in Chechnya to name but the most recent slaughterhouses. Something had changed drastically in the early part of this century. Through the development of science and technology and their generalized application in production, capitalism had created a system of mass-production, capable of eradicating scarcity. Yet capitalism was born out of scarcity and cannot function without it. Its absence, in a capitalist context, does not mean abundance but overproduction. Because the market-mechanism is based on measuring the exchange-value of commodities by the social labor-time that is required for their production, global demand, purchasing power, can grow only to the degree that more labor-time is expended in production. Yet the growth of supply was now no longer based so much on adding more labor-power as on subcontracting it, replacing it with technology. This fundamental, insoluble contradiction between supply and demand, between the creation of real wealth and the creation of capitalist exchange-value, became a deadly threat to what capitalism is all about: profit.

The preservation of profit now required a steep loss in the exchange-value of all that is traded, a drastic cheapening of capital and labor-power. That's why the decadent phase of capitalism is so destructive: the greater the contradiction, the more value must disappear to make newly created value more profitable, so as to rekindle the flame of production. Contrary to what some expected, this new phase did not spell the end of capitalism's development. Devalorization made room for new growth reorganization and technological progress extended capitalism's scale and reach, which alleviated its contradictions. But these contradictions continued to build subterraneously, forcing again massive devalorization, violent destruction. Today, capitalism's extension-potential is nearly exhausted. The global assembly-line is humming but precisely because it is so productive, there's ever less room on it. Only the strongest competitors can maintain a relative prosperity, but even for them there are ominous signs as more and more capital shuns productive investment to seek refuge in financial assets, building up a bubble that is doomed to burst. The fact that a third of the global workforce, more than a billion people, cannot find work testifies to the degree to which global production is blocked by dwindling profits. More and more, the preservation of profits requires cutting corners, lowering production costs through any means possible, even when this means devastating the environment, subjecting workers to unbearable living and working conditions, or sacrificing quality, regardless of the consequences for the safety of consumers, as crumbling buildings in Turkey and dioxin-laden chickens in Belgium illustrate. In more and more places, the shrinkage of profits invite violence, corruption, and mafia-practices. In the weakest, least cohesive countries, states are fracturing as different segments of the dominant class fight each other over the shrinking pie. Or else the state tries to defend its cohesion by creating, with genocidal rhetoric, a hated common enemy, a scapegoat-minority. Capitalism's own crisis provides the instruments for these battles in the form of millions of uprooted people, many of them young men who were never integrated into a working life and are vulnerable to the erotic seduction of an all-is-permitted culture of violence. Meanwhile, the stronger countries try to contain the rot where it threatens their own profits by intervening militarily, advancing their own particular interests against their rivals at the same time.

Left unchecked, this destructive dynamic will gather steam and engulf the world in a new holocaust. Not a replay of World War II, not one giant nuclear holocaust (although that danger can't be discounted forever) but one in which bloody conflicts multiply and combine into an unprecedented orgy of self-destruction. Some of this is explored in this issue of IP. The alternative to this grim perspective is at the same time very simple and enormously complex: to produce for human needs instead of for profit. Technically, this is more possible than ever. The fast development of information and communication technology has made it a lot easier. There is no doubt that it is feasible to create abundance in regard to the basic needs of all humans, and not just the basic needs, and to organize production so that all able-bodied people can work and there is a lot of free time for everyone — and to find in the exploration of that leisure-time itself an endless source
of creative activity. Of work, you might say, although it’s not imaginable that work would still resemble what it is today, when the elimination of drudgery becomes the conscious goal of society. But what this requires above all is the conscious will of humanity to make it real, to organize and control this revolution. We believe that this will can only be forged in struggle, in revolt against the class whose existence depends on the perpetuation of the absurdity of production for profit. Only the autonomous struggle of the working class, the great majority of society whose work makes the wheels of the world economy turn and whose will can stop them and change their direction, provides this hope. But the working class cannot realize its potential until it puts itself in the picture. To see what it can do, it must see itself

We revolutionaries are here and must come together to tear away the curtains of ideology that hide the absurdity and truly horrendous perspective of continued capitalist rule, and to hold a mirror to the proletariat: see clearly, see the danger, see yourself, see your power. Recognize the necessity and the possibility. They’re here. Now.

INTERNATIONALIST PERSPECTIVE
To contact us, write to: AM, PO Box 40231, SI, NY 10304

(from p. 11)

spontaneous and that our efforts to organize it or to ‘educate’ workers for it are futile.

My review of Internationalism’s “The Legacy of DeLeonism” raises questions about as many as possible of Internationalism’s misconceptions about De Leon and the century-long history of DeLeonism. As usual we end with some notes, announcements, and short reviews.

Finances

I’m beginning to think that the economic health of the DB moves counter to that of the stock market. In April when the stock market appeared to be headed for a crash, DB finances recovered from a low point in January. Today the Dow is above 11,000 and the DB’s two-month income is well below $100. But the good news is that we still have a long way to fall before we drop to the red ink levels we were usually in twelve and more years ago.

Contributions: Joe Tupper $20 for the abolition of capitalism. Total $20. Thank you, comrade.

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(to p. 23)
What Is Capitalism?

"Anti-capitalism" has become a popular slogan, and a good thing too. But if this is to have a positive impact people have to be clear as to what they mean.

To put our cards on the table straightaway, what we mean by capitalism is an economic system where productive resources are used as "capital", i.e. they are used to produce more wealth with a view to profit; this sets in motion an impersonal and uncontrollable economic mechanism which leads to the accumulation, in fits and starts, of more and more capital, of more and more wealth used to produce further wealth with a view to profit. Capitalism is, then, a system of capital accumulation. Hence, of course, its name.

Just a market economy?
This is not how defenders of capitalism like to portray things. Many shun the c-word and talk instead about a "market economy". To most people a market is a friendly place where you buy things you need so the term "market economy" is employed so as to conjure up the idea of an economy geared to serving consumer demands.

It is possible to envisage such an economy on paper but it would be vastly different from capitalism. It would be an economy of self-employed farmers, artisans and shopkeepers, each producing a particular product which they would exchange on the market, via the medium of money, for the products produced by the others which they needed. There would be no profit-making, no exploitation and no accumulation, just independent producers exchanging their products for their mutual benefit.

The farmers, butchers, bakers, candlestick makers and others would be producing their particular products which would sell at a price reflecting the average amount of time required to produce it. There would be no profit and no exploitation because everybody would be receiving the full value of what their labour had produced. They would just be exchanging so much labour in one form for the same amount in a different form.

Marx called such an economy "simple commodity production" (a commodity being, for him, an item of wealth produced for sale), but it is doubtful whether it has ever existed in a pure form. The nearest that may have labour come to it would have been in some of the early colonial settlements in North America, but even Adam Smith writing over two hundred years ago in 1776 assumes an economy in which there is already production for profit. And accumulation.

