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Editorial Matters

We were overjoyed recently to learn that by shrinking a page 15 percent and printing four pages on a sheet of fourteen-inch paper by offset, we could actually cut costs slightly. We hope that readers will be pleasantly surprised by this new format, which we expect to be much clearer than that produced by the mimeograph/printer process. The result is a rather shorter looking page--actually it contains about five fewer lines so that nineteen pages of the old DB require about twenty-one and a half pages in this format. Although we inten
to leave twenty pages as the critical mass needed to prompt the birth of a new issue, we expect that some issue will have at least twenty-four pages. Since we no longer have to worry about the sheer bulk of the paper, which limited us to twenty pages, we can begin publishing larger chunks of the continued articles, of which we now have three.

For one thing, this new format has allowed us to publish Louis Lazarus's article analysing from an orthodox DeLeonist viewpoint the Socialist Labor Party's internal debate on reforms. Originally published by the Industrial Union Party as a letter and sent to its contacts, the article, we thought, deserved a wider audience; for the question of tactics is always relevant and no more so than now as the collapse of the old order accelerates. At the expense of friends of Comrade Lazarus this issue is being printed in an edition of 500 and sent to the entire readership of the DB.

This expanded edition has also enabled us to publish three more chapters of Comrade Don Fitz's satire "Pinocchio at the Unemployment Office" and to bring "The Socialist Labor Party Revisited" up to the 1967-70 split (or disruption, depending on your perspective). What was intended as a few paragraphs of background on the SLP as an introduction to a paper concentrating on changes in the party during the past decade has grown like a tapeworm. Ben Perry's article, forthcoming in the next issue is an integral, and concluding, part of that introduction. Subsequent installments will detail the efforts of Nathan Karp and company to redesign the facade of the party.

Although the bulk of this twenty-seven page issue consists of longer articles, our major interest remains your letters and articles. These must be camera ready. We simply paste them up without editing. Please: single space with narrow (three-quarter-inch) margins.

The size of this edition enables us once more to pester the entire readership about the importance of subscribing. If you find the articles and letters in the DB interesting and worthwhile, we hope you will share the costs. Your subscription expired with DB6 if the "S" or "R" on your address label is circled. If there is a red check mark on your address label, you have never subscribed. In either case you can be sure of getting issues only occasionally as we circulate the mailing list with excess copies. The cost of a subscription for issues seven through twelve is three dollars, additional donations willingly accepted.

Frank Girard
for the DB Committee
SLP'S EFFACEMENT OF DANIEL DE LEON'S CONCEPTS

by Louis Lazarus

You do not know where the deviation from the truth will end.

-Dr. Samuel Johnson

The Socialist Labor Party in the early days listed in its platform a number of reform demands. In the political platform of 1886, 24 demands were included. The caption over "social demands" read: Demands for the Amelioration of the Working People under the Present Industrial System."¹ By 1895 the party had reduced the reforms to 21. It prefaced them with the remarks: "In the meantime, and with a view of immediate improvement in the condition of labor, we present the following 'Demands.'"²

Daniel De Leon summed up such platforms in his editorial: "Thanks for the Reminder."

"1896 was the last Presidential year in which the SLP held a national convention clogged, hampered and otherwise fettered by the navel string of the curiosity named the Socialist Labor Party. The fact manifested itself in the long list of 'immediate demands'--a regular 'appendix' to the anatomy of the Party, and fit only to produce appendicitis--a political inflammation that is now afflicting the Socialist Party. The navel string being cut at the 1900 national convention of the SLP, the 'appendix' was removed and thrown into the political garbage can."³

At the 1900 National Convention, the Committee of Platform and Resolutions, Lucian Sanial, its chairman reported: "The Socialist Labor Party has only one great principle and one great plank: the abolition of the wage system . . . I shall simply state, therefore." Sanial continued, "that the committee recommends that the platform of the Socialist Labor Party, that is, the Declaration of Principles, adopted in 1889 and somewhat amended in 1896, be readopted word for word, and the whole string of planks, that remind us of the infancy of Socialists, when Socialists were impressed with the idea that we must do something immediately for the working class . . . that all those planks be stricken out and the Declaration of Principles alone remain."⁴ It was at that Convention that immediate demands were excluded for the first time from the political platform.

In Convention, 83 years later, the SLP is seeking to return to "the infancy of Socialists, when Socialists were impressed with the idea that we must do something for the working class." Today the
Reforms would be different; hence they would fish for immediate demands that are consonant to our times. Reforms, however, are reforms, no matter what they are. They cannot be fused into a revolutionary program. Lacking forward-looking minds, "they try to roll back the wheel of history."

Leafing through the Minutes of the Thirty-Sixth National Convention of the Socialist Labor Party, July 18-23, 1983, one would find that our contention is true to the letter, for it reveals that some party delegates expressed a proclivity for reform, without any opposition being voiced.

