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Privatized warfare in the form of terrorism (NGO terrorism?) has become an increasingly important part of the social scene. *New Democracy*’s article on the subject covers what we might consider the gamut of anti-capitalist reactions including dark suspicions about the role of the political state in the tragedy.

Latin America has always provided encouragement for leftists unhappy about the quiescence of the U.S. masses. Nicaragua and El Salvador come to mind, as does Chiapas and more recently Noam Chomsky’s admiration for the Brazilian Workers’ Party and its leader charismatic leader. At the moment

"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 cooperation.

The pages of the DB are open to anyone in this political sector, the only limitation being that submissions be typewritten, single-spaced, and copier ready. We do not edit 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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IS IT REALLY
“A WAR AGAINST TERRORISM?”

In the wake of the horrific events of September 11 our political leaders declared war on terrorism, which they claim will last “for fifty years and may include as many as 60 countries as enemies. President Bush’s $379 billion Pentagon budget includes $48 billion for fighting terrorism.

Why would the government launch such a vast undertaking? Nothing is as it seems in this war. The government is lying about just about everything. Beneath the rhetoric about terrorism and “the clash of civilizations” their real goals are very different and have more to do with controlling the American people and working people around the world than they have with a real strategy to fight terrorism.

What is the US government really trying to accomplish? Three things:
1) Ratchet up social control,
2) Project military power more aggressively "to places around the globe where elite power is threatened.
3) Establish a permanent US military presence in Central Asia, to secure that region’s vast resources—read "oil"—for US needs.

Of these goals, number one is the most important. But since the other two are more easily explained, let’s look at them first.

PLAYING “THE GREAT GAME” FOR OIL

For, more than a century Afghanistan was the object of the “Great Game” played by the British Empire and Russia for control of this crossroads of Asia. When it recruited and armed the mujahadeen in Afghanistan to attack Russian invaders in 1979, the US became a key player in the game.

Afghanistan has even more importance now than it did in the nineteenth century. Central Asia and the Caspian region hold the greatest proven reserves of oil and gas in the world after Saudi Arabia—from 60 to as many as 200 billion barrels of oil and 236 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, according to John Maresca, Vice President of UNOCAL Corporation, in Congressional testimony of 2/12/98. The difficulty is getting these vast reserves to market. Afghanistan is the best route for an oil pipeline to deliver these products. The chief obstacle to construction of the pipeline has been political instability: “Construction of the pipeline... in Afghanistan could not begin until a recognized government is in place that has the confidence of governments, lenders, and our company.”

The US media have of course kept mum about the oil pipeline, lest Americans suspect that the real goals of the government in this War are not as pure as it claims.

PROJECTING US POWER

The ferocious bombing of Afghanistan, complete with cluster bombs and 15,000 pound “daisy cutters,” the largest non-nuclear device in the US arsenal, provided an awesome display of the military might of the US elite and an object lesson to any country on Earth that may have ideas about bucking the New World Order. The message is pretty clear: The US has unchecked, unmatchable firepower. Get out of aniline and you will get a taste of what Afghanistan has got.

The US is also using the war to project military power more aggressively to “hot spots” around the
globe. Since there is no, longer a credible Communist threat, the US is using "Islamic terrorism" to legitimize global intervention on behalf of local elites and US and European investors. The US is filling the power vacuum in Central Asia left by the collapse of the Soviet Union, establishing military bases at key points in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, as well as in Pakistan in South Asia, where there is growing instability. The US has announced that these military emplacements are long-term. In mid-January the US dispatched 660 troops to the Philippines, having supposedly discovered a link between Al Qaeda and Moslem rebels there. The government has also found supposed links between Al Qaeda and Columbian "terrorists," by which it means not the right-wing death squads which work hand-in-glove with the US-supplied Columbian armed forces, but the peasant guerillas who have been fighting for over thirty years against the wealthy elite of Columbia.

WAR AND SOCIAL CONTROL

Near the end of the Cold War, as the Soviet Union was about to self-destruct, Boris Yeltsin made a very revealing comment to the US government. He said, "We are going to do something very terrible to you. We are going to deprive you of an enemy."

What did he mean? The 50-year long Cold War had proved extremely useful for both the Soviet and US elites. The "Soviet threat" justified gigantic military budgets and a world system of US military bases. It legitimized US attacks on popular revolutionary movements in Central America and Indochina and other places too numerous to mention and the installation of US client regimes by the CIA in Iran and Guatemala and elsewhere. The "Soviet threat" gave much needed cover to repression in the US against militant trade unionists and against the early civil rights movement and the anti-Vietnam war movement. The Soviets, of course, used the "capitalist threat" in similar ways to justify anti democratic, repression in Hungary and Poland and throughout Eastern Europe and in the Soviet Union itself. If the Cold War, had not existed, Soviet and US ruling elites would have had to invent it.

The use of war by ruling elites for social control is hardly new. In a recent article in Le Monde, Philip Golub says, "Indeed every war has both a foreign and a domestic agenda; Aristotle [writing 2400 years ago] reminds us, that a tyrant declares war "to deny his subjects leisure and to impose on them the constant need for a leader."

The US has needed a new Cold War to take the, place of the Soviet threat for over ten years. Sure, the government tried to pump up Saddam Hussein as "worse than Hitler," but how seriously can you take an enemy which is defeated in a few weeks with fewer than 80 American battle deaths? The government tried, to scare us with images of "rogue states"like North Korea, but North Korea is on life support. Not a very credible threat.

WHY NOW?

The "war on terrorism" represents a dramatic escalation of the strategy of social control undertaken by the corporate elite in 1972 as a counteroffensive to the revolutionary upsurge of the 1960s and early '70s. The essence of that strategy was to introduce insecurity and fear into people's lives at every possible point. Now the government has taken the extraordinary step of promising us "a generation of war." This war on terror is designed to terrorize us with threats of a sinister enemy from whom we have to be protected, and to grant the government limitless powers to police us. If we raise our voice against the government, we ourselves are under threat of being identified as "with the terrorists."

It is important to see this new "elite strategy in historical perspective. At the close of WWII governments here and in Western, Europe adopted a "welfare state" approach to, pacify their citizens.
While there were still great inequalities and injustices, the lot of most Americans improved. But what was expected to be a period of social peace erupted in the 1960s into a "revolution of rising expectations" here and abroad.

In 1972 the government and corporate leaders went on the counteroffensive to lower expectations and tighten their hold on society. For 30 years now they have attacked people in every area of, their lives in, the name, of "the free market" or "globalization."

In the last few years, however, this strategy has reached a dead end. Everywhere they look the corporate and government elite see growing resistance to their rule:

- The growing anti-capitalist, anti-"globalization" movement. The mass demonstrations against the World Trade Organization that took place in Seattle, Quebec, Sweden, and Genoa represent the emergence of something which has not been seen for 100 years: an international anti-capitalist movement not controlled by Communists. The demonstrations are concrete expressions of the emerging agenda of people around the entire globe. It is true that this movement is an extremely mixed bag and has not formulated any, clear answers or widely-accepted vision of what a new society to replace capitalism might be or how we might get there, but these are the questions with which it is concerned. As the depredations of capitalism on human society become ever more obvious, the tendency of the movement to pose revolutionary answers to these fundamental questions will only grow.

- An end to belief in capitalism as a system. Millions of people, perhaps billions worldwide: have, lost their confidence in the future under capitalism.. This ironically is an inevitable effect of thirty years of corporate attacks on people's security, but the rulers. had no other choice. They had to lower people's expectations and they did. The absolute conditions of life for most of the world's people have worsened dramatically in the past decades, and their relative conditions, compared with the wealthier people in their own societies, have grown even worse. Loss of confidence in the system is very dangerous for elite rule; it leads people to search for alternatives.

- A growing willingness to see the system as the problem. Ten years ago, when the few of us who founded New Democracy began talking with each other, it struck us that the problems people were then experiencing - high unemployment, homelessness, health care priced out of reach - seemed to many people to be like the weather. No one was responsible for them, they were just there: "Shit Happens." Few people actually saw these things as functions of government or corporate policies. The political movements of the time mostly revolved around "identity politics" - gay rights, feminism, multi-culturalism and such.

Now this has changed. Millions are aware that the rich have stacked the deck.. They see Enron executives cashing out and leaving their employees robbed of their life savings. They see the corporate hand behind attacks on health care, and job security and public education.

This new restiveness isn't just in the US, of course. Capitalism has devastated wide swaths of the globe in these years. In Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, promises of a better life through capitalism have proved. hollow. China has, experienced decades of social dislocation and increasing inequalities, which some experts believe presage uncontrollable social upheavals. The standard of living in Mexico and some other Central and South American countries is less than a third, of what it was, in 1982. In Argentina mass resistance to capitalist measures toppled four governments in December, 2001 and threatens to spread to other countries.

Where is all this leading? It's not clear. It is not that the elite expect revolutionary upheaval tomorrow, but they see the possibility of revolution growing larger on the horizon. The elite understand that they cannot continue to rule in the old way with democratic liberties and a world at substantial peace. The "war on terrorism" is how they are preparing for the future in a society which is rapidly discovering that it has no future. This new elite strategy is an admission of profound, potentially terminal weakness.

The fact that capitalism has nothing to offer but endless war does not mean that the system will
collapse of itself or that we necessarily will succeed in creating a new society. Revolutions are built on hope, not despair. We can only find our way to a new society if we make this our goal and if we have a path to take us there.

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(from p. 2)
Argentinians are providing the drama. “I.M.’s” article from the Australian anarcho-syndicalist monthly Rebel Worker suggests ongoing localized rebellions more in the traditional expectations of our sector of the political spectrum rather than an all-or-nothing insurrection like Russia in 1917. Besides the “popular assemblies” an important element in left communist thinking, the article reports strikes and factory occupations that hearten both De Leonists and anarcho-syndicalists. Something tells me, though, that it will be a while before the socialist industrial unions in Argentina have organized production for use.

