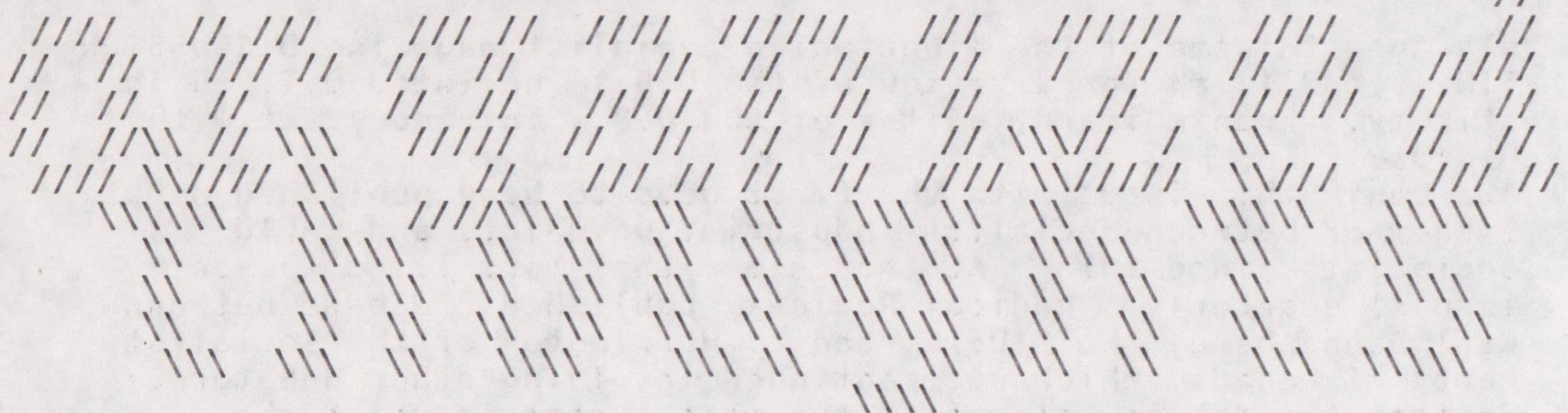


Issue Number 7 November 13, 1993 // ///



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The back issues of this publication are archived at FTP site
 etext.archive.umich.edu in /pub/Politics/Organized.Thoughts. These
 documents may be freely distributed in electronic or printed form, and
 the reader is encouraged to upload them to local bulletin boards.
 Address correspondences to 5559653@mcimail.com

--* R O O T W O R D S *-*-*

"There are a thousand hacking
at the branches of evil to one
who is striking at the root."

Henry David Thoreau, Walden,
(1854)

"To be radical is to grasp
things by the root."

Karl Marx, Contribution to the
Critique of Hegel's 'Philosophy
of Right' (1843)

#7.00 Announcements ... M. Lepore

New readers - welcome! ORGANIZED
 THOUGHTS investigates programs to
 replace class-divided society by a
 classless society. Note that this
 is a libertarian socialist journal,
 which means that the writers here
 do not propose state ownership of
 the means of production. Instead,
 they advocate variations on a
 participatory democratic system of
 industrial management, based on the

THE FuNnY KoRnEr

Question:
So what's an onomatopia?

Answer:
A socio-governmental
system that just
sounds good.

Contributed by Naomi Seeger
ecz5see@mvs.oac.ucla.edu

conscious and voluntary association of the members of society. Apart from this, the writers here may have large disagreements about the specific goal and the implementation.

The July-August issue of the libertarian socialist magazine DISCUSSION BULLETIN (see O.T. #4 for a review of the D.B.) reprinted O.T. #5 in its entirety. Frank Girard, editor of the D.B., introduced it with these words:

"We begin this issue with the first head-to-head published debate I know of between socialist industrial unionists and world socialists since 1918. At that time, the short-lived (seven issues) quarterly, Radical Review, published a debate between Karl Dannenberg, the SIUist, and L. Harrington of the Socialist Party of Canada, which was continued involving other debators. We took the debate below from the most recent issue of the electronic publication, ORGANIZED THOUGHTS. Mike Lepore, the editor and a De Leonist, began the debate with subscribers to his publication who are members of the World Socialist Movement, represented in the U.S. by the World Socialist Party, and in Canada by the Socialist Party of Canada. We hope that D.B. readers will continue the discussion either electronically or via hardcopy, and will send copies to both O.T. and D.B."

