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Contents **Page**

About This Issue. 6

Can Revolution Come Through the Ballot Box, From *New Unionist* 3
Letter, Chris Faatz
Reply, Jeff Miller
Revolution Through the Ballot Box?, Chicago Revolutionary Network

Comments on Some Letters in DB90, Larry Gambone 7

Letter, Bob Rossi 8

Letter, Monroe Prussack 9

Letter, Adam Buick 10

Lacking Archons and De Leon, Laurens Otter, from *Any Time Now* 11
Comment, Larry Gambone

Che Guevara, Professional Revolutionary Re-evaluated, John Cabral 14

The Second Greatest Robbery in History: Or How the U.S. Government Is Looting the Social Security Pension Fund, L.A. Workers' Voice 15

Response to the Discussion Bulletin: Does Ruling Class "Conspire: Against Workers, E.F., from *Internationalism* 17

Conspiracy or Instinctive Response?, Frank Girard 19

A Conspiracy or the System?, from *New Unionist* 21

Some Excerpts from "What Is Socialism?" with comments by Chris Faatz 23

Syndicalism and Revolution, from *Internationalist Notes* 25

Organization to Liberate Society, from *Z Magazine* 27

Notes, Announcements, and Short Reviews 31

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ABOUT THE DISCUSSION BULLETIN

The Discussion Bulletin is affiliated with the Industrial Union Caucus in Education (IUCE). It serves as the financially and politically independent forum of a relatively unknown sector of political thought that places the great divide in the "left," not between Anarchists and Marxists but between capitalism's statist leftwing of vanguardists and social democrats and the real revolutionaries of our era: the non-market, anti-statist, libertarian socialists. They are organized in small groups of syndicalists, communist anarchists, libertarian municipalists, world socialists, socialist industrial unionists, council communists, and left communists. The perspective of these groups with their rejection of capitalism's wage, market, and money system as well as capitalist politics and unionism constitutes the only real alternative to capitalism in both its market and statist phases.

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

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

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[The following exchange appeared in the July 1998 issue of the *New Unionist* (2309 Nicollet Ave., #202, Minneapolis, MN 55404). In addition we are publishing the text of a flier by Chirevnet designed to intervene in the debate. To my knowledge, only two elements in our political sector advocate the use of capitalism's political system as a strategy in the socialist revolution: the World Socialist Movement (the Socialist Party of Great Britain and its companion parties) and the DeLeonists: the Socialist Labor Party, New Unionist Party, and other DeLeonist groupings. It seems to me that criticism of the DeLeonist position on the use of the ballot is based on a failure to consider the tactical possibilities that can spring from its use. I think that Jeff Miller's response to Chris Faatz here is right on target. The exchange with Internationalism on conspiracy elsewhere in this issue also touches on the subject. --fg]

Can a Revolution Come Through the Ballot Box?

First of all, kudos on a fine little paper. I'm fascinated by something coming out of the De Leonist sector of the socialist movement that doesn't seem to spend all its time counting theoretical angels on the heads of theoretical pins in the light of De Leon's revelations. While your politics are clear, your open-mindedness (such as in matters of religion and disagreement on both large and fine points) is equally so.

I'd like to raise a question, though, that I hope you can answer.

I agree wholeheartedly with the front-page programmatic statement that "real socialism is not state control from the top down. It's a stateless workplace (I'd add "and neighborhood") democracy from the bottom up." Then you go on to add that the goal of the revolutionary workers' political party is to "educate and rally the majority for a revolution at the ballot box."

At the ballot box? I don't understand. While universal suffrage in bourgeois society is an immense historical gain for the working and its allies, it isn't, and, by the very nature of the bourgeois state and the interests it serves, can't be the route to fundamental and revolutionary social change in this country, let alone the rest of the world.

Bourgeois democracy is a dictatorship, despite its democratic forms. It' s the most palatable means by which the interests of the ruling class in this epoch of world history can be carried forward--a kind of veil and a bit of a bribe to the movement of the workers and oppressed to keep them happy and, hopefully, unaware of their own real needs. In other words, it's an extremely efficient means by which the dreadful spector of class conscious political activity is kept at bay. As this grueling century's history shows very clearly, the bourgeoisie is quite willing to don jackboots and black jackets, and pick up the bayonet, if their rule is actually threatened by mass working class political activity. Fascism is the means through which the rulers and beneficiaries of this economic system will, with minimal hesitation, crush any true threat to their interests, as Germany, Spain and Italy have all proven.

Equally in the oppressed nations, any attempt at even the most minimal amelioration of suffering "through the ballot" will be brought to nothing through imperialist intervention should the profits of multinational corporations be threatened-Chile under Allende and Guatemala under Arbenz are both prime examples of this fact.

So it seems to me a contradiction: the ballot as a means to achieve the end of class rule in the United States? I'm no aficionado of violence, but it seems to me that a revolutionary movement will take much, much more than that.

Chris Faatz
Vancouver, Washington

4

Reply:

Chris Faatz says correctly that "universal suffrage is an immense historical gain for the working class and its allies." If it is acknowledged to be a great gain the clear implication is that it is such because it can aid the working class in its struggle. The real question is then not if, but how to properly employ the ballot.

When Faatz says "bourgeois democracy is a dictatorship" he surely speaks figuratively, that the democratic state under capitalism serves the class needs of the capitalists.

But it is of course not literally a dictatorship. The political rights enjoyed by the capitalists are also shared by the workers, and these include the freedoms of speech and assembly as well as the freedom to compete for the offices of government power in elections.

But Faatz is correct that elections are used by the ruling class to bamboozle the workers and keep them from an understanding of their own real interests. He could have added that elections serve another important function of social control by having the workers themselves sanction and legitimate capitalism by voting for the pro-capitalist Democratic and Republican parties. In a modern technological society violent repression is a highly disruptive and inefficient means of rule. For a dynamic and efficient capitalist economy the workers have to believe in the system, even when things get hard for them, and "police" them selves.

The fact that the electoral system plays such a key role in this social conditioning makes it imperative that the revolutionary movement not surrender this field of struggle to the ruling class. This tactical consideration, of winning "the hearts and minds" of the working class, is one important reason, but not the only one, the NUP calls for a revolutionary workers party to challenge elections.

There is in addition a vital strategic consideration. By bringing the revolutionary program to a vote of the people the revolution legalizes and legitimizes the confiscation of the capitalists' property once a majority vote is achieved.

The existing law protects and "sanctifies" private property in the means of production, and the institutions of state enforce the law. Because the revolutionary movement seeks to transfer this private property to the community at large, its political goal is not to amend or reform the existing property-based legal system but to overthrow it. This also means overthrowing the state that enforces the law, rather than attempting to use the bourgeois state for working-class ends as the reformist parties do.

This is the meaning of "a revolution at the ballot box"--the revolutionary political mobilization of the majority and the expression of the will of the majority at the ballot box, for all to see and none to deny.

What we believe Faatz is getting at--and what he is absolutely correct in--is that this explicitly political process cannot create the new society. For this the workers need their all-inclusive industrial union by which to assume democratic control over the means of production, the workplaces, once they have become the property of society by declaration of the people at the polls.

But Faatz also objects that the bourgeoisie will "don jackboots and black jackets, and pick up a bayonet, if their rule is actually threatened by mass working class political activity."

But here again he speaks figuratively. The capitalists will never literally pick up bayonets themselves, any more than they would pick up a shovel today. The capitalists never do their own fighting--they get others to do their fighting for them.

This fact only emphasizes the need for a political movement to rally the overwhelming majority to the revolution--including those workers in the military--so that the ruling class will have no one to call on to fight for them. By agreeing to a peaceful test of strength at the polls, rather than on the battlefield, the workers will be fighting on their own terrain because they are the immense majority; at the same time they

can never possess the weapons or military organization to defeat the armed forces of the state on their terrain of violence.

Because the revolutionary movement will play and win by the rules the population has been convinced by the ruling class itself are correct and just, any extralegal action by the capitalists against the will of the people will be seen as an illegitimate power play. It will only serve to push the last wavering elements to the side of the revolution, completing the isolation and "de-powering" of the ruling class.

Actually, the chances of a violent counter-revolution in today' s United States and other developed countries are much less than the fascist cases of Germany, Spain and Italy. There the ruling classes could call on a large middle class of small business owners, including the peasants, to safeguard their commonly revered institution of private property by violently smashing the workers movement. No such large middle class exists anymore in this country.

The point can also be illustrated by the successful overthrow of the Stalinist regimes of Eastern Europe as opposed to the violent crushing of the democracy movement in China. In industrialized East Germany, the non-violent political mobilization of the urban population was so complete that the ruling class, which had controlled one the most repressive regimes in the world, gave up without a fight. But in China the great mass of peasants remained passive and failed to rise in support of the urban movement, which was then forcibly suppressed by the rulers' peasant army.

Finally, the workers will have the ace-in-the-hole on account of the takeover of the industries by their industrial union. The capitalists might offer people money to fight for them, but since dollars will be useless for obtaining goods and services, the appeal such offers have today will vanish. The only way for anyone-including the former capitalists and their supporters--to secure the means of survival will be through labor in the industries now under the workers' collective management. And what a change in attitude an empty stomach can make!

This is the revolutionary program the NUP proposes for the United States. It cannot be automatically imposed on other countries with different political systems and cultures. But the overthrow of capitalism in the United States will obviously facilitate its speedy overthrow throughout the world by such means as are appropriate in each country, none of which will then need fear an imperialist intervention by the U.S.

-Jeff Miller

Revolution Through the Ballot Box?--

"If voting made a difference, it would be outlawed!"

by the Chicago Revolutionary Network/CHIREVNET
c/o Boxholder, PO Box 578042, chicago, IL 60657-8042//diannas@msn.com

This letter is being written in response to the "Letters" column in the July, 1998 issue of the *New Unionist* [2309 Nicollet Ave., Suite 202, Minneapolis, MN 55404], entitled "Can a Revolution Come Through the Ballot Box?" We in CHIREVNET, a revolutionary Marxist/syndicalist collective, agree with the essence of Chris Faatz's letter that it can't, adding further that *"If voting made a difference, it would be outlawed!"*

Furthermore, we are in fundamental agreement with [revolutionary] economic democracy [RED] led by revolutionary unions as a key strategic objective of a working-class revolution in the US. Instead of the dream, utopian, petty-bourgeois concept of a

"revolution" through the ballot box, we believe in the General Strike leading to the widespread, armed occupation of the workplaces [factories, mills, mines, etc.] by revolutionary unions, etc., as the best way to overthrow capitalism for keeps.

