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"With adequate profit, capital is very bold.
 A certain 10 percent will ensure its employment anywhere;
 20 percent certain will produce eagerness;
 50 percent positive audacity;
 100 percent will make it ready to trample on all human laws;
 300 percent, and there is not a crime at which it will scruple,
 nor a risk it will not run,
 even to the chance of its owner being hanged."

T. J. Dunning, Trade Unions and Strikes, London, 1860

ORGANIZED THOUGHTS **** a journal for libertarian socialist programs

100 YEARS AGO - THE PULLMAN RAILROAD STRIKE MASSACRE

In 1893, the Pullman Palace Car Company of Chicago, Illinois reduced the wages of its employees. In May of 1894, the company terminated the jobs of employees who had expressed their dissatisfaction with wage reductions. The American Railway Union responded by organizing a strike and boycott. On July 2, a federal court issued an injunction against the strike. On July 4, federal troops dispatched to the site by the president of the United States, Grover Cleveland, fired upon the picketers. Twenty-five workers were killed and sixty seriously injured. After the massacre, the only legal prosecutions were the imprisonment of union representatives for violating the injunction.

#9.01 J. A. Fedoruk, "The Story of Atterica"

||||||| The following allegory is reprinted from the August 1950
||||||| issue of the Socialist Press, a former publication of the
||||||| Socialist Labor Party of Canada

The Story of Atterica
by J. A. Fedoruk

Many, many years ago, in the far off land of Atterica, lived a mighty Sultan, lord of a vast estate and owning thousands of slaves.

The slaves produced much wealth for their master. His wines were of the finest vintage in the world; his nightly banquets were so splendid as to arouse the envy of all his brother parasites.

While the Sultan wined and dined like the prince he was, the slaves received only one bowl of rice a day, and six lashes of the whip to make them toil more diligently.

Occasionally the Sultan harangued his slaves about the advantage of being his chattels, pointing out that he knew of a state where the slaves received only half a bowl of rice each day and were lashed twelve times. Thereupon the slaves expanded their chests, and were proud that they were Attericans, and of their way of life.

One day a shrewd Atterican hit upon the idea of a slave union, and he held public meetings urging the down-trodden to join, promising many benefits from organization. He was successful in his scheme, for most of the slaves joined. The membership fee was ten percent of the rice the slaves received, which the slave leader sold and became very wealthy.

Thusly spoke the leader to his toil-burdened brothers: "I shall approach the Sultan for a greater allowance of rice. I shall ask for a bowl-and-a-half, which will mean a fifty percent raise for you. Also, I shall demand that the number of lashes be lowered from six to five. It is your right as slaves to enjoy these benefits; it is your birthright."

And so he bargained (collectively) with the Sultan, and they hit upon a compromise. Henceforth the slaves would receive one bowl and a quarter of rice a day, plus six and five strokes of the lash on alternate days.

Some of the slaves were jubilant, and they heaped abuse on their brethren who dared to enjoy the benefits won by the union but refused to part with their ten percent to maintain the organization.

Other slaves protested that they wanted freedom, maintaining that they produced the copious wine and abundant meat that stocked the Sultan's table; that they should therefore enjoy these much desirable things. Those far-seeing slaves began to speak of overthrowing the Sultan's regime, and forming a new way of life which would guarantee to all within the land a share of the treasures which the Sultan had appropriated to himself.

The Sultan and the slave-union leader became much alarmed and indignant. They said such talk was un-Atterican, and forthwith they began to prosecute the proponents of the new ideas.

But it availed them nothing, for, after a determined struggle, slavery was abolished in Atterica.

The splendorous banquets were held as before, but now the former slaves were all participants.

#9.02 Excerpt from the INDUSTRIAL WORKER

An excerpt from the article
"IF -- a History Game",
INDUSTRIAL WORKER,
December, 1982

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Suppose unions throughout the world were to set up a bureau to gather from their members, from statistics, and from knowledgable people of various sorts, information about the work typically done in various places, and about what part of that work might better be left undone, or replaced by work that would do working people more good.

Suppose these unions were to set up a modern data processing facility to use this information, and keep it updated, incorporating the consumer preferences of the workers in various regions, and the ecological considerations of folks who worry about the environment, and whatever other information was pertinent to rearranging the world's work for the general well-being.

Suppose it became widely known throughout the world that this fund of information existed, and that doing the world's work on the schedules it generated would make life better for all of us.

Suppose workers throughout the world reached an understanding that on some pre-set date they would quit doing what the capitalists told them to do, and instead make what these new schedules called for, and ship products -- none of them arms -- where they would do the most good.

Could rulers effectively tell the working class "no"?

Would the process of developing this information leave workers as they now are -- at the mercy of the employers?

Would the fear of war persist? Or would we at last have peace on earth and good will among its peoples?