Mr. Massi has made a profound "discovery" after 87 years, proclaiming that De Leon's dealing with "the reform demand leaves much to be desired in the way of clarity." (p. 158) Here we have a prominent member of the SLP not only casting aspersions but also traducing the reputation of a man who, in the whole history of Socialist thought, was the only one to have made a well-grounded study of reform.

Following along the same line, Massi attributes to De Leon his "lack of clarity" in the matter of reform because the "utterances on this subject were made under very historical conditions during a period when revolutionary agitation in the labor movement reached a peak." (p. 158) He has the temerity to make such a defamatory statement without any substantiation. His assertion that historical conditions were such that "revolutionary agitation . . . reached a peak" is totally preposterous. Let us examine the historical record: The Socialist Party in 1904 polled 402,203 votes; in 1908, 420,713 votes; and in 1912, 897,000 votes.5 In its 1903 platform there were 7 demands, and in 1908 there were 31 immediate demands.6 Whereas the SLP in 1904 had 33,510 votes; in 1908, 14,028 votes; and in 1912 only 29,213.7 The SLP's platform was revolutionary, but the SP's "reached a peak" in reform agitation.

To support his reform theory, Massi defines reformism as "that body of political thought which advocates that social revolution is obtainable through gradual (revolutionary) attainment of a broad series of reforms of the capitalist system." (pp. 159-160) It can hardly be termed a "social revolution" if Socialism could be accomplished through reform--an inconceivable possibility.

What he is referring to is one phase of reformism. And it was this that De Leon dealt with in his address, "Reform or Revolution." De Leon then was treating of the newfangled ideas hatched by the German revisionist, Edward Bernstein, who later published his ideas in the book, Die Voraussetzungen des Sozialismus, translated into English as "Evolutionary Socialism." De Leon, in his speech, laid to rest those notions.

The resolution formulated by Massi indicates unmistakeably that he and his party lack the confidence in the intelligence of the working class; that workers must be enticed by immediate demands rather than
informed only of true and reliable facts of a revolutionary progress. As he indicates: "We cannot and should not base our political agitation, whether it be in a political campaign or an intervention activity upon a mere assertion that a socialist revolution is the only answer to every issue... However, by merely repeating this assertion we lapse into total irrelevancy, and we fail to communicate our program to the working class." (p. 160)

He then concludes: "The critical problem is the absolute necessity to remain relevant while at the same time avoiding becoming so involved in immediate demands that we lapse into a reformist position (i.e., advocating reforms for its own sake)." (p. 161)

His apprehensiveness can be well understood. If he really were to know about reforms, he would know that the advocacy of one reform must lead the party to a second, interrelated with the first, and in time it would snowball into several demands.

De Leon clarified this point that even reformers can understand:

"The theory that Socialism can with safety depart from the hard and fast line of its ultimate goal and follow the lure of 'something now' batters itself against the fact that 'something now' is not obtainable by it, and the logical consequence of such departure would be the degeneration of the movement into 'something now,' or reform movement." 8

If those words are not sufficient to convince some who believe that reforms can be lumped together with the demand of the abolition of the capitalist system they should read this discerning declaration by Daniel De Leon:

"Immediate demands tacked in America to a revolutionary program deliver the movement tied, hands and feet into the power of the ruling class... 'Immediate demands' are sops. A ruling class is proof against such spittballs. For every one sop fired at it, it can answer with a thousand." 9

The thoughts that we are to mention next are comparable in content to the views in the Massi resolution: "It is necessary to help the masses in the process of the daily struggle to find the bridge between present demands and the socialist program of the revolution." These words are derived from highly reformistic reflections appearing in a pamphlet published by the Trotskyists, "The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International. The Transitional Program." (New York, 1964) p. 9

In his "Flashlights of the Amsterdam Congress," De Leon superbly analyzed reform and revolution, anticipating such arguments as reforms acting as "the bridge between present demands and the socialist program of the revolution":

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In his "Flashlights of the Amsterdam Congress," De Leon superbly analyzed reform and revolution, anticipating such arguments as reforms acting as "the bridge between present demands and the socialist program of the revolution":
"With guile or innocent purpose, the effort is often made to blur 'revolution' into 'reform,' and 'reform' into 'revolution'; and, with innocent purpose, or with guile, the attempt is not infrequently made to stampede the argument into an acceptance of the blur by holding up 'cataclysm' as the only alternative." (p. 191)

A Special Committee at the convention: R. Whitney presented the following report "Re Resolution on Developing a Pragmatic Approach to the Reform Demand (Massi Resolution):

"Your committee agrees with the main premises of this resolution—that the party needs greater clarity in regard to its treatment of the reform demand. Yet it would be unrealistic for this committee or this convention to attempt to resolve this admittedly thorny question." (p. 234)

If the Socialist Labor Party were sound today, the convention would have no inclination even to entertain such bizarre notions offered by Massi. Nonetheless, the party is straining every which way to make reform demands fit into Daniel De Leon's conceptions. Indeed, it is for them a "thorny question." It will not work. It is catching at a straw.