Capitalism is indeed a market economy, but not a simple market economy. A key difference of course is that under capitalism production is not carried out by self-employed producers but wage and salary workers employed by business enterprises. In other words, under capitalism, the producers have become separated from the means of production. This makes all the difference. The producers are now not bringing to market what they have produced (that belongs to their employer, the owner of the means of production) but only their working skills, so they receive the value not of their product but only of their ability to work, which is less. The product is still under normal circumstances sold at its full labour-time value but the proceeds go not to the direct producers but are pocketed by the owners of the means of production. Profit is the difference between this and what they pay, as wages and salaries, for the working skills they purchase on the labour market.

Production for profit
So capitalism is not a simple market economy. Marx explained the difference well when he said that what happens in a simple market economy is that the producers brought to market a product of a certain value which they sell for money in order to buy another product or products of equal value. The economic circuit is commodity-money-commodity (C-M-C), the aim being to end up with a basket of useful things. Under capitalism the economic circuit is different. A capitalist sets out with a sum of money which they use to buy commodities (factory buildings, raw materials, working skills) that can be used to produce other commodities with the aim of ending up, after these other commodities have been sold, with more money than they started off with. So the circuit is now money-commodities-more money (M-C-M').

It is now clear why capitalism cannot be described as an economy geared to satisfying consumer demands. The products of capitalist production have to find a buyer of course but this is only incidental to the main aim of making a profit, of ending up with more money than was originally invested. Production is initiated not by what consumers are prepared to pay for to satisfy their needs but by what the owners of the means of production calculate can be sold at a profit. This is what makes the wheels of capitalism grind or not grind, or not grind so quickly, as the case may be—depending on the level of the rate of profit.

But the picture of capitalism is not still complete. Capitalist investors want to end up with more money than they started out with, but why? Is it just to live in luxury and consume in riotous living? That would suggest that the aim of capitalist production was simply to produce luxuries for the rich. Once again, it is possible to envisage such an economy on paper. Marx did, and called it "simple reproduction", but only as a stage in the development of his argument. By "simple reproduction" he meant, logically enough, that the stock of means of production was simply reproduced from year to year at its previously existing level; all of the profits (all of M' less M would be used to maintain a privileged, exploiting class in luxury and idleness. As a result the M in M-C-M' would always remain the same and the circuit keep on repeating itself unchanged.

Capital accumulation
This of course is not how capitalism operates. It is not a "steady state economy". On the contrary, it is an ever-expanding economy of capital accumulation. In other words, most of the profits are capitalised, i.e. reinvested in production, so that production, the stock of means of production, and the amount of capital, all tend to increase over time (not in a smooth straight line, but only in fits and starts, but that's another story). The economic circuit is thus money-commodities more money-more commodities, even more money (M-C-M'-C-M').

This, however, is not the conscious choice of the owners of the means of production (given the choice, they'd probably prefer to consume it all themselves). It is something that is imposed on them as a condition for not losing their original investment. Competition with other capitalists forces them to reinvest as much of their profits as they can afford to in keeping their means and methods of production up to date. As a result there is continuous technological innovation. Defenders of capitalism see this as one of its merits and in the past it was so far as this has led to the creation of the basis for a noncapitalist society in which the technologically-developed means of production can be now-and could have been any time in the last 100 years-conscious used to satisfy people's wants and needs.

Under capitalism this whole process of capital accumulation and technical innovation is a disorganised, impersonal process which causes all sorts of problems-particularly on a worldwide where it is leading to the destruction of the environment and the absolute impoverishment of many formerly independent producers in the so-called Third World—which have rightly ignited the anger of the new wave of anticapitalist protesters.
Alternatives, viable and unviable

Unless these anti-capitalist protesters take the time to study what exactly capitalism is and how it operates they risk not advocating a viable alternative. (We are assuming of course that they want to be pro-something and not merely anti-capitalist, not merely a feeble counterweight within capitalism to the excesses of certain international capitalist organisations and corporations.)

One danger is that the anti-capitalists will be diverted into campaigning to try to put the clock back by returning to the simple market economy that may have existed in early colonial North America. This is an important strand in Green and anarchist thinking as exemplified by the slogan "small is beautiful". We are offered the idyllic picture of an economy of self-employed small-scale producers producing for a local market or of an economy composed entirely of LETS schemes. This wouldn't be capitalism but it wouldn't be possible either, if only because enough to feed, clothe and house the world's present population would not be able to be produced on this basis.

More sophisticated Green thinkers, sensibly, don't want to go that far. What they advocate is a steady-state market economy, a variant of Marx's "simple reproduction". The idea is that the surplus would be used not to reinvest in expanding production, nor in maintaining a privileged class in luxury but in improving public services while maintaining a sustainable balance with the natural environment. It's the old reformist dream of a tamed capitalism, minus the controlled expansion of the means of production an earlier generation of reformists used to envisage.

But it is still a dream because it assumes that a profit-motivated market economy can be tamed, and made to serve human and/or environmental, needs. History has proved that it can't be; capitalism has shown itself to be an uncontrollable economic mechanism which operates to force economic actors to make profits and accumulate them as more and more capital irrespective of the consequences. This mechanism first came into operation in the 18th century and since then has spread to dominate the whole world in the form of the world market. Capitalism today could in fact be described as the profit-motivated, capital-accumulating world market economy.

Other anti-capitalist protesters see this fact that capitalism is a world system as being the problem and the solution as being to break it up into separate capitalisms operating within national frontiers behind protective tariffs walls. This hardly justifies the description "anti-capitalist" of course, and parallels a nasty strand of nationalistic thinking which has always associated capitalism with a sinister "cosmopolitan" conspiracy. Indeed, the danger is that, in the absence of being presented with a credible alternative, it is here that the "anticapitalist" protests will find the loudest popular echo. The US labor unions took a nationalistic line in Seattle and in Britain the Green Party has already endorsed the reactionary "Save the Pound" campaign.

So, given that anything that rejects technology and the existence of one world is a non-starter, what is the credible, viable alternative to capitalism as a world system of production for profit and uncontrolled and uncontrollable capital accumulation? It's where all the productive resources of the Earth have become the common heritage of the people of the world--"make the Earth a common treasury for all", as Gerrard Winstanley put it right at the beginning of capitalism--so that they can be used, not to produce for sale on a market, not to make a profit, but purely and simply to satisfy human wants and needs in accordance with the principle of, to adapt a phrase, "from each region on the basis of its resources, to each region on the basis of its needs."