#9.03 UNIONISM: ITS REAL ROLE AND PROMISE

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UNIONISM: ITS REAL ROLE AND PROMISE

THE STRUGGLE

It is an historic fact that unions were born out of a hard,

bitter and often violent struggle between capital and labor. It was a struggle between two naturally opposing classes, capitalists and workers, over the division of labor's product into wages and profit.

The struggle today is the same as it was in the past. Unions that genuinely represent workers understand the conflict between workers' interests and capitalists' interests. They organize themselves on the basis of the class struggle.

FALSE PRINCIPLES

A union which adheres to the principle of the brotherhood between capital and labor negotiates as though owners and workers were partners with mutual interests. It accepts capitalism as a permanent system and does not challenge it.

Because of this acceptance, certain consequences follow. Such a union naturally limits itself to demanding better wages and working conditions from employers, whose profit interests in a competitive system require essentially the opposite -- lower wages and/or greater productivity from labor.

A union that does not challenge capitalism bases itself on the false premise that capitalists support workers, and not the other way around. Such a union has no real choice but to sell out workers' interests in order to keep the owners in business on a sufficiently profitable basis.

Because of the procapitalist stance of the union, it is not organized to be effective against the system. It can do very little for its workers, especially in bad times when capitalism is in trouble. Union leaders, many of whom began as sincere and honest, lose their ideals and become corrupted. They become more interested in preserving their own lucrative jobs and maintaining bureaucratic control over the workers.

These business unions rarely act in solidarity with one another, and then it is usually in response to pressure from the rank and file. Divided by craft, organization and contract, they often scab on one another, and even fight over who has jurisdiction over a particular set of workers.

More importantly, because procapitalist unions have no interest in organizing workers as a class, they pave the way to their own ultimate demise. As the capitalist system deteriorates, large masses of unemployed, unorganized and desperate workers who have no reason to be loyal to the unions, become unavailable for hire. This makes it all the easier for the capitalists to break strikes and destroy the unions.

THE POTENTIAL OF UNIONISM

Capitalism is a sick and dying system. As it continues to deteriorate, it will bring more misery, insecurity and hardship to the people.

The working class, including all those who work for a wage or salary, whether presently employed or not, comprises over 90 percent of our nation. It does all of the necessary and useful labor of society, and, as such, has the potential power to bring about social change, if it understands its power, and organizes itself accordingly.

The union is the ideal vehicle which, if correctly structured, would not only be able to defend workers interests on a day to day basis while capitalism lasts, but would be the central means by which

to build a new social and economic system responsive to the needs of the people.

Marx told the workers of all countries to unite, that they have nothing to lose but their chains. Capitalism is big, powerful, and, above all, international. With less than 13 percent in unions in the U.S., it is imperative that workers begin to build a truly effective union movement here, and, at the same time, form alliances and encourage union building throughout the world.

They must return to the principles that formed the basis of early unionization, namely, the class struggle. This time, however, they must build a union to challenge the capitalist system.

This time, workers must understand the mistakes of the past. They must be clear as to the form, goal, and tactics of the new union movement.

The following is an outline for a real workers' union. It is not a complete plan, but it provides a basic framework upon which to build.

THE FORM

1. A real workers' union would organize the workers as a class, employed and unemployed, blue collar and white collar, without any divisions or classifications. Supervisors and other higher paid personnel would be included because there would be recognition that all categories of workers have interests in common. The only available labor during strikes would be a few company stooges and the largely absentee capitalist class.

2. A real workers' union would organize all workers by industry. The line of division between the industrial unions would be determined by output. If the output is automobiles, for example, the union would include all workers engaged in production of automobiles, parts and materials, whether they work in the office, on the line, in plant security, etc. Even the unemployed auto workers would be included in the automobile workers' union. It would be the same in each industry -- construction, transportation, communication, education, health, etc. All the industrial unions would be united into one big union, and their activities, both within the union and between the unions, would be coordinated to improve effectiveness. For example, labor contracts would simultaneously begin and end on the same date.

3. A real workers' union would be organized so that all power remains with the rank and file. Leaders would be elected for their ability to present the demands upon which the enlightened workers have decided. Union leaders would be paid no more than the average of workers' wages, and would be elected subject to immediate recall upon majority vote. Labor contracts and union constitutions would be written in easy-to-understand, readable language.

4. A real workers' union would spurn formal recognition by either the employer or the state. It would be an informal body and would legitimize itself by polling its own members. It would know when there is sufficient sentiment among the vast numbers of workers to begin confronting capitalism. Workers would pay their dues directly to the union. There would be no such corrupt practice as a dues check-off system whereby fake unions try to control the membership with the cooperation of the capitalists.