We strongly agree with Chris that "[b]ourgeois democracy is a dictatorship, despite its democratic forms," while we sharply disagree with Jeff Miller: "[b]ut it is of course not literally a dictatorship. The political rights enjoyed by the capitalist are also shared by the workers...." Only formally, politically, this is true, but in *practice*, in *reality*, rights for the working class and all of the oppressed *only exist* if the state of the ruling class is not practically threatened by the exercise of these "rights."

For example: during the late 60's and early 70's the Black Panther Party posed a revolutionary potential, so the ruling class' state dictatorship viciously attacked the BPP through COINTELPRO, *murdering many, and jailing even more!* BPP revolutionaries Fred Hampton and Mark Clark were sleeping peacefully in their beds--the "same" [sic] right enjoyed by the bourgeoisie--when hired thugs of federal, state, and city agencies launched an armed assault--and murdered Fred and Mark.

Also, we have a member that was once in Vietnam Veterans Against the War/Winter Soldier Organization [VVAW/WSO], an anti-imperialist organization. VVAW/WSO was a serious problem for the US. Imperialist War effort in Vietnam, so VVAW/WSO was wiretapped, subjected to mail tampering, infiltrated with Government agent-provocateurs, had bogus charges filed against it [e.g., the Gainesville 8], and had its big, peaceful, but militant demos often *violently attacked* by various cops--hired thugs.

A *real* bourgeois dictatorship, economic AND political, *actually exists* in the US.!

PS. We further agree with Chris that fascism is a potential danger in the US. *when* a revolutionary working class movement threatens bourgeois rule, and cite *current* social groupings, the Christian Right, militia movement, KKK, etc., made up of middle class/very backward workers. Also, the change in E. Germany was *WITHIN* capitalism!

ABOUT THIS ISSUE

DB91 begins with a discussion on the use of the ballot by revolutionists. For some reason the position of DeLeonists on this matter seem to escape others in our political sector. Unfortunately two of De Leon's major works on the subject are now out of print: *The Ballot and the Class Struggle* and *As to Politics*. The latter was a debate published originally in the *Daily People* in 1906 between IWW opponents of the use of the ballot and De Leon, the editor.

Larry Gambone's letter takes issue with Collectivities on taxation and other aspects of their economics, with Derek Devine on the syndicalism of the IWW, and with those who think taxation is a non-issue for revolutionaries. I'm intrigued by Gambone's idea that the IWW espouses a "Marxist" as opposed to anarchist syndicalism. More to the point and to the purpose of the IWW's founders, it seems to me, is Devine's point that the IWW is a revolutionary industrial union. In fact the some writers around the time of the 1908 split in the IWW spoke of the political industrial unionists and the anti-political industrial unionists.

(to p. 13)

I have a few comments on some of the letters in DB 90

1. Collectivities Response

A hundred years ago thousands of people died of small pox. A far-seeing individual might say that one day this need not occur, yet they would never tell a sick person because of this their suffering was not real. State taxation, the need to borrow money and to pay commissions etc is, like it or not, the cost of doing business. Try to avoid paying taxes, for example, and see what happens. Hence, the "90% of SV... abstracted off" is not just a trick to fool the workers.

"Massive increases in supervisors, managers, security personell, police... etc." Management and supervisors were among the chief victims of the 1980's-90's job cuts. Businesses found themselves top-heavy with profit-eating drones. It is true that more police and security systems are being employed, but this is a result of the break-down of community and sociability as a result of the intrusion of the state and commodity into daily life - more of an indirect, rather than a direct result of capitalism.

"It is the exchange between CCP and SCP which provides the demand for that portion of surplus-value which is to be accumulated." How then, does one explain accumulation in North America where Simple Commodity Production is a very small portion of the economy?

2. Derek Devine - only very sectarian old time Wobs ever thought the IWW was not syndicalist - it is a particular type of syndicalism, one that is marxist rather than anarchist-based. In my 30 years of off and on again membership in the IWW, I cannot recall anyone denying its essential syndicalism.

3. "Brouhaha Over Taxes..." How anyone could still be pushing the line that workers shouldn't be concerned about taxes, I don't know. SV is a highly abstract concept - taxation is not. 1. We don't see it - unlike the money taken from our wages 2. Many workers are consumers of SV and perhaps only a minority produce it. 3. As Marx pointed out, in any industrial society, workers would not receive their total product, an amount would have to be deducted for social services, expansion etc.,

We are against taxation because 40-50% of our wages are eaten up by it, and anyone who has been in the workforce for any length of time remembers when it was a lot less. In fact, there are many people alive who can remember when *no* workers paid income tax and sales tax was non-existent. Rather than arrogantly proclaiming The Truth, to the great unwashed, listen to us instead! One might add that the "workers shouldn't be concerned about taxes" line also nicely dovetails with the liberal-left's apologies for state capitalism. A great number of working people are angry and searching for answers. A realistic politics would build on this sentiment rather than pour cold water on it.

Larry Gambone, Box 174, Montreal QC H3K 3B9 Canada

Dear Friends,

I owe Jon Bekken the apology he's looking for in DB #90. It was not my intention to attack him or draw him into an argument. Neither was it my intention to attack either the IWW or Workers' Democracy. I also didn't mean to imply that Bekken doesn't work for a living; it just seems foolish for him to refer to himself or anyone else as "us working stiffs." I [redacted]being misunderstood.

The issue for me is organizing and how that gets done. I agree with WD that working class values should form the core of a militant approach to building a self-managed society. This is quite a statement to make because it challenges every assumption about organizing--from the AFL-CIO's to the IWW's. It means that organizing is done though relationships which challenge fear barriers with confrontation. It means consciously defining one's relationship to communities, co-workers and power in positive terms.

Where I differ from WD on this issue is that I see attacks on the AFL-CIO as detracting from values-based organizing and playing into leftism. I do not think that relational organizing will build a mass movement any time soon; it depends on small groups working through values with workers, talented organizers and leaders developing relationships and knowing what to do with them and general agreement across the labor movement on what our focus should be.

For most readers, including most IWWs, this is either a foreign language or irrelevant. The focus of the the "non-market, anti-statist libertarian socialists" is not organizing. This is too bad because organizing is the only test of ideas. If you don't test your ideas and adjust them accordingly, you're irrelevant. Your place in the labor movement is determined only by what you bring to the table. People who abstain from struggle for fear of compromise or confrontation resign themselves to being powerless cranks.

Posturing is not the same as struggling. Neither the WD leaflet nor the Bekken piece I was referring to talked about power in ways that people who are involved in organizing recognize. I could have chosen any one of dozens of cranky pieces in the IW, the DB or related publications to make my point and wish I had done so now.

Just about anyone can organize today and it's too bad that people around the DB don't. If the IWW can attract a few activists, so could DeLeonists build an SIU and the councilists could build councils. They won't do it because organizing violates comfort zones and forces us to change. It's easier to criticize than to act.

I'm not going to defend the AFL-CIO against Bekken's attacks. The AFL makes its own mistakes and pays for them. What I question is the values implied in attacking the AFL and what that leaves the IWW or WD to bring to the table. How does that help you organize? How does that help you define your relationship to power in positive terms? How does that help anyone who matters to us? What does that say about your focus?

I don't see evidence that the IWW is going about organizing in a way which will attract a lasting membership who are prepared to deal with power. I grant that IWW membership is increasing--so what? Part of the payoff of our work within unions falls to people on the fringes. I imagine that anti-AFL rhetoric attracts a small number of workers, but experience tells me that people who are primarily critics are not good organizers and jump ship when things get moving. I'm also sure that some IWWs are getting fired and blacklisted and that someone in the IWW mistakenly believes that this is a good sign.

I raised issues of working class values, organizing strategies and political possibilities within the DB. Bekken's response was to call me a liar, say that I should be censored and end by saying that he doesn't understand the point of my letter. No other DB readers responded, though several wrote to attack a competing sect or develop an obscure point of marxism. I raised the wrong issues with the wrong people. I was hoping that someone out there cared about organizing but I was mistaken.

--Best Wishes,

Bob Rossi
PO Box 2766
Salem, OR. 97308

Dear Readers,

The DeLeonist Society of Canada rejects my proposal for us to establish socialism by amending our Constitution to make the means of production social property and continue to live under the Constitution. To my critics the way to socialism is paved with good intentions and a revolutionary working class along with a huge population that is driven to disillusionment by poverty. They want the revolutionary traditions and rights that were handed down to us by patriots who successfully struggled against British feudalism to be forgotten. Their contempt for bourgeois society and morality, as well as jurisprudence, has created doubt as to how we will relate to each other as civilized people with equal rights. Instead of adapting our Constitution to changing conditions as we have been doing, they see a desperate population caught in an advancing crisis of capitalism doing what is right through leaders who know something about Marx.

The writings of DeLeon about his conception of socialism based on socialist industrial unions has brilliant thinking that society certainly will use once it nationalizes the means of production. The writings of the great American Anthropologist, Louis H. Morgan, ~~state that~~ especially Ancient Society will also be used to reinforce the case for democratic industrial union management of industry. Before DeLeon wrote about industrial government and created the ~~Third World War~~ by writing its preamble, he wanted the Socialist Labor Party to grow so the working class may benefit from enhanced political power. The SLP was active and got thousands of votes (mostly in New York City), even though it did not advocate industrial union government before 1905 when the IWW was founded. The SLP devoted itself to educate workers to form class-conscious unions. It fought corruption in most existing unions, and it offered a socialist ticket for its candidates to run for office. In my opinion, the possibility of success for socialism is better now than then because world conditions are ~~most~~ insecure and desperate. With terrible weapons of mass destruction, wars are unthinkable. The union movement is shrinking because much of the world economy holds labor down with repression, and it is harder for labor to present a united front on a world scale. Through the mass media, we all see the great wealth that is available, and our frustration grows that capitalism will not let us share in it with any degree of equality.

With my vision of the future that I get with the aid of hindsight, I say it is common sense for us to proceed as the SLP did before industrial union government was imagined.