- ADAM BUICK (from December 2000 Socialist Standard, 52 Clapham High St., London SW4 7UN, England)
What Was the USSR?
Towards a Theory of the Deformation of Value
Part IV

[Comment on Concluding the Series]

So our saga on the nature of the USSR draws to a close. While some readers have awaited avidly for each exciting installment, others from the beginning thought we gave disproportionate space to this rather tired old topic. Another dissatisfied group may be the partisans of particular theories which were not given the recognition they feel they deserved. This was unavoidable considering the sheer number of theories one could have dealt with. The list of political tendencies which have considered that the USSR was a variety of capitalism includes 'anarchism, council communism, "impossibilism", many types of Leninism (including Bortigism, Maoism and a number arising out of Trotskyism), libertarian socialism, Marxist Humanism, Menshevism, the Situationist International and social democracy. Some might also question why, of our previous parts, only one dealt with (state)capitalist theories outside Trotskyism. Yet what is striking in looking at these alternatives is that none dealt adequately with the orthodox Marxist criticisms coming from Trotskyism. If Trotskyism itself has been politically bankrupt in its relation to both Stalinism and social democracy—and this is not unrelated to its refusal to accept the USSR was capitalist—at a certain theoretical level it still posed a challenge. We restate the issues at stake in the first few pages below. While fragmented ideological conceptions satisfy the needs of the bourgeoisie, the proletariat must acquire theory; the practical truth necessary for its universal task of self-abolition which at the same time abolishes class society. Clearing some of the bullshit and clarifying issues around one of the central obstacles to human emancipation that the 20th century has thrown up, namely the complicity of the Left with capital, may help the next century have done with the capitalist mode of production once and for all.

Introduction
The problem of determining the nature of the USSR was that it exhibited two contradictory aspects. On the one hand, the USSR appeared to have characteristics that were strikingly similar to those of the actually existing capitalist societies of the West. Thus, for example, the vast majority of the population of the USSR was dependent for their livelihoods on wage-labour. Rapid industrialisation and the forced collectivisation of agriculture under Stalin had led to the break up of traditional communities and the emergence of a mass industrialised society made up of atomised individuals and families. While the overriding aim of the economic system was the maximisation of economic growth.

On the other hand, the USSR diverged markedly from the laissez-faire capitalism that had been analysed by Marx. The economy of the USSR was not made up of competing privately owned enterprises regulated through the 'invisible hand' of the market. On the contrary, all the principal means of production were state owned and the economy was consciously regulated through centralised planning. As a consequence, there was neither the sharp differentiation between the economic nor the political nor was
there a distinct civil society that existed between family and state. Finally economic growth was not driven by the profit motive but directly by the need to expand the mass of use-values to meet the needs of both the state and the population as a whole.

As a consequence, any theory that the USSR was essentially a capitalist form of society must be able to explain this contradictory appearance of the USSR. Firstly, it must show how the dominant social relations that arose in the peculiar historical circumstance of the USSR were essentially capitalist social relations: and to this extent the theory must be grounded in a value-analysis of the Soviet Union. Secondly it must show how these social relations manifested themselves, not only in those features of the USSR that were clearly capitalist, but also in those features of the Soviet Union that appear as distinctly at variance with capitalism.

Main and Sub-Headings

The Capitalist essence of the USSR
The Trotskyist Approach
Capitalist Crisis and the collapse of the USSR
The Historical Significance of State Capitalism
Germany and the conditions of late industrialisation
Russia and late development
Underdevelopment
Mercantile capital and industrial capitalism
Russia and the problem of underdevelopment

The Deformation of Value
The problem of the nature of the USSR restated
The circuits of industrial capital
To what extent did the commodity-form exist in the USSR?
To what extent did commodity-production exist in the USSR?
To what extent did commodity exchange exist in the USSR?
To what extent did money exist in the USSR?
The sale of labour power
Contradictions in the USSR: The production of defective use-values

Conclusion

As we pointed out in Part I, the Russian Revolution and the establishment of the first 'workers state' has had a profound impact in shaping our world. At first the apparent success of the Russian Revolution showed that there was a realistic alternative to capitalism. It showed that capitalism could be overthrown by the working class and that a socialist, if not communist, society could be constructed on its ruins. As such it inspired generations of socialists and workers in their conflicts with the capitalist system, defining both their aims and methods.

However, as the true nature of the USSR began to emerge, the perception that it was 'actually existing socialism' became an increasing barrier to the development of an opposition to capitalism. If the socialist alternative to capitalism was a totalitarian police state in which you still had to work for a boss, then most workers concluded that it might be better merely to reform capitalism. At the same time the attempts of the Stalinist Communist Parties across the world to subordinate working class movements to the foreign policy needs of the USSR further compounded this problem.

The struggle against both Stalinism and social democracy demanded an understanding of the USSR.
The question of what the USSR was therefore became a central one throughout much of the twentieth century. It was a question, which as we have seen, was bound up with the associated questions of what is socialism and communism? What was the Russian Revolution? And indeed what is the essential nature of capitalism?

From a communist perspective that takes as its touchstone the abolition of wage-labour as the defining feature of communism, it would seem intuitive that the USSR was a form of capitalism. However, as we have seen, the 'state-capitalist' theories of the USSR have proved inadequate compared with the more sophisticated theories that developed out of the Trotskyist tradition. To the extent that they have shared the traditional Marxist conception of the Second and Third Internationals that state capitalism is the highest form of capitalism, state capitalist theories of the USSR have proved unable to explain either the apparently non-capitalist aspects of the USSR nor its decline and eventual collapse.

Indeed, while the Trotskyist theory of the USSR as a degenerated workers' state has become untenable given the chronic economic stagnation of the USSR that became increasingly apparent after the 1960s, and which culminated in the collapse of the USSR in 1990, it has been Ticktin's radical reconstruction of this theory that has so far provided the most convincing understanding of the Soviet system and its decline and fall.

However, as we showed in Part 2, Ticktin's theory still falls short of the mark. Rather than seeing the USSR as being a social system stuck in the transition between capitalism and socialism, we have taken up the point of departure suggested by Bordiga to argue that the USSR was in transition to capitalism.

We have argued that in order to break out of its backwardness and subordinate position within the world division of labour the state bureaucracy, which had formed after the Russian Revolution, sought to make the transition to capitalism through the transitional form of state capitalism. In its efforts to industrialise, the Russian state sought the forced development of productive-capital that required the suppression of the more cosmopolitan and crisis ridden forms of money and commodity capital. However, while such forced capitalist development allowed an initial rapid industrialisation, the distortions it produced within the political economy of the USSR eventually became a barrier to the complete transition to capitalism in Russia.

As such we have argued that the USSR was essentially based on capitalist commodity-production. However, as a consequence of the historical form of forced transition to capitalism there was a dislocation between the capitalist nature of production and its appearance as a society based on commodity-exchange. This dislocation led to the deformation of value and the defective content of use values that both provided the basis for the persistence of the distinctly non-capitalist features of the USSR and led to the ultimate decline and disintegration of the USSR.