Pieter Lawrence’s Socialist Standard article on the change from capitalism to socialism begins by noting the misconceptions modern readers draw from the Communist Manifesto, written 150 years ago during capitalism’s technological infancy. Like De Leonists, the world socialists see the potential material abundance as the factor that makes possible an immediate transformation to socialism. My only reservation about the article is found in the last three sentences where he speaks of the post-revolutionary need for “re-organization and development” of production. It is just this problem that the socialist industrial unions will have solved prior to the political revolution. In the words of the IWW, we’ll build the new society in the shell of the old.

Next Perry Sanders’ speech recalls the earliest mass repression of workers by Lenin and the Bolshevik leadership. The letter from the International Communist Group points out one more error on my part in writing about the contemporary communist left. A recently published book on its history carries the story only to 1945 simply omitting 57 years of organizational evolution. I wish someone could recommend an authoritative source for the missing half century.

Adam Buick comments on the hostilities between the De Leonists and the World Socialist Movement that have added zest to the revolutionary movement in the English speaking world for the past century. And I reply. Next New Internationalist/Workers’ Voice analyzes Anarchy in Kansas’s DB112 article and predicts a social struggle in education of major proportions—one that has possibilities for revolutionary organizing. The Marxist Labor Party has been in existence since 1990. Dmitry Fomin has sent the DB the translation of a major document with the Party’s explanation for the almost immediate collapse of anything resembling socialism after the revolution. He also sent a copy of the MLP’s theoretical journal, Markists, and the translation of the contents and title page of the journal.

Next is my rejoinder to Internationalism, which returned to its self-appointed task of “coming to grips with De Leonism” in its issue number 120. Their sixth article on the subject is a reply to selected parts of my reply in DBs 108 and 109. Since length again prevents publication of the renewed attack, readers who don’t wish to send to Internationalism for the original will have to infer its sense from my response. Interestingly Internationalism’s source is The Life and Times of Daniel De Leon by Carl Reeve, son of the old Stalinist warhorse Ella Reeve Bloor, herself briefly a member of the SLP. It is one of the three English language biographies of De Leon—there is also one in Russian.

Kevin Glover wrote an interesting and informative article on the IWW’s drive to organize an important sector of the wage slave system: food service. The DB borrowed it from Chain Reaction, the Texas prisoner journal. Readers who would like to read a revolutionary prisoners’ magazine can obtain a copy from the address at the end of the article. As usual we end with some notes, announcements, and short reviews.

(to p. 14)
Argentina in Revolt!

The following article throws some significant light on recent events in Argentina. However, there is a strong disturbing tendency to make wild over-generalisations from this experience. The explosive economic conditions which led to the Argentine upheaval do not exist in Britain (where the author comes from) Australia or other advanced capitalist countries!! In Australia as elsewhere, there is an extremely low level of morale and organisation amongst the unemployed and in working class communities.

A focus upon strategic industries and the tremendous potential of workers in these sectors to initiate waves of direct action and inspire others to follow suit remains the most important priority of the few revolutionary groups around with their very limited resources and experienced personnel. -Ed.

"We have seen how the Revolution began with popular risings ever since the first months of 1789. To make a revolution it is not, however, enough that there should be such risings – more or less successful. It is necessary that after the risings there should be left something new in the institutions that would permit new forms of life to be elaborated and established " Kropotkin, The Great French Revolution.

Anarchism is often portrayed by historians and others as somewhat utopian, having no real idea of how to get from capitalism to a free society. Lenin, for example, asserted that anarchists "while advocating the destruction of the state machine, have absolutely no idea of what the proletariat will put in its place." The truth is, of course, different. Anarchists see the initial framework of an anarchist society as being created under statism and capitalism when working class people organise themselves to resist oppression and exploitation. In summary, the very process of collective class struggle would create the basis of anarchism.

Therefore, anarchists do not abstractly compare a free society with the current one. Rather, we see an organic connection between what is and what could be. An anarchist society would be based on the working class's own combat organisations, as created in their struggles within, but against, capitalism and the state.

In this sense, anarchy is not some distant goal but rather an aspect of current struggles against domination, oppression and exploitation (i.e. the class struggle). Anarchism draws upon the autonomous selfactivité and spontaneity of working class people in struggle to inform both its political theory and its vision of a free society. The struggle against hierarchy teaches us not only how to be Anarchists but also gives us a glimpse of what an Anarchist society would be like, what its initial framework could be and the experience of managing our own activities which is required for such a society to function successfully.

Anarchy in Action?

The events in Argentina speak for themselves. Popular risings there have been in abundance. After two and half decades of IMF-backed free-market reforms, more than 40% of the 38 million population live below the poverty line and 100 children die daily from hunger and disease. People have had enough. Millions of people have challenged the state of siege. People are fighting on the streets, standing up to those who express and exploit them. In Cordoba, a car-making centre north-west of Buenos Aires, workers protesting at government plans to reduce wages and apply other austerity measures, occupied the town hall, and then set fire to it.

Various governments have collapsed but in the lives of the working class, nothing changed -- except for
feelings of victory. In the streets the confrontations continued. The power they express, the power of mass direct action, inspires and will not be easily forgotten. The question is, what comes next? Will riot become revolution? The answer to this question depends on what forms of popular self-organisation are being created. Luckily, such forms of working class power are being created.

The most exciting thing is the largely spontaneous appearance of "popular assemblies" after the insurrection last year. These self-managed assemblies are neighbourhood based and run by huge mass meetings of thousands. There are currently 30 assemblies in Buenos Aires and many others all over the country. In the French Revolution, the people of Paris formed the directly democratic community assemblies called "sections." Kropotkin pointed to these as examples of both the popular institutions required to make a revolution ("the districts of Paris laid the foundations of a new, free, social organisation") and "the principles of anarchism." It was by means of these popular assemblies that "the masses, accustomed themselves to act without receiving orders from the national representatives, were practising what was to be described later as Direct Self-Government." A similar process is at work in Argentina. Other forms of popular power are developing. The unemployed workers movement has played a key role in many of the revolts. It has been building for the last five years and in the last year it has helped force the government to introduce policies to aid the unemployed. Its tactics are to paralyse transportation by blocking off major highways in order to make their demands. They are called piqueteros ("the picketers"). Any agreements made are discussed by the participants directly. They do not delegate leaders to negotiate with the government. They make it clear to the blockades and the people there discuss what they should demand and what they should accept. They have the same healthy "distrust of all executive power" which Kropotkin praised the Parisian Sections for!

There are attempts by workers to organise themselves. Throughout Argentina strikes have occurred. Committees of struggle to co-ordinate the protests have been created. Occupations have started. In Redo Turbio, the mine workers have occupied the mines. In Neuquen, the workers have occupied ceramics factory of Zanon, where a workers congress was held in December,

This congress saw almost 400 ceramics workers, teachers, unemployed workers and students meet to discuss the current events. The main organisers were the ceramics workers union (SOENC), the teachers' union of Rio Negro (UNTER), a militant unemployed workers' organisation (MTD) and the teachers of ATEN Centenario. Members and delegations of several other organisations of the region also participated. After intense discussion on a multitude of issues, including the next measures to be taken in their struggle and the need for co-ordination of current struggles, a declaration was agreed. This stated that the ceramics workers of Zanon "struggle for the nationalisation and the reopening of the plant under worker control" and are "mobilising together with the unemployed workers of Neuquen ... and with the teachers and government employees." They aim to intensify "the co-ordination and unity between struggles with the aim of setting up a Regional Co-ordination" as a step towards the unification of "the struggles on a national level". They made "an urgent call for an immediate congregation of the National Assembly of Employed and Unemployed Workers with a 1 in 20 representation, just as was voted in the last Picketers' Assembly in La Matanza. " This would seek to unite all those "that are struggling through democratically elected representatives voted in Assemblies within the workplace."

Clearly, Bakunin's prediction that the "future social organisation must be made solely from the bottom up, by the free association or federation of workers, firstly in their unions, then in the communes, regions, nations and finally in a great federation, international and universal" is taking shape. The ideas of anarchism are being applied by those in struggle. This is to be expected, as those ideas are just generalisations derived from past working class struggles!

Anarchists in Action
The anarchist group Organizacion Socialista Libertaria (OSL), the strongest current of organised anarchism in Argentina, is playing an important role in the struggles. According to one of their messages, "anarchist militantes have been battling the police since the morning in the Plaza de Mayo" while the OSL have joined in marches to Plaza de Mayo together with other social organisations.

The OSL are encouraging the process of working class community self-organisation, with "each militant discussing in his or her own community the best way to establish a minimal territorial organisation with the goal of defeating the state of siege." While "governmental secret services are continuing to spread fear, paranoia and battles between one community and another, the OSL have "decided to start an ideological debate with others in those neighbourhoods where self-managed peoples' organisations are present. It is in these areas where we will call on the other organisations to study what has happened and to develop a way of acting which will allow us to reorganise against the terror of the State and to organise self-management, or at least, the seeds towards it."

They are also involved in the unions, attending meetings called by the CTA trade union federation to decide on its actions. They are aware that the Trade Union leadership "did not want to go out and agitate as they were afraid the situation could get out of their hands." The key will be to encourage any attempts by workers to organise independently of their leaders. The importance of anarchists getting involved in the struggle is clear. As they put it: "We must throw ourselves fully towards building people's organisation, because if we the people are not capable of giving ourselves the society which we want and need, ex-President Menem is there waiting to be called, as a replacement part so that nothing changes."

The need for anarchists to argue for their ideas is important. A process of revolutionary self-education is occurring in Argentina, as in any revolution as Kropotkin stressed, "by degrees, the revolutionary education of the people was being accomplished by the revolution itself." However, this is a process, a process that anarchists can aid. As can be seen from many demonstrations, the protests have a nationalist tinge to them. This is to be expected, as the current crisis is the result of foreign domination (aided and abetted by the local ruling class, of course). It would be a tragedy if this working class revolt gets sidetracked into boosting Argentine capital within the national market. Equally, many of the protesters will be demanding that capitalism work correctly rather than seeking its end. Anarchists must clearly argue that crisis is inevitable under this system and, equally as important, that local ruling elites are just as bad as foreign ones and so nationalism is no solution. Anarchists must do all they can to argue that only working class self-management can create a decent society and encourage the struggle towards that end.