(Note: The following article belongs at the beginning of this issue as a part of the debate on the electoral road to socialist revolution. Circumstances unfortunately relegated it to this spot. --fg)

SOME EXCERPTS FROM "WHAT IS SOCIALISM?"

(With comments by Chris Faatz, 1701 Broadway, #211,Vancouver, WA 98663 cfaatz@teleport.com

[NOTE: the following first appeared as part of a discussion on the internet regarding socialism and its definition. It's been slightly modified for DB readers--CF]

The question being debated here is that of what might be termed "the DeLeonist Road to Socialism." Many people are unclear as to what DeLeonism is. One thing that can be said for it is that you won't find their definition in most of your dictionaries--and that's probably a good thing, as a friend recently pointed out. To me, they fall within the general realm of "libertarian socialists," but let's let one of their leading historical figures and defenders, Eric Hass, editor of the Socialist Labor Party's central organ, "The People" for umpteen years, set it out in his own words. Here's a definition from a 1958 printing of his pamphlet, "What Is Socialism?"

"'Socialism is that social system under which the necessaries of production [factories, tools, land, etc.] are owned, controlled and administered by the people, for the people, and under which, accordingly, the "cause" of political and economic despotism having been abolished, class rule is at an end. That is Socialism, nothing short of that.'

"This is the terse definition given by the great American Socialist pathfinder, Daniel De Leon. To it we add this: "Socialism is the only social system under which the worker will enjoy the full social value of his labor. Modern technology and science have made it possible to produce an abundance for all with a minimum of toil.... [Each] will enjoy security from want and fear of want, a measure of personal liberty such as... has never been known, and, not least, leisure for travel, play, and cultural pursuits. Socialism will mean a full, useful life.

"Socialism is the next higher form of social organization which *must* supersede capitalism if we are not to sink into the mire of fascism. It is the coming classless society of peace and plenty for all."

Hass goes on, in re: government ownership as Socialism:

"Government ownership, or the nationalization of utilities and industries, as it is sometimes called, is not Socialism. Common or collective ownership of industry in a Socialist society of free workers, in which exploitation of man by man is impossible, is one thing. But State ownership of industry in a class-divided society, in a society where the State is nothing more than an instrument by the means of which the economically dominant class maintains its power to exploit the worker, is another and quite different thing....

"To attain Socicialism the workers must make the means of production their collective property, abolish the class State, and administer production through democratic bodies elected from the industries."

One thing that can be said about DeLeonism is that it's democratic through and through, has no use for vanguards, and emphatically denies any kind of control from above in the new society. An industry-based democratic control from below is the vision that DeLeon

From *Any Time Now*, Winter 1998 Vol.3 No.3 (Affinity Place, Argenta, B.C. V0G 1B0 Canada)

LACKING ARCHONS AND DE LEON

Laurens Otter, long time syndicalist activist, has sent us an article on the anarchism of Daniel DeLeon. For those of you who don't know, DeLeon was the leader and chief theoretician of the Socialist Labor Party, that such a person might also be an anarchist might come as a surprise, but read on.

DeLeon was hostile to both anarchism and the Wobblies. yet, in contradiction espoused a kind of anarchism. When he first became a socialist in the early 1890's, he passed through reformism and just before the turn of the century might be considered an orthodox statist-socialist. He was, by the time of his break with the Wobblies (in 1908) as adamant as any anarchist that socialism could not be achieved without the abolition of the state.

The whole of De Leon's theory is based on the belief that one big union, organized industrially, not on a craft basis, should be ready to displace and replace the state. He believed certainly, in contesting elections in parallel with this, and argued that an electoral victory would not give authority and justification for the abolition of the state; but he was not under the utopian delusion that the ruling class would accept this, insisting that workers organized in the industrial unionist movement would have to enforce the change.

The Wobblies were not all anarcho-syndicalists, the vast majority still believed in some electoral activity, and in fact, objectively, De Leon's insistence that nothing was to be gained by capturing the state and that workers must be prepared for a decisive industrial revolutionary struggle; should have put him on the anarcho-syndicalist wing of the Wobblies.

His arguments against syndicalism mostly have the taste of being excuses, Anarchists (not anarcho-syndicalists) in France were throwing terrorist bombs, then of course, Leon Csolgozs (and Berkman was to attempt to assassinate a capitalist manager), so DeLeon argued that anarchists had an individualist not a class analysis of the evils of society. It's possible that some of the French terrorists may have had; DeLeon could hardly have known of the fact that the major American anarchist groups had regarded Czologosz as a police spy; nor the fact that Berkman argued that there were particular circumstances that made his act an acceptable subsidiary to class action; it is notable that DeLeon's arguments against terror exactly paralleled those advanced by most anarchists.

French syndicalists (and in the logging industry, Wobblies,) used sabotage as a supplement to strike action, they did not organize for this, they organized to strike. but where the bosses used overwhelming para-military force, then they justified the spontaneous use of sabotage; DeLeon misrepresented this to suggest conspiracies to organize a form of action which by definition would only be used by a minority. But once again his argument (though unfair) is an anti-elitist argument. He was, in fact, condemning anarchists, alleging that they were not anarchist enough. Although DeLeon insisted that the sole purpose of getting a socialist majority elected, would be to adjourn political government sine die, and hand over the legitimacy of power to the industrial union movement; he advanced the curious thesis that to advance an anti-electoral position instead of an electoralist one, constituted an abrogation of any desire to

convert non-socialist workers to socialism. He must have been aware that anarchists spoke on platforms the same way he did; that in all manners his efforts at propaganda were mirrored by that of anarchists; that to the same extent that his desire to create a theory of socialism was also paralleled by anarchist work in the same field. So his charge was, in fact, nonsense; yet, once again the motivation was a libertarian one, an insistance that revolution could and should only happen when the majority of workers want it.

Arguing on this basis, DeLeon painted a caricature, claiming that his "Bummery-Wobbly" opponents, (whether purely because they were not in favor of his party, or because a minority of them rejected all electoral activity) were in favour of creating a tight conspiracy, which would lead to a dictatorial substitution of the rule of an elite for that of the working class as a whole. Well, of course, Nachaev - and possibly Bakunin - had thought in such terms; but it would not have taken a lot of study (and DeLeon was not normally given to failing to study the arguments of his opponents,) to know that the bulk of the anarchist movement - and specifically all anarcho-syndicalists - repudiated such a strategy. But once again, DeLeon's critique of anarchism was an argument that someone was not anarchist enough.

Even where DeLeon's anti-anarchist arguments rose above the level of mere polemic, they were in fact libertarian critiques of a caricature anarchism. Though he dismissed Kropotkin as "Crack-pot-kin" and as a Social Darwinist, (Kropotkin, like DeLeon himself, did indeed use Darwin's theories, but argued, in contrast to Huxley and Spencer, that evolution depended upon Mutual Aid, rather than competition,) he produced a theoretical argument for socialism, that almost totally duplicated Kropotkin's own.

Indeed, if it hadn't been for DeLeon's hostility to anything called anarchism, he might well have validly criticized syndicalists for failing to learn sufficiently from Kropotkin's Mutual Aid theories, and Kropotkin for underplaying the importance of class organization. DeLeon's theories in fact, however much he might have denied it, constituted a synthesis of Kropotkin's theories with those of the syndicalists. Had DeLeon been able to appreciate this, and had he outgrown the urge to pose inaccurate arguments against anarchism, he would have been remembered as one of the most important of all anarchist thinkers.

So why this curious mental stop, which made a man who should have been one of the foremost anarchist thinkers of all time. into the most widely remembered opponent? - widely remembered not for intelligently argued theories, but for putting up Aunt Sallies and making silly cheap points?

The question perhaps takes us into the realm of psychology; something can be seen by looking at names, we have a man whose first name Daniel, a man whose son was called Solon. Both were ethnically Jewish. and the father at least, well versed in the historical knowledge and beliefs of his people. So he knew the significance of Daniel in Judaic thought; remember also that that father was also a professor of classics and was clearly well aware of the significance of Solon in classical history.

Daniel and Solon were both legendary law-givers of their respective peoples and cultures. Daniel who had been the prisoner of the alien culture, upheld the ancient Torah (egalitarian

legal and religious system) of his people and subsequently - even within the exiled community - restored this, preparing his people to arise from their subject position of their exile, so that a return (delayed by the conqueror in turn being conquered by a new empire) nevertheless in time took place. Solon - an Archon - who though born to the ruling class pushed through reforms and a democratic constitution to enfranchise the mass of his compatriots, and then, so as not to usurp this power, took himself into exile.

I suspect that within those two names lay an idealized (Utopian) picture of social revolution, a revolution handed down from above by a heroic prince of the people, a picture that was at total variance with DeLeon's actual theories, but which was so important to him that the application of the theories had to be distorted to fit the picture.

Laurens Otter

COMMENT

The psychological is sadly neglected in radical political writings, so it is good to see Laurens giving thougnt to this aspect in regard to DeLeon. But this psychological reading can also be complemented by a discussion of ideology. Specifically, the marxist ideology, beginning with Karl Marx himself, damns anarchism in a most dishonest and straw-man manner. Even marxists who might be favorable to anarchism, like Rosa Luxemburg, cannot seemingly resist sneering at anarchists. Thus, it comes as no surprise that DeLeon took cheap shots at us.

Larry [Gambone]

(from p. 6)

Next Bob Rossi, who understands that 'a soft answer turneth away wrath,' replies to Jon Bekken's letter in DB90. Bob mistakenly refers to the Boston-based New Democracy (ND) as Workers Democracy (WD), a now defunct group in St. Louis that splintered from the SLP in 1981. Monroe Prussack writes to re-affirm his faith in the U.S. Constitution and the Founding Fathers. Adam Buick makes an important point for those who feel more comfortable about their politics when they can find support for their positions in Holy Writ. Certainly Buick makes an interesting point.

Laurens Otter's take on De Leon's anti-anarchism strikes me as generally on target until he decides to venture into psychology. In my estimation the major cause of the anti-anarchism of De Leon and other major figures in the socialist movement around the turn of the century was the desire to dissociate themselves from anarchism's turn (or--more accurately--the turn of some anarchists) to assassination and the so-called propaganda of the deed.