I inadvertently omitted the following information from the previous issues of O.T., which explored the differences between the industrial union concept of socialism and the World Socialist concept. The SPGB publishes the SOCIALIST STANDARD monthly. The cost for 12 issues is: L 8.00 (Britain), L 11.00 (Europe airmail), L 15.00 (the rest of the world). In the previous sentence, kindly pretend that my letter L is the symbol for British pounds.

Cheques/money orders should be		Socialist Standard Subscriptions
made out to: The Socialist		52 Clapham High Street
Party of Great Britain.		London SW4 7UN
		United Kingdom

I thank Harry Morrison for sending me a complementary copy of his book The Socialism of Bernard Shaw (188 pages; ISBN 0-89950-441-8; see O.T. # 6 for the publisher's address). The chapters are:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Shaw Discovers Marx | 8. Shaw on Religion |
| 2. The Fabian Society | 9. Darwinism and Socialism |
| 3. Shaw's Curious Socialism | 10. Patriotism and Shaw |
| 4. Shaw on Political Democracy | 11. Echo or Caricature of Marx? |
| 5. Shaw on the Soviet Union | 12. The Fusion of Fabianism and |
| 6. Shaw on Italian Fascism | "Marxism" |
| 7. Shaw and Nazism | Index and appendices |

"Fire your boss!" -- slogan on an IWW lapel button.

By the way, the price of the IWW newspaper has changed since I last cited it. It's one year for \$15. INDUSTRIAL WORKER, 1095 Market St., Suite 204, San Francisco, CA 94103. You just have to see 'Wage Slave World News', the hilarious spoof of the news which comes as an insert to the I.W. (Headline: "AFL-CIO to Merge with Space Aliens")

**** News about the < etext.archive.umich.edu > archive ****
Note that the name of the archive site has changed since last time, but no change in the directory path /pub/Politics/Organized.Thoughts. Also, take a peek at the new directories /pub/Politics/Essays/Marx, /pub/Politics/Essays/DeLeon, and others. Volunteers are trying to make this sort of classic working class literature available to the world in electronic form, for the first time ever. The directories may be rather empty right now, but you can check them from time to time. There are also electronic magazines, as well as excerpts from

the classics, in pub/Politics/Spunk, a project with a focus on international labor and anarchist causes. (The university archive is provided for educational purposes, and is not affiliated with the movements represented there.)

Ed Wizek is a veteran activist, speaker and writer in the labor movement, and a promoter of the industrial union approach. I asked him to contribute a guest editorial. The remainder of this issue consists of reprinted mail correspondences.

"This country, with its institutions,
belongs to the people who inhabit it.
Whenever they shall grow weary of the existing government,
they can exercise their Constitutional right of amending it,
or their revolutionary right to dismember or overthrow it."

Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865),
16th President of the United States, Inaugural Address

#7.01 Jobs for the 90's Edward Wizek

In the recent national election, United States voters wanted a change in the economic field.

They wanted decent paying jobs in order to solve their economic problems. They felt Bill Clinton offered the greatest promise. Without a doubt, he did.

The question is: can we use POLITICAL MEANS to solve economic problems? I think not. The New Deal never solved the problems of the Great Depression -- World War II did that. Massive cold war arms and government spending postponed economic problems by priming the pump of government debt. Despite massive spending, problems are worsening, and government spending options are now more limited and less effective than in the 1930's.

EMPLOYERS WHO DON'T EMPLOY

The basic problem is that employers, as a class, are unwilling or unable to employ all the people who want and need work. Who are these employers? Not the Mom & Pop restaurants working many hours to survive; not the hard working survival businesses, many in the underground economy. Employers, as a class, do not work -- they hire others to do the work, when profitable.

About 5 percent of our population are employers, who LIVE BY OWNING THE MEANS OF PRODUCTION, and NEED NOT WORK FOR A LIVING. This ownership is the pivotal point which defines WORKERS, as a class, and EMPLOYERS, as a class.