THE GOAL

5. A real workers' union recognizes that capitalism is obsolete and no longer serves the needs of the majority. It would, therefore, have the goal of building a stateless, classless society, in which all the means of production and distribution would be owned collectively, and administered by councils of the producers themselves. It will have realized that it holds the only means of unifying, solidifying and cementing the workers into one compact body capable of acting in a moment's notice against any reactionary response by the ruling class.

TACTICS

6. A real workers' union recognizes that, as long as capitalist society provides the ballot and retains the facade of democracy, it must contest the capitalist class on the political field, as well as economically.

Therefore, the union holds that the workers must organize into a political party of their class: (a) to avail themselves of the peaceful method of settling social disputes; (b) to utilize the political arena in organizing and welding workers into one class-conscious aggressive body; (c) to make the single demand for socialism; (d) and, finally, to capture and dismantle the capitalist political state, and replace it with an Economic Democracy.

7. A real workers' union is an invincible force with which to back up the right of the revolutionary ballot with the MIGHT capable of taking and holding all the means of wealth production, and operating them for the use of society as a whole. By occupying industry, it cuts off the source of capitalists' power and puts it into the hands of the people. It inspires them with courage, confidence in themselves, and faith in their capacity to administer their own affairs. It is the only labor unionism that can end forever the destructive antagonisms of class-divided society and the enslavement of one class by another.

Capitalism has solved the problem of how to produce an abundance of all the good things of life, but it has never solved the problem of distribution. It is now up to the people to build a peaceful, secure, democratic society based on production and distribution for use, not sale. For the first time since our early ancestors living in tribal societies, everyone will have economic equality and common goals.

#9.04 SEE, An Introduction

An Introduction to the Society for Economic Equality

Who We Are

The Society for Economic Equality (SEE) is an independent group of people living in Western Michigan who are deeply concerned about the deteriorating quality of our own lives and those of others in the working class. We see unemployment, crime, and poverty on the increase, at the same time that medical care, education, and family stability are on the decline. These problems exist, not only here in our area of the globe, but for billions of people worldwide.

SEE consists of working class people. Some of us are students or are retired, but most of us have factory or service jobs. We have been meeting regularly since February 1992.

What we stand for

What brings the members of SEE together is the belief that an unfair economic system creates the injustice and insecurity that most working people experience. For example, the so-called "free market" system creates and feeds social problems like unemployment, poverty, child abuse, and racism. An economic system that demands constant change in where we live, the work we do, and what we are paid undermines the stability of people's lives and communities. As a result, we believe that any lasting justice and security in people's lives must begin with the abolition of the market system.

At the same time, we realize that many problems like hunger and homelessness require immediate action, and we support efforts to alleviate the pain and suffering caused by this heartless system. But such efforts cannot permanently solve social problems. The persistence of human misery, violence, and divisiveness convinces us that these problems will not be solved permanently by politicians and reformers, no matter how well-intentioned they may be.

Supporters of SEE believe that it is time for working people of all races and all incomes to proclaim a new Declaration of Independence -- this time from an oppressive economic and political system: capitalism, the market system. At the same time we must build a new society that differs from capitalism, one where all people will share equally in producing and consuming the things they need to live.

What we do

We have a double task. The first part is to show others (1) that the market system causes social problems, (2) that these problems can't be solved under that economic system, (3) that any solution must begin with the abolition of capitalism and its political system, and (4) what people can do to end the system. The second part of our task is to begin the discussion about what kind of society people should build to replace capitalism.

This job is not an easy one. We must combat the propaganda of government and corporate spokespeople, television, newspapers, schools, and even some churches. But it is not hopeless. The increasing misery caused by the decay of capitalism is also causing people to begin to question the ideas they have always accepted.

Members of SEE are involved in working groups and committees to plan discussion meetings, study groups, and public meetings to present videos, debates, forums and panel discussions. We write and distribute leaflets, support working people's job actions, and cooperate with other groups to promote a better world.

If you see the need for a new society, we hope you will join us in this effort. Membership in SEE is open to anyone who agrees with us that the market system is the principal cause of social problems.

We also hope you will get in touch with us so that we can send you information about such activities as discussions, forums, video showings, and the like. For further information write to SEE, P.O. Box 1564, Grand Rapids, MI 49501.

#9.05 SEE, Why Are So Many Working People Poor?

Why Are So Many Working People Poor?

If you work for a living, you may have noticed that the people who work the hardest make the least money -- or so it seems. And the jobs that have the least recognition, and are the most unpleasant, are on the bottom when it comes to wages. The really big money goes to people who don't do anything useful at all. These are the people who own big businesses and factories. They have stock in GM, Steelcase, McDonalds; they own Amway or are bigshots in the government.

It wouldn't be so bad if all we working people had to do was support them and their expensive habits. We can do that easily enough. We've been doing it for a thousand years. The trouble is that they won't let us support ourselves decently. They own or control everything. They won't allow us to build houses or apartments even though millions of us need decent housing. The same goes for food, clothes, and all the other things we and our families need desperately or would like to have.