As we saw in the last issue in relation to the war in Kosovo the question of Russia remains an important one on the geo-political stage. The economic and political problems of breaking up and reintegrating the Eastern bloc into the global structure of capitalism is one that has yet to find a solution, and this is particularly true of Russia itself (which is, after all, the world's second nuclear power).

The forced development of productive-capital for over half a century has left Russia with an economy based on huge monopolies unable to compete on the world market. At the same time the insistence by the ideologists of Western capitalism that all that Russia needed was deregulation and liberalisation has simply given rise to the emergence of money-capital in its most parasitical and predatory form. As a consequence, Russian resubordination to the dictates of the international law of value has left it with one part of its economy reverting back to barter while the other is dominated by a Mafiacapitalism that is blocking any further economic development. Hence, despite all the efforts of the USA and the IMF, Russia still remains mired in its transition to capitalism.
Working for Wages: The Roots of Insurgence by Martin Glaberman and Seymour Faber

Review by Neil Fettes

"At this time, as for a very long time now, the class struggle consisted in more or less short-lived and scattered actions. Now and then sudden outbreaks of resistance, tough but quickly broken by order of the union bigbosses, make it possible to think that the other forms of struggle could appear - then everything would collapse back again into apathy."

"The chiefs and chieflings of the parties and the trade unions loudly deplored this apathy, without permitting anyone to inquire in public whether this apathy was not itself once the basis of their position as bureaucrats and the consequences of their dirty work - legal, patriotic, electoral, and so forth. And then there were the little political groups, the 'groupuscules', preaching in the desert conceptions a half-century old and more."

--- the Mass Strike in France Informations Correspondence Ouvrières

This description of the class struggle in France, written by a small now-defunct organisation neatly describes the apparent state of class struggle outside of periods of open resistance. To an untrained eye the picture appears to be of idyllic class peace, and then apparently from nowhere near insurrectionary movements can appear. It is often wrongly supposed by academic Marxists and sociologists that class is a 'thing.' A tidy formula according to which income and education allow the user of this formula to sort individuals into neat little packages. But 'class', whatever else it might be, is not a thing, it is a social relationship, and because humanity makes for an inexact science, class is a leaky package. According to some, these 'leaks' prove class does not exist.

Martin Glaberman and Seymour Faber have spent many years of their lives involved in activities based around the premise that class does exist, and at the heart of the working class there is the creative potential to create a new world. In their book Working for Wages Glaberman and Faber begin with this proposition and, following the book's subtitle, the roots of the insurgency - map the origins of and power of the working class' resistance to capitalism.

In the preface to the book, the authors explain that their intention is to fill a vacuum: to probe the source of why working people rebel against work and what the possible outcome of their struggles might be. Written in simple and straightforward language Working for Wages serves as a very readable introduction to the ideas that Glaberman has helped to expound for over half a century; first, as part of the Johnson-Forest Tendency and later in his successor organisations including Bewick Publishing, and through such pamphlets as 'Punching Out' and "Be His Payment High or Low."

"The question is not what goal is envisaged for the time being by this or that member of the proletariat, or even the proletariat as a whole. The question is what is the proletariat and what course of action will it be forced historically to take in conformity with its own nature."

--- Marx: The Holy Family

Many people who argue against Marx's theories of class struggle ask why do the workers appear to accept capitalism? Why are they not in permanent revolt against this system? The question is a good one, but it reveals more about the people who ask the question than those who answer it. Let's put it this way. Marx wrote in The Manifesto of the Communist Party that under capitalism the worker is "compelled to face with sober senses, his real condition of life, and his relations with his kind." What seems like
acceptance is often shrewd awareness of the possibilities and limits of struggle at a given time. Glaberman once told me a story which sheds some light on this matter. In the 1940's, unions came to try to organise a small light manufacturing plant in Detroit. On a number of occasions, organisng drives were launched, but after the votes were held, the drives were defeated. According to most sociological and traditional leftist readings, the workers were 'backward.' Yet another interpretation is possible. The workers knew the union and the advantages it would bring to them; however, the workers also knew the drawbacks. The union meant slightly better wages, benefits, and job security. The union also meant the speed-up. Perhaps because they were women workers whose reliance on their husbands' larger paycheque afforded them a greater measure of freedom, they chose to maintain a measure of control over their workplace over a larger paycheque. Backwardness or class consciousness?

The point is, as Glaberman and Faber document through a wealth of anecdotal evidence, although work is a facet of every worker's existence, there is also the constant struggle on the job to assert a measure of control and to resist the employers' agenda. This resistance takes many forms: absenteeism, sabotage, strikes, wildcats and in exceptional cases the establishment of workers' councils. Viewed in this way, it is not workers who cause strikes; rather it is the bosses' inhumanity and the workers' desire to humanise their surroundings that make for industrial conflict. While the authors are careful not to exaggerate every strike, every disruption of production, as the potential crises that could overthrow capitalism, they are also aware that these conflicts are part of the same chain.

The point Marx made over and over again is that the working class is revolutionary or it is nothing. On the face of it, this assertion is empirically hard to accept. Worldwide, the labour and socialist movements appear to have been in retreat for several decades. In the United States, defeated, and betrayed struggles serve as a litany of indictments of the failings of the official leaders of the working class: PATCO, P-9, Greyhound, Staley, Caterpillar, Detroit, the list goes on and on. Yet it is a mistake to see the workers' movement as merely that section of the working class organised within the trade unions or worse still the union leadership. In chapters entitled "The war on the job" and "Work As Play or Making Work Human" Glaberman and Faber demonstrate the class struggle is an ongoing and never ending struggle within the world of work. As Marx put it the oppressor and the oppressed, stand "in constant opposition to one another, [carrying] on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight..." As in Marx's time, now today. Despite the seeming route of the traditional working class organisations, the class struggle continues unabated.

Another common objection is the predominance of racist and sexist ideas, the whole-scale belief in religion, and other socially conservative ideas that seem to belie any possible revolutionary role for the working class. The authors however point out that the if one were to examine the attitudes of the Russian working class in 1917, one would find religious obscurantism, sexism, anti-Semitism, illiteracy and countless other 'backward' ideas. Was the abandonment of these reactionary attitudes a prerequisite to revolutionary action? Of course not.

This latter objection that it is the ideas in the head of the working class rather than its social being, leads many on the 'left' to argue that without the intervention of a vanguard party to issue orders to the class and direct the revolution, there can be no revolution. The authors quite correctly point to significant movements of the class in the twentieth century that disprove the traditional leftist interpretations. In Hungary in 1956, a massive demonstration organised by dissident students and intellectuals created a momentum which overthrew the state and set up workers councils across the country. The leftist who whines the reasons for the defeat of the revolution was the absence of the vanguard party and not the massive counter-revolutionary efforts of the second most powerful nation on earth cannot be taken seriously. The events in France in the spring of 1968 were not sparked by economic crises or the party paper, but by unhappiness among students, because of, among other things a prohibition on female students visiting male dorm rooms at the university. In what seemed like the blink
of an eye, ten million workers were on the streets. While neither of these titanic struggles were ultimately successful, the creative potentialities of working people were amply demonstrated. The key point that Glaberman and Faber return to again and again is a portrait of the worker as a living, breathing human being rather than the idealised proletarian of leftist mythology.