Historically, jobs come from employers investing in production for profitability. Their ability to employ has worsened in the past 20 years. With over 10 million unemployed, the employer class reveals its inability to provide jobs. The government has intervened in the economy with spending programs, and is yet the employer of last resort. A form of trickle down to workers, and profits to employers.

CAN WE SOLVE OUR ECONOMIC PROBLEMS BY POLITICAL MEANS?

Like putting air into a leaky tire, adding more political intervention (public spending, etc.) has temporarily kept things going, but failed to solve the jobless problem. The Soviet Union, one of the most powerful political governments in modern history, could not solve economic problems with all its awesome state power. Isn't it time to recognize the limitations of "political solutions"; that economic problems need to be addressed directly with economic solutions?

Jobs are the lifeblood of worker well-being. Jobs affect our lives, our families, and especially our children. It doesn't matter if we are highly trained or educated -- we can't escape the need to find jobs in an over-supplied labor market. The employers know how to take advantage of market conditions with wage and benefit cuts, layoffs, down-sizing, factory closings, moves to cheaper labor areas or abroad.

EMPLOYERS PRIMARILY SEEK PROFITS

They are not in business to provide jobs, and have no responsibilities to workers except under limited government decrees, like unemployment insurance or regulations. AS A CLASS, EMPLOYERS ARE SOCIALLY IRRESPONSIBLE. They cut and run to other areas for cheaper labor. They are not even necessarily American, for, in this system, anyone with sufficient capital, from any country, can become a member of the employer class.

Do we need an EMPLOYING CLASS, incapable of hiring workers except at the price of untold suffering of millions of unemployed, other millions living in poverty, and working full or part time at low wages, millions of people living in the streets due primarily to increased joblessness? Almost half of the millions of people living in poverty are children.

The future is bleak unless we make a fundamental change in our thinking about THE ECONOMY and EMPLOYERS AS A CLASS.

ON THE JOB -- THE KEY TO ACTION

Take the JOBS out of the hands of the irresponsible EMPLOYER CLASS. Workers have the smarts to run industry for the EMPLOYERS; why not take over all the jobs and divide the work cooperatively, so all of us can have jobs, and get the benefits of our productive efforts?

To take over the JOBS, we need an INDUSTRIAL UNION -- an on-the-job democracy capable of overwhelming private ownership of industry and replacing it with social ownership. Instead of being profit driven, this Industrial Union will be guided by people's needs.

The purpose of taking over all the jobs in the means of production and distribution is to meet our needs for goods and services. Each of us will do our job and exchange labor and the products of labor with each other throughout society.

WORKER-CONSUMERS WILL BE THEIR OWN EMPLOYERS, BECAUSE ALL OF US WILL OWN THE MEANS OF PRODUCTION.

Today we have some near examples of common ownership in the public highways, libraries, parks and lands which are there for all to

use and enjoy. But these examples are forms of political control. The INDUSTRIAL UNION society is superior to political government and supersedes it by workers also taking over the political government jobs and incorporating any useful functions such as traffic control, coast guard at sea, etc. The role of the politician, bureaucrat, banker, stock broker, etc., will be ended, along with the private, corporate, or political government ownership of the means of production.

Political democracy will be superseded by an Industrial Union democracy of worker-consumers.

Today our industrial capacity is used at about 70 percent, because EMPLOYERS restrict it to what is profitable. Consumer-based INDUSTRIAL UNIONS will expand production till our needs and wants are met. We have the industrial capacity for potential abundance, but this is an idle dream so long as capitalist employers control the jobs.

While INDUSTRIAL UNIONS will provide the jobs and abundant income to solve most of our economic problems, I believe they will eliminate causes for much of the crime, violence and racial hatred now epidemic. Each person will be regarded as important in contributing to the well-being of all. We will have a sound basis for human brotherhood with INDUSTRIAL UNIONS. This is a job for the 90's.

In Solidarity,
Ed Wizek
545 Perth Ave.
La Puente, CA 91744 USA

#7.02 L. Otter, Reply to the debate in O.T. #5

To O.T. and the DISCUSSION BULLETIN:

Laurens Otter
College Farm House
Mill Lane
Wellington
Salop. TF1 1PR
United Kingdom

Except for the matter of abstention or otherwise from parliamentary elections, the Lepore/Szalai/Elbert debate hits on the most basic issues for D.B. readers; ones not confined to the debate between Spugubs and De Leonists, since the distinction between an industrial strategy and a "political" one is mirrored in the debate between syndicalists & Malatestans.