For a lot of us, things are really bad. If someone in the family gets sick, we don't have money enough to take him or her to the doctor. If something goes wrong with the car, we can't afford to fix it and still pay the rent. Nowadays it takes the earnings of both husband and wife to support a family. The loss of one's job means that we can't pay the rent, make the payments, and keep food on the table.

We know this little piece of paper isn't telling you anything you didn't already know. And reading it isn't going to put money in your pocket. But, at the same time, it doesn't hurt to know that other people besides you know what is going on and resent the way poor people are treated. It's bad enough if you have a job and are poor, but if you are unemployed or on welfare, the parasites that own and control this country treat you like dirt.

But there is something we can do. We can join with others to reach more people. Once the majority knows the cause of our misery is that a tiny minority owns and controls this country, we can all cooperate to change it. We can build a new America where working people can produce goods and services to satisfy the needs of everyone.

The working people who produced this leaflet are the Society for Economic Equality (SEE). To get in touch with us, or to get a leaflet that tells more about us, drop a card or letter to SEE, P.O. Box 1564, Grand Rapids, MI 49501.

#9.06 NUP, The New Unionist economy: questions and answers

Reprinted from the NEW UNIONIST, newspaper of the New Union Party

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Letter from Steve White, Arden Hills, MN
From the NEW UNIONIST, December 1992

I've been reading your newspaper off and on for a few years. Your ideas are very intriguing, but I have a few questions. If I have incorrectly stated your position, please provide corrections.

1. If the NUP is successful in producing one worldwide union,

how would this union determine the wages to be paid to various industries, and the prices to be charged for the various products? Specifically, how would you weigh in measures of input (e.g., years of education, physical difficulty/danger, worker experience), and the value of output for, say, medical doctors, farmers and janitors?

2. Again, in the future with one big union, please be specific in explaining how you would deal with internal disagreements between the sub-unions. Specifically, how would you resolve the claims by, say, auto workers and the food-service workers that both deserve more wages/benefits, and when both sub-unions are willing to wildcat strike to get their demands?

3. Please explain how the decisions would be made about which products should be produced. Specifically, if a nail factory wanted to make one big 10-ton nail for a year's output, what, if anything, would prevent them from doing so?

Editor's Reply

The economic system proposed by the New Union Party is production for use, not for sale. Goods and services would therefore have no money price, since they would not be sold from one owner to another. Nor would workers sell their labor power to someone else for a money wage.

The people collectively would own what they collectively produced, and through their democratic economic government would decide on and carry out the distribution of their product for individual consumption.

People in a New Unionist society, as people today, would have different opinions on how such factors Steve White mentions (education, physical difficulty of the job, etc.) should affect the compensation in goods and services received for one hour or one week of labor. For example, some might argue that since a doctor has to spend so much time to gain the skills required for a valuable service to society, he/she should receive a higher compensation than average. On the other hand, some may say that since society is providing the doctor the education and opportunity to do work that is interesting and personally rewarding, he/she should be content with average compensation. The question may very well be resolved by adhering to the principle that all forms of useful labor - from the doctor to the janitor - are equally necessary for the smooth functioning of society and should therefore be compensated equally.

Even acknowledging this guiding principle, however, there may be cases where some product or service was deemed essential, yet not enough people were willing to do the necessary labor. In that case, incentives in compensation/labor time might have to be offered to attract the necessary number. More likely, though, technology would be developed and applied to fill the gap.

Whatever seems to make most sense to us today, these questions can only be decided by the people of the future society. Even then, experience will very likely provide the definitive answers, and opinions and decisions will no doubt change as the new society evolves. And it may be that these questions in general will turn out to be non-issues in an automated, cybernated economy capable of producing an abundance with minimal labor.

Concerning the value of the output of different types of work, the absence of a market system will likewise mean the absence of

economic value in its current sense of exchange value, of commanding a certain price. The criterion for production decisions will be the usefulness to society and individuals. If goods and services are deemed to be needed, useful and desirable, they will be produced; if not, they won't.

Of course, those decisions will be made in consideration of such factors as existing productive capacity, the labor time we are willing to expend, what constitutes a safe rate of raw materials consumption, effects on the environment, etc. The requirement would not be to put a relative value on the product of different labor skills, but only to judge which products, and in what relative amounts, would be most beneficial to society, and to distribute productive resources and labor accordingly.

Since different industries would not be competing for sales in a market, the objective basis for conflict among industrial unions would be removed. Of course, there would be differences of opinion on the questions of production and distribution, but the overall goals and plan would be determined by society as a whole - represented in the elected all-industries congress, and by referendums, not by individual industrial unions.