After the death of Daniel De Leon, the SLP's membership was about 3,200, and with the Foreign Language Federations there were in the vicinity of 5,000 members. Arnold Peterson by his "high-minded" methods as the National Secretary for 55 years, achieved eminence by substantially reducing the membership. The present administration, introducing interventionist tactics, has been instrumental in attaining the magnificent total of 240 members. Now the party is wrestling with immediate demand reforms. It is truly desperate. In the past, the SLP adhered strictly to a revolutionary plan of action. At present, now that capitalism manifests signs of a breakdown, and in face of the disintegration, the SLP is discussing the espousal of reforms. An utterly fatuous move. As De Leon elucidated:

"There is not a single 'immediate demand' worth realizing that is not embraced in the comprehensive demand of the unconditional surrender of the capitalist class."10

R. Whitney presented a response to the Massi Resolution. Mr. Whitney is a member of the Editorial Staff of The People. His statement attests to his incomprehension of modern Socialism as well as contemporary history. He writes that the "SLP does not oppose occasional and temporary alleviations from human misery that are won by the working class. For example, though the SLP certainly does not advocate Social Security, national health insurance or any one number of 'social' reforms, is cannot be fairly said that we oppose such measures." (p. 236)
Genuine Socialism is neither so naive nor so preposterous, as inferred by Whitney, that it would spend time to oppose reforms that may be of some benefit to workers. But to say that such reforms were "won by the working class" is utterly absurd. Reforms were not won by workers; they were bestowed by the capitalists or their political henchmen to undermine workers' discontent or diminish their revolutionary propensities. An authentic De Leonist organization will never aid the capitalists in their malevolent work of blunting the edge of workers' revolutionary ardor. It will inscribe on its banner the only demand, "The unconditional surrender of the capitalist class."

In another part of his statement Whitney questions: "Which reform demands do we support, however conditionally or critically? An on what basis do we decide which reforms demands merit critical support, which merit no support, and which merit active opposition?" (p. 236)

According to this editor, the SLP members must choose which reforms they prefer and which they will not support. Once they support a number of demands, in time, others will follow. The reform line dictates, as in a department store, a selection of demands must be given to the voters from which they could choose to satisfy their own needs. At present, the SWP and the CP are experts in the field of reforms. The SLP is a mere amateur. In due time, the SLP will join the club, or by then will vanish from the political scene.

"The resolution (by Massi) states," writes Whitney, "that 'We cannot and should not base our political agitation . . . upon a mere assertion that socialist revolution is the only answer to every issue that is raised.' It goes on to state that 'by merely repeating this assertion we lapse into total irrelevance, and fail to communicate our program to working class.'"

"This is true, but when was it ever suggested that party members repeat assertions? What party members should do when agitating is to explain how and why capitalism creates the problems in question, explain limitations of the reform demand in question, and thereby make a pervasive case for socialist revolution. And if party members make the case for socialist revolution, they hardly 'lapse into irrelevance.'" (p. 237)

Seemingly, Whitney does not agree with Massi. In one instance, however, he says, "This is true," referring to Massi's reasoning that "We cannot and should not base our political agitation . . . upon a mere assertion that revolution is the only answer to every issue that is raised." He then expresses this thought: "When was it ever suggested that party members merely repeat assertions?" We reply. The answer is simple: Surely members can only make "assertions" that are based upon the program to which the party is committed.

At this point he gives the impression that the membership need not accept reforms; that he, Whitney, is opposed to demands. Nothing of
the kind. He says "For one thing, there is at least one additional category that must be included. That is the category of reform demands against the initiatives or policies of the capitalist class--e.g., against the arms race, militarism, U.S. interventions, cut backs in services, nuclear power, etc. And such demands can be stated in a positive form--e.g., the nuclear freeze, the Transfer Amendment, alternative budgets, etc.

"Within category one of the resolution, it should be noted that there are various contradictions involved with reform demands that do not always make it clear whether or not a particular demand will be of net immediate benefit to the working class. A demand for higher unemployment benefits can be concrete and specific, and there is little doubt that workers would reap immediate benefits from such reform. But many other reform demands are not so clear cut." (p. 239)

Making every effort to justify the amalgamation, Whitney is constrained to write in incomprehensible language. In a modern Scientific Socialist platform the incompatible elements can never be united. They cancel each other out. These people, like the Whitesys and the Massis, have come into the movement ignoring the 24 years of Socialist activity and significant contributions to Socialist thought by Daniel De Leon, who firmly established that it is either reform or revolution. They, however, of the conviction that the advocacy should be reform and revolution, which is completely contrary to thinking of the foremost American Maxist, Daniel De Leon.