Anarchists too (both syndicalist and communist) are divided as to how much support/involvement on the part of the majority is necessary before revolution can finally be made. (Since we measure support not just in terms of how many people are prepared to put their X one way or another on a voting slip, it might be that anarchist debate would concentrate on other crucial figures than the 51% or 80% so far instanced, but mutatis mutandis there is similar debate; & I write this in the knowledge that anarchists too have not answered the questions satisfactorily.)

So far all of your participants have assumed that the growth of socialist consciousness will be constant, unilinear & unidimensional. (This would seem to be a remarkably undialectical assumption for Marxists to make. May I suggest that growth is more likely to come in a series of waves, perhaps each flow will go further than the last, but here will be ebbs in between.) All seem agreed that such growth will certainly take decades and possible centuries to pass from the

51% to the 80% mark.

Equally none of the participants have touched on the control of the Capitalist Press, the role played by the capitalist domination of the educational system, (indeed the libraries, advertising, & an hundred other ways to shape opinion,) in enlisting workers into support for capitalist institutions; nor has there been any mention of the "Secret State", the way that through dirty tricks governmental bodies can distort information, [c.f. Spycatcher,] & influence opinions.

There is another problem that those who believe in the vote must face. I don't know enough about the Canadian Constitution; in Britain no government has ever polled 51% of all votes, Thatcher with a 42% of votes cast, (something round 30% abstentions,) had a majority of about 100 seats in Parliament. The U.S. system is such that only about 70% of those eligible to register do, & so, Presidential polls as far as I can gather seldom attract 50% of the real electorate; 26% of the population is therefore enough to win.

So long before the SPGB or SLPUS gets even the 51% discussed they will have been elected to be the majority (probably overwhelming majority) in Parliament &/or Presidential office. Those who insist that 80% is necessary before there is a socialist transition have to envisage a situation where socialists are (whether constantly or frequently) so elected, for decades, (possibly centuries,) during which they will not feel they have a mandate to make a socialist revolution.

What will they do? Some De Leonists would say abstain until such time as they have the overwhelming majority necessary. That means leaving power in the hands of a minority, by definition only an anti-democratic minority would agree to exercise such power, which could open up all sorts of dangers. The Spugubs say that its members will vote on bourgeois issues on their merits, which means that a government can only be formed by those members of the parliamentary minority who could expect the SPGB to vote for (or at least abstain on) their measures - as meritorious capitalist measures, - [the SPGB would not approve an anarchist abolition of government by direct action.]

Alright, the SPGB would keep its hands clean, it wouldn't form the de jure government, but as it would have an absolute veto on all government actions & decrees, it would be the de facto one. The party would then have to choose what it did about M.I.5 etc., the Capitalist Press, the educational system,....

#7.03 M. Lepore, Reply to L. Otter

- > your participants have assumed that the growth of socialist
- > consciousness will be constant, unilinear & unidimensional

I don't think anyone has made that assertion. I wish to clarify my own premise.

An increase in socialist consciousness, whether its progress takes on a exponential or any other wave shape, must obey a theorem of mathematics which applies to all continuous functions in the universe.

If a function has value A at time t1, and value B at time t2, then, for any selected value between A and B, there must exist at least one point in time when the function has that selected value. Socialist support is approximately zero today; therefore, if it someday turns into a majority support, then there must be points in time when it passes through all intermediate values - 19 percent, 37 percent, 51 percent, etc. If the change occurs slowly enough, then the 51 percent phase is likely to coincide with at least one Election Day. Some socialists speak of someday attaining vast majority support but do not consider what should be done at the time of narrow majority support. They are neglecting an event which the laws of mathematics must impose.

- > All seem agreed that such growth will certainly take decades
- > and possible centuries to pass from the 51% to the 80% mark.