This struggle gives those involved a sense of their own power (both as individuals and as a class). It also gives them experience of managing their own lives and of organising their own struggles. This is a good foundation for building a strong anarchist movement in Argentina. In case we forget one hundred years ago anarchism played the leading role in the labour movement there. The current events are producing organisations with a distinctly libertarian nature. Could these be the basis of a regenerated working class anarchist movement like the old FORA anarchosyndicalist union federation? If so, it will not happen automatically, it will require the anarchists to take an active part in working class struggle and organisation. As can be seen, the OSL is doing precisely that.

Towards revolution?

As anarchists have long argued, the class struggle creates the framework of a free society. This process is at work in Argentina. How can the transformation of riot into revolution be helped? While this task can only by the work of those who take part in it, a few words of general advice can be drawn from history -- the first steps have already been taken!

The practical bases of an alternative are already falling into place. The embryo of popular power, of a free society, is being created in the community and workplace assemblies. Self-management must be en-
couraged within them. These organs must be strengthened and federated. As in every struggle, co-
ordination must be ensured.

Many neighbourhoods are organising popular general assemblies to decide how to carry the struggle
forward. Their federation is essential. These assemblies must have the real power to ensure they become
expressions of the will of the working class and to provide a framework by which collective decisions,
direct action, solidarity and self-defence can be organised. As Kropotkin argued, the French popular
assemblies "sought for unity of action, not in subjection to a Central Committee, but in a federative union."
This was "made from below upward, by the federation of the district organisations; it sprang up in a
revolutionary way, from popular initiative." The Argentine ones must do the same. Only in this way can the
state be abolished.

Consumer products have been expropriated by the people. The next stage is the expropriation of the
means of production -- the fields, factories and workshops -- by workplace assemblies. They must be placed
under workers' self-management and federations of workers' assemblies created. Any attempt to nationalise
them (as the Marxist left proposes) must be opposed in favour of socialisation - replacing private
capitalism with state capitalism is no solution. Only socialisation under workers' self-management will see
capitalism ended.

An awareness of this need is developing. At the Zanon congress, a 22 year old worker from the plant
stated that the each centimetre of the plant, each tile that was piled within the long corridors stood for "the
millions that we produced, and everything that the province gave to Zanon; and now that Zanon doesn't
want to be responsible for it, it's going to be ours." That perspective has to be generalised and turned from a
defensive strategy to an offensive one.

The building of federations between the community and workplace assemblies is essential. This is for
three reasons. Firstly, to build working class power to resist and finally overthrow the current system by
combining economic and social self-organisation. Secondly, to aid the creation and distribution of goods.
Thirdly, to create a possible framework in which to socialise the means of life and take them under true
common ownership. A basic first step by the community assemblies must be the setting up of consumer co-
operatives to facilitate the distribution of goods and encourage workers to expropriate their workplaces.

In a nutshell: All power to the community and workplace assemblies!

The call for a "National Assembly of Employed and Unemployed Workers" is a positive one, as long as it
is made up of mandated and recallable delegates and is complemented by local and regional federations of
assemblies. Without constructive building from the bottom-up, any national assembly will be artificial,
simply a mouthpiece for various would-be politicians and new bosses. Nor can it be a grouping of existing
unions and party committees as this would simply be a top-down joining of various bureaucratic
committees and not a real expression of popular self-rule. Any National Assembly must be an organ for
working class struggle, simply co-ordinating and executing the decisions of the base assemblies.

Any attempt to centralise power must be resisted as it will disempower the grassroots assemblies and kill
the revolt. The seemingly widespread call for a " Constituent Assembly" is basically a call for a left wing
bourgeois government and for the popular assemblies to be put under its control. It must be opposed as it is
the death of grassroots self-management. There is a need to co-ordinate struggle, but this must be based on
bottom-up, federal, organisations. A call for a "People's Assembly," based on mandated delegates from the
community and workplace assemblies is paramount -- as is the awareness that popular organisations must
riot surrender their self-rule and become mere ciphers, stepping stones for a political party to take power.
Any working class assemblies (and their councils) must be autonomous, free from the control of any
political party or organisation (including anarchist!). All power to the assemblies must not become
transformed into "all power to the Party through the assemblies." Decisions must reflect the debate in the assemblies, not in the small, restricted, leadership of a political party!

Only self-organisation and direct action from below will ensure that this mass protest does not simply result in a new gang of thieving bosses being placed in power. Only when the working class has organised itself from below upwards will it be a position to dispense once and for all with bosses and politicians. The struggle against capitalism is building the framework of the free society that will replace it. "Me job of anarchists is to encourage these processes and show how they can form an alternative to capitalism."

As in every revolution, the "principle of anarchism" are being born from the class struggle, the deeds of working class people fighting for a better life. Argentina is no exception and as can be seen, the embryos of popular self-management are being created. We have a lot to learn from these experiences. The current protests not only reinforce the validity of anarchist ideas, it also allows us to improve these ideas just as anarchists learned from past working class revolts.

The role of the unemployed workers movement is important, suggesting that anarchists should seriously look at creating similar groups here. Equally, the importance of the community assemblies is obvious. Anarchists have long argued for this and we should apply this principle in “community unionism.”

These would be similar to the anti-poll tax unions and such groups as Haringey Solidarity Group and the Govanhill Pool protests in Glasgow. Equally, the need for a libertarian presence in the workplace is essential. This may involve a pronged strategy of rank and file groups within existing unions plus dual unions to link up activists across industries. Lastly, the anarchist movement needs to discuss strategy and tactics in open forum as in the conferences at Bradford, Glasgow and London.

The events in Argentina also shows the direction the anti-globalisation movement must take — it must apply its principles of direct action, solidarity, self-managed self-organisation within everyday life and struggles. While mass demonstrations like of Genoa are essential, they cannot replace the need to build strong roots in our communities and workplaces. Without this grassroots activity, the anti-globalisation movement will wither, just as a flower cut off from its roots. Demonstrations by themselves will not end capitalism or its imposed, top-down, globalisation. Only when the bulk of the population take direct action, organise themselves and fight for their freedom will real change occur. As Argentina shows.

The power of the working class in revolt is clear — it has managed to bring down numerous politicians. The question is, will it be able to bring down all governments and all bosses? That remains to be seen.

The possible framework of a free society can be seen, will the Argentine anarchists be able to encourage these first steps and help them become organs of working class power? Hopefully. As the OSL say:

"We will be there with our conviction that a different way of living is possible and that is what we are fighting for!"

I. M.

[From Rebel Worker, Feb-March 2002, $1.00 from PO Box 92, Broadway, Sydney 2007 NSW Australia]
Socialism: sudden and gradual change
by Pieter Lawrence

Can the change to socialism be a gradual one? Or must it be a decisive revolutionary break from capitalism?

In modern times the idea of a new society, or a change from capitalism to socialism, goes back to the turn of the 19th century when it was discussed by utopian writers. These ideas were developed by Marx and Engels as a political and economic criticism of the capitalist system and in 1848, in the Communist Manifesto, they set out a revolutionary programme for achieving this change. The pamphlet became a great influence on the growth of working class movements when the many Communist, Social Democratic and Labour Parties were founded. Some were eventually successful in winning power and forming governments. Even now, in China, a so-called Communist government wields power over nearly a quarter of the world's population.

As we now look back over the struggles of countless millions of working people throughout the world during the 19th and 20th centuries, which were dedicated to the idea of building a new society, it is important to ask what has been achieved? And if the aims that inspired all these movements have not been realised, what went wrong? It has to be accepted that they made no progress towards a socialist society, and it should now be asked why the methods and policies of these movements were doomed to failure.

Though it was a great influence it would be unjust to blame the failures on the Communist Manifesto. However, whilst we may still admire that great historical document we should also accept that the revolutionary programme it set out was fatally flawed. One problem with this programme was that it envisaged that socialism would be established after a period of time following the capture of power by a working class government:

The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralise all instruments of production in the hands of the state, i.e., of the proletariat organised as a ruling class, and to increase the total of productive forces as rapidly as possible."

So the expropriation of the capitalists was to take place gradually and would include the continued use of such features of capitalism as money, rent from land, income tax, private property and a national bank with state capital. It was in effect, a recipe for state capitalism.

A process of change, by degrees, from capitalism to socialism is not possible. This would have to assume that at each stage there would be, side by side, wage labour producing commodities for sale on the markets with people co-operating voluntarily to produced goods solely for needs. It would also have to assume that sales of goods would operate side by side with free access to goods. But if the function of state capital was that it should be invested in labour, machinery and materials with a view to its circulation and accumulation throughout production and the sales of commodities, then this could only have resulted from the exploitation of workers. That this function of capital would gradually disappear from the system, and voluntary co-operation with free access to goods would displace wage labour producing commodities for sale, is, once again, just not credible. Taking the works of Marx as a whole, we can understand that the productive relationships of capitalism and socialism are mutually exclusive and cannot operate together. In fact, a capitalist basis compels each part of the productive system to be profitable or at least solvent, and if they are not they tend to drop out because they are not viable. These are the pressures of economic selection which tend to maintain the system as an exclusively capitalist structure.

It is true that later in his political life Marx came to see the revolutionary programme of the Communist Manifesto differently, but by that time the idea of nationalisation and state control as providing a road to socialism had become the received wisdom of working class movements and
tragically, it all was to lead to failure, disaster and disillusion. It was the founder members of the Socialist Party who insisted that the change from capitalism to socialism could only be achieved by a majority of socialists taking democratic control, bringing in the common ownership of the means of production and commencing the organisation of socialist society from that point.

On the face of it, this suggests that the change from capitalism to socialism would be a sudden leap from one social system to another. But, seen against the background of continuous development and the particular factors that would be involved, it would not be a total social change so much as a change in the social relationships through which society is operated. This would be the new basis on which people would reorganise society to meet their needs.