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At the SLP's National Convention, held during the week of July 15, 1984, a "Resolution on the Reform Question" was adopted, offered by Section San Francisco, and was reported in The People, August 18. We shall submit a critical analysis of some passages of the Resolution.

In the early part of the Resolution it reads: "The party recognizes that working class day-to-day struggles often tend to center on some immediate issue or immediate demand. As a revolutionary socialist party it cannot simply ignore such struggles. It cannot sit on the sidelines seemingly aloof and unconcerned with problems afflicting our class. It must demonstrate its empathy for their struggles. At the same time it must seek by its presence to raise the struggle to a higher level and strive to persuade the workers for the need to adopt a revolutionary goal."

A bona fide Socialist organization will signify its responsiveness to workers' struggles. It will do so in its official organ; but it will not advance any immediate demands. By disclosing that some of the capitalist evils are the effects of the system, the Socialist publication will clearly indicate that the advocacy of immediate demands will mean fighting those effects, which will eventually lead to a host of other reforms.
On that essential factor De Leon reasoned:

"Every movement in the land that has aimed at the overthrow of existing conditions, and that made the blunder of seeking to ingrati ate itself by means of 'molasses' and the 'thin edge of the wedge' of 'immediate demands,' has by so much weakened the intellectual fiber of its followers, and thereby ripened recruits for absorption by the bourgeois masters."

As to the De Leon quotation cited in the "Resolution on the Reform question"; the piece from which the quotation was culled should be read in its entirety and fully comprehended. De Leon answered a letter written by Homer Folks, Secretary of State Charities Aid Association of New York. Folks' letter had asked for support by the Daily People of a Bill before the Senate for 'promoting more humane treatment of persons arrested for public intoxication."

In his reply De Leon did write: "The Socialist Labor Party by no means rejects palliatives, absolutely and under all circumstances. The Party gives all needed weight to palliatives that will relieve immediate suffering, and thus afford relief while steadily keeping its eye upon the ultimate goal--the uprooting of today's iniquitous social system of which inebriety, together with its long train of evils, is but a consequence. If your Bill offered such a palliative it would receive the Party's support; at any rate, it would not meet the Party's opposition. Your Bill, however, so far from being a palliative would aggravate the ill."

What De Leon said was that the Party will look favorably upon palliatives "that will relieve immediate suffering." But De Leon did not write that the Party would include palliatives as immediate demands in its program. "At any rate," he wrote, "it would not meet the Party's opposition." As we expressed previously in this paper: "Genuine Socialism is neither so naive nor so preposterous to oppose reforms that may be of some benefit to workers." De Leon's stand was virtually the same.

The present SLP will deviate from De Leon's basic precepts to bolster its reform position. It is an unalterable fact that De Leon never revised his point of view with respect to palliatives: He said:

"The palliative works the evil of inoculating the revolutionary force with a fundamental misconception of the nature of the foe it has to deal with. The tiger will defend the tips of his mustache with the same ferocity that he will defend his very heart. The recourse to palliatives proceeds from, and it imperceptibly inculcates, the theory that he would not. It proceeds from the theory that the capitalist class will allow itself to be 'pared off' to death. A fatal illusion."
As we continue reading the Resolution we come upon portions that are unfathomable to the same mind:

"The question of what position to take on a given demand, particularly one raised by an issue-oriented coalition, can sometimes be a problem. It would be nice if there were a ready-made formula by which every party section and/or member could immediately determine the appropriate response.

"No such precise formula is possible, particularly with respect to, as yet, unformulated demands and/or issues. Demands and issues do not always fit neatly into specific categories. The Transfer Amendment proposal, for example—the proposal to cut the military budget and transfer the funds to meet human needs—could by some be regarded as a demand for immediate relief; by others, as a demand against the encroachments of capital; or an antimilitarist demand; and by still others as an impossible demand since it expects a reordering of capitalist interests and compulsions.

"Some demands are vague expressions of sentiment directed at the state (e.g., No more war! Fight racism!); others are demands for specific legislation like those calling for rent control or a nuclear freeze. Moreover, economic demands, like the demand for shorter workweek with no loss in pay, when raised by workers on the economic field in direct confrontation with their capitalist exploiters are one thing; when raised by a political party as a political plank to solve the unemployment problem; they are quite another matter."

The above lines gives one the strange feeling that he is reading senseless musings in some dime novel. The vain attempt to compound reform with revolution is like trying to square the circle, hence the meandering thoughts. It is, indeed, "confusion worse confounded," for they know not which way they are headed. The Roman philosopher and dramatist, Seneca, once wrote these wise words, which apply to the SLP:

"Our plans miscarry because they have no aim. When a man does not know what harbor he is making for, no wind is the right wind."14

Despite the SLP's denial, its views correspond to those of the Trotskyists. Both say virtually the same but couched in different language. The Resolution declares; "We hold that the party's position on reforms is well defined and that its intervention policy meets the requirements that we remain relevant to the political issues raised in a given struggle while at the same time relating these issues to our ultimate revolutionary goal."