I don't make any assertion about how long it might take to get from 51% to 80%, nor do I suppose it matters much, since I consider a simple majority to be the only prerequisite for ending class rule. My intention was to refer only to the movement from 0 to 51 percent. Popular support for industrial democracy in a classless society is approximately zero. Historical progress has been temporarily suspended. We cannot determine how long the present Dark Age will continue.

The perpetual Marxian predictions of capitalism's pending collapse are nonsense. I can easily imagine humanity reaching the 23rd century with capitalism still in existence, with the workers on the spaceships, receiving a 0.0001 fraction of their product and robbed of the rest, rebelling periodically for a bare living wage. I'm completely serious about this. There is no indication that capitalism will go away until we effectively illustrate to the working class the need to end it. Historical materialism itself doesn't disprove my statement; only some of historical materialism's possible but unproven corollaries discount it. Any Marxists who deny this possibility without offering specific reasons are being teleological.

Capitalism has found a way to preserve itself. The method is to grant the working class a few small concessions, wait a generation, blame the current social problems on the "liberals" and take back what it has previously conceded, wait another generation, respond to new rebellion by granting a few concessions, and begin the cycle again. The workers, as nearsighted as we seem to be, may respond indefinitely in the same cyclical way: elect a conservative ... still have the same social problems ... elect a liberal ... still have the same social problems ... elect a conservative.... This can go on for centuries, unless socialists can find a way to present the revolutionary case convincingly.

- > none of the participants have touched on the control of the
- > Capitalist Press, the role played by the capitalist
- > domination of the educational system

There's little to debate regarding the fact itself. All Marxists already agree that -

"The ideas of the ruling class are, in every epoch, the ruling ideas; i.e., the class which is the ruling material force of society, is, at the same time, its ruling intellectual force.

The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control, at the same time, over the means of mental production, so that, thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it."

-- Marx and Engels [1]

If we agree on that much, then we should be brainstorming to find possible ways to break out of the situation.

- > the "Secret State", the way that through dirty tricks
- > governmental bodies can distort information

I recognize that problem, and I admit that I don't know what to do about it. But whatever may be the degree of distortion of the democratic process through right-wing trickery, my assertion is the same: If the workers ever attempt to seize possession of the means of production, while the elected offices of the state (which control the military and police) are still under the control of capitalist political parties, then there will occur one of the bloodiest ruling class reactions in history. This is my message to those who advise that a workers' economic revolution should "ignore the state". It's very difficult to "ignore" someone who will be firing a machine gun into your face.

There is only one way to get rid of the state (as anarchists and Marxists similarly desire to do) - and that is to first win control of the state, and then, from that position of control, dissolve it. It will be difficult, but saying that it will be difficult doesn't make it any less necessary.

- > Presidential polls as far as I can gather seldom attract 50%
- > of the real electorate; 26% of the population is therefore
- > enough to win

That would tend to shift the numerical value at which a socialist political victory takes place, but leave us with the same basic question about what should be done in the event of it. However, it's a myth that those who refrain from voting refrain due to apathy. Nonvoters usually cite their reason to be the very small differences among the politicians who have made it through the nomination process and therefore have a chance of being elected. This situation would not dominate if the working class were to unite in a class conscious manner on the political field.

- > Some De Leonists would say abstain until such time as they
- > have the overwhelming majority necessary.

De Leon's editorials [2] suggested that that, if the degree of working class organization is not yet sufficient for social transformation to occur, any socialists elected to the legislature should primarily use their office as a rostrum. They should use the podium to the maximum extent, use the press interviews and the letter-mailing privileges, for working class education. As a secondary task - yes, I believe it to be secondary - there would be opportunities to use the voting power which that political office brings. This parliamentary activity would be mostly negative - efforts to resist repressive legislation and defend civil liberties, since genuine socialism can be built only by an industrial union, and no working class political party can have any

role in it.

It's unclear under what circumstances socialists in the legislature should vote on reform proposals, because most reforms intended to help working people backfire on us. Revolutionary change is needed, not because the reform of capitalism is insufficient, but because capitalism cannot be significantly and permanently reformed.

- > That means leaving power in the hands of a minority, _by
- > definition only an anti-democratic minority would agree to
- > exercise such power_, which could open up all sorts of
- > dangers.