John Cabral has provided us with the ammunition to smash Che Guevara's icon, and the L.A. Workers' Voice provides us with some facts on the fate of the favorite reform of many workers. Next is Internationalism's reply to a comment in DB86 about what I see as their willingness to view ruling class actions as the result of conspiracies. I reply and leave the last word to a brief article on conspiracy from a recent issue of the *New Unionist*.

Because of a mix up here at PO Box 1564, Chris Faatz's article incorporating quotations from Eric Hass's *What Is Socialism?* was misplaced. It belongs with his letter and the *New Unionist* reply in the first pages of this issue. It strikes me that a DeLeonist could answer Chris's "quibble" by asking, "Just where does "power" lie in an industrial society? The next article, from *Internationalist Notes* provides

(to p. 16)

CHE GUEVARA, PROFESSIONAL REVOLUTIONARY, REEVALUATED

By John Cabral

Thirty years after the death of Ernesto "Che" Guevara, new books are uncovering the facts of his celebrated life and martyr's death in 1967. The two most important are Jon Lee Anderson's *Che: A Revolutionary Life,* and Jorge Casteneda's *Companero: The Life and Death of Che Guevara.* Both show an altruistic man with a fascinating personality. But in these accounts one can also see the professional revolutionary who never had a job, never did the shopping, never took his kids for a walk in the park. Guevara advocated a revolutionary elite with a mission: lift ordinary people out of the routines of their everyday lives, mobilize them, and remold them in the new social structure.

With a medical degree from his native Argentina, Che befriended Fidel Castro in Mexico City. Four years later he and Castro marched triumphantly into Havana at the head of the guerrilla army. Che, already a revolutionary hero, soon became a minister of state. In 1965 he vanished, willingly giving up power, fame, family, and comfort. He ended up in Bolivia, attempting to ignite a revolution. Che and his tiny guerrilla army were annihilated by the U.S.-trained military. The Christlike image of the dead Che became the symbol of revolutionary heroism and sacrifice.

It may come as a surprise to learn that Guevara was the first of Castro's guerrillas to execute peasants accused of being informers. After the fall of Cuban dictator Batista, Guevara was the chief organizer of the firing squads, the new secret police, and the forced labor camps for dissidents. He was also chief architect of Cuba's economic and political relationship with the Soviet Union.

Under Castro and Guevara the new government did carry out a radical redistribution of wealth from the local and foreign elite to the poor. But the planning for the new Cuba was all done in secret. Cuba's sweeping land reform was conceived and planned in Guevara's offices by a handful of leaders in the wee hours of the night. Herein lies much of the explanation for the enduring food scarcity in Cuba and the failure of the Cuban revolution to spread: the lack of democracy.

Guevara advocated the creation of a New Man under socialism under the guidance of the Party. The model for the New Man was the guerrilla fighter. Guevara wanted every Cuban on a permanent war footing, ready to make the same sacrifice in battle for the revolution that the guerilla fighters made in the Sierra Maestra. He believed the revolution springs not from the daily life of the people and their values of mutual support, but from the elite cadre of armed revolutionaries who fight their way into the Presidential Palace.

The Che myth contributed powerfully to the idea that radical change could never come from within advanced capitalist countries such as the United States. He lived for a final, bloody, all-out confrontation with U.S. imperialism. The revolution would start in the poor countries; but even there, it would not spring from the people themselves. Guevara's revolutionary adventures in the Congo (a complete fiasco) and in Bolivia (another debacle) were secret military expeditions disconnected from the real struggles of the people.

Che and the new leaders in Cuba wanted to help the poor, but they did not really trust ordinary people. Lack of democracy condemned the Cuban experiment to failure.

Working people of all countries share the same values. No matter where it begins, a truly democratic revolution will spread around the world. It will not be exported by roving bands of professional revolutionaries or imposed by the leaders.◆

From NEW DEMOCRACY, July/August 1998 (P.O. Box 427, Boston, MA 02130)

The Second Greatest Robbery In History: Or How The U.S. Government Is Looting The Social Security Pension Fund.

For the past several years now, the ruling class, with plenty of help from their loyal servants in the corporate media and in government, have been promoting the Big Lie that the Social Security system is about to go belly up in the not-too-distant future. The self-serving purpose of this campaign has been an attempt to manipulate public opinion into (1), believing that a crisis indeed exists and (2), accepting the inevitable cuts in their Social Security benefits that will be carried out under the guise of "reforms."

The very same politicians, Republicans and Democrats alike, who for years have been gleefully swinging the budget ax, slashing social programs to the bone in order to finance big tax breaks for the rich, are coming forward with their remedies to "save" Social Security. Their solutions are nothing but a poison pill that workers, including the unemployed and retirees, should refuse to swallow without a fight. To paraphrase the German poet Bertolt Brecht a bit loosely perhaps, whenever you hear the government talking about reforms these days, that's the time to barricade your front door and tighten your grip on your wallet.

In 1983 the government created what's known as the Social Security Trust Fund, ostensibly to ensure that the payroll taxes directed into the Fund would be used to pay retiree benefits - only. Currently, the Fund is taking in about $50 Billion per year more than is being paid out in benefits. The fund is also invested in U.S. Treasury securities which yields an additional $50 Billion or so per year. What this adds up to is that the system is actually running a surplus of nearly $100 Billion per year (L.A. Times, 2/16/98, A5). If this be the case, then what's all the worry?

The only reason a Social Security "crisis" exists at all is because the government, in its appointed role as Robin Hood In Reverse, is once more stealing from working people in order to give to the rich. In this case the government has been, as they put it, "borrowing" the surplus money from the Fund and using it as part of the "unified Federal budget." In this way it can then be used to help pay, for example, the $300 Billion annually forked over to the Pentagon or the hundreds of Billions given away each year to U.S. corporations for tax rebates and various subsidies.

It is a testimony to the skill of the American ruling class' public relations propaganda machine that it could get away with calling the coming proposals to reduce benefits, increase the age of retirement and hand over Billions of our dollars of pension fund money to the sharks on Wall Street, a "reform." Some intentional fallout from this manufactured scare campaign has been the pitting of one section of workers against another. Many younger workers have swallowed the bait and believe that they've been paying into an already moribund system that's about to be bled dry by those too-numerous, aging baby boomers. Naturally, left out of the discussion by the big business media is the trifling little fact that Social Security would continue to operate as a viable system if not for the Republican and Democratic politicians who have been looting the Fund for years to pay for everything but pension benefits.

The president has called for a year of "discussion." So for the next several months the administration will be busily scurrying about the countryside holding some of their typically sham "town hall meetings" at which they will be "listening to the people" in an attempt to build a consensus for their already decided upon reforms. Meanwhile, the real discussions as to how Social Security will be "reformed" will be made behind the scenes by the political representatives, think tanks and lobbyists of big corporations. Release of the government's "Structural Adjustment Program" for Social Security will most certainly be delayed until after the November congressional elections. In this way the Republican and Democratic candidates can continue posing as champions of the elderly, willing , not doubt, to fight to the death to protect their pension fund. After the elections, however, the crocodile tears will flow as these same politicians reluctantly "explain" the hard choices that had to be made if "we" are to "save" Social Security.

Just how are working class people going to hold the line against these ongoing governmental [read: corporate] assaults on their standards of living? There are no easy answers.

No guarantees. But if workers are going to have a fighting chance at all, they must first understand the class nature of all the various political/economic battles that confront us on a daily basis. From the fight for universal health care, full employment, high quality education for all, a clean and safe environment, to the preservation of our retirement fund, it is essential that working people become conscious of themselves as a class and learn to recognize the capitalist class forces that stand between us and our aspirations. Most importantly, following this heightened understanding, working people themselves will realize the necessity of building their own revolutionary organizations with which to confront their tormentors in class struggle.

L.A. Workers' Voice
P.O. Box 57483
Los Angeles CA 90057

(from p. 13)

us with a left communist critique of the IWW. *Internationalist Notes* along with LA Workers' Voice is the U.S. representative of the Communist Workers Organization (CWO) in Britain. These and such groups as the International Communist Current and others trace their origins to the Italian Communist Left, which broke with the Third International in the latter 1920s.

The Organization to Liberate Society certainly doesn't belong to our political sector; on the other hand, its very broad "principles" don't exclude us nor anyone else. At the very least it may offer us revolutionary libertarian socialists the opportunity to get the message across to people who would not otherwise see or hear it. As usual we end with some notes, announcements, and short reviews.

Finances

To readers who noted that in this space DB90 referred to an old friend who had described me as "functionally enamored," I would like to note that the spelling checker on my word processor isn't aware that the word *innumerate* exists in the English language and while I wasn't watching brought up the word *enamored* to replace it. Over the years my performance as bookkeeper has justified characterizing me as innumerate, although I think this time may be an exception.

With a healthy balance remaining from the last issue and income during the past two months that exceeded expenditures, we can report greater balance than we began with -- again thanks to readers who contributed in excess of the cost of their subscriptions.

Contributions: Joe Tupper $40; E.C. Edge $5; Bob Rossi $10; Frank Girard $22; Chris Faatz $10; Monroe Prussack $7; Gene Miceli $3. Total $97. Thank you, comrades.

BALANCE	June 26, 1998	$419.03
RECEIPTS		
Contributions	$ 97.00	
Subs and sales	57.00	
total	$154.00	

(to p. 22)

[The article below was sparked by a comment in DB 86, introductory to Internationalism's leaflet on the UPS strike reprinted in that issue. My response to Internationalism's article follows, as does a brief article on conspiracy taken from the July 1998 issue of the *New Unionist*. I sent Internationalism a copy of my reply to their article along with a request that they publish it in *Internationalism*. I would expect it to be published in an upcoming issue. Debate and discussion require that both sides be heard. – fg]

Response to Discussion Bulletin: DOES RULING CLASS "CONSPIRE" AGAINST WORKERS

(From Internationalism #102, Feb-Mar 1998, P.O. Box 288, New York, NY 10018)

The Discussion Bulletin (DB), a DeLeonist publication, re-printed the leaflet issued by Internationalism on the UPS strike of last fall. That strike, as is well known, was called by the largest union in America, the Teamsters, against one of the most visible trucking/delivery companies in the country.

The comments made by the DB in its introduction to our leaflet voiced a general agreement with our analysis of that strike - that the strike was an effort to make the unions in America more credible to workers generally, without making really significant gains for the workers; that the strike was set up and publicized by the mass media to influence the thinking of the workers, who had for so long been disillusioned about unions to once again view unions as their representatives and advocates. - But the DB criticized the ICC for our so-called 'conspiracy theory' viewpoint.