An example of a "sudden" and far-reaching change in social relationships was that carried out by the Bolsheviks as part of their state capitalist revolution in 1917. Not the nationalisation of industry and manufacture, which was not so much a basic change as a transfer of private ownership to the benefits of monopoly and control for a new class of state bosses. But, in the countryside, the Bolsheviks destroyed the landed aristocracy overnight. These feudal relationships had existed for centuries and involved millions of people over the entire land mass. This destruction of an entire class and its corresponding mode of agricultural production was enacted at 2.30 in the morning on 9 November 1917.

But this is not to suggest that this sudden change can be explained solely in terms of the events of 9 November 1917. Although the power of the landed aristocracy had remained barely unaltered for centuries, the pressures on it from a wide range of external sources had been gradually intensifying. In this broader context, the sudden destruction of the landed aristocracy in Russia is explained in relation to the slow pace of social development during the preceding century including the failure to develop more efficient capitalist agriculture compared with other European Powers. This lack of proportionate development meant that in the First World War Russia was unable to sustain its war effort on equal terms. The failures of the Russian Army, the bankruptcy of the state, and the desperate condition of the Russian masses in poverty and famine led to social and political breakdown, which gave the Bolsheviks their opportunity to seize power. So the sudden changes enacted by the Bolsheviks in 1917 were the outcome of these tensions which acted as a more gradual build up of predisposing factors. Although the circumstances would be totally different this may be a useful analogy in considering sudden and gradual change as elements in a socialist revolution.

At the time of the Communist Manifesto Marx and Engels believed that one of the limitations on what could be achieved was the relative lack of capitalist development. This meant that, though the political and economic arrangements were vague, the first thing the working class would have to do with its "political supremacy" would be to "increase the total of productive forces as rapidly as possible." But 150 years later this has been massively achieved by capitalism itself. In fact it has done much more.

A key concept in the materialist view of change is what Marx referred to as the conflict between the "material productive forces of society" and the "existing relations of production". Applying this to capitalist society, its productive relations of class ownership, wage labour and capital have not changed over more than two hundred years. These define capitalism as a system and cannot change. But its productive forces have changed enormously. These have increased and spread to every corner of the globe to become a world system. Means of production of every kind, transport and advanced technique have been developed together with instant world communications, administration and institutions. These developments over time now pre-dispose the ease with which a majority of socialists could stop the operation of capitalism and immediately commence the organisation of socialist society. These changes have altered the conditions in which the work for socialism is carried on. For example, the existence of great powers of production which cannot be used for the benefit of all people because they are constrained to serve the interests of a few in a profit system sharpens the conflict between human needs and the
prevailing class relations. We are also able to learn from the political experience of failure. Mainly the disastrous idea that socialism can be established over time by a “working class government” through nationalisation and state control.

In practical terms the change from capitalism to socialism will not mean the introduction of anything materially new so much as the immediate removal of redundant features of an existing structure of production and social organisation. The establishment of common ownership does not and could not imply a sudden transformation of all the material processes of living. There could be no sudden change in the actual work processes of people in mining, industry, manufacture, transport and distribution, farming, building and construction, energy supply, health services, etc. All these people would carry on with what they are doing but within the new relationships of voluntary co-operation. From this point a period of rapid re-organisation and development would also be commenced after production and administration has been released from the economic constraints of capitalism. This will necessarily take time. Seen in this practical perspective the change from capitalism to socialism can be seen as combining elements of both short and long-term change.

[From Socialist Standard, March 2002, 1L ($2) from 52 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7UN, UK]

(from p. 6) Finances

That the DB’s income exceeded expenditures for the second month in a row signals an economic recovery, at least in this small corner of the U.S. economy. Let’s all rejoice and forget unemployment and downsizing.

Contributions: Joe Tupper (for the abolition of capitalism) $20; Dionisio Villarreal $4; Pat Bjorklund $22; Paul Burkett $4; Ken Ellis $1; Perry Sanders $7; Eugene Rodriguez $10; Pat Murtagh $5; Mike Brandissi $17; Willy Eckert $7; John Furdeek $44; Jim Plant $10; Mark Alonzo $4. Total $158.00

Thank you, comrades.

BALANCE February 24, 2002 (per bank statement) $214.13

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BALANCE April 22, 2002 $280.46

Fraternally submitted,
Frank Girard
"FORUM" Talk by Perry Sanders [CHIREVNET], Chicago, IL, May 19, 2002

Welcome and "Revolutionary Greetings" from CHIREVNET to everyone here tonight! First off, let me say that my talk is NOT going to include how the Bolshevik Party shut down the KEY revolutionary factory committee movement in early 1918, and gained control/dictatorship over the trade unions and Soviets. My talk also will not discuss the severe objective factors confronting the Russian Revolution, such as Russia being chiefly a peasant country, the devastation to the economy and working class from the civil war, and ebb in the world revolution. To begin then.

Think about this in a general sort of way: a given country is experiencing widespread, spontaneous, militant strikes by workers in all its major cities. The response of the Government is: DISPERsal OF DEMONSTRATIONS BY AN ELITE MILITARY FORCE; LOCK-OUTS OF FACTORIES ON STRIKE; LOSS OF RATION CARDS FOR STRIKERS; INSTITUTION OF MARTIAL LAW; WIDESPREAD ARRESTS; IMMEDIATE EXECUTIONS IN THE CASE OF POLITICAL GROUPINGS; AND, SURVEILLANCE OF WORKERS IN THE FACTORIES BY ARMED cadre OF THE RULING GOVERNMENT PARTY. What is the first country that you think of this happening? Did you think of the fascist, military dictatorship of General Pinochet in Chile in 1973 or later? Or did you think of Hitler's Nazi dictatorship in Germany in the 1930's? Or Stalin's "1984" style, state capitalist dictatorship? Whatever country and time period that you thought about, one thing is certain [in relationship to the previous description of the situation]: the working-class in that country obviously was NOT in political, economic and social power; rather, the working-class suffered from a ruthless dictatorship OVER it! Of course, that ruthless dictatorship could ONLY be that of a capitalist ruling class. The situation previously described was that of the Russian working-class and the ruling Bolshevik Party in February, 1921, after their civil war had ended, where famine and starvation stalked the land, and immediately preceded the REVOLUTIONARY WORKING-CLASS UPRISING OF KRONSTADT, in March, 1921. The description of this situation was taken almost verbatim from The Dutch and German Communist Left, International Communist Current, 2001, p. 169.

You might think then that the ICC is a supporter of the revolutionary working-class uprising of Kronstadt—which was militarily murdered by the ruthless dictatorship of the Bolshevik Party, led by Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin, et al, through the so-called "Red Army"—but you would be wrong. The ICC's position on revolutionary Kronstadt boils down to that of tragic necessity in favor of the Bolshevik Party [ibid]. Earlier ICC articles are critical of "tragic necessity" and the Bolshevik massacre of the Kronstalters.] The ICC's description of the situation facing the revolutionary Russian workers, sailors and soldiers can thus be taken as basically accurate, which is independently confirmed, chiefly by: The Kronstadt Uprising 1921, Ida Mett, Solidarity pamphlet, England, 1967—used extensively in my talk today—and Kronstadt in the Russian Revolution, Efim Yartschuk, originally 1923, English edition, 1994.

What then were the demands of the revolutionary mass strikers in Petrograd, Moscow, and elsewhere in February, 1921? What were the demands of the revolutionary sailors and workers of Kronstadt in March, 1921? Why were the Bolshevik Party leaders so threatened by these revolutionary demands that they resorted to military methods to mercilessly crush these revolutionary strikers and Kronstalters? Were there theoretical errors in principle by Lenin—the chief architect and practical leader of the Bolshevik Party—that led to the counter-revolutionary, state capitalist dictatorship of the Bolshevik Party OVER the working class and poor peasantry, calling this "socialism"? What revolutionary lessons can be drawn from this for today's revolutionary, international, working-class struggle for international socialist revolution to global communism? As to the latter question, this talk will only deal with it in a general way, leaving the rest for the extensive discussion period following the two talks [the other by Mike Hargis of the L.W.W.], and future discussion/debate/polemics by class-conscious rev. workers here and world-wide!
To the first question, what then were the demands of the revolutionary strikers in Petrograd, Moscow, and elsewhere in February, 1917? “The strikers were demanding measures to assist food supplies. Some factories were demanding the re-establishment of the local markets, freedom to travel within a radius of thirty miles of the city, and the withdrawal of the militia detachments holding the road around the town.” [The Kronstadt Uprising of 1921, p.36.] With their political demands being: “abolition of martial law; liberation of all those imprisoned; free elections to the strike committees and Soviets; all the demands directed against ‘the dictatorship of the party’ and the Cheka. They were an appeal for workers’ democracy and the revitalization of the Soviets, which had been absorbed by the state and the Bolshevik Party.” [The Dutch and German Communist Left, p. 169] It is important to keep in mind that these revolutionary strikers were predomiantly, militarily suppressed by the dictatorship of the Bolshevik Party, through its formerly revolutionary leaders.