For that reason, workers' delegates elected to political office should not make it a "principle" to abstain from parliamentary action, but should accomplish whatever they can in that field, within the narrow limitations. They should announce loudly what those limitations are, then, without delay, return to the task of assisting the organization of the productive class to revolutionize all social institutions.

[1] Marx and Engels, The German Ideology (1846); International Publishers, 1972, p. 64

[2] De Leon, Berger's Hit and Misses, New York Labor News Co., 1912 (More recently reprinted under the title A Socialist In Congress: His Conduct and Responsibilities)

#7.04 Phil Reynolds

Reply to the debates in O.T. #5 & #6

p.reynolds1@genie.geis.com

Gentlemen,

As I read your missives, I get a feeling that I'm reading a specific sub-genre of speculative fiction. However, please understand that I in no way wish to denigrate either your persons or thoughts. I think that your rhetorical parrying about future societies, established along the lines of various philosophical ideals, is the operating essence of the changes to be wrought. It is in your (seemingly endless) dialogues that civilization carefully studies and learns of the many paths that we might take as guidance into the future.

WE MAKE OUR OWN ENEMIES!

In the "Declaration of Principles" listed in ORGANIZED THOUGHTS #6, I note the occasional usage of phrases like: "...the working class must organize consciously and politically for *the conquest* of the powers of government", "*the overthrow* of plutocratic privilege.", "the party seeking working class emancipation *must be hostile* to every other party.", and "The Companion Parties of Socialism, therefore, enter the field of political action determined to *wage war* against all other political parties" (emphasis mine). The phrases I've emphasized are figures of speech, not to be taken literally (though history tells us otherwise). The socialist ideal will never become a reality as long as it engenders opposition.

The capitalists that you wish to overthrow, if you are truly successful, must therefore become socialists and allies. And they won't be too eager to voluntarily give up the power that they've accumulated. Further, it would be un-natural if they were to give up their powers. The driving engine of capitalism is a very normal and natural trait of all life, *Greed*. We can measure the relative quality of our civilization by our collective control of the basic human drives. If we were to plot this relative quality (good/bad deed ratio per hectare per year) on a graph, we would see the gradual and continuous increase in the quality of civilization over time. The only effective reconciliation will occur when those with the power and wealth are presented with compelling, non-violent, reasons to voluntarily give up their collective position in order that they may receive something of greater value.

That "greater value" is represented in the basic precepts of socialism. I would suggest that the quickest path to that future is one that seeks to eliminate opposition between factions. The exact structure of that future will be based on the needs of the times and the legacy of study and education as well represented in O.T.

#7.05 M. Lepore, Reply to P. Reynolds

Whether a description is accurate is one question, and whether it's sweet-sounding is another. Perhaps the word "overthrow" is unnecessarily warlike. Did the tide of history "overthrow" the lord and vassal relationship of manorialism, or did it merely "abolish" them? Marx often used the verb "aufheben", translated as "to abolish", but it can also be translated as "to transcend" or "to resolve". Whatever we may choose to call it, we require the "Aufhebung" of capitalism. The instrumental forces may be democratic and economic, not involving barricades and bullets. Regardless of the means, the result is a redefinition of historical-social relations.

Regarding some of wording in the Declaration of Principles of the Companion Parties of Socialism (see O.T. #6.03) -- I also dislike the statements: "... the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party ... determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist...." I dislike these statements because there may be very many working class parties. Some of them may remain distinct organizations because of small differences, even due to something as trivial as personality conflicts. I consider it a mistake for these parties to think of themselves as rivals.

Factionalism wouldn't even be a liability if all concerned would admit and act according to the regions of overlap in their views. If any two organizations believe respectively in principles (A,B,C) and (B,C,D), then they should cooperate when it comes to the promotion of their common principles (B,C), even while they act separately to promote their dissimilar principles (A) and (D). Unfortunately, this much is not now being done. If we can achieve this, to allow a limited overlap in beliefs to justify limited cooperation, then factionalism will actually be a strength, an inner dynamic which provides for self-correction and self-improvement.