It will have to be this way because each industry is only part of an integrated whole, and the parts have to work in a coordinated fashion for the economy as a whole to operate efficiently. The federal principle would apply: local government would be autonomous concerning decisions relating to its own affairs, but they would have to be consistent with the goals and policies of society as a whole, the way today in this country, local and state governments govern autonomously within the confines of the U.S. Constitution and federal laws. The advantage of industrial union government is that it is a direct, everyday working democracy, through which policies can be constantly reviewed and evaluated, and promptly changed when deemed necessary.

This reply may seem too general to those seeking specific answers about how a new system would work. But the purpose of the NUP is not to draw up blueprints for a perfect utopia, but to show what changes are needed to enable the working producers to take control of their own product, and to make economic and social decisions for themselves.

Because these changes can only come as a result of the struggle of a revolutionary movement, people will necessarily remake themselves as they remake society. Attitudes and social values will mature to reflect the objective economic interdependence of all people in a global industrial society. There will be a general recognition that the interests of the individual worker and vocational groups of workers are synonymous with the interests of all workers, and that opposing individual interest to the social interest is destructive of both.

After a successful revolution, this principle will become a truth that is self-evident. No sane person will get it in their head to "beat the system" by producing a 10-ton nail, because when you ARE the system, beating it is only beating yourself.

Second letter from Steve White, Arden Hills, MN
From the NEW UNIONIST, February 1993

Thank you for the clarifications in your response to my questions. Your reply left me with some further questions.

1) Concerning future societies where people cooperate with each other (the "perfectibility of man" issue), doesn't this assumption about the nature of man seem particularly soft? It is clearly a logical possibility that man is perfectible, but is it reasonable to expect such a leap of faith without evidence?

2) Doesn't the avoidance of the discussion of how future societies would decide wages/costs, etc., weaken your arguments? It would seem that after over 100 years of debate, the future's decision-making process for wages, etc., would have at least a tentative "recipe" for the transition stages. How does the NUP avoid looking like the politicians who commonly refuse to discuss specifics during their campaigns?

3) Why should workers join any union when they are powerless to stop permanent replacement workers from taking their jobs? And if they can't strike, how can the workers bring about better wages, etc.?

4) Why will the safety net of the welfare state not work in the long run? Does the welfare state put a permanent delay on the crisis needed for a revolution? Wouldn't there be incentive to keep the net just high and wide enough to avoid revolution?

Thanks again for your consideration of the above issues. Dialogue is always very enjoyable.

Editor's Reply

1) In any form of society, people cooperate. The word "cooperate" means to work together. Society is the association of people which enables them to work together. Since humans cannot survive without society, it can be said that cooperation is part of "human nature."

While cooperation exists in all societies, industrial society demands a high degree of cooperation, because the division of labor is highly developed. Since each product requires different kinds of labor for its production, and since each individual contributes only one kind of labor to the production process, nothing could be produced without a highly-perfected system of cooperation.

So there is no leap of faith involved in the question whether or not people can cooperate; we already do.

The reason this is not readily apparent to people today is that capitalism operates on the principle of individual competition for private property. This means that under capitalism there is the contradiction of industrial production being social and cooperative in nature, while the distribution of the proceeds of production is decided through the competitive struggle of individuals each looking out for No. 1.

The question then is whether it is possible for people to cooperate for their own mutual benefit and under their own direction, rather than for the benefit and under the direction of bosses.

This is not a matter of whether or not people can be made "perfect." Human behavior will always be distorted by misinformed opinions and irrational passions: "mistakes" are inevitable in human affairs. The realistic goal is to create a system of government that reflects the already-existing economic reality of labor cooperation, so that all people can benefit from the wealth produced in industry.

Of course mistakes will be made. But when the intent of

government is to empower the people to cooperatively manage their own cooperative labor, the mistakes can be corrected. They will be corrected because people will have a common interest to do so, unlike in the present system where the fact of competing economic interests paralyzes government action.

Because the instinct to survive is fundamental, people have always been able to create new social forms at those times when the old ones collapse, and the survival of society - and thereby of human life - is threatened. In these social revolutions, people discover, by force of circumstances, that they are capable of things previously thought unattainable due to the presumed imperfectibility of humankind.

In 1776, for example, the American people discovered that they could govern themselves without a king. Given our history, it does not seem such a leap of faith to suppose we are able to govern ourselves without the equally useless lords of commerce and industry.

2) The NUP does outline a "decision-making process" through which economic and other social questions would be decided. What we don't have is a blueprint to dictate what the outcome of the process will have to be.

We do know that the working class revolution will make industry the property of society, and that people will own the product of their labor - exploitation will be abolished. To ensure that the people have direct democratic control over their product, there will be a democratic decision-making process within the workplaces, and a representative economic government for each industry and for the economy as a whole.