To the second question, what were the demands of the revolutionary sailors and workers of Kronstadt—who had associated closely with the revolutionary strikers of Petrograd—in March, 1917? “1) Immediate new elections to the Soviets...by secret ballot...preceded by free electoral propaganda; 2) Freedom of speech and of the press for workers and peasants, the anarchists, and for the Left Socialist parties; 3) The right of assembly, and freedom for trade union and peasant organizations; 4) The organization, at the latest of 16th of March 1921, of a Conference of non-Party workers, soldiers and sailors of Petrograd, Kronstadt and the Petrograd District; 5) The liberation of all political prisoners of the Socialist parties, and of all imprisoned workers and peasants, soldiers and sailors belonging to working class and peasant organizations; 6) The election of a commission to look into the doings of all those detained in prisons and concentration camps; 7) The abolition of all political sections in the armed forces. No political party should have privileges for the propagation of its ideas, or receive State subsidies to this end. In the place of the political sections, various cultural groups should be set up, deriving resources from the State; 8) The immediate abolition of the militia detachments set up between towns and countryside; 9) The equalisation of rations for all workers, except those engaged in dangerous or unhealthy jobs; 10) The abolition of Party combat detachments in all military groups. The abolition of Party guards in factories and enterprises. If guards are required, they should be nominated, taking into account the views of the workers; 11) The granting to the peasants of freedom of action on their own soil, and the right to own cattle, provided they look after them themselves and do not employ hired labor; 12) We request that all military units associate themselves with this resolution; 13) We demand that the Press give proper publicity to this resolution; 14) We demand the institution of mobile workers’ control groups; 15) We demand that handicraft production be authorised provided it does not utilize wage labour.” [The Kronstadt Uprising of 1921, pp. 37-38] As you have heard for yourselves, these demands were designed to get the economy moving again, and against the dictatorship of the Bolshevik Party OVER the working class and poor peasantry and for a real, revolutionary mass democracy. This is why all working-class revolutionaries should honor the heroic memory of the revolutionary Kronstadt sailors and workers! And all workers everywhere who have died for the revolutionary, international working-class cause!

Which brings us to the third question posed, why were the Bolshevik Party leaders so threatened by these revolutionary demands that they resorted to military methods to mercilessly crush these revolutionary strikers and Kronstadiens? Because “ALL POWER TO THE SOVIETS!” and “FOR A THIRD REVOLUTION OF TOILERS!” [the first two being February, then October, 1917] was a direct, mortal challenge to the ABSOLUTE POWER of the Bolshevik Party leaders OVER the working class & poor peasantry! Which is why the Bolshevik Party leaders, Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin, et al ordered Kronstadt crushed!

On to the fourth question posed, basically, were there theoretical errors in principle by Lenin from Marxism that resulted in all this? The answer is “Yes!” First, “On its own, the working class can only achieve trade union consciousness” [What is to be done?, etc.], which is NOT true in rev. situations and during working-class revolution, as
proven by the Russian Revolution]. Second, springing from the first error, the working class must at all times be "led" by the "vanguard" party, who "alone" is capable of "assuming power" and "directing" "all the toilers" [The State and Revolution, Chinese ed., p. 30]. Leninism essentially negates the CENTRAL, revolutionary role of the working class in the international socialist revolution to global communism!

Finally, the fifth question, what are the practical, revolutionary lessons for the international working class struggle for revolutionary, international socialism as the transition to world-wide communism? First, there is no revolutionary need for political parties since this implies: participating in the capitalist electoral charade—which we all know means more or less the same old capitalist, authoritarian dictatorship by the big capitalist ruling class—and, a desire for state power. A KEY function of the socialist revolution is to: smash/abolish the capitalist state—chiefly the bureaucracy, the economic/political police forces system, and standing armed forces; and, instead set up a transitional, revolutionary government based on revolutionary workplace committees/councils or one big revolutionary-democratic union, such as a massive I.W.W., with workers' militias. The revolutionary-democratic masses in such committees/councils or union[c]entral[all] and all centralized bodies that are set up: as with the Paris Commune, NOT the reverse, as in the Russian Revolution. Second, the working class role for revolutionary economic/political organizations is, by means of revolutionary propaganda, agitation and direct action, to encourage the growth and development of revolutionary tendencies and direct action of the working class, and revolutionary, national and international political and economic organizations of the working class—among the enlisted ranks in the capitalist armed forces too! This international class struggle process culminates—when the revolutionary situation is ripe—by issuing the "call" for the MASSIVE armed General Strike AND/OR seizure of the means of production & distribution—the beginning of the international socialist revolution itself, the revolutionary transformation to global communism! This concludes my "FORUM" talk this evening, and I eagerly await the extensive discussion period to follow!

*** ENDNOTE: Most of the Russian-speaking military regiments were deemed "politically unreliable" by the Bolshevik leaders. So, they called up Bolshevik Party members, and Central Asian troops of the "Red Army," who couldn't speak Russian and thus were susceptible to the Bolshevik Party leaders' lies and slanders against revolutionary Kronstadt that it was a "counter-revolutionary plot" led by "White Guards" and "White Generals." Still, many soldiers refused combat against the revolutionary Kronstadt sailors and workers, or deserted in the face of combat and were shot by the political police of the Cheka, or went over to the revolutionary side. In the end, unfortunately, numbers prevailed.

* The "Red Army" was organized along typical capitalist, authoritarian lines during the civil war, dictated to from above by thousands of former Tsarist officers and Trotsky, after the outlawing of: the revolutionary committees of soldiers; and, the revolutionary-democratic election of officers by rank-and-file soldiers.

(from p. 32)

The York Times on Milosevic Trial: a Triumph of Cynicism," of which APR claims every sentence contains at least one falsehood. "The Beautiful mind of Donald Rumsfeld" quotes "the war criminal Henry Kissinger" as describing Rumsfeld as the most ruthless man I have ever known, thus proving the truth of the old saying, "it takes one to find one." Much of the article deals with the treatment of what Rumsfeld refers to as "unlawful" at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. "Terrorizing the World" and subsequent articles describe actions of the U.S. government as it ignores international law in order to maintain its economic and political control in Colombia, Iraq, the Balkans and any other place where corporate interests are involved.

"Propaganda, Inc.: Behind the Curtain at U.S.I.A."
relates the history of government brain washing beginning in 1917 when the U.S. had to create pro-war propaganda prior to WWI. Also, articles on Cokie Roberts, West Papua, Argentina and much more. One-year sub, $16 (non U.S. $24) from AAL Press, POB 4710, Arlington, VA 22204.
Dear Discussion Bulletin,

In DB n°111 (Jan-Feb 2002), presenting Communism n°12, you briefly presented our group (ICG) as a group that “trace their political lineage to the left wing of the pre-WWI Italian Socialist Party... Bordiga... the Italian Left.” You will maybe be surprised to read that we completely deny any bordiguist filiation.

Contrary to the bordiguist groups, we denounce Bordiga (and the political forces he represents) for not having deeply break with social-democracy. Even if we look at the period Bordiguists do like to put forward (1915-1921), we can already quickly denounce:
- the globality of its political battle for the regeneration of the Socialist Party of Italy (PSI) before 1919, when the proletariat tends to break from social-democracy on an international scale
- his politics defending the “neutral” position of the PSI towards war in 1914. A position he justifies saying that “his present campaign and position in the favor of neutrality is related to the intimately revolutionary soul of socialism”
- his general justification of the bolshevik politics the local (defense the Brest-Litovsk treaty, the New Political Economy,...) as well as on the international terrain (defense the 21 conditions of the IC)
- the fact that he tried to put a brake on the attempts to break from social-democracy that existed in his own “abstentionist” fraction (at Modugno as early as 1916, then in 1919, then again in 1920, in Turin where he opposed Boero who defended that they had to break from the PSI)
- his accommodating attitude towards the internal politics of the PSI at the very moment when the anti-revolutionary movements started in Italy (expropriations, looting, direct actions, ...)
- his blind obedience first to the counter-revolutionary discipline of the PSI, later to the one of the IC (ideology of the unity).
- his democratic praise for the councils, the soviets and his defence of the presence and the activity within the trade-unions (included those “most corrupted” as he said)

And if we consider the question of abstentionism against the election circus, on which is based the image of radicality of Bordiga and his so called “abstentionist” fraction, we will notice that (talking of the same period as before):
- he programatically defends the election participation of the socialist parties
- he politically denounces (more than once) abstentionism (he wrote “Against abstentionism” in Avanti! in July 1913) and tries to dissociate himself from the revolutionary positions (facing the K.A.P.D., the one he called “anarchists” or “trade-unionists”, the radical elements of his own “abstentionist” fraction...).
- he participates to the elections after the defeat of his fraction inside the PSI in October 1919. He refuses to separate from the PSI and submit himself to the discipline ...
- Confronting the IC, he capitulates on all the question, included the « election » one.
- he explicitly dissociate himself from the revolutionary left and even more from the K.A.P.D. that he denounces along with Lenin as infantile, trade-unionist and non-political

These only are some polemic remarks about Bordiga. Their aim is to denounce the absurd marriage you try to do between us and the bordigist current. We do recognise, of course, some revolutionary programmatical aspects on which Bordiga did try to stand. In a short future we will publish some elements of discussion on that topic.

Here we only tried to help you see more precisely the political content we defend. If you try to present us you could draw inspiration from the little presentation of our group we published on our internet site (see joined document)

Greetings,
Kate, for ICG.

NB. We apologise for our broken English. This letter was written in French then translated. If the French version may be of any utility, just tell us, we can send it.

Frank

I read through the latest DB over Easter and hope you'll publish the following apology for the behaviour of our "political cousins" (or is it bastard half-brothers?), the Socialist Studies group. Also enclosed, for consideration for publication, the review of Jim Plant's resignation pamphlet that appeared in the Socialist Standard in 1969 which has some relevance to the debate. Re the question of "hostilities" between the SPGB and SLPGB I've sent you by ordinary mail (for your collection) some polemics from them in the 1960s (in case you might think it was all one-sided)—I quite like the term "idiotorial committee"!

Also I think you were a bit unfair to include under "hostilities" the issue of the WSP's journal a few years ago devoted to a debate between them and Mike Lepore. I seem to recall that, at the time, you commented on it favourably because it gave equal time to both sides and was conducted in a civilised tone. I daresay one of the issues discussed was labour-time vouchers, an issue on which you would now incline more to our view than the traditional SLP one!

Adam

Reply: Dear Adam,

In a recent letter Jim Plant spoke of "...seeing] little point in publishing this item...." And I'll yield to his judgment on the matter. You are right in questioning my characterization of the WSPUS's Socialist Review # 11 as a resumption of hostilities between the WSP and the De Leonists. Although hostilities can be carried in a civilized manner, the content of the SR was in the debate, not the attack mode. It was as fair and civilized a discussion as one could ask for.