We want to respond on this issue. This is not because our feelings get hurt by criticism. In fact, we believe that open and clear debate is essential to enabling the revolutionary movement to clarify positions and to strengthen the working class's ability to defend itself and to develop its class consciousness which can enable it to overthrow capitalism. But we also recognize the importance for the workers' movement to have a realistic understanding of how the ruling class operates in manipulating the proletariat and exercising political and social control.

Does the bourgeoisie conspire against the working class? Does any notion about the ruling class developing political campaigns against the proletariat justify concern about a paranoia, an irrational assumption that 'they're all out to get us?' What we really defend is a position that the bourgeoisie uses Machiavellian methods to manipulate the working class. We are not conspiracy maniacs.

Our Response to Critics

There is a weakness, a political weakness among many of the groups in the US which claim to defend proletarian positions. There is a failure to recognize how the capitalist state in the period of capitalism's decadence operates to exercise its dictatorship over society. Too much of the political milieu in the US believes too much of the rhetoric of democracy spewed by capitalist politicians, the media and academic/educational institutions.

For revolutionaries, since the time of Marx and Engels, it has been understood that the capitalist state is an expression of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. This remains true whether the state takes the form of an open dictatorship as the Franco regime in Spain for several decades or the masked dictatorship of British parliamentarism. And this is certainly true of the American state apparatus which includes the major political parties, and yes, the unions including the Teamsters and all of the AFL-CIO. As we have often said, the unions did not start out as tools of the state. During the ascendancy of capitalism, which ended in the early part of the twentieth century the workers did initially form unions to defend their interests, to defend themselves against horrid working conditions, long hours and

low pay. But with the opening of capitalism's epoch of decadence, marked with the bloody butchery of World War I, the unions were incorporated into the state machinery in order to control and contain the workers. In America the Wagner Act of the thirties enhanced the linkage between state and unions - all the better to galvanize labor and industry to support the efforts needed to prosecute the second world war.

To this date, the state controls the unions. The unions remain a tool of the ruling class to dominate the working class. It was litigation in the courts which finally ousted the old gangster regime that dominated Teamsters Union. It is the government and the bourgeois court system which is still taking a strong role in determining who is appropriate to lead the union. A coincidence?

Does the Ruling Class in America 'Conspire' Against the Working Class?

Behind the scenes arrangements are made and manipulations are planned and carried out without full disclosure -- we can be sure this is the case. The government, business and the unions are linked with a thousands threads of interaction. This is the nature of state capitalism. Not all transactions are publicized. The capitalist class and its bureaucracies are well experienced in double-faced manipulations. Particularly, when stakes are high for the state they will most definitely take measures against the working class. We are not meaning this in the narrow caricatural sense where three guys get in a room and decide who gets 'hit'. But the government, the political parties, major corporations, the media, the unions and the military are linked in uncountable ways to defend the interests of capitalism -- and most certainly, not limiting themselves to open and above-board dealings, agreements and actions.

The unions are linked into the state machinery in a thousand and one ways - from legal regulation to participation in Democratic party politics. The unions serve a function of providing false leadership to the workers, leading them to defeats and dead-ends. They are an arm of the state apparatus. Is it paranoia to think or rather to recognize that as an extension of the state the unions will work together with the government to 'teach the workers a lesson.'

Who would deny that the ruling class has often taught workers a lesson by firing workers who have gone out on strike, by hiring scabs? Or by firing militants who had played a major role in strike activity, particularly wildcats?

Is the 'free' press in America not thoroughly inter-linked with the state apparatus and the major corporations? capitalism owns the 'free press" -- major corporations own the major news media. And the reporters are reliant on the government, business and union contacts to get the news -- these are their reliable sources.

'Dirty tricks' were not just a hallmark of the Nixon presidency. He was kicked out of office in disgrace because he refused to accede to what the dominant fractions of the ruling class wanted -- pullout from Vietnam.

That great hero of American state capitalism, Franklin Roosevelt, was aware of the coming attack on Hawaii but did nothing to prevent the attack, or the loss of life at Pearl Harbor - in order to have the basis for whipping up a pro-war fever in America to mobilize the open entry of the US into the second world war. And who was slaughtered on the battlefields of world war II? And who was slaughtered in the factories, ship-building yards and mines during the 'war effort'? The working class.

The way the ruling class maneuvers against the proletariat is not a paranoiac fantasy of three guys in a room. It is part of a systematic way of functioning by which capitalism makes decisions, manipulates public opinion. To believe in this day and age that policy decisions are based on public debate and discussion, that the ruling class is overtly honest and open before the working class and the general population, is like believing in Santa Claus, the good fairy, or the electoral road to the working class revolution, e.g. DeLeon's confused notion that Socialist Industrial Unionism would be voted through the bourgeois electoral process.

--E. F.

CONSPIRACY OR INSTINCTIVE RESPONSE?

Let me begin this answer to *Internationalism's* February/March 1998 article "Does Ruling Class 'Conspire' Against Workers? -- A Response to Discussion Bulletin" by correcting a couple of errors: 1) the Discussion Bulletin (PO Box 1564, Grand Rapids, MI 49501) is not a "DeLeonist publication." The DB publishes articles from a wide variety of groups in the political sector we call (for lack of a better term) "revolutionary libertarian socialist." Because Internationalism and other left communist groups hold some positions similar to those of many DB readers we often reprint material from their journals and engage in debate with them.
2) Internationalism is wrong in saying that the DB's comment on their leaflet "The Meaning of the United Parcel Strike" "...voiced a general agreement with our [Internationalism's] analysis." The actual words of the comment in DB were:

> "It would be interesting to examine the similarities and differences among them [i.e. the responses to the UPS strike by the various libertarian socialist groupings], but this issue carries a leaflet published during the strike by Internationalism because it explicitly comments on a suspicion that I suspect many of us have that strikes and the union movement in general are pretty much coordinated by the ruling class. The difficulty I have with this leaflet is that it infers from events a ruling class conspiracy, whereas I think that our masters are just doing what comes naturally."

Nothing here was intended to suggest agreement with Internationalism's idea that "the strike was an effort to make the unions in America more credible to workers generally, without making really significant gains for the workers or that the strike was set up and publicized by the mass media to influence the thinking of workers...." While I and others in the DB's political sector might suspect sometimes that our rulers coordinate the union movement, no evidence exists to show that this is true. Rather the evidence indicates that the capitalist class simply respond individually and severally to events in the class struggle in ways that they believe will be advantageous to them. Expressions like "our rulers," "the ruling class," and "the capitalist class," which we all use, suggest a unitary or monolithic capitalist class consciousness and class interest. Actually the capitalist class is deeply divided. Besides competition within industries there are conflicting economic interests among such branches of capitalism as finance, manufacturing, energy, and the like. And these divisions are reflected in differences in approaches to containing the class struggle and the policies the political state should pursue in the matter.

Returning to Internationalism's UPS strike leaflet, I need hard evidence in order to believe such statements as these: 1) "Clearly the government wants this strike to proceed," 2) "A central political goal of the bourgeoisie in the current period is the strengthening of the left to control the working class in the years ahead. The revitalization of the AFL-CIO, re-establishing the credibility of the unions has been underway....", and 3) "The unions and the media conspire together to hide the union's own complicity in imposing the two-tier wage system in UPS." Statements like these conjure up the idea of "three guys get[ting] in a room..." and manufacturing a plot, regardless of Internationalism's disavowal of that meaning. In such statements we have the essence of the conspiracy thinking that informs Internationalism's view of the strike.

Perhaps a cause of Internationalism's conspiracy fixation about unions is its misreading of U.S.

economic and labor history. Whatever truth there may be in Internationalism's theory of capitalism's period of "ascendancy" ending in the early 20th century and the "decadence" that has followed, that theory is not reflected in the history of the condition of our class. The great improvements in workers' standard of living followed WWI. The reasons for the improvement are moot. The Russian Revolution and the scare year (for capitalists), 1919, may have been a factor as were the giant leaps in industrial productivity that made it possible to counter worker unrest with wage increases. Certainly the wave of plant-occupations, "the sitdown movement," of the mid-thirties was a factor that led some important elements of capital, acting through the state, to encourage the growth of the industrial union movement in the hope that it, like the craft unions, could be manipulated as a part of the ongoing effort to restore order and labor discipline.

Workers did indeed organize themselves during the latter part of the nineteenth century. And union leaders often sold out to the capitalist class then just as they do now -- beginning with Terrence V. Powderly of the Knights of Labor and Samuel Gompers of the AFL. The editor of the Socialist Labor Party's paper, the *People*, Daniel De Leon, an astute observer of the union movement from 1891 to 1914 argued that most union leaders probably begin as decent sincere people. But without the understanding of economics and history that education in the socialist movement brings, they become either cynical about any real progress for workers and decide to enrich themselves or else they conclude that any improvement in workers' condition depends on cooperation with their masters.

The present generation of union leaders seems to have succumbed to both cynicism and the "brotherhood of labor and capital" solution. In their positions as CEOs of giant labor management companies with high salaries and the perqs that go with such positions, they identify with their corporate counterparts. Because their six-figure salaries and those of their supporters in the union bureaucracy depend on the flow of cash from the dues payers, their primary concern is the financial security of the union. Strikes are always hard on union financial reserves. As a result, like their corporate equivalents, they see lobbying among influential politicians as the safest road to improvement of the union and its members. But to see the growth of this partnership of capital and labor as a conspiracy is to misread the significance of events.

Democracy and DeLeonism

For some reason Internationalism finds it difficult to understand the position of DeLeonists on capitalist democracy. Let's begin at the beginning. In the 19th century U.S. capital found it advantageous to extend the widespead suffrage, held up to then by property owners, to a growing industrial working class that was becoming restless. This happened earlier in the U.S. than in other western industrial nations. Early socialists (the Socialist Labor Party in the U.S.) assumed that workers could use the ballot to emancipate themselves simply by electing socialists to office. In fact, Marx, speaking at the 1872 Hague Congress of the First International, spoke optimistically of the possibility that U.S., British, and perhaps Dutch workers "may achieve their aims by peaceful means." (i.e. the ballot) But electoral efforts during the 1870s and 80s showed that through its control of the state capital could count out socialist candidates or use their wealth to corrupt them if they were elected.