It is perhaps a poor critic who complains about things which are not in a book rather than things which are, but perhaps the weaknesses of the book are in what has been left out. The authors state that their book is intended to fill a gap with “a study insurgescies” and the book is clearly intended to have a timeless quality about it. Nevertheless, it is striking that much of the anecdotal evidence on workers strikes and workplace struggles date from the 1970’s and seem to end in the early 1980’s. While I am not of the opinion that the last twenty years of history has meant the end of history or of class struggle, it would have been useful to look at the way that class struggle has changed or been re-channelled in light of the capitalist assault on working people under the Reagan, Bush and Clinton presidencies.

A second point is the question of globalisation. In the 1960’s and 70’s Detroit was the centre of a radical workers movement that led every would-be Marxist-Leninist vanguard scurrying to set up branches there. Thirty years later and Motor City has fallen on hard times. Vast numbers of jobs have been exported to different sectors of the globe. While globalisation is often presented as a vast unstoppable juggernaut, something which in my opinion in a tremendous exaggeration which often exposes just how vulnerable capital is, occupying a seventy year old factory when production is about to be shifted thousands of miles away is a good question for working people. Of course, this might sound like faulting someone in 1932 for writing about the state of the working class and then criticising them for not predicting the sit-down strike. One of these tactics may now include the use of new technological communication. A few years ago when I was living in Calgary, I participated in a solidarity tour with members of the Women of the Waterfront group, women whose husbands were striking Liverpool dockers ironically resisting globalisation and casualisation of their industry. Even though the strike was ultimately lost, the solidarity efforts which organised hot-cargoing and solidarity action across the globe were largely organised through email and Internet communications.

But these small quibbles and certainly not reason to prevent someone from buying the book. The biggest complaint about this book however, is the price. For some mysterious reason the publisher has listed this under-200 page book for $26.95 (over $40 Canadian), making it a luxury item for many. This atrocity can be partially overcome by ordering the book directly from Bewick Editions for $20 including postage.

_Neil Fettes teaches ESL in Toronto, Canada_

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(from p. 14)

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Fraternally submitted,
Frank Girard
Internationalism is the U.S. branch of the International Communist Current (ICC), which is probably the largest of the Left Communist groups. Its journal—also called Internationalism—has been published for at least 25 years. Over the years the DB has occasionally reprinted articles from the journal, most of them polemics aimed usually at the DB itself or DeLeonism and other tendencies in our political sector whose shortcomings it finds worthy of note. Unfortunately the four-part polemic reviewed below is much too long for the DB. Readers can send for the four issues at $1 each from PO Box 288, New York, NY 10018—fg]

Internationalism and “The Legacy of DeLeonism”: A Review

Almost exactly a year ago, DB102 announced Internationalism’s publication of “The Formation of De Leonist Ideology,” the first installment of a planned four-part series, “The Legacy of De Leonism,” promising a review when the series was completed. Since then the three succeeding installments have been published: “The Economic Confusions of Daniel De Leon,” (#114, Sept-Oct, ‘00), “De Leon’s Misconceptions on Class Struggle,” (#115, Dec-Jan, ‘00), and “The Political Misconceptions of De Leonism,” (#117, Apr-May, ‘00).

Part 1, “The Formation of De Leonist Ideology” (Internationalism #112, April-May 2000) begins: “There is no way to understand the history of the revolutionary working class movement in the U.S. without coming to grips with Daniel De Leon and De Leonism, the political tendency that continues to adhere to his programmatic outlook.” And “come to grips” is exactly the intention of its author, Jerry Grevin, for despite his laudatory comments on De Leon’s role in opposing the racist, nationalist, and reformist tendencies in the early U.S. socialist movement, his real purpose seems to be to denigrate De Leon, using the whole catalog of accusations voiced by three generations of labor historians influenced by the memoirs of such socialist and labor union careerists as Samuel Gompers, Morris Hillquit, W.Z. Foster and others for whom De Leon and The People were an ever-present thorn in the flesh.

De Leon’s principal failure, according to Grevin and Internationalism, was his development of the idea of socialist industrial unions as the model for the society of the future instead of workers’ councils which became the revolutionary organization of choice after the Russian Revolution. Internationalism’s insistence on the superiority of workers’ councils—the Russian Soviets—results, I think, from an unwillingness to consider the matter objectively.

While it is true that workers’ councils soon became the prevailing form of revolutionary organization during the upsurge in worker combativity after 1917, they have a 100 percent record of failure. The history of the councils in Russia is one of unmitigated disaster. They were taken over by a Leninist elite, the Communist Party, and evolved into a dictatorship over the working class at least as repressive as anything private capitalism has to offer. The post-1917 acceptance of workers councils as a revolutionary form of organization resulted from the influence of the Third International. With few exceptions the revolutionary wing of the socialist movement worldwide had accepted the dictates of the new International, which took over the direction of what was widely regarded as the beginning of a world revolution. The Bolshevik revolutionary scenario of a party-directed urban insurrection plus worker’s councils became the only allowable scheme. We find them usually as the mass organizational reflection of premature insurrections engineered by vanguard parties eager to seize power. As in Russia, such efforts elsewhere also failed. Consider Germany, Hungary, and Bavaria in 1919, Germany in 1923, and China in the late 1920s.

As for De Leon himself, after briefly mentioning his successes Internationalism faults him for a
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Part 2, "The Economic Confusions of Daniel De Leon"
The attack on De Leon as a Marxist theoretician begins in Part 2. The primary confusion
according to Internationalism is his acceptance of Ferdinand Lassalle’s "Iron Law of Wages." Lassalle
held that under capitalism there was a long term tendency for wages to decline despite workers’ struggles.
Karl Marx too saw this tendency as a factor affecting the level of wages along with the business cycle, changes
in technology, and the intensity of the class struggle. Upon careful consideration of the
evidence it becomes clear that what Internationalism considers an 'economic confusion' of De Leon was
shared by Karl Marx. How else to explain this passage by Marx from page 73 of the New York Labor
News edition of Value, Price, and Profit: "...the general tendency of capitalist production is not to raise,
but to sink the average standard of wages or to push the value of labor more or less to its minimum limit.”
Marx goes on to say that in 99 cases out of a hundred, efforts to increase their share of the wealth they
produce or to resist efforts to decrease it will fail. Nevertheless the struggle itself is an evidence of the
revolutionary potential of our class. In all this Marx is not saying anything that De Leon doesn’t echo. In
the concluding pages of VP and P Marx, after pointing out to workers the limitations and actually the
futility of these daily struggles in the face of overwhelming power says, "They ought not to forget that
they are fighting with effects, not with the causes of these effects..."