Frank
Finally, there is the issue of the 'education industry' workforce itself, which numbers in the many millions in the USA. It is the very concentration of these workers in mainly urban areas, but rural ones as well, that creates better opportunities for the more far-seeing education workers to develop new organizing on a firm class basis for the future struggles. True, many of these forces today are bogged and divided into pro-capitalist AFL-CIO trade unions. Also, most present school employee unions are craft unions which only further divide the workers up into separate branches. But these problems—elitism, craft snobbery, pro-boss ideology, business unions, and their integration into the bosses' state machinery via the Democratic Party and capitalist legality—are aspects of the qualitative degeneration of the unions in the modern historical epoch.

But the mass of the school employees—bus drivers, commissary, janitors, clerks, teachers, aides, etc. potentially aggregated by the thousands in many cities—gives these workers a firmer ground to potentially better defend their livelihoods under attack and eventually counter-attack with a new unity and mass struggle, transcending craft and 'professional' divisions, building a new organization based on class struggle, not class collaboration with the bosses and administrators.

The Kansas anarchists should also look at this problem starting from the historical and materialist vantage point and also consider the closeness of the working class students' schools to their parents' workplaces and communities as a whole. It might very well be that the next rounds of social struggles might heavily involve the schools, and the worker-parents livelihoods as well. Such struggles could be the basis to raise enormously the class and social consciousness as well as lead to new workers organizations of struggle coming up fighting directly against the exploitation of capital's social relations themselves!

Just thinking a-priori that 'smaller is better' means a gross oversimplification on this and other fronts of class conflict. Not only will new struggles against the capitalist offensives draw workers into the fray, but also the students can and will become a big part of this experience which could see workers fighting not just to be a class IN themselves to advancing to become a class FOR themselves and against capital. Contrary to the Kansas anarchist views, workers/students really do need education, but actually socialist education in theory and practice.

New Internationalist/US Workers' Voice
Box 57483
Los Angeles, CA 90057

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THE MARXIST LABOR PARTY

[Note: On the next two pages readers will find the translated title page and contents page of Marxist, the theoretical journal of the Marxist Labor Party. They were sent to the DB by Dmitry Fomin of the MLP's South Bureau. As is clear from these two pages, the MLP is experiencing a split, the fracture line being the Leninist 'heritage' of the party. The DB also has a translation of the 22-page article from the journal, "Marxist Anatomy of October 1917 and the Present Day," which I'd like to publish as a free pamphlet.

-fg]
Against Bourgeois Education, for Marxist Education!

In DB#112 (Apr-May, 2002) Anarchy in Kansas (#2) thinks "We don't need No Education," or thought control, etc. in its critique of ruling class dominated state schools. This critique however is both fatally flawed and backward. Advocating breaking up state schools (K-12) for 'homeschooling' or deschooling schemes of anarchists and libertarians is both utopian and reactionary. It is analogous to fighting monopoly capitalism of our epoch by advocacy of return to 16th and 19th century pre-monopoly capitalism.

While the Kansas anarchists nailed the state schools correctly for imbuing the youth with illusions in nationalism, capitalism and other aspects of bourgeois ideology, the anarchist 'solution' of homeschooling and deschooling in inherently a petty bourgeois program based on parents or friends being at home much of the day with enough skills and interest to teach children. But the anarchists gloss right over the real life situation of most proletarians, who are up to their necks in surviving week to week under waged slavery and other social relations imposed by capitalism. Today, if the children and youth of workers were denied the use of the state schools en masse and sequestered by parents and friends for 'homeschooling', most would invariably end up on the streets getting these anarchists' panacea of 'no schooling' or worse yet, lumpenproletarian street schooling and lifestyles of some sort.

The 'de-centralist' movements against state schools are for the most part a reactionary movement to de-centralize and dis-aggregate mostly working class youth so they can be easier to socially control as capitalism de-funds working class majority state schools to shore up capitalism's sagging profit-margins. It is being aggregated/socialized in the state dominated schools, just as workers are potentially more powerful when they are concentrated in industries, that the school employees and the youth have a material footing to launch future mass struggles and new Anti-state organizing, hostile to the functioning of capitalism itself.

The Voucher outfits would only make the present bad situation worse for workers and youth. Vouchers are 'manna from heaven' for those who support street corner schools for profit--petty bourgeois and bourgeois hucksters alike. Voucher programs only pick the bones of already grossly underfunded state schools (K-12) in workers communities. Voucher schools will mainly 'cherry pick' the highest achieving layers in state schools, and discriminate against unwanted kids for economic, ethnic and religious reasons. Also those kids really in need of special education classes will see their programmes cut back more because of less children being enrolled in the state schools. After all, the privatizers 'bottom line' would still be maximization of profits per the amount of capital invested whether the school is run by big capital (Edison Schools) or petty capital, the little neighborhood street corner 'academy'.

And what if 'smaller homeschools could pool the kids withdrawn from state schools and set up street corner schools with state issued vouchers for tuition/expenses? What about the safety of the children enrolled? And who is doing any serious background checks on those homeschoolers and 'de-schools' employees and owners? This takes some time and expense. This is expense that the privatized homeschoools will most likely not want to bother with very much. Now considering the immense scandals in the schools now concerning child safety, and I think the torrent of now exposed perverts and child molesters operating under cover of the cloth in that bulwark of hypocritical bourgeois morality, the Catholic Church and its religious schools as well as others should be sufficiently instructive.
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The Marxian Labour Party ("Марксистская рабочая партия" in Russian) was founded in 1990 in Moscow. The party is not large in number and unites those Marxists - workers and intellectuals - who consider the social order in the former USSR as state capitalism. There are different currents inside the party presented both by Leninists and by non-Leninists. Refer to the www.mlp.am.ru for further details. There is an English page there. The party as a whole, as well as its two factions, is seeking to establish and deepen contacts with any non-Stalinist and non-Trotskyist organisations (not diehard ones: at the minimum) throughout the world. Looking forward to your reaction,

The Council of the Marxist Labour Party:

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*Prepared by the non-Leninist faction inside the Marxist Labour Party which actually is being persistently supplanted by the recently organized Leninist majority in its ranks (mainly consisting from the newly joined members) and supported by some non-Party influences like E. Nikishina – The MLP South Bureau's note
DENIGRATING DELEONISM

in its issue 120 Internationalism returned to its project of "coming to grips with De Leonism," but rather obliquely this time. The title, "Deifying De Leon Dishonors His Revolutionary Legacy" seems to be nothing more than a distingenuous (and irrelevant) cheap shot. The basic purpose of the series has been to denigrate De Leon and the revolutionary program he developed and thus to deny the validity of his "revolutionary legacy." It's irrelevant because the article has nothing to do with "deifying" De Leon; it's a reply of sorts to articles in DBs 108 and 109 reviewing Internationalism's four-part series.

[Note: Internationalism's attacks on DeLeonism have been much too long to publish in the DB, and the same can be said by Internationalism about publishing the DB's review. With that in mind the DB has provided readers with information on how to obtain copies of Internationalism. Internationalism, however, as is its custom, has protected its readers from hearing the other side of the debate by not returning the favor. Like the earlier issues, Internationalism120 can be obtained for $1 from PO Box 288, New York, NY 10018.]

Jerry Grevin, the author of Internationalism's articles, begins by expanding his original accusation that De Leon advocated "a variant" of the iron law of wages. Now we have his assertion that De Leon and the SLP viewed strikes as useless. The fact is that De Leon, like Marx, asserted the economic futility of strikes, but saw them as evidence of the healthy and potentially revolutionary willingness of our class to engage in the struggle for a greater portion of the wealth it produces. (Since Grevin accuses me of misquoting and misparaphrasing Marx, readers will find here the relevant passage from Value Price and Profit, [pp. 72-74 of the SLP edition or in other editions, the last couple pages starting at the paragraph that begins, "These few hints..."]) and also from De Leon's What Means This Strike in the collection Socialist Landmarks, pp. 83-85.)

From Value Price and Profit:

These few hints will suffice to show that the very development of modern industry must progressively turn the scale in favor of the capitalist against the workingman, and that consequently 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. Such being the tendency of things in this system, is this saying that the working class ought to renounce their resistance against the encroachments of capital, and abandon their attempts at making the best of the occasional chances for their temporary improvement? If they did, they would be degraded to one level mass of broken wretches past salvation. I think I have shown that their struggles for the standard of wages are incidents inseparable from the whole wages system, that in 99 cases out of 100 their efforts at raising wages are only efforts at maintaining the given value of labor, and that the necessity of debting their price with the capitalist is inherent to their condition of having to sell themselves as commodities. By cowardly giving way in their every-day conflict with capital, they would certainly disqualify themselves for the initiating of any larger movement.

At the same time, and quite apart from the general servitude involved in the wages system, the working class ought not to exaggerate to themselves the ultimate working of these every-day struggles. They ought not to forget that they are fighting with effects, but not with the causes of those effects; that they are retarding the downward movement, but not changing its direction; that they are applying palliatives, not curing the malady. They ought, therefore, not to be exclusively absorbed in these unavoidable guerrilla fights incessantly springing up from the never-ceasing encroachments of capital or changes of the market. They ought to understand that, with all the miseries it imposes upon them, the present system simultaneously engenders the material conditions and the social forms necessary for an economic reconstruction of society.
From *What Means This Strike?*

Three years ago I was in your midst during another strike. The superficial observer who looks back to your attitude during that strike, who looks back to your attitude during the strikes that preceded that one, who now turns his eyes to your attitude in the present strike, and who discovers substantially no difference between your attitude now and then might say, "Why, it is a waste of time to speak to such men; they learn nothing from experience; they will eternally fight the same hopeless battle, the battle to establish 'safe relations' with the capitalist class, with the same hopeless weapon: the 'pure and simple' organization of labor!" But the Socialist does not take that view. There is one thing about your conduct that entitles you to the warm sympathy of the Socialist, and that is that, despite your persistent errors in fundamental principles, in aims and methods, despite the illusions that you are chasing after, despite the increasing poverty and cumulating failures that press upon you, despite all that you preserve manhood enough not to submit to oppression, but rise in the rebellion that is implied in a strike. The attitude of workingmen engaged in a bona fide strike is an inspiring one. It is an earnest that slavery will not prevail. The slave alone who will not rise against his master, who will meekly bend his back to the lash and turn his cheek to him who plucks his beard—that slave alone is hopeless. But the slave, who, as you of New Bedford, persists, despite failures and poverty, in rebelling, there is always hope for. This is the reason I have considered it worth my while to leave my home and interrupt my work in New York, and come here, and spend a few days with you. I bank my hopes wholly and build entirely upon this sentiment of rebellion within you.