But how far can we go in seeking unity? I don't find evidence that capitalists (generally) can become "socialists and allies", or that

social changes require the capitalists "to voluntarily give up the power that they've accumulated." Among rulers who are about to be deposed, there are often a few who are more enlightened than the rest, and we're always glad to see them, but it's dangerous to rely on their uncertain appearance. It would be something like the 1776 radicals saying that monarchy can be replaced by the republic only when the time comes that most monarchs have been convinced by the arguments in favor of it. One of the revolutionary aspects of history is that newer structures are not bound by the "morality" of older structures.

I agree that capitalists would, in the building of an egalitarian society, "receive something of greater value." They would lose the main cause of their ulcers and heart attacks. They would gain a more peaceful and a less polluted world, which should mean much to them if they love their grandchildren. But I'd like to see some historical data before supposing that this would generally guide them. I can't think of any social class which has ever profitted materially from concentrated and inherited wealth, and which has then abdicated its ruling status in return for the improvements associated with change.

#7.06 H. Morrison A reply to the previous correspondences

In regard to the objections to the employment of words such as "hostile," and "wage war," in the Declaration of Principles of the Companion Parties of Socialism -- and particularly the attitude of so many that convinced socialists do have a common goal -- the abolition of capitalism; and therefore should cooperate with one another, rather than to engage in mutual vituperation:

The problem, insofar as the Companion Parties are concerned, is in the definition of "socialism" -- the society that we all profess to be advocating. We of the Companion Parties are apparently the only ones who define socialism as a system based only upon production for the needs and wants of the population as a whole, and not at all in the needs of capital and surplus value. In fact, in our concept, capital and surplus value will not exist.

In short, capital is capital regardless of the fact that it may be owned nationally, corporatively, or individually. Capital is wealth used to create more wealth, through exploitation of labor, with a view to profit. It takes more than a change of vocabulary to abolish capital and wage labor! Any organization that regards the Bolshevik revolution of 1917, the Chinese revolution of 1950, etc., as socialist has an entirely different concept of socialism than that of the Companion Parties.

In the Discussion Bulletin, Number 21, Jan. 1987, this writer has a two-and-three-quarter page letter in which he briefly reviewed, inter alia, the attempted unification of the S.L.P. of A. and the Socialist Party of America. As noted in the letter, the unification conference took place in N.Y. City on January 6 and 7 of 1917. It foundered, according to the S.L.P., on the "rock of Industrial Unionism," which the S.P.A. refused to accept.

In short, to quote myself in that letter: "There can be no more conclusive evidence than that to prove that the S.L.P.'s concept of a socialist society was (and still is) not fundamentally different

from that of the parties of social democracy...." Change the name of "wage labor and capital" to something different and the relationships vanish into thin air -- or, rather, "hot air!"

The information in the above referred-to letter to the D.B. was gotten from The Socialist Standard (SPGB) of March, 1917, in an article written by Adolph Kohn, an SPGB member in the U.S. at the time, on the lam from the British military, as were many of his comrades -- and a host of others -- otherwise "loyal" Britishers. Kohn got his facts from The Weekly People of Jan. 13, 1917.

As further evidence of the embracement of Bolshevik style exploitation of labor via capital and surplus value, allow me to present the following Resolution extracted from the Minutes of the SLP Convention of 1924, found by this writer in a file on the SLP in the stacks at the Mugar Library (Boston University).

In my opinion, there can be no better evidence of the nature of the SLP and De Leonist "socialist" capitalism than what existed in the former Soviet Union! The only real difference was the nature of the "superstructure" -- the absence of actual soviets in the Government.

Minutes, Reports, Resolutions, Platforms, etc. of the Sixteenth National Convention, Socialist Labor Party, May 10-13, 1924.
Published 1924 - SLP National Executive Committee

... Committee on Resolution reported the following resolution on Nicolai Lenin and a motion was passed unanimously that it be adopted by a rising vote.