The organizational structure of this decision-making process will be set up - to whatever degree of completion - prior to the political revolution that makes the legal changeover to social property. Industrial unionism will unite the workers to carry on the struggle against the bosses under capitalism. Organized in the workplaces, the workers will be ready to assume management control once the majority declares for social ownership at the ballot box.

Then there begins what Steve White calls the transition stages from the old system to the new. Since there is no way to predict what specific problems and obstacles will arise in the transition period, there is no point in trying to write a recipe for it in advance.

How many people will be unemployed at the time of the revolution? How will they be incorporated into the new economy? Which industries will be phased out of existence because their product is no longer needed or wanted (such as weapons), and how quickly? How will these workers be retrained? Which needs will be given priority. i.e., housing or health care? What happens if other countries don't have their own revolutions in concert with ours?

For these and many other questions there are no advance answers, because they will depend on the circumstances prevailing at the time. The important thing will be to have the structure and process in place to make the decisions efficiently and democratically, to make sure the new system can work immediately to begin solving the problems passed on to it by the old system.

Not providing specific answers in advance does not mean the NUP is the same as the politicians who refuse to discuss specifics during their campaigns, because the NUP does not claim that merely voting for it will solve anything. If the workers want their problems solved, they're going to have to organize to do it themselves, and be willing to assume the responsibility of governing themselves. What the NUP

does is show what changes in the system of economics and government need to take place, and how they can take place, in order for industrial freedom to become a reality.

3) The question why workers should join a union, when unions can't prevent replacement workers from taking their jobs, contains its own solution: ALL workers, whether they have jobs or not, need to be in the union. The competition for jobs that drive down wages and working conditions can only be prevented by organizing the entire working class and demanding jobs for all.

Unfortunately, the existing union structure failed to approach organizing this way, because it accepted the employer's "right" to make a profit, instead of recognizing the need to unite the working class against the profit system. If you accept the premises of the profit system, you have to accept the "concessions" capital needs from labor to stay profitable. And so we come to the spectacle we have today of the unions bargaining away their own existence.

Steve White is correct in questioning why workers would want to join this kind of union. But this doesn't rule out a different kind of union, a real union, one that practices solidarity as well as preach it.

By being open to all workers, whether employed or not, and by making full employment their central demand, the unions would create a culture of solidarity, and would provide a support structure for the unemployed and poor and homeless, at the same time it would increase the unions' power in the class struggle over wages and working conditions. Obviously, the incentive to join this kind of union movement would be as great as the disincentive is to join the existing one.

New Unionism is a social movement because it recognizes that its goal of full employment can only be accomplished by throwing out the profit system. This leads naturally to the organization of a political movement to carry out the task.

Unions are indispensable in replacing capitalism with an economic democracy, for the reasons outlined in the previous answer. New Unionism is thus the answer to the question of how we get from here to there.

The working class - however conservative it may seem today - will be forced by deteriorating economic conditions to fight back. To fight back effectively, it will have to organize industrially along the lines of class solidarity. The struggle for organization will itself force people to think in new ways about their position in society, about what is right and wrong, thereby opening their minds to the revolutionary alternative proposed by the NUP.

4) The purpose of the welfare state is indeed to salve the injustices of the market system, in order to dampen rebellion against the system. While the ruling class has an incentive to maintain the safety net for this reason, it nevertheless sees social spending as a "luxury" it can't afford, given the ever-ballooning budget deficit. The economic slump has increased the need for programs as poverty spreads, yet programs have been cut back in response to the State's fiscal crisis.

The result is a tattered safety net that allows more and more people to become homeless and malnourished each passing year. The Democratic Party may understand the need for the welfare state to stabilize capitalism - unlike the market-crazed Republicans blinded by their thousand points of light. But with the government larder empty, Clinton well in advance of his inauguration advised the poor to go screw themselves.

As greater numbers of the currently-employed working class come into need of government assistance and - with the tradition of the welfare state still strong - expect it to be provided, the inability of the government to respond to their demands will work quickly to radicalize the thinking of the people.

#9.07 Correspondence from Laurens Otter, rebuttal to M. Lepore
(Continuation of the debate from issue #8)

In ORGANIZED THOUGHTS #8.09, M. Lepore proposed the use of political organization as follows:

"No one can abolish something without first controlling it. A wrecking ball is hurled toward a structure, not away from it. Water extinguishes a flame by enveloping it, not by avoiding it.... Accordingly, it would be more logical for an anarchist to ADVOCATE use of the political process, not to REJECT it."

The wrecking ball certainly swings toward the structure; it doesn't, however, become part of it. Water surrounds the flame & prevents the supply of oxygen to it; it doesn't become part of that flame, unless the heat is in the presence of a catalyst & so high that the water is immediately transposed into its constituent elements, in which case it burns explosively to recreate steam & fails to extinguish the fire.