Around the turn of the century a split in the SLP resulted in the exodus of the reformers and proponents of capitalist unionism who joined their counterparts in Debs's Social Democratic Party to form the

purely political Socialist Party. The SLP then went on to develop a new program for revolution. Its strategy was a synthesis of revolutionary unionism (syndicalism) and the political rights afforded the working class by capitalist democracy. De Leon and the SLP argued that the Constitution of the U.S. effectively legalized revolution -- that the electoral process provided a legal pathway to elect revolutionaries to office who could then simply abolish private property and the state. But realizing that capital would not willingly give up its privileges and that the working class would need to enforce their victory at the ballot box, the SLP advocated that workers organize industrial unions dedicated to building a new social system along industrial lines and able to effect the real revolution: dispossessing the capitalist class, taking over the means of production in the name of all of society, and running them to produce goods and services to satisfy human needs. The result is an open political movement that is free to agitate publicly for the legal overthrow of capitalism and the state. As SLP candidates we were dedicated to the abolition of the offices we ran for and the entire state apparatus. In fact, some of us spoke of running *against* office rather than for it.

Compare this with Internationalism's refusal to advocate the use the electoral process in what passes for democracy under capitalism. One result is the belief that a revolutionary party must operate as a small underground conspiracy in the same way that the Bolsheviks did prior to the Russian Revolution. The strategy for revolution then requires that strikes, protests, and demonstrations be extended so that this small vanguard can quietly place itself at the head of any mass movement that emerges and provide the political leadership for the resulting revolution. It was this top-down Leninist vision of revolution that created the perversion of socialism that emerged in the old Soviet Union.

--Frank Girard

A CONSPIRACY, OR THE SYSTEM?

Who or what is responsible for the economic crisis in Asia? Or for any of the other many problems people face throughout the world?

The idea that all our ills are the result of a "conspiracy" by cabals of powerful men is a widespread one. Both on the "left" and the "right" theories abound on how the Federal Reserve, or the Free Masons, or the CIA, or the Jews, or the U.N., or the international capitalists secretly conspire to dominate the world. They push their buttons, and havoc is unleashed on their helpless victims.

Of course, not long ago it was the so-called Communists who were supposed to have had an all-powerful international conspiracy of their own. So why did they allow their system to collapse and their privileges and power to vanish overnight?

Likewise today, if the international capitalists are all-powerful how is it that their system is in a state of collapse in Asia? Obviously, they can't control their system any more than the Communists could control theirs.

People with economic and political power do pursue their interests in organized ways. They maintain both governmental and private organizations to investigate and act upon opportunities for gain, and on perceived threats to their economic interests, all over the world.

But their common, planned actions are reactions to conditions and developments that they did not create nor desire. For example, the IMF bailout of Korea was forced on the Western capitalist governments by the damage a loan default would have on their financial systems.

So why do conspiracy theories remain so persistent and pervasive?

Besides the paranoia suffered by some individuals believing them, there seems to be

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--Frank Girard

A CONSPIRACY, OR THE SYSTEM?

Who or what is responsible for the economic crisis in Asia? Or for any of the other many problems people face throughout the world?

The idea that all our ills are the result of a "conspiracy" by cabals of powerful men is a widespread one. Both on the "left" and the "right" theories abound on how the Federal Reserve, or the Free Masons, or the CIA, or the Jews, or the U.N., or the international capitalists secretly conspire to dominate the world. They push their buttons, and havoc is unleashed on their helpless victims.

Of course, not long ago it was the so-called Communists who were supposed to have had an all-powerful international conspiracy of their own. So why did they allow their system to collapse and their privileges and power to vanish overnight?

Likewise today, if the international capitalists are all-powerful how is it that their system is in a state of collapse in Asia? Obviously, they can't control their system any more than the Communists could control theirs.

People with economic and political power do pursue their interests in organized ways. They maintain both governmental and private organizations to investigate and act upon opportunities for gain, and on perceived threats to their economic interests, all over the world.

But their common, planned actions are reactions to conditions and developments that they did not create nor desire. For example, the IMF bailout of Korea was forced on the Western capitalist governments by the damage a loan default would have on their financial systems.

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Besides the paranoia suffered by some individuals believing them, there seems to be

a widespread need to personalize the cause of what otherwise appear as inexplicable events. Yesterday I had a good job, a nice home, a loving family. Yet today I've lost it all. Some evil person must be responsible for this catastrophe in my life.

Holding certain individuals responsible for problems is easier than seeing how the institutions of a social system channel behavior in certain necessary directions, whether or not anyone wills or desires the results.

But if we reflect a moment on why we do the things we do --get up at a certain time, do a particular kind of work, buy certain things, get married at a certain time, etc. --we can see it's largely because of the way the social system is structured and operates. We do make personal decisions, but they are made in response to the limited options presented by the system.

It's the same for the "movers and shakers" of the world. Their decisions, and the harmful effects they have on the rest of us, are governed by the demands of an economic system they benefit from but whose outcomes they can't control.

The problem with seeing world events as the product of a malicious conspiracy is that it keeps us from understanding the systemic reasons for our problems. And without that understanding, there can be no organized action to change the system.

--from *New Unionist*, July, 1998

(from p. 16)

DISBURSEMENTS

Postage	$ 90.00
Printing	36.29
Bank charges	14.00
Canadian Discount	3.46
Postage due	5.50
total	$ 149.25

BALANCE August 28, 1998 $423.78

Fraternally submitted,

Frank Girard
for the DB

The inspiration of our Declaration of Independence and Constitution should motivate socialists to work for a better social system as it did DeLeon. In time when the public is mentally prepared and wants to learn, we will teach democratic industrial unionism. It is my hope that we will not abandon a rich heritage from capitalism that we have to follow some half-baked social schemer like Lenin or DeLeon in his later years. In the past this country was on the right side in critical showdowns. Starting with the Civil War, we ended black slavery. In World War II, we took sides against the racist imperialism of Hitler and imperial Japan and won. The Cold War that often was bloody had us in resistance to systems of state despotism that threatened to change the world to absolute servitude for the masses. Rather than go into more detail, I shall conclude thus. It is our destiny to be on the right side in the coming political battle between capitalism and socialism because the growing world crisis is making capitalism more impossible to function.

Fraternally yours,

Monroe Prussack

Monroe Prussack

Dear DB

What Marx may or may not have said is in one sense irrelevant. Certainly it doesn't settle an argument—except about what Marx may or may not have said. Neil C (DB90) quotes Marx that *"the working class cannot merely lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes"*. He interprets this as meaning that Marx held that the working class cannot lay hold of the ready-made state machinery at all. But this is clearly not what Marx meant. Neil has overlooked the word *"merely"*. This word makes Marx mean that the working class could lay hold of the ready-made state machinery but that this was not enough, they had to do something else as well. Elsewhere Marx made it clear that this "something else" was to smash or lop off (take your choice of metaphor) the bureaucratic-military parts of it, ie to make it fully democratic. Only after this had been done would it be a suitable instrument for the working class to wield to abolish capitalism.

It can also be pointed out that Marx, for one, did not draw the conclusion from the experience of the Paris Commune of 1871 that the working class should not use the vote. In 1880 we find him drafting a declaration of principles for a workers' party *in France itself* in which workers were urged to turn *"universal suffrage from the instrument of fraud it has been up to now into an instrument of emancipation"*.

So, logically, Neil ought to denounce Marx too as a *"parliamentary cretin"*. Why doesn't he?

Adam Buick, 20 Rue Le Corrège, B-1000 Brussels, Belgium. 26 August 1998.

himself outlined, and that his followers propagandize and agitate about to this day. In fact, it's fairly clear that this is indeed the main political activity of the DeLeonist activist: propagandizing and agitating about that glorious end goal, the Cooperative Commonwealth based on democratic control from below. Any other political activity--taking part in demonstrations, organizing against the death penalty, fighting with and for striking workers--is, as I understand it, seen as a mere palliative at best, as a reformist measure that holds back the class from its historically-prescribed duty: the achievement of Socialism.

Lastly, on achieving Socialism:

"The Socialist Labor Party cannot bring about Socialism. The mission of the Socialist Labor Party is to show the way. *The working class must do the rest* [my emphasis --CF].

"To bring about Socialism, the workers must organize in accordance with the economic and political conditions prevailing here in America. First, they jmust organize politically to demand, through the peaceful means of the ballot, that all the means of wealth-production become the collective property of society. (Refusal to submit the issue to the will of the majority automatically outlaws the movement as an advocate of 'physical force and violence' and reduces it to a conspiracy. Moreover, it would be stupid, as well as dangerous, to so refuse because we have the right, under the Constitution, to alter our government, or abolish it 'and set up new safeguards' to protect our welfare and happiness. The amendment clause of the Consitution, as Abraham Lincoln pointed out, is the peaceful 'substitute' for armed revolution.)

"Secondly, the workers must organize a force to back up their ballot and prevent a pro-capitalist reaction.; That force can only be the Socialist Industrial Union--the organization of the workers along industrial lines and on the basis of the class struggle. The Socialist Industrial Union is made mandatory by the facts of production. Workers run industry from top to bottom. They are in a perfect strategic position to take possession, lock out the capitalist class and continue production without interruption, thus averting the chaos that would otherwise ensue. The Socialist Industrial Union is the workers' power!

"Finally the Socialist Industrial Union becomes the framework of the Industrial Republic of Labor which will supersede the capitalist political State."

To raise a dead horse just to beat it some more, my biggest quibble with the above is the seeming naivete of the comrades of the De Leonist persuasion in thinking that, once the above has been accomplished (were that to happen), the capitalist class would abide by the legalities of the Constitution and hand over power with neither bang nor whimper. History--Guatemala, Spain, Russia, Germany, Italy, Chile, Vietnam--all eloquently argue otherwise.