The Trotskyists assert: "Our system of transitional demands, stemming from today's conditions and from today's consciousness of wide layers of working class and unalterably leading to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat."13
"How idle, then is the wareface which reformers are too apt to wage in which they slay the carcasses and spare the life! The husk forsooth, they seek out and destroy; but within the husk is a seed of deadly poison, whose vitality they are unable to impair, and which shifted from its place, bears fruit in another direction, and shoots up with a fresh, and often a more fatal exubernace."16

FOOTNOTES

1The Labor Movement in America By Richard T. Ely (New York, 1886 pp. 368-370  
2Socialism and Social Reform by Richard T. Ely (New York, 1895 pp. 377-379  
3Daily People, August 27, 1912  
4Proceedings of the Tenth Convention of the Socialist Labor Party, p. 86  
5The Socialist Party of America By David A. Shannon (New York 1955) p. 5  
6Socialism in the United States by Morris Hilquit (New York, 190 and 1910) pp. 349-351 and pp. 369-377  
8Getting Something Now, Daily People, September 6, 1910  
9Immediate Demands, Weekly People, August 20, 1910  
10Immediate Demands, Weekly People, August 20, 1910  
11Immediate Demands, Weekly People, August 20, 1910  
12Weekly People, May 8, 1909  
13Two Pages from Roman History, p. 88  
14Epistles of Seneca (Cambridge, Mass., 1953) Vol II, p. 75  
15Death Agony of Capitalism  
16History of Civilization in England (New York, 1897) Vol II, pp 182-183
Dear Friends:

In his reply to my last letter, Frank Girard says that I “see technology and industrialization as a villain and one of the principal goals of the revolution as the return to the self-reliance and economic independence that some workers enjoyed in the pre-industrial age.” In fact, I said no such thing. I never made any judgment about “technology and industrialism” in general. Nor did I make any comparison of the situation of workers prior to industrialism and since, nor did I say that it was “technology and industrialism” that was the “villain.” Girard must be simply stating some pre-conceived notion about “what anarchists think.”

What I said is that the actual techniques that are used in production, the way in which jobs are defined and the design of industrial architecture and industrial processes all reflect the interests of capital in controlling the labor of workers and capital’s interest in minimizing costs. Thus, in so far as companies get away with imposing costs associated with production on the community, this will lower their own costs. Thus, companies will take advantage of the fact that the air is “free” to not bother to develop and buy equipment to adequately prevent air pollution. This transfers a “cost” from the company to society.

Part of the idea behind Taylorism is to analyze a task into its component parts and then, where possible, assign different people to do these tasks. That way, they can separate out the skilled work from the unskilled work and employ the fewest number of skilled people possible, which enables them to spend less on training and on skilled workers’ higher wages. Also, it enables management to gain greater control over the coordination of the production process since it becomes their task to coordinate the labor of people who do the various parts of the labor process.

I can see how Mike Gunderloy might be sensitive about criticisms of the engineering profession, since he says he’s worked as an industrial engineer, but there is no need to assume the existence of a “plot.” Capitalism doesn’t operate as a conspiracy of the bosses. Companies are forced to adopt Taylorist methods in order to compete. They are interested in exacting as much production from labor at the lowest price in order to prosper as a business. And companies pollute for the same reason.

Not all the decisions about technological applications happen the way they do because of capitalist control, since the current state of research, technical efficiency (getting more outputs with fewer inputs) and the properties of material things are also factors in technological decisions. But these purely technical considerations don’t completely determine what we’re going to actually see in the factories and offices. Technological development is also shaped by class interests.

Now, Fellow Worker Girard says: “Laubach may be right in saying
that after emancipating ourselves from capitalism we may have to scrap or redesign much of the technology and organization of production. Certainly the capitalist class had the factors...design...to organize themselves."

Well, this is to concede the point I was making.

The point is not to denounce "technology and industrialism" but to recognize that under self-managed socialism, industrialism and the technical organization of production will be developed on very different principles from what we see today. On the other hand, I agree with FW Girard that not everything about the way capital has organized production is inconsistent with working class interests. As Girard rightly points out, capital has attempted to minimize labor time because each employer wants to cut his dependence on labor and cut his labor costs. Under capitalism, since the working class doesn’t collectively control production, this means individual workers are deprived of their livelihood through technological unemployment. But in a system of production for the collective benefit of the working class, automation would mean that the time each of us must work to get our share of the social product could be reduced.

What we want is that the working class should assume complete mastery of production. But this also means complete control over the way production is organized, how jobs are defined, what training people receive, what industrial processes are going to be used, and so on. There is no way that self-managed, libertarian socialism is consistent with the existing managerial/engineering hierarchy, with its power over workers and its privileges and its Taylorist practices. If left in place, this hierarchy would recreate simply some sort of technocratic/bureaucratic class system.