So in both cases your argument fails. No anarchist has ever suggested that you abolish the state by avoiding contact with it. What we deny (& incidentally, in his later years, De Leon denied) is that you can abolish it by becoming part of it.

If your argument were valid it would equally apply to the economic institutions of capitalism. You would have to say that the only way to abolish capitalism would be to become the dominant capitalist.

While no doubt you are right that, faced with a general strike, the ruling class will probably have sufficient ammunition in hand that mere denial of supplies will suffice, (unless a substantial section of the security services have been subverted,) you ignore the peculiar significance of the fact that a social general strike is a stay-in strike, not a come-out one. The capitalists in such circumstances can only win by destroying their own capital; they may restore a class divided society, but not a highly developed capitalist one.

M. Lepore wrote:

"If we are to have 'a general lockout of the capitalist class', and yet not see million of workers killed in the process, this [violent] response by the state must be prevented.... The working class must win control of the order-giving centers from which the police and soldiers receive their instructions.... By winning control of political office, the delegates of the working class could either send the police and soldiers home, or could reassign them to nonviolent occupations...."

Your proposal, which is based on the belief that the armed forces, police & security services obey government, fails to note the evidence that even with the mildest milk & water bourgeois-reformist governments, the security services will act treasonably.

In "Spycatcher" Peter Wright from our secret state not just

admits, but boasts, that he & his colleagues acted to destabilize the Wilson (centre-Labourist) Government; & by implication also shows that they acted against the Callaghan (right-Labourist) & Heath (Left-Tory) Governments in order to smooth the way for Thatcher.

And, even on this side of the Atlantic, the rumour has penetrated that there is more than a little reason to suspect that the FBI had an hand in the assassination of Jack Kennedy, & that earlier sections of the power establishment did everything they could to undermine the Roosevelt New Deal.

#9.08 Correspondence from Harry Morrison, rebuttal to M. Lepore
(Continuation of the debate from issue #8)

It came as a bit of a surprise to me to be confronted, in O.T. #8.06, with the excerpt from Marx's Critique of the Gotha Programme.

That tract has been a veritable Bible to defenders of the cock-and-bull yarn, by champions of the Soviet faith, about the "overthrow of capitalism" and the institution of "socialism" in Russia in November of 1917. It has seemed to me that the statement of Arnold Petersen, appearing in the Weekly People of November 24, 1917 and quoted by me in O.T. #8, would have been sufficient to show De Leonists how wrong they have been since they had learned of the adulation by Lenin of the theories of De Leon. It makes more sense, friend Lepore seems to have reasoned, to challenge me with that argument by Marx, written in 1875 and enclosed in a letter to a friend (Bracke) in Germany, with the request that it be shown by him to some other friends; posthumously published by Engels. Without going into other details, here, about it -- other than to note that it violates, in essence, the scientific reasoning in everything else that Marx and Engels ever wrote regarding the essentials necessary for socialist revolution to be successful, let me get down to brass tacks on the latest equivocations of M. Lepore.

The problem, it seems to me, Michael, is that you have one of those "double-compartmented" minds in which the sound, scientific understandings -- in one chamber -- are unable to penetrate and wash away the poppycock ideologies in the other. Such minds, to be sure, are common; they explain, for example, why most private universities can teach Darwinian evolution on the same campuses that their Theology colleges teach Creationism, and why students of Theology see no contradiction in their having various immunization shots with vaccines, etc., that have been first tested on our "lower" animal relatives. (And I should not be too surprised, in your case, as I understand that the De Leonist position on religion is that it is a "private matter" -- not of concern to socialists; that there be no conflict between religious beliefs -- theoretically speaking -- and socialism!)

Let me deal, here, with your own contradictions; because of space limitations I will select only one outstanding illustration. In O.T. issue #6.06, you definitely agree with us that nations cannot possibly exist under socialism, contrary to the position of the S.L.P. -- which you take note of and criticize. After citing instances of the SLP's unsound view on the subject, you say, inter alia:

"... Secondly, 'socialist countries' would have to trade materials with each other, something similar to, 'We'll ship you four tons of bauxite for each ton of chromite that you ship to us.' This would be followed by disagreements based on localized self-interests, e.g., 'Why should we trade with you, when this

other country will give us five tons of bauxite for each ton of chromite, rather than four?' The 'socialist' countries would then have a material basis for conflict. The method of historical materialism shows that a material basis for conflict generally leads to actual conflict. That's not my idea of a socialist world."

It would seem that you definitely did agree with World Socialists that socialist revolution makes a continuation of nations obsolete. But by O.T. #8 a different element entered into the debate -- the question about "lower" and "upper" stages of socialism. It seems that the working class can only arrive at a desire to get rid of capitalism in stages.