Grevin's willful blindness to the sense of Marx's statements in VPP may stem from his realization that these speeches by Marx and De Leon fly in the face of an article of Internationalism's faith: its peculiar mechanistic version of "capitalist decadence." Neither Marx nor De Leon could witness the explosive growth in productivity that would enable capital to accord to working class demands to improve the standard of living of industrial workers in the 20th century. Grevin's defense of his idea of capitalist decadence seems relevant to the comic Richard Pryor's famous remark. "Are you going to believe me or are you going to believe your lying eyes?" To explain 20th century economic reforms Grevin resorts to a new classification of reforms: They are "fundamental structural changes" like the eight-hour day and restrictions on child labor granted during what he calls the ascendant phase of capitalism [i.e. pre-1914] and thus in keeping with "capitalist decadence" theory, or else they are "measures designed to institutionalize state capitalism" like social security, welfare, and the WPA. Grevin doesn't explain just how the sharp rise in the standard of living of industrial workers since 1914 figures in the thinking of capitalist decadence proponents.

Next Internationalism "comes to grips" with De Leonist's rejection of the idea of a post-revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat. The problem I and many other De Leonists have with the idea of a dictatorship of the proletariat is its tragic history. I cited the USSR, The People's Republic of China, and Cambodia as examples. Grevin complained that these weren't dictatorships of the proletariat but rather were "extreme forms of state capitalism, not workers governments." I agree that all were examples of state capitalist economies. But in each case the vanguard party that provided leadership for the proletariat claimed to have established a D of P whose purpose was to repress counter-revolutionary elements in society. In every case the dictatorship of the proletariat became a dictatorship over the workers by the elite leaders of the vanguard party.

Another factor influencing De Leonist rejection of the D of P is that De Leonists are opposed to the idea of a minority revolution. In advanced industrial nations the proletariat make up over 90 percent of the population. It is the task of socialist revolutionaries to convince, not lead, our fellow workers to abolish capitalism. A revolution made by a clear majority of convinced socialists will not need the coercive
instruments of a dictatorship to maintain itself. Marx could not see into the future when the proletariat would be the great majority and when it would only remain to win them over by persuasion. Nor could he envision the hideous barbarism that the dictatorship of the proletariat would entail.

This brings us to the question of democracy and the Leninist aversion to the idea of a revolution precipitated by the choice of voters in an election. Grevin’s response to the idea in the section “DeLeonism and Bourgeois Democracy” consists almost entirely of sarcastic references to my brief outline of the De Leonist program in DB108:

“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 SIUs would provide the social organization necessary to organize production.”

Grevin simply ignores Marx’s 1870 endorsement of a peaceful, electoral revolution (quoted in DB108) and attempts to laugh the SLP’s program for revolution out of existence: “For De Leonism, proletarian revolution will not only be peaceful but legal to boot!!! God forbid the workers stage an illegal overthrow of capitalism.” Etc. etc. After the laughs Grevin’s argument consists of his conviction that the capitalist class is unlikely to abide by its professed democratic pretensions. Like Greven De Leonists have no illusions about the willingness of our rulers to abide by the results of an election, nor did De Leon. The power that will enforce the victory at the polls will be the class conscious working class organized in socialist industrial unions whose members do the work and are in a position to control production, communication, transportation and all other activity a counter-revolution would require.

It’s difficult to understand exactly why Leninists like Internationalism and the left communists in general reject so utterly the idea of a peaceful revolution. One explanation may be their romantic attachment to the model of urban insurrection played out in Petersburg in 1917. Another might be that the De Leonist model leaves no role for the vanguard party and its leadership elite – no place for the Leuns, the Trotsky’s, the Stalins, the Maos of such a revolution. Perhaps also they feel that a blood-on-the-streets insurrection will pave the way for the coercive force that will institute the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The title of Internationalism’s series was “The Legacy of De Leonism.” I hope readers will examine that legacy by reading De Leon’s works available from New York Labor News, PO Box 218, Mountain View, CA 94042 and from the monthly journals The People, PO Box 218, Mountain View, CA 94042 and the New Unionist, 1821 University Ave., W. #5-116, Saint Paul, MN 55104.

--Frank Girard--
Howdy! I'm a Texas prisoner, and have been for over twelve years. In that protracted time period, I've worked in nearly every facet of food service. I've cooked for 1600 cons, been a baker, a pot washer, diet cook, and at the other end of the spectrum, been a SLOP MAN (refuse disposal technician)–hauling out 300 lb. barrels of food scraps to feed the pigs. I currently work on the back dock unloading eighteen wheelers of food, and stackin' 'n' packin' tons of food boxes, canned goods, produce, biscuit mix, you name it, in the kitchen commissary.

One day recently, when I had some slack time, I noticed that I was sitting amidst boxes of canned goods from near every corner of the planet. We have peaches from Greece, peaches and fruit cocktail from China, pineapple from South Africa, applesauce from Quebec, and sliced apples from Washington State, to name but a few. Obviously, our food is international in character, as is our global economic system, but more importantly, the workers in every corner of the globe through the sweat of their brow produced that food, under all manner of conditions--some I venture not too good.

In order for all of that food to arrive here (Garden spot of the universe) many types of labor were required, from the farm workers who grow and picked it, to the factory workers who canned it. Transport workers were of course involved in transporting it by truck, train, and boat. Warehouse workers, and longshore workers were involved in loadin' 'n' unloadin', stackin' 'n' packin' 'n' storin' it. And of course, prison food service workers are involved in preparing and serving these items.

Also involved in this process is a lot of unpaid labor. The less wages paid to workers in all facets of this international process, the more profit that the idle class of bosses has been able to rob us of. The more wages we are able to wrest from this numerical minority of thieves, the closer we approach getting the full value out of our toil. Being an unpaid slave of the state of Texas, I am fairly cognizant of the different degrees of this scenario, including "rock bottom!"

Restaurant workers provide one of the most noble and humanly fundamental services to people, i.e. feeding them. In return, they often receive wages terribly inadequate to survive on, and little appreciation to boot. Getting a pay raise from a tight assed manager can be like pulling teeth! I am personally no stranger to restaurant work myself. In my younger days I worked as a line-cook, chef's apprentice, food prep man, dishwasher, potwasher, custodian, and busboy. I even got fired once for agitating for a measly $1 an hour raise, after a year and a half of dedicated six day weeks. Hardly much to ask!

The Industrial Workers of the World (I.W.W.) is at present, on an organizing drive of all restaurant workers, and my being from Texas, three major cities chock full of restaurants and fast food establishments with millions of low paid wage slaves, come to mind. Namely, Dallas, Houston and Austin. I hope that people reading this article will make thousands of copies and distribute them to the fellow workers and help to build this massive organizing campaign in their
city (Anyplace Planet Earth!) of this most overworked, and underpaid sector of the working class.

A bit about the I.W.W.: The I.W.W. is an Industrial union with the intention of organizing all workers, in every industry, regardless of craft or skill into One Big Union! Rather than have workers who belong to a hodgepodge of different and unsolid unions based on their particular craft or local, for instance, a different union for cooks, and a different union for waitresses, or one for carpenters, and one for masons, the I.W.W. would have workers in all these industries organized solidly into One Big Union so as to be able to back one another up when push comes to shove. Don’t you think it’s about high time we made our collective shove!

The advantage of having, for example, all restaurant workers (cooks, busboys, waitpersons, bartenders, dish washers, etc. transport workers, farm workers, warehouse workers, stevedores) organized solidly into One Big Union becomes readily apparent if you consider the following scenario. Let’s say that the farm workers were to go on strike over wages or unsafe working conditions. Workers in all other industries could back their play thusly. The truckers could refuse to handle the boss’s produce, longshoremen refuse to load it on or off ships, warehouse workers and grocery stockers could refuse to handle these goods, and restaurant workers could refuse to work until the farm workers’ demands for higher wages and humane working conditions were unequivocally met. And this whole process could work just solidly in reverse, if it were the restaurant worker who initiate industrial action. Just having restaurant workers organized on large scale would afford them a tremendous amount of leverage against the bosses.

But this is not all. In my life, I have worked as carpenter, painter, air condition and heating installation, sheet metal trades, and even been a high rise window washer. Aside, possibly from the last, restaurants can hardly do without these forms of labor. So you see, the advantage of having all workers organized in the I.W.W. means that carpenters, painters, electricians, plumbers, telephone workers, AC workers can all be called on to back up restaurant workers when need for solidarity arises. For as little as the push for a dollar an hour pay raise, all could be counted to throw off the work belts and put their hands in their pockets. And this is how we might bring together all the fragmented working class elements and unite them into one giant fist of solidarity that will settle for nothing less than the best for the working class.

So, imagine all restaurant workers organized solidly into an industrial union of the I.W.W., and spreading this idea to workers in other industries! This would take on international proportions, just like the food boxes in the aforementioned prison commissary, and it would mean an international industrial solidarity like none seen before in history.

It is not merely the I.W.W.’s goal to get higher wages for our labor, though that is surely a good place to start, and, I might add, the I.W.W.’s method of direct action in the form of work slowdowns, quick strikes, and solidarity strikes goes a thousand times further to achieving this than the methods of other unions. Spending millions to
finance politicians in the Democratic Party, who do nothing for
workers, as the A.F.L. has done is a total waste of worker's time and
money. The I.W.W. has cheap dues and it is totally democratic in
structure, with the power of the union residing in the hands of the
rank and file workers. Workers make all decisions in the union by vote,
and there are no high paid union officials or crooked bureaucrats in
our union to misrepresent our interests or sell us out to the bosses.
As well, the I.W.W. is only as strong as its members make it. Effective
action depends on the courage, initiative and creativity of the
membership. No one will fight our battles for us, but membership in the
I.W.W. means that you will have some of the most principled people in
the world fighting right along beside you.