The situation in Yugoslavia is a good example of this. Although workers are elected to Workers Councils, the main power in industry resides with the firm’s managerial/professional staff. In fact, the system of rotation from office helps to sustain managerial control because workers don’t stay on the Councils long enough to know the ropes or acquire the knowledge needed to challenge the boss/engineer hierarchy.

In order for workers to acquire mastery of production, it isn’t necessary for a worker to become a "renaissance man" (i.e. know about all areas of production), as Guderley asserts. Nor is the present division of labor due to the fact that "not everyone wants to go through four years of college." What is needed for workers to have power over production, is that the skills and knowledge required in running and organizing industry should become more widespread and should not be monopolized by a small elite group.

This doesn’t mean that everyone would have the same knowledge. For one thing, some people are likely to be more interested than others in acquiring such knowledge. But whatever the differences
in knowledge that remain, the workers must have the power to make
the decisions, and technical training and advice should be much more
widespread, and as such, engineering should no longer be dominated
by an anti-labor ideology, as it is today.

For a world without bosses.
Richard Laubach
Free Workers Committee

Comrade Bulleteers:

Thanks for the printing of the articles about DeLeonist thought.
I'm sure that I missed some of their nuances through not being
familiar with the subject, but at least I'm beginning to get an
idea of where you folks are coming from.

Joanne Forman is right that the corporation is becoming a
big force in many lives, but I'm not so sure that they're going to
supplant governments. Look at Japan, for example, where a number
of computer companies are co-operating with government funding to
work on the "fifth-generation computer" project. More likely, I think,
is that governments will come to regard the corporations and not
the people as their constituents. Very few corporations are large
enough to duke it out with a nation-state if it came to violence.

Upon further consideration I've come to the conclusion that
some engineering really is designed to keep workers subjugated, or
at least that it regards people as only their dollar value -- "units
of productive labor", as the jargon goes. Perhaps a more humanistic
engineering can be designed, though, starting with a vocabulary
that refers to people as people.

Laurens Otter makes some good points about anarchism, perhaps
the most important being that anarchism refers to a host of ideas
that don't always mesh with one another. Anarchists can generally-agree with one another that State power needs to be eliminated; they
can agree with many other leftists that it needs to be reduced, and
this gives the anarchists common ground with other ideologies even
if their ultimate goals are more far-reaching.

Along with a definition of anarch, though, we need a definition
of State-- particularly if we take the simplest and broadest definition
of anarch as "no-state". The question is whether the system of
distribution envisioned under DeLeonist thought qualifies as a State
or not. For me, the deciding point would be what functions the
congress of workers' representatives carried out -- and what
restraints existed to keep it from taking on further functions to
the detriment of individual freedom.

I think Frank Girard oversimplifies when he says that the
capitalist class has designed the productive process to minimize
labor time. It's not labor time that the owners care about, but the
cost of production. In industries where labor is the most expensive
part of the product (for example, textiles), minimizing labor is
the easiest way to minimize the cost. But in other industries there
are situations where it is better to use more man-hours than to
automate for efficiency (many clerical jobs are in this category).
The ideal society might well go for minimizing labor time across the board and speeding up the pace of automation so that more goods were available to all with less work.

Mike Gunderloy, 41 Lawrence St., Medford, MA 02155

Dear Friends:

Regarding the late Dallas Reynolds' tract in DB #7: Arnold Petersen, former National Secretary of the Socialist Labor Party, and Lenin are no longer living, so we cannot ask them to elaborate on their opinion that Daniel De Leon was, in effect, the Father of Socialist Industrial Unionism.

Nevertheless, De Leon's grasp of the revolutionary necessity that, in this country, the SIU organization and action be coupled with its working class political counterpart was essentially Marxist.

De Leon warned that a general strike by workers at a time of revolutionary crisis, in place of their organization into socialist industrial unions prepared for prompt occupation of the work places to carry on and administer production at the revolutionary moment, would spell death to the revolution and tear the country apart. He did not have the example before him, as we've had in Iran where a general strike helped topple the monarchy, while a lack of the necessary working class organization brought on a clerical reaction that is rending the nation in its efforts to maintain and extend its rule.

Iran is a small country with only one highly developed industry, oil, therefore for material reasons unable to consummate a socialist revolution solely on its own. But the tragedy of its people is no less profound for that, and what happened there can happen here if De Leon's lessons go unheeded. For many reasons, De Leon deserves recognition as the formulator of the idea of Socialist Industrial Unionism. The denning of De Leon with faint praise is as injurious to the labor movement, or perhaps more so, than his elevation to idolatry.