First, it is not production for exchange on a market that is the immediate problem, but control by capitalists. "Trading" can continue after the revolution but it must be done under the control of Industrial Unions. Allow me, at this point, to quote Marx in his most important scientific work -- Capital. In a number of instances, scattered throughout the volumes, he tells us that capitalists are but "personifications of capital;" that it is capital that must be done away with. For example, in his preface to Volume I, we read:

"To prevent possible misunderstanding, a word. I paint the capitalist and the landlord in no sense couleur de rose. But here individuals are dealt with only in so far as they are the personifications of economic categories, embodiments of particular class relations and class interests. My stand-point, from which the evolution of the economic formation of society is viewed as a process of natural history, can less than any other make the individual responsible for relations whose creature he socially remains, however much he may subjectively raise himself above them."

Now, of course, Michael, as you pointed out in O.T. #8.09, "Argument by authority is invalid. The scientific method recognizes no articles of faith." But the above work comes from Marx's Capital, a scientific work; and, even if it comes from his preface, the same observation is made by him on a number of occasions in the body of the text; and it is self-evident, anyway, to any student of capitalism -- or should be.

So now, since we know that it is capital and not the particular political views -- or even the economic status -- of those who control and direct it, why should we believe that the mere act of getting rid of capitalists and placing Industrial Union director -- bosses in control of industrial operations -- can make a difference of worthwhile benefit to the working class in that so-called "lower stage of socialism"? After all, Michael, according to Marx, writing in 1875, and you in this final decade of the 20th century, workers during that early phase after the revolution will still be "paid" according to the value of their input to society's needs. In other words, THE CONCEPT OF VALUE -- "socially-necessary labor time" -- will still remain, and, anyway, as you also point out, workers would not know how to behave in any other way than what they had been used to before the Revolution!

And where is the evidence that you appear to believe exists that the tendency of people to goof off from the labor mills is inherent in human constitutions? In the centuries that the bulk of populations was made up of serfs and/or free peasants, when a guaranteed standard of living was afforded them in return for taking care of the lord's planted areas for part of the week, was 'free riding' during the days that they worked for themselves an inherent part of their constitutions?

The reason behind the prevalence of "free riding" under

capitalism is the wages system, and particularly the capitalist style Division of Labor -- also a vital part of the industry in Soviet Russia -- Stakhanovism! True enough, they had no legally-designated capitalists in that "socialist" nation. but they certainly did have a bureaucracy of surplus-value eaters who were able to live in the manner of the capitalist class because of their "perks" -- and if you check you will discover that they could also bequeath accumulated assets to their heirs -- not to mention their ability to place their own -- or friends -- in cushy positions.

Given a situation where an Industrial Union society would be established following a "socialist" revolution", in an era where the bulk of the population would not know how to "behave" in a society based on free right of access to needs and wants, would exploitation of Labor still not be the name of the game -- along with capitalist-style Division of Labor?

You should check out Adam Smith on that subject, in his Wealth of Nations (Volume Two, Book V, Chapter I):

"In the progress of the division of labour, the employment of the far greater part of those who live by labour, that is, the great body of the people, comes to be confined to a very few simple operations; frequently to one or two. But the understandings of the greater part of men are necessarily formed by their ordinary employment. The man whose whole life is spent in performing a few simple operations, of which the effects too are, perhaps, always the same, or very nearly the same, has no occasion to exert his understanding, or to exercise his invention in finding out expedients for removing difficulties which never occur. He naturally loses, therefore, the habit of such exertion, and generally becomes as stupid and ignorant as it is possible for a human creature to become. The torpor of his mind renders him, not only incapable of relishing or bearing a part of any rational conversation, but of conceiving any generous, noble, or tender sentiment, and consequently of forming any just judgment concerning many even of the ordinary duties of private life.... it corrupts even the activity of his body, and renders him incapable of exerting his strength with vigour and perseverance, in any other employment than that to which he has been bred...."

That should go along way in explaining the causes of "free riding"!

In fact, nothing that Marx and Engels had to say about it, a century later, was any more derogatory!

It would not be too difficult to imagine Industrial Union management, in a so-called lower stage of socialism, pushing workers in an all-out effort to raise production levels -- in a society still retaining such parasitical industries as Armed Forces, Banking, etc., to an even greater extent than today, in order to attain what they feel to be needed for a society based on right of access.

What you fail to comprehend is the fact that, once the fetters of market production are removed, the world can literally be inundated with all of the reasonable needs and wants of all mankind. Capitalism, in the course of human society-evolution has made that possible -- providing that we get rid of the fetters to production inherent in capitalism. Basing one's technique on the idea that workers are incapable of understanding that potential has gotten humanity no closer to socialism than has the argument of our World Socialist Movement. To those of us who have the struggle for a sane system of society in our bones, so to speak, we must continue to press for the end of production for a market -- for the "higher forms of

socialism", and the free right of access.

The experience since November of 1917 has proved that there is no such thing as a "lower" form of socialism. It is all or nothing!

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