SYNDICALISM AND REVOLUTION

(From Internationalist Notes #11, P.O. Box 2044, Madison, WI 53703)

In the first years of the century leaders of the American Labor Union (aka the Western Federation of Miners) called for a meeting to discuss plans for the creation of a newer type of union. Invited to the conference were all the leading socialists and militant union leaders in the United States. Many union militants in Europe had already come to the conclusion that a new revolutionary union was necessary for workers to gain control of the economy and bring about a social revolution. This tendency began at a time when many social-democratic parties were beginning to form their own personal trade unions. Their perspective was born out of frustration with the failure of the social-democratic parties and the failure of trade unions to be effective means of struggle. Its perspective demanded that workers take direct action on the job rather than vote for worthless politicians. The main pitfalls of their path to a revolutionary society are similar to the pitfalls of strikes themselves.

Their vision is corporatist in that all workers are to be divided into industry specific unions, that every organizing drive requires an enormous expenditure of effort to achieve minimal results The isolation engendered by concentrating all militant energy into separate struggles helps to further their isolation from the mass of potentially militant workers. To organize unions at all has become almost impossible. while a majority of workers that are fed up with the system will never have access to the protection of a union. Organizations like the IWW with their focus on direct action and democratic unionism fail to address the needs of the working class precisely because their focus is limited to the endless process of creating a separate union in every single workplace.

The IWW today is a very different institution from what it was during the height of its existence. Among the most glaring differences are their reliance on worker owned businesses, their participation in trade unions. These particular changes are tied to their initial failure in creating "one big union.

An excellent example of the organizational defects of the IWW in action is the only time that the IWW saw a resurgence in membership 1946, directly after the strikes against the no-strike pledge in 1943-45. Their organizational inability to react to a more independent form of struggle left them in the inevitable position of tail-ending post-war union organizing drives. Rather than trying to aid the struggle they meekly followed after it. In effect they themselves became, as DeLeon had once described the trade unions as being, "the rear guard of a retreating army."

Worker ownership of business as practiced in the several IWW "job shops" around the country, could be better known as small businesses. It demonstrates an avoidance of struggle rather than a means of strengthening the position of workers. It removes militants from workplaces where they could be more effective as well as adding to the illusion of a perfect democracy. This growth of worker ownership and cooperatives came at a time when the anarchist movement in this country was being severely repressed and was unable to organize effectively in the workplaces. The capitalists will simply not allow the creation of a new society within the shell of the old.

Their participation in the trade unions involves two distinct tactics. First, encouraging dual card membership and thereby openly participating in the national trade unions, all with the aim of creating a more democratic AFL-CIO. They don't realize the nature of the unions which act like troubleshooters for the capitalist class. Unions channel anger on the job into state approved activities that assure victory for the employers. They also have long taken a stance that they won't raid trade union shops if they are effectively representing the interests of the workers. There are no unions that truly represent the interests of the workers, although they may be pressured - their function is to impose order within the working

class.

Such tactics used by the syndicalists show how indelible are the mistakes of social-democratic thought that every revolutionary tendency in the twentieth century has carried with it the old illusions of unions, democracy and national liberation. We do not deny that work in the unions can be useful if it actually manages to increase the autonomy and militancy of workers but it is not usually a possibility given the nature of unions.

In the book, The I.W.W. Its First Seventy Years (1905-1975) Fred Thompson explains the origins of the IWW in the first paragraph.

"The I. W. W. was started in 1905 by "seasoned old unionists, " as Gene Debs called them, who realized that American Labor could not win with the sort of labor movement it had. There was too much jurisdictional squabbling, too much autocracy, and too much hobnobbing between prosperous labor leaders and the millionaires in the National Civic Federation. There was too little solidarity, too little vision of what could be won and too little will to win it. (2)

In many ways militants today are faced with a similar lack of vision, so that often they are found searching for some movement that they can latch on to, the IWW's playing with Earth First! is a prime example. They have democratically decided that they must change the preamble to their constitution to include "living in harmony with the earth." Any revolutionary society, should by its very nature, not destroy earth in the manner of our current capitalist society. The truth is that it reflects a conscious decision to pander to environmentalists rather than to reassess a platform which is still almost identical to Daniel DeLeon's old "Socialist Reconstruction of Society" speech.

We have to argue that what is needed is to truly explore new methods of struggle that can put things on a terrain of class struggle rather than continue this avoidance of reality that they call pragmatism, which seeks every possible way of diverting militants towards more harmless movements that avoid class struggle. This is not uniquely the problem of the IWW, it is a problem shared by many. The question of whether or not to leave the terrain of class struggle in order to pander to a bourgeois political fad is a very serious one, the longer it is avoided, the more impossible it becomes to work toward concrete goals of struggle against the ruling class. This avoidance is intentional and has the aim of covering up impotence in actually waging struggles.

The basic rejection of the idea that a revolutionary party can actually be useful to workers is a real problem for an organization that advocates the democratic control of industry (i.e. direct democracy). Even though most of the tasks of such a revolutionary party are basically the same, to get out the press and to find meaningful ways to intervene as conflicts between workers and capitalists arise, they labor under the illusion that total self-management of all industry is possible. When in fact even a revolutionary society would have to delegate authority by a vote to officials whose jobs are to complete specific tasks, in short a delegatory democracy is preferable.

workers, although they may be

Their critique of the unions was true back in 1905 but today ignores their subsequent development into organs of control within the working class. The debates over the change of their platform indicate the full extent of the confusion of an organization that has lost its historical relevance. In this case such confusion and debate is the sign not so much of the health of the organization but of its lack of vision, a

similar lack of vision to the one that caused the formation of the IWW in the first place. The one thing that can give such a vision to militants worldwide is an International Workers' Party whose aim is to unite all revolutionaries. At the end of Lenin's April Thesis, he writes, ' Yet we are afraid of our own selves. We are loth to cast off the "dear old" soiled shirt... But it is time to cast off the soiled shirt..." (3) The time has come to cast aside all the remnants of the old state-capitalist lefts, as well as the antiquated and misguided reactions to it. We have to lay the foundations of a world revolutionary party - the International Bureau for a Revolutionary party works towards this goal.

Notes

1 Chase, Fred. from the desk of.... Industrial Worker. Vol. 94 no. 5. p.S

2 Thompson, Fred. The I.W.W. Its First Seventy Years (1905-1975). Chicago, IL: I.W.W., 1976. p.5

3 Lenin. The April Thesis. Moscow: Progress Publishers. 1970. p.54

Some Thoughts on the Organization to Liberate Society

The material below comes to us from the July/August 1998 issue of *Z Magazine, the* major vehicle for publication of Noam Chomsky's essays and interviews as well as articles and essays inspired by "unorthodox Marxism."

Deliberately phrased apparently to exclude no one on the left, the five "Principles" of the Organization to Liberate Society can certainly be interpreted to mean that "liberation" requires the revolutionary abolition of capitalism and the state. My principal objection concerns the step-at-a-time, reformist approach to social change that I infer from the high-lighted phrase in the opening formula of each of the "principles": "A society is **more liberated to the extent** that..." Nor do I like the coy way the organizers and founders of OLS chose to conceal their identity. Clearly it is a creation of the academic intellectuals around *Z Magazine*. There is nothing wrong with this, but I wish they had been more open about it. Whether it will be open to ideas that don't mesh with those of its organizers remains to be seen Although I doubt that the originators of OLS had revolution in mind, those of us who see something useful in discussion with the academic proletariat around *Z Mag*, could do worse than join. (As this is being typed OLS needs 998,774 members to reach the million mark.)

–Frank Girard

ORGANIZATION TO LIBERATE SOCIETY

The Organization to Liberate Society first appeared on the Internet on May Day 1998 at http://www.olsols.org At the site are five principles, some discussion of their meaning, some questions, some answers about OLS, a discussion of the rationale behind OLS, a way to join, a pep talk about recruiting, a list of organizational supporters who link to OLS, a list of OLS members with e-/bio info searchable by city, state, name, etc.

OLS Principles

There are no (known) founders of OLS and no official leaders. Everyone who joins is just another member with no one owning or dominating the organization. Everyone is equally public. Nationally, only when there are one million members does the membership democratically establish structure and program. The growing tally is a public source of recruits for diverse projects as well as a fount of inspiration. Since Z agrees with the five principles, likes a tally, supports the bottom up approach, and is intrigued by the commitment to determine national structure and program only when the membership is sufficiently large for it be meaningful, Z supports OLS.

OLS will at least be a tally and a resource, and if it grows sufficiently it will become whatever its million members make it. It is hard to imagine a person affiliated with any progressive project, organization, or periodical who wouldn't find this type of bottom-up organization a worthy aim. OLS may not work, sure, and it may not be precisely what we/you would have preferred, word for word, but that's no reason not to try it. The bottom line is that a tally isn't a full tally if you aren't on it. And an organization can't become what you want it to be if you don't join it.

* A society is more liberated to the extent that fewer people are denied human rights or opportunities or in any way oppressed due to race, religion, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual preference, property ownership, wealth, income, or statist authoritarianism and exclusion. Reducing and ultimately removing such hierarchies of reward, circumstance, status, or power would improve society.

* A society is more liberated to the degree that it fosters solidarity such that its citizens, by the actions they must take to survive and fulfill themselves, come to care about, promote, and benefit from one another's well being, rather than getting ahead only at one a another's expense

* A society is more liberated to the degree that its citizens enjoy comparably rewarding and demanding life experiences and equal incomes, assuming comparable effort and sacrifice on their parts to contribute to the social good.

* A society is more liberated to the extent that its citizens are able to democratically influence decisions proportionately as they are affected by those decisions and have the circumstances, knowledge, and information required for this level of participation.

OLS

Comments

"I agree with the OLS principles. I think a national and even international tally of the "choir" would be a wonderful thing and I very much like the idea of an organization devoted only to recruitment and bottom-up organization until it has sufficient scale to legitimately address national program."
- Michael Albert, Z, ZNet

"I've been using electronic conferencing and computer networking for over 15 years and think that OLS is an effort work supporting."
- Elaine Bernard, Harvard Faculty

"The principles seem very reasonable to me, and might well open the way to useful outcomes. And I like the bottom up democratic orientation. I hope the aims are attainable."
- Noam Chomsky

"Why did I join OLS? Why wouldn't I? I think the principles are a great statement of what it means to be for justice in our society. I agree with the organizational and programmatic modesty and the recruitment ambition. I like having a tally and would love having a huge organization with these values. I am happy to work for it."
- Alfredo Lopez, People Link, LOLU faculty

* A society is more liberated to the extent that diversity is fostered and nourished in social relations, in relations with nature, and in all dimensions of life.