Clara Hayes, St. Rt. Box 23, Michwoods, MO 63071

Dear DISCUSSION BULLETIN Readers:

In DB-8, Frank Girard (in replying to Comrade Laubach), had some interesting things to say about technology and workplace control under socialism. I agree with the main thrust of his comments, but disagree with his view that "the capitalist class had the productive process designed not just to ensure their control but also to minimize the labor time" (page 2). This is not the case, because the capitalists' objective (an objective enforced by competition) is to maximize the surplus labor time extracted from workers, i.e., to minimize the part of the work-day in which workers produce enough to pay for their
wages. But maximization of profit is not always the same as "minimizing the labor time" in commodities. Sometimes wages can be low enough to prevent mechanization of production (such mechanization not being profitable), even though this mechanization would reduce the labor time needed to produce each unit of the commodity in question.

This is an important issue because it points out the need for some mechanism (or plan) for helping workers in relatively backward sectors after the revolution occurs. Indeed, workers in technically backward industries cannot be expected to support the idea that technological planning under socialism can be safely left "to workers in each industry" (Girard, DB-8, p. 20). And given the slash and burn tactics employed by transnational corporations in both the industrialized and Third World countries (capital flight, outsourcing, etc.), it may be that a redistribution of the benefits of technological advance (both from capital to labor and among industries and regions) is now a necessary part of a stance of international working-class solidarity. Technological backwardness also tends to be a trait of industries in which women and racial minorities hold a relatively higher portion of jobs. The formulation of a coherent socialist position on technological change is, therefore, crucial for short-circuiting the racist and sexist divide-and-rule tactics of the white-male-capitalist class.

Of course, an important prerequisite for expanding the realm of freedom (and eliminating the realm of scarcity) under socialism will be the previous development of productive forces under capitalism. Therefore, I agree with Girard's emphasis on the need for democratic control by workers over the conversion of these pre-existing productive forces (formerly instruments of capitalist oppression) into instruments of liberation from scarcity. In this respect, it should be noted that scientific and technical knowledge is itself a "force of production," hence even if the democratic conversion of technology into a socialist form involves, e.g., the physical scrapping of some machines, this does not necessarily entail the waste of the entire productive force embodied in these machines.

This all points out the need for integrating workplace democracy with democratization of education, research, and development in the transition to socialist relations of production. In other words, how is technological change managed democratically, and how are the benefits from technological change democratically distributed (among industries, regions, nations, sexes, and races) after the elimination of capitalist monopoly over the means of production? I don't have the answers to these questions, so I'll throw them out for commentary by anyone interested.

Respectfully,

[Signature]

Paul Burkett
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To the Discussion Bulletin:

In Bulletin #8, Mike Sunderland writes, "... Sam Brandon seems to view the "working class" as one monolithic entity. For the life of me, I don't know what this working class includes. Where do managers fall? Engineers?..."

I quote from the Declaration of Principles of the Industrial Union Party. This should answer the questions that perplex him.

"We, the overwhelming majority of citizens in this country, are slaves -- wage slaves.

As members of the working class we produce all of the wealth of America, and we get in return -- a wage. It is just enough on the average to maintain us and enable us to breed replacements, who, in their turn, will give up their lives, bone, nerves and muscles, their joy and love and generosity and kindness, and every natural human grace -- for a wage. So long as capitalism lasts, there is no escape for us from the grinding need to sell ourselves. Our capacity for labor is all we have to sell, and we must sell it to the capitalists. That's how the capitalists make a profit -- by exploiting the working class. That is, the working class produces all the wealth, from which the capitalist ruling class takes the largest portion in this process of exploitation, and, in return, gives its slaves a wage. The fact that some workers have color TV's, automatic dishwashers, two or three automobiles, and their own homes, does not alter the fact that they are exploited. Indeed, the debts usually connected with such ownership fastens the chains of wage slavery even more securely."

Let us not help the capitalist class in their attempt to divide us into skilled workers, unskilled workers, engineers, bricklayers, architects, teachers, etc., etc. If we must sell our labor power, in order to live, we are members of the working class.

The sooner the workers realize this, the sooner they will organize to end this exploitation.

Sam Brandon

The Socialist Labor Party Revisited
(Continued from DB7)

The forty years from 1924 to 1964 hardly changed the party except to shrink its numbers and intensify the tendencies that had already begun to emerge. Like the reliance on the impersonal approach of leaflet distribution, the isolation from the union movement and leftwing politics had a stultifying effect on the intellectual development of the membership. We rarely read other left periodicals and consequently were sorely misinformed and uninformed about other groups and programs. Because we were not active in the unions and the sin-
gle-issue movements that attracted radicals in the decades after WWI, we were isolated from the arguments and debate that rocked the left during those forty years.

Our insulation from the left and our infrequent need to defend our views from attacks from that quarter discouraged any kind of theoretical discussion or speculation. Adding to our reluctance in this respect was our awareness that almost any criticism of or deviation from the party's position could be construed as weakening the party by creating dissension or--worse--disruption. As a result, although we might debate for hours about whether the party should buy a one-day license to sell liquor at a state convention banquet, we never raised questions about any aspect of the party's program or policies. To do so would have meant risking consignment to outer darkness, shunned by our comrades and separated from the movement in which we had invested our lives. We accepted DeLeon's dictum, "The idea and the organization are one," and put away dangerous thoughts.