The big picture goal of the I.W.W. is a much more socially
transformative one in that we envision the bringing about of a social
system of Industrial Democracy based on the democratic and equalitarian
principles we practice at present. This would be a system whereby all
the goods and services, and wonders which workers produce and
contribute would be produced and performed for human use and enjoyment,
rather than, as at present, for the profit of a numerical minority of
greedy people. As workers organize and begin to get more and more of
the full value of our labor, which the bosses at present squeeze us
for, said bosses may one day feel the need to take the proverbial hike.
This will be no problem, because if we are well organized, we can run
all of the industries for ourselves, i.e., humanity. After all, if we
all know how to work together anyway, what real need do we have for
bosses anyway? And once the bosses have been rendered fairly
superfluous on a grand scale, and we are running the industries
democratically for the benefit of all (no starving or homeless people in
the I.W.W. vision), we can democratically decide how to reorganize our
society in a much more artistic, aesthetically pleasing, greener, life
promoting manner.

So, in the case of restaurant worker unions, we may decide that we
no longer want such unhealthy and polluting type eating establishments
as McDonald's or Wendy's or their eyesore buildings in our new society.
We may opt for tearing them down and creating far more wondrous and
relaxed eating establishments, where people could, for instance, take a
free public transport, dine on a wonderful meal in exquisite
surroundings with family and friends—for free, and then take in a free
film afterwards. And this is how every facet of society could be
democratically organized, with everyone having a say—and deciding
how cities and communities will be constructed, and the best and safest
ways to produce goods and services. With everyone able to share in
this work, people will no longer have to put in the health-draining
hours of labor that we do under the present system. In short,
production for use, not profit is the ultimate goal of the I.W.W., but
in reality it would be a system whereby we would all profit in health
and general wellbeing. But the first step is to get organized!
Restaurant Workers! Learn how to organize and spread the word! Feeding
people is some of the most beneficial and necessary work there
is, and restaurant workers have been categorized as low-wage, low-
skilled simpletons for far too long. Eating establishments cannot run
without your labor power, and once organized into the I.W.W., the boss will soon see who the true simpletons are! Build to Win People! To find out more about this drive, and the I.W.W. In general, write to: Industrial Workers of the World, PO BOX, 13476, Philadelphia, PA. 19101. Ask them to send you an organizing guide, and more literature on the I.W.W.'s aims, methods, and principles. As well, take out a subscription to our paper, The Industrial Worker—the best labor paper around, and share it with your fellow workers!

IN SOLIDARITY, KEVIN

[From Chain Reaction #8, Single issue $2 from Austin ABC, PO Box 19733, Austin, TX 78266]

NOTES, ANNOUNCEMENTS, AND SHORT REVIEWS

Socialist View according to its masthead is the “Bi-Monthly Journal of the North East Branch of the Socialist Party.” This is the first time I have seen a local publication by the Socialist Party of Great Britain. SV began publication with the January/February 2001 issue in a 20-page, ½ A-4 format. As one might expect, it is heavy on local material—information on local meetings, and addresses and phone and e-mail info, so that readers can contact the local group. Much of the rest of the content informs northeast readers about the publications and meetings of the national SPGB. Although some issues contain reprints from the SPGB’s journal the Socialist Standard, like “One Green World” in number 1, most of the material seems to be especially written for SV. Among this is (in No.1) a five-page “Open Letter to Workers” presenting the SPGB’s case for socialism; No. 3 “The Parliamentary Road to Socialism”, which presents the SPGB’s argument for its electoral revolutionary strategy as opposed to the Socialist Labor Party’s combination of electoral and industrial unionism; No. 6, November/December 2001, billed as the “Special Issue on the U.S. War Against ‘Terrorism’” contains “In Whose Interests?” which examines the ‘alliance’ between the U.S. and Britain, and “The U.S. and the Threat of Bioterrorism.” Characteristic of SV is a generally lighter touch than the Socialist Standard and a greater use of graphics and even poetry. 40 p (no subscription info given)

Website <www.communities.msn.com/RealWorldSocialismNorthEast>

Love & Politics is an 84-page collection of the poetry of Judith Malina, an actress and anarchist whose art mirrors her life in New York City’s anarchist movement. As one might expect of a lyric poet, her work is personal. Not ideological. She memorializes departed anarchist friends like Mel Most, Esther and Sam Dolgoff, and her longtime companion Julian Beck. Another poetic focus of her anarchist eye is a sensitivity to both injustice and individual kindness as she encountered them. Still another dimension is her consciousness of herself as Jewish and a woman. The Preface speaks of her as “an actress informed with all voices, an anarchist of the spirit,[who] writes of love which is always at the same time a political act, a politics which issues from compassion, written in tender ink. This is the anarchism of the heart.” $6 from Black & Red, PO Box 02374, Detroit, MI 48202. Black and Red is also the publisher of Maurice Brinton’s The Bolsheviks and Workers Control 1917-1921, available for $2.50. Prices do not include the cost of postage, which is apparently left to our consciences.

The Iron Fist Behind the Invisible Hand: Corporate Capitalism As a System Of State-Guaranteed Privilege by Kevin A Carson presents a variety of anarchism that deviates from the anarcho-communism
and anarcho-syndicalism and anarcho-primitivism we are accustomed to. A note from the author accompanying the review copy describes it as "...an analysis, from a socialist-market syndicalist perspective, of the role of state intervention in maintaining so-called "free market" capitalism. It obliquely answers Chomsky's social democratic "anarchist" argument for increased state power to break up corporate capitalism." The author begins by giving the historical context for modern capitalism, which he gleaned largely from the final chapters of Marx's Capital. The difficulty I have with his version of Marx is the emphasis on the action of the state. To read Carson you would think that the people who fed, clothed, and housed King Alfred, Ethelred, and Harold, and who ploughed the soil, shoveled the shit, wove the cloth, and cooked the food for the kings and thegns and priests and their retainers were free volunteers in some kind of Anglo-Saxon commune. Evil in the form of the Normans and William the Conqueror defeated Harold and distributed English lands and the peasants attached to them among his retainers. This according to Carson was the beginning of a feudalism that evolved over the centuries through a series of state actions that ended the peasants' attachment to the land and made them available to anyone who could profit by hiring them as wage workers. The trouble with this version of history is that it omits the economic side of the historical process. Government (state) action took place in an economic context. The enclosures that Carson correctly sees as a major step in the historical process were driven by the development of a market for British wool on the continent. The subsequent evolution of British industry turned on the availability of dispossessed—and starving—peasants as a wage labor force.

Carson, who identifies himself as a "mutualist anarchist" argues in this pamphlet that markets in themselves are not evil; rather the problem is capitalism with which markets have been associated for the past 400 years or so. The global spread of the system and the aggregation of enterprises into transnational corporations, he would argue, are also the result of state action. What he seems to neglect is the economic side of a process in which the state is only one of the factors. Could society have built a mutually beneficial market-based economic system in the 1500s had it not been for the British state? Perhaps so, if the only force at work had been the popular will. But there was another force: technological evolution.

Yes—Utopia!—we have the technology by Ron Cook is my favorite kind of book: self-published and—most unusual—self-bound by the author. Books by rank and file socialists generally concentrate on the what's-wrong-with-capitalism argument for socialism. Ron Cook uses an even better argument: How socialism will change the way we live our lives. As a retired teacher I was especially interested in his eleven-page chapter, "Liberated Children: Children, too, will be free in Utopia—with radical consequences." He envisions a socialist society that will simply eliminate education as an institutionalized activity, including the kind carried on in the nuclear family under the name of "home schooling." Rather children would remain with their parents—or grandparents or other care givers—as onlookers or participants in work or play or other activities. They would be in the factory, office, truck, coal mine—wherever the care giver was—and in the process learn to be adult human beings, which is the goal of all education. In the course of these infant years children would be encouraged to experience and observe everything our culture has to offer in the way of the arts, science, entertainment, music, sports so that later they can be coached to become adept at whatever interests them. In effect Cook envisions a world in which every adult can become a part-time teacher.

In Chapter 9, "Working: The creative core of our lives," Cook draws on the basic ideas of socialism advanced by the World Socialist Movement, of which he is a supporter. In this socialist utopia both wages and the market have been abolished. Goods and services are free, and work is voluntary. How will society get the necessary work done? Well, for one thing eliminating capitalism will also eliminate a lot of work. Cook lists two pages of occupations that will be scrapped—and that doesn't include lawyers, of whom there are 2 million in the U.S. and god knows how many MBAs. Also, much of
our hatred of work stems from the authoritarian circumstances under which we work and the low esteem that clings to many occupations. When the economic circumstances of our live no longer are dependent on our occupation and when work is no longer slavery under the “management” of some tin-horn Simon Legree, when we are participating in the management of production, work will lose its negative connotation.


Ron Cook will hand-bind a copy and mail it to you in North America for $8 ($12) from 11 Dagger Lane, West Bromwich, W. Midlands, B71 4BT, England. It can also be downloaded for $1.50 from <www.nospine.net/d.asp T=0044-00118-001> e-mail <cook-works@goodlife.fsnet.co.uk>

Alternative Press Review, Vol.7, No. 1, Spring 2002 reminds me of the DB, only bigger and, in many ways, better—83 pages, colored ink. Like the DB it reprints articles from the large array of anarchist periodicals being published worldwide and a much larger section reviewing alternative journals including non-anarchist and reformist publications like the Uitne Reader, Skeptical Inquirer, The Progressive, and In These Times. Among the articles are the 5-page “Statement of Slobodan Milosevic On The Illegitimacy of The Hague “Tribunal,” which he was not allowed to deliver as well as the 3-page article “The New