Whereas; of Jan. 21, ¹⁹²⁴~~1929~~, at 5:30 p.m., Nicolai Lenin, the Premier of the Russian Soviet Republic, died near Moscow; and

Whereas; Lenin's devotion to principles, his fearlessness, his ability in scenting fakers and traitors in the organization of labor; his utter ruthlessness in attacking such; his clearness and thorough understanding of Marxian principles and the economic foundation of society, and the political and social currents that flow therefrom made him a staunch champion of the workers, loved by them, and dreaded and hated by their plunderers; and

Whereas; his death at this important moment in the reconstruction of society in Russia on Socialist lines, or at this critical moment of the world's revolutionary proletariat when capitalist society is crumbling, is an irreparable loss to the world's Revolutionary Movement; and

Whereas; Lenin's creation -- the Soviet idea -- and De Leon's creation -- the Revolutionary Industrial Union idea -- each in the respective country serving as scaffolding of the Socialist Republic, establish an affinity between Lenin and our own De Leon, the Russian Revolution and the Socialist Labor Party of America: therefore be it

Resolved; at the 16th National Convention of the Socialist Labor Party, that to our Russian revolutionary comrades and to the world's oppressed, we express our heartfelt grief at the loss of this great proletarian revolutionist; and be it further

Resolved; that the National Secretary be directed to forward a copy of these resolutions to the Russian Soviet Government; that a copy be spread of the minutes and that the resolutions be published in the Weekly People and other Party organs.

Now Really! Had Lenin possessed a "thorough understanding of Marxian principles and the economic foundation of society, and the political and social currents that flow therefrom", he would certainly have understood that --

"One nation can and should learn from the others. And even when a society has got upon the right track for the discovery of the natural laws of its movement ... it can neither clear by bold leaps, nor remove by legal enactments, the obstacles offered by successive phases of its normal development. But it can lessen and shorten the birthpangs." (Marx, Capital, Vol. I, Kerr, pp. 14-15)

The only lesson possible to have learned from the nations of Western Europe in 1917 was that the capitalist economy is what develops naturally out of feudal agrarianism and that dictatorship - governing - would not alter that development -- although it could retard it. In any event, Marxist-oriented economists in the former Soviet Union must have learned that redefining "socialism" to conform to capitalist relationships does not alter the situation: the relationships of capital and wage labor dominated the scene in "socialist" Russia under the "Marxian" Bolsheviks from Lenin to Gorbachev! And any cursory reading of the history of Soviet Russia under Lenin should reveal that the recurring periods of unrest, before, and after, the institution of his capitalist New Economic Policy (NEP) cast doubt, at least, on the universal love and affection for that Dictator.

'Nuff sed! Yours for world socialism, and best wishes in our attempt to stand up under all of this American capitalist "prosperity!"
Harry Morrison ("Harmo")

#7.07 M. Lepore Reply to H. Morrison

I agree with Harry's characterization of Lenin as a "dictator." For those who have doubts, Internet users can connect to the U.S. Library of Congress and browse its archive of Soviet historical documents (FTP seq1.loc.gov, chdir pub/soviet.archive). In particular, see the letter in which Lenin ordered the kidnapping of 100 randomly-selected innocent people so that the hostages could be ceremoniously executed.

The SLP initially made the error of viewing the Bolshevik uprising as an emancipatory one. In doing so, the SLP was repeating an error which Marx and Engels had earlier made -- the assumption that overturning a modern ruling class would eventually, but inevitably, leave the people in democratic control. They didn't visualize the possibility that there would arise a new style of class rule, with a state falsely called "Communist" being the new owner of monopoly capital, the new exploiter of the working class.

"Communism is for us not a state of affairs which is to be

established, an ideal to which reality will have to adjust itself. We call communism the real movement which abolishes the present state of things."

-- Marx and Engels, The German Ideology (1846)

"In short, the Communists everywhere support every revolutionary movement against the existing social and political order of things."

-- Marx and Engels, The Communist Manifesto (1848)

Fortunately, the SLP very soon came to realize the class-ruled nature of Soviet society, and it published pamphlets with titles like Marxism versus Soviet Despotism and Stalinist Imperialism. In view of that important change, I'm inclined to overlook the earlier mistake. (I'm certain that the SLP has never regarded the Chinese revolution as a socialist one.)

Harry has been eloquent in showing us how the proposed World Socialism differs from the industrial union conceptions, either the syndicalist or the De Leonist variety. However, in my opinion, his assertion that the industrial unionism approach continues the existence of capital and wage labor has not been demonstrated.

Revisions to file:

Nov. 14, 1993 typographical errors corrected

Line 818; end of issue number 7