After the well-known statement, "Instead of the conservative motto, "A fair day's wage for a fair
day's work, they [workers] ought to inscribe on their banner the revolutionary watchword, "Abolition of
the wages system!" Marx concludes with this:

After this very long, and I fear, tedious exposition, which I was obliged to enter into to
do some justice to the subject-matter, I shall conclude by proposing the following,
resolutions:-
Firstly. A general rise in the rate of wages would result in a fall of the general rate of
profit, but, broadly speaking, not affect the prices of commodities,
Secondly. The general tendency of capitalist production is not to raise, but to sink, the
average standard of wages.
Thirdly. Trades Unions work well as centers of resistance against the encroachments
of capital. They fail partially from an injustice use of their power. They fail generally
from limiting themselves to a guerilla war against the effects of the existing system,
instead of simultaneously trying to change it, instead of using their organized forces as a
leverage for the final emancipation of the working class, that is to say the ultimate abolition
of the wages system.

Wages, Price and Profit, p.74

[Note: The author, Jerry Grevin, faults De Leon for having misunderstood Marx's thinking on wages
despite "...having translated into English the very works in which Marx argued his analysis." Three
works that come to mind in which Marx argued his case: V, P, & P, which was written in English and
required no translation; Capital, which was certainly not translated by De Leon; and Wage Labor and
Capital, published by the SLP but translated by Harriet Lothrop –fg]
Part III. "De Leon’s Misconceptions on Class Struggle"

Here Internationalism raises questions about the tactics advocated by De Leon. These misconceptions hinge largely on his failure to take into account an economic phenomenon, the "Decadence of Capitalism," discovered and named by Internationalism at least a half century after De Leon’s death. According to ‘decadence theory’ as promulgated by Internationalism, capitalism reached the end of its progressive, ascendent phase in 1914 just before WWI. Prior to WWI capitalism was capable of granting reforms and improvements in workers’ standard of living. That being the case Internationalism sees De Leon’s opposition to reforms as a mistaken policy since capital could and did improve the lot of workers.

But the SLP in the U.S., the SPGB in England, and the Left Communists elsewhere did not oppose reforms and reformism on the basis of whether capitalism had the capacity to grant reforms but rather because they recognized the motives of the capitalists and the reformers: to buy labor peace and a more stable work force. The question of cost isn’t in it. No price is too high that will enable the capitalist class to continue their ownership of the means of production. In fact, the development of a left wing in nearly all parties of the Second International around the turn of the century reflected the need for revolutionaries to separate themselves from the reformist majorities and their willingness to deal with capital in the matter of concessions to its wage slaves designed maintain social stability.

It was this tendency which De Leon and his supporters in the SLP fought during the first ten years of his editorship of the People until the split in 1899/1900 and afterwards in the new Socialist Party of America. Strangely it is this tendency—reformist to the core—which Internationalism by implication defends as rational because its reformism is in keeping with the reality of “pre-decadent” capitalism. In other words, Internationalism regards the rightwing socialists, reformers, against the revolutionary left in the splits around the turn of the century that created the opposing revolutionary parties worldwide. In the U.S. De Leon and the SLP vs. Hillquit and Victor Berger and the Socialist Party. In Britain the Socialist Party of Great Britain and the British SLP versus the Social Democratic Federation and the Fabians. In Russia, Lenin and the Bolsheviks vs. the Mensheviks. In Germany, Liebknecht and Luxemburg vs. Bebel, Kautsky, and the party establishment. The revolutionary positions taken by De Leon, Lenin, and others, which Internationalism regards as being at odds with the logic of capitalist decadence theory because they ignore the capacity of capital to grant reforms, suddenly become defensible beginning in 1914 because WWI activated the decadence switch of world capitalism rendering it incapable of granting reforms.

Most Marxists would agree that capitalism has outlived its usefulness as an economic system under which humanity can progress. We have only to look at the history of the last century. The title “The Century of Total War” given to a recent TV series speaks to its nationalist military nature. For humanity it deserves the term “Century of Total Human Misery” and environmentally “The Century of Total Environmental Devastation.” Unfortunately this record doesn’t stand as the principal idea of Internationalism’s theory of capitalist decadence. Rather, Internationalism concentrates on a sort of corollary to its decadence theory, the exceptionally wrongheaded idea that since 1914, when capitalism supposedly went into decline, it is no longer capable of granting political and economic reforms to its working class—this in the face of a historical record that points to a contrary set of facts. One has only to name the economic reforms of the Thirties—Social Security and the other reforms of the Roosevelt and Truman era like welfare, WPA, expansion of the franchise to include women in 1920, as well as the social democratic “victories” in much of Western Europe.

Events since 1914 certainly confirm the idea that capitalism has outlived its usefulness. By 1924 the U.S. was experiencing an agricultural depression, and the stock market crash of 1929 signaled the onset of the Great Depression. Both of these would seem to bear out Internationalism’s appraisal of
decadence. On the other hand the capitalist handling of working class dissatisfaction by the New Deal in the 1930s and Keynes-influenced reforms for the next four decades demonstrate the absurdly flawed analysis of Internationalism: that decadent capitalism is no longer capable of granting reforms to its wage slaves.

But let’s leave Internationalism’s mechanical theorizing about decadence and consider a Marxist interpretation of the means of production continued in both industry and agriculture. It engendered a glut in both manufactured and agricultural products and created the unemployment that left workers without the means to satisfy their needs. Clearly our class under capitalism had built a productive giant with the potential to satisfy the material needs of everyone. What stood in the way? The capitalist economic system— the market. The evidence of this contradiction between the productive capacity of society and its inability to satisfy human needs was the ongoing depressions of the last quarter of the 19th century. In the U.S. this was signaled by the Panic of ’73 and the five-year depression that followed it and the equally horrendous depression of 1890-1900, the latter coinciding with the first decade of De Leon’s tenure as editor of the People. In both depressions capital exerted downward pressure on wages. Far from being a period of economic ascendance with capital willing and able to grant improvements in workers’ standard of living, as Internationalism asserts, our masters successfully fought the desperation strikes of a starving workforce time after time. Consider the Great Railroad Strike of 1877, the Homestead Strike, the Pullman Strike. The union movement was even more useless than it is today. The leadership of the Knights of Labor was opposed to strikes on principle, while the A.F. of L., headed by Samuel Gompers was rapidly developing the class collaboration strategy that marks its contemporary policy.