The SLP and Unionism

In 1924 the six-year campaign of the SLP's National Office to destroy the Workers' International Industrial Union (WIUU) succeeded leaving the SLP for the first time without a union it endorsed. Even prior to the organization of its own socialist union, the Socialist Trades and Labor Alliance in 1895, the SLP had endorsed and indeed been represented in both the Knights of Labor and the AF of L.

Without a union of its own and implacably hostile not only to craft/ AFL unions but also to the Chicago (non-political) IWW and to such efforts to radicalize existing unions as the CP-dominated Trade Union Educational League, the SLP was obliged to reduce its union work also to distributing leaflets. Besides denouncing the capitalist unions, these called on workers, not to join existing SIU's (since there were none), but to organize new socialist industrial unions to replace the existing capitalist craft unions.

Clearly this was a case of the prophets crying in the wilderness, given the existing economic conditions and the state of worker militancy prevailing in the latter 1920's. Only a new set of economic circumstances, another major crisis in the system could bring any substantial response to the call for revolutionary unions. In effect, the SLP had--apparently without thinking about it--postponed the organizing of revolutionary SIUs until the economic collapse, the eve of the revolution, in contravention of DeLeon's idea of the SIU as the school in which our class would develop class consciousness while fighting our battles with capital.

When economic conditions did change in the 1930s, the SLP, instead of helping to organize socialist industrial unions, watched from the sidelines as the labor skates and their CP and SP patsies organized capitalist industrial unions in most of the basic industries. In 1940 the party took a last step away from union involvement. The constitu-
tional provision which prohibited members from holding paid offices in capitalist unions was extended to prohibit their holding membership unless their jobs depended on it.

The SLP and the USSR

The SLP’s peculiar position of support for the USSR and the Russian Revolution and unrelenting hostility toward its chosen representatives in the US, the Communist Party, continued an embarrassingly long time—on through the Stalinist repression of the thirties including the slave labor camps, and show trials right up to the Hitler-Stalin pact of 1939. As late as May 15, 1939, the New York Labor News published Soviet Russia: Promise or Menace, in which National Secretary Arnold Petersen, while attacking Stalin’s claim that Russia had attained socialism, denied that there was any significant lack of free speech there and defended the show trial on the ground that the SLP, too had had to deal with traitors.

SLP support for the USSR was the result of a set of complex forces, not the least being Lenin’s early efforts to win the support of the revolutionary wing of the Socialist movement in the West. In the U.S. and Great Britain the Socialist Labor Parties were an important component of that wing, hence Lenin’s admiring and highly publicized words about DeLeon. The change, when it came, was spearheaded by a new National Editor, Eric Hass, elected in 1938 to replace Olive Johnson, who resigned in disgrace as has every National Editor since DeLeon.

The SLP and McCarthyism

The early post-WWII period, which brought the last significant increase in membership (This writer is of that generation), also brought the cold war and the McCarthy repression. The immediate and obvious victims of both were the CP and its “progressive” satellite organizations. But the entire left suffered as the “anti-communist” hysteria pretty much ended recruiting and agitation.

Actually the SLP suffered less than the CP, the Trots, and other left groups. For one thing it was not named on the U.S. Attorney General’s official list of subversive organizations. Like the SP, its historical credentials as an “American” party saved it from the list. A contributing factor may have been its insistent dissociation from the CP as well as what capitalism’s watchdogs may have perceived as utter lack of influence among our class.

It also suffered less because it had less to lose. While the party did continue to lose members between 1950 and the Vietnam War, the loss was the normal attrition, not mass desertion because of social and economic pressure as in the case of the CP and Trots. In point of fact, these years were a rather stable period in the party’s history. Unlike the reformist CP, SP, and Trots, whose agitation had always been geared to the unions and various single-issue groups, access to which was denied them by the McCarthy repression, the SLP’s
leaflet distribution and electoral campaigns continued unabated. In the period 1952-56 we distributed over 10 million leaflets, and by 1960 it had declined only slightly to an average of about two million per year. And we not only contested the presidential elections but ran state and congressional candidates as well in most industrial states.

The problem of course was that all this activity, carried on at great personal effort in an atmosphere of general hostility, was almost universally futile. In the twenty-five years between 1954 and 1969 I doubt if the party in Michigan recruited five new members. Section Washtenaw (Ann Arbor-Ypsilanti) had been organized in 1950, but even then, the membership of eight or ten consisted of the sons and daughters of Federation members and seasoned sympathizers, not new recruits.

The Social SLP

The loss of membership, the futility of agitation, and working class hostility to the party and its program all combined to heighten a tendency that had always existed in the party. Under the guise of money raising, the internal social activity of the party increased as the external