Where did OLS come from?

OLS came from the discussions and interactions of a few people... But the origins don't matter much because the people involved at the outset now have no more say over the organization than anyone else.

Why should I join OLS when it doesn't have a program and isn't doing anything that will improve my job or community now?

Because not everything happens overnight. OLS is meant to evolve into a large organization able to affect society and its institutions. But think what it would mean if over a million people agreed with OLS principles? And in the meantime, you can always form a local chapter where you live or work, and undertake whatever campaigns you choose to affect your job or community directly.

What makes you think a million person organization will be able to come to agreements when it hasn't paid any attention to overcoming its members' differences along the way?

For a national organization with a broad national agenda, structure and process should be decided:

(a) When the decision will really matter -- that is, when the national organization is large enough for its choices to make an impact, and

(b) By all the people who will be affected by the decision, or at least by a huge number of people, and from diverse constituencies, even if others join later.

Yes, organizations have tremendous difficulty coming to agreement. But why? Sometimes it is fear of the work that would follow if agreements were reached. Sometimes it is basic disagreement over values. But as the real impact of agreeing on an agenda and a structure become greater, we assume people's abilities to take one another seriously and to make compromises and get down to work, increase dramatically.

If I join an organization, I want to have co-members I can talk with and get support from. How does that happen with OLS?

OLS members put brief bios and contact information into the membership

OLS

"I joined OLS because it's a great idea whose time has come. Why not try it? I've always suspected the choir is bigger than anyone would have us think. Let's group ourselves around these principles and see what we can do once we realize the power of our numbers."

- Cynthia Peters, Z writer, LOLU faculty

"I joined OLS because I want to see a tally of all radicals. I like the idea of a bottom up organizing approach. If it doesn't work...no loss. But if it does work, what an exciting prospect."

- Lydia Sargent, Z, ZMI

"Without real access to the media, we can't tell how many of us there are out there. Perhaps our views are really crackpot -- as the media wants us to believe -- but maybe our thinking about justice, equity, and human possibility have more support than we know. OLS seems to offer us the opportunity to find out. And if there are more of us than we think...there are lots of exciting possibilities!"

- Steve R. Shalom, author, ZMI faculty

"I like the OLS principles. I enjoyed reading some of the reasons other people joined. Good principles. Good people. Those are reasons enough for me."

- Bob Simpson, Z cartoonist

database which goes onto the public site. The member's comments and info are even accessible by region. OLS members who don't have computers need only borrow someone's. And if they don't have access that way, what better place to go to hook up and to talk to others than the public library's computer room?

Who are the hidden leaders of OLS?

There are no hidden leaders. There are the people who first had the idea, and the people they talked with, and the people in the next circle, and the people who read about it and joined, and the ones who joined after browsing to the site, and so on. And all these people are in the membership list and no person anywhere in this group has any more say than any other about what is happening except with regard to maintaining this web site, a purely mechanical task. Recruitment, the key work of OLS until it reaches a million members, is done by all.

I want to do something now to affect conditions in the world. OLS says to wait. Why should I bother paying attention to that?

You can join OLS and do a host of things now to affect conditions in the world. First, you can organize people into OLS. That affects conditions in the world by changing the number of people supporting the five principles, by increasing our visibility and therefore creating a new context for other positive efforts, by getting us closer to a million members, by beginning the process of getting to know one another and getting started on discussion of what comes next. And OLS isn't in competition with other projects that you might participate in so you can do anything else you desire, as well. OLS provides a place where existing efforts can look for new people.

What about changing the Principles, or changing the membership goal or the decision to hold off on program until it is reached? Who would make those decisions?

No one. OLS is founded on the basis of supporting the five principles and recruiting members until the one million mark is reached. On reaching its first goal, OLS members agree to decide national goals, structure, and program. Everyone whose experience with OLS or conditions in their communities or life leads them to want OLS to change in some way, has a clear mandate. Build OLS. Create local OLS chapters. Along the way by all means talk about innovative ideas for national program, structure, and adapted principles. Why not try for what we agree is worth trying for?

OLS

How many people agree with progressive principles and values?

OLS thinks it's in the millions. And OLS is a way to find out.

To find out more about OlS browse to www. Olsols.org

And if you like what you see, become a member and join the tally.

Recruit others to sign up. Recruit organizations to link to the site.

Recruit periodicals and writers to join and support OLS.

Use email or word of mouth or even this centerfold to publicize OLS.

International Solidarity Conference (I-99) From: International '99 Committee <intl99@iww.org> .

In November 1997 we issued a Call based on the following understanding: The collapse of the Soviet Union and the onset of the "Globalization" of the capitalist market place has created a new terrain of activity for the working class. This new world has opened up new discussions and makes partners out of former enemies. We would like to propose a Conference be held in San Francisco, California, USA for the first week of June, 1999, to open up discussions on ways the working class can organize against the attacks of world capitalism.

We would like to supersede this Call with an invitation to all who agree with the following positions:

1) The Working Class and the Employing Class have Nothing in Common.
2) The working class take over the economy itself.
3) The working class must organize into revolutionary unions to fight the capitalist class.

This I-99 Conference will be orientated to rank and file participation. We encourage all militants and organizations agreeing with the above principles to join in building this conference.

For historical reference, The original text of the I-99 Call may be found on the WWW at: In English: http://www.iww.org/~intl99/call.html
In Spanish: http://www.iww.org/~intl99/convacatoria.html

And has been endorsed by the following groups: 11/97: San Francisco Bay Area Workers Solidarity Alliance (WSA-IWA/AIT/IAA) 11/97: San Francisco General Membership Branch, IWW 12/97: General Executive Board, IWW 02/98: Anarcho-Syndicalist Group of Melbourne (ASGM), Australia 03/98: Malmv Local Federation (SAC), Sweden 03/98: Detroit General Membership Branch, IWW 04/98: Atlanta General Membership Branch, IWW 04/98: Sveriges Arbetares Centralorganisation (SAC), Sweden 05/98: Workers' Solidarity Alliance-IWA, USA 05/98: Gainesville General Membership Branch, IWW 05/98: IWW-Communication & Data Workers IU560, San Francisco Local 23 06/98: Freie Arbeiternnen Union (FAU-IAA), Germany 07/98:26 Blackbird Syndicalist Federation of Minnesota, USA [more signatures as forthcoming]

Please reply to: I-99 Committee c/o San Francisco IWW, P.O. Box 40485, San Francisco CA 94140 Email: <intl99@iww.org> Telephone & fax: +1 (415) 437-0582

Upheaval in the Land of the Eagles: A Short Account of the Post-War Albanian Social History and the 1997 Rebellion and ***Days of June, 98, Days of Class Struggle in Greece, two*** recent English language pamphlets come to us from The Children of the Gallery, a Greek Anarchist group in Athens. We have reviewed other material dealing with the Balkans from this group in the past. The first pamphlet describes the history of Albania from its liberation during WWII with special attention to the period following the ousting Enver Hoxha and the chaotic political and economic situation that has prevailed since then. 15 A4 pages plus wraps and three pages of photos. *Days of June...*, a 12-page, 1/2 A4 pamphlet deals with the struggles of Greek school teachers against an educational reform law. Unfortunately the exact provisions of the law weren't listed, but they aroused sufficient anger among teachers and students to mobilize over 20,000 protestors and require the government to call out riot police. No price given. from TPTG, PO Box 76149, Nea Smirni 17110, Athens, Greece.

Three new leaflets from the Socialist Labor Party. "What's Wrong with the Labor Unions?" repeats the standard DeLeonist critique of capitalist unions with no effort to make it topical. Assuming that our class doesn't wake up, we can use this leaflet for the next half century. "What's Behind the Attack on Public Education?" deals with current educational issues like vouchers, privatizing, and home schooling. Like the union leaflet it calls for socialism as the solution. "Socialist Industrial Unionism: The Workers Power" is actually the revised version of a large (9 by 12) four-page leaflet that appeared first under this title in the 1930s. Out of print for--I would guess-- nearly twenty years, it has been

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reborn as a trifold but retains many of the features of its predecessors including some of the graphics. The text has been changed, shortened considerably because of space considerations. Write for copies -- 100 for a dollar from Socialist Labor Party, PO Box 218, Mountain View, CA 94042.

Struggle: A Magazine of Proletarian Revolutionary Literature (Anti-War Issue) Spring 1998 was once the literary journal of the Marxist-Leninist Party U.S.A., from which it received "great creative, political, and material support. Since the evaporation of the M-LP in 1993 it has apparently fallen on hard times. This issue (36 pages + wraps) contains poetry and prose suitable for a "journal oriented to the working class struggle." By mail $3 per copy $18 for six issues from P.O. Box 13261, Detroit, MI 48213.

Melancholic Troglodytes is a bi-lingual journal--English and Arabic or some other language using the Arabic alphabet. The 39 pages in English contain the following articles: "Afghanistan: the Devil's Gonna Get You" by Idris the sufi hermophrodite; "Short Back-and-Sides Please: A Critique of Circumcision" by Fati the three-nippled whore of Qom; "The Complexities of Simpletons" by Maryam, the blood-sucking huri; and several others including one on chess, "Shah-mat, Fatherfucker" and one on the Nation of Islam. I lack the political sophistication to understand the position of the Melancholic Troglodytes, but I gather that they inhabit a level at least two floors up from the Situationists. L3 (around $5) from Box MT, 121 Railton Rd., Herne Hill,London SE24 England.

The Freethinkers' Picnic: Newcastle's Secular Hall of Science 1884-1893 by Tony Laffan. In 1884 Newcastle, New South Wales, Australia was a coal mining town--a LARGE coal mining town--population 50,000. It was proletarian to the core, many of its inhabitants being immigrant British coal miners who had brought with them from the old country a taste for political and religious dissent that made them open to the secular (freethought) movement of the 1880s and for the socialist movement that succeeded it. Laffan's 73-page book, illustrated with an index and bibliography and references details these historical factors along with the issues and the colorful personalities of the speakers who led the movement and performed on its platforms. Available from: Toiler Editions, PO Box 235, Singleton, NSW 2330, Australia.

The Discussion Bulletin has now reached a level of technology where it can receive material for publication directly through E-mail without having to retype it. Send your E-mail letters or attached documents to < **fgirard@iserv.net** >.

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