To suggest, as does Internationalism, that capitalism in its ascendant phase in the last quarter of the 19th century found it possible and profitable to grant reforms and wage raises ignores the realities of the human misery behind the class struggle and most especially the labor glut that resulted from improvements in technology. Far from capital having entered a decadent phase since 1914 that has made reforms impossible, the evidence shows the contrary. During the darkest days of the Great Depression of the thirties capital saved itself by the long list of New Deal reforms in terms of hours and wages as well as Social Security, welfare, and other measures designed to quiet worker dissatisfaction. The standard of living of our class continued to rise right up to around 1970.

Part IV. “The Political Misconceptions of DeLeonism”

Nothing demonstrates more clearly the difference between De Leonists and the heirs of Lenin than Internationalism’s insistence that socialist revolution must be violent. The difference, I believe, arises from environmental causes. In the cases of both Tsarist Russia and the U.S., Marxism was imported into a new political and economic arena. Tsarist repression forced Marxism’s adherents underground. The new revolutionary movement had to operate as a conspiracy. Like its predecessor social movements, its militants could expect either deportation to Siberia or exile abroad. Its only hope of success lay in an insurrection that would overthrow the Tsarist government. The movement was forced underground and became a conspiracy.

In the U.S. Marxism found a capitalism so secure that it could afford the luxury of electoral democracy, by which it could settle its internal disputes while at the same time maintaining the social peace it requires. Given the constitutional basis of democracy rooted in a guarantee of what amounted to the right of revolution, workers could organize unions, organize politically to contest elections, and agitate openly to advance labor’s interests. Marxists were in the forefront of the labor movement.

Unfortunately one effect of this “bourgeois democracy,” as Internationalism calls it, was the rapid development of the revisionist tendency in Marxism: the effort to seek pro-labor reforms through
parliamentary action. At the same time leadership of the labor unions fell into the hands of careerists who functioned as capitalism’s “labor lieutenants,” as a prominent 19th century capitalist called them.

This was the labor and socialist movement when De Leon arrived on the scene in 1890. He immediately joined forces with other revolutionaries in the SLP. In 1892 the party began running candidates in presidential elections instead of fusing with reformist labor parties. Its members also sought to influence the labor movement. In 1895 when this “boring from within” had obviously failed, the SLP set on foot a socialist union movement, the Socialist Trades and Labor Alliance, to compete with the AFL, rather like the socialist unions in Germany.

Ruling classes secure in a stable economic and political system could never grant socialists the right to the ballot. But the ballot was a mixed blessing. It was during this period—the last quarter of the 19th Century—that we see growth of the revisionism we associate with the Second International. In the U.S. the ensuing split resulted in the organization of the Socialist Party of America, largely reformist, which grew by leaps and bounds and the much smaller SLP advocating a revolutionary union movement and political program.

Dropping the immediate demands that characterized its pre-split election platform, the SLP, beginning in 1902, entered elections with single revolutionary demand, “Abolition of Capitalism.” Clearly it is possible for revolutionaries to use capitalism’s “bourgeois democracy” to call for revolution, and the ballot can be used to campaign for a peaceful revolution as the SLP did for over 80 years.

Now consider the alternative. The U.S. Communist Party at the behest of the Leninist Third International organized an underground party and deliberately embrace illegality. As a result the CP in the U.S. was a target for the FBI and eventually for the McCarthy hearings and the Smith Act prosecutions.

De Leon’s idea featured a peaceful revolution through the ballot preceded by a period of economic and political education by a revolutionary party and a revolutionary union movement. The combination of an educated working class and foundering capitalism would result in an overwhelming victory at the polls. The socialist majority in Congress would abolish capitalism and disband the state apparatus, the SIs would provide the social organization necessary to organize production.

With minor differences in the details DeLeonists see this model of revolution as containing the features that insure success in advanced industrial nations.

1. It is the best our class can do to assure a peaceful revolution. The ruling class is unlikely to resort to violence since the battlefield would the industries and workplaces where our strength lies, not with weapons on the streets where they have the advantage.

2. It places the revolution on a legal, civilized plane that will not alienate potential supporters.

3. It puts the task of educating our class in the hands of a revolutionary party or parties. The revolution will be carried out by the mass organization of the working class—the socialist industrial unions, which will enforce the victory at the polls by the real revolution, the occupation of the workplaces and their conversion into social property, thus depriving our masters of the basis of their power: ownership of the means of production.

4. The SIs provide the framework for organizing production for use. They are the industrial “government” of future society—the government over things rather than people that Engels spoke of. Political government over people, the government that enforces capitalism’s dictates will be dissolved.
along with its military and police powers of coercion and its armies of administrators, managers, union labor skates, politicians, and the rest of their control personnel.

The beauty of this plan is that the working class will use the facade of democracy, which capital needs for its smooth functioning, in the pre-revolutionary education phase during capitalism’s disintegration. At the same time—and under the same legal rights—our class will be organizing the SIUs that will replace capital’s governmental machinery.

As the IWW puts it, “We will build the new society in the shell of the old.” And as the SLP slogan of the 1930s and 40s put it, All Power to the Socialist Industrial Union!”

Now a few more points not covered above:

1. Internationalism criticizes De Leon for his failure to recognize the importance of the dictatorship of the proletariat. It strikes me that such a dictatorship would be necessary only if the proletariat were a minority, as in Russia in 1917. In advanced capitalist countries today the great majority of the population consists of wage workers. Our task as revolutionaries is to win them over to socialism. No revolution can take place until that is done. Some of the greatest tragedies of a tragic century, where the slaughter of members of our class was greatest, took place where a revolutionary elite decided to set up a dictatorship of the proletariat. Consider the USSR, China, Cambodia.

2. Internationalism states that Marx insisted that revolutions must be violent. This was true in his earlier days, but by 1872 at least, he expressed a different view in a speech on the Hague Congress of the First International, given in Amsterdam after the Congress:

One day the worker will have to seize political supremacy to establish the new organisation of labour; he will have to overthrow the old policy which supports the old institutions if he wants to escape the fate of the early Christians who, neglecting and despising politics, never saw their kingdom on earth.

But we by no means claimed that the means for achieving this goal were identical everywhere.

We know that the institutions, customs and traditions in the different countries must be taken into account; and we do not deny the existence of countries like America, England, and if I knew your institutions better I might add Holland, where the workers may achieve their aims by peaceful means. That being true we must also admit that in most countries on the Continent it is force which must be the lever of our revolution; it is force which will have to be resorted to for a time in order to establish the rule of the workers.

NOTES, ANNOUNCEMENTS, AND SHORT REVIEWS

Anti-Semitism and National Socialism is an essay by Moishe Postone. First published in the collection *Germans and Jews Since the Holocaust: The Changing Situation in West Germany* (Holmes and Meier, 1986), it has now been issued as a pamphlet, No. 7 of its Boomerang Series, by Chronos Publications. Postone argues that the Holocaust and the virulence of Nazi era anti-Semitism sprang not from racist and economic causes, to which we have generally attributed them, but rather from a mystical/irrational aspect of the National Socialism that Hitler brought onto the German political scene. Contrasting the Holocaust to the pogroms of Czarist Russia, he sees the former as more motivated by immediate racial hatred and more by "modern" anti-Semitism, a characteristic of Nazism. The source of this modern anti-Semitism is the development of industrial capitalism which contributed to the dislocation of the conventional social relationships of the peasant/artisan society of Germany and elsewhere in Europe. What made its development especially strong in Germany was the very rapid growth of capitalism and its political repercussions in Germany. The "old" anti-Semitism rampant in Germany prepared the ground for this "modern" version which makes the evil Jews worthy of extermination because they constitute a cancer eating away at the nation, one that must be excised. Most interesting is Postone's view that the Nazi anti-Semitism was a sort of quasi anti-capitalism. Twenty-four pages, no price given, from Chronos Publications, B.M. Chronos, London WCIN 3XX.

The Unabomber and the Future of Industrial Society by T. Fulano. Writing in *Fifth Estate*, the oldest and best-known of the primitivist anarchist journals, Fulano, like John Zerzan, might have been expected to write an admiring essay on Theodore Kaczynski, the Unabomber. Instead this 16-page article taken from the Fall, 1996 issue is highly critical of both Kaczynski himself and also of the Manifesto. Although he contrasts him favorably to General Powell and the other international conspirators in the mass murder of the Gulf War—at least in terms of the magnitude of his acts (three dead versus hundreds of thousands), Fulano attributes the bombings to a maniacal rage that the Unabomber sustained for twenty years while carefully designing and building the bombs. Fulano faults Kaczynski'd defenders and admirers, "his fan club on the West Coast" led by John Zerzan, for their willingness to see the actions of a mad man as a step toward the solution of the problems created by industrial capitalism. Fulano sees this response to the Unabomber as the response of an otherwise thoughtful element in our society who have simply given up on a rational solution and are willing to go along with the Unabomber. No price given. From The Fifth Estate, 4632 Second Ave., Detroit, MI 48201.

Revolutionary Optimist: An Interview with Martin Glaberman is perfectly described by its title. Glaberman is one of the authors of *Working for Wages* reviewed elsewhere in this issue. Conducted by a three-man team from various political persuasions, it enables Glaberman to recount his political history, which began with his joining the Socialist Party of America at age 13, joining the Trotskyist tendency that entered the SP in the mid-thirties, and leaving with the Trots to form the Socialist Workers Party. He then became a part of the Max Schachtman's group, which opposed the official SWP position on the nature of the Soviet Union. When the Schachtmanites split, he became a part of the Johnson-Forest tendency of the SWP. When the J-Fs left the SWP, Glaberman left with them and became a part of the grouping that included Raya Dunayevskaya and CLR James. Besides his wanderings in the jungle of Trotskyist splinter groups and indeed contributing later on to new growth, Glaberman describes his adventures as an industrial worker/political missionary in the Detroit and Flint union movement. Aside from what appears to be an assumption on the part of Glaberman and his interviewers that the working class consists of factory workers, a noteworthy fact about the pamphlet is that Gaberman the
revolutionary seeker has never found a group or program that he can support wholeheartedly.

A Red & Black Notes Pamphlet, 28 pages, $4.00 postpaid from Red & Black Notes, PO Box 47643, Don Mills, Ont MC3 3S7 Canada

Internationalist Notes in the current issue, Volume 3, Number 1, Second Quarter 2001 has transformed itself from a newsletter into a 16-page standard size journal and bills itself as the "Left-Communist Political and Theoretical Journal of the U.S. Supporters of the International Bureau for the Revolutionary Party (IBRP). This first issue begins with an interesting five-page article "Marx and Engels and Human Nature," much of it a review of a 1945 book Human Nature: The Marxist View by Vernon Venable, an Associate Professor of Philosophy at Vassar College. "The Head Fixing Industry: The Growth of Corporate Media Monopolies" contains a wealth of information about the salaries and other perks that capital grants to the media stars it has trained to mystify the masses. Also included are articles on the U.S. Constitution and the U.S. union movement ("Unions Oversee Defeats for Workers"). $2 (A sample copy upon request) from IN-USA, PO Box 57483, Los Angeles, CA 90057.

Red & Black Notes seems to be the only English language councilist journal still in existence now that Collective Action Notes is in remission. This 16-page issue, No. 13, Spring 2001, contains articles on the anti-capitalist movement in Canada as well as theoretical material of interest to non-market socialists. In this issue: "Goodbye to the Welfare State," which begins with the idea that "...the welfare State isn't now and never was, a genuine gain for the working class." The two-page article goes on to point out the ongoing process by which welfare measures are evolving into means tested actions to cut benefits and costs. Social Security—in Canada at least—has developed administration xxxxx to policing rather than administrating claims. R & B next considers the question of resistance to this trend and concludes that the abolition of capitalism is the only solution but unfortunately not one likely to be accomplished soon. The best our class can do is to resist individually and collectively. Also book reviews; "A Fair Day's Wages for a Fair Day's Work," an 1881 essay by Frederick Engels; and a half page of the "Ultra-Left on the Web," a listing which I intend to reproduce below with some additions. $5 for four issues (North America), $7 (elsewhere), from POB 47643 - 939 Lawrence Avenue East, Don Mills, ON, M4C 3S7, Canada.

On the Web
Red & Black Notes web page http://ca.geocities.com/red_black_ca
Break their Haughty Power Loren Goldner's web site http://home.earthlink.net/~lrgoldner
Chronicles of the Class Struggle A new site which hopes to serve as the multi-lingual bulletin board for news of the class struggle. http://www.chroniclesfromtheclasswar.com/
Troplin A mostly French Language site featuring, among others the writings of Gilles Dauve' http://www.geocities.com/Paris/Chalet/6118/
Wage Slave X The personal web page of a supporter of Internationalist Perspective http://www.geocities.com/wageslavex
Love & Treason Small collection of good left-communist essays http://www.infoshop.org/myep/love_index.html
INTERNATIONALIST DISCUSSION LIST
A new internet discussion list; for details go to
http://www.geocities.com/wagedlavev/pfdn.htm or write to Red and Black Notes

Socialist Labor Party    www.slp.org
New Union Party           www1.minn.net/~nup
Socialist Party of Great Britain www.worldsocialism.org
New Democracy            www.newdemocracyworld.org
Internationalism          www.internationalism.org
Chain Reaction            www.worksintl.com/chain-reaction
South Chicago ABC Zine Distribution http://members.xoom.com/thoughtbombs/
Institute for Social Ecology (Murray Bookchin) www.social-ecology.org
Revolutionary Perspectives http://www.ibrp.org and www.internationalist.net
Collective Action Notes   http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/Lobby/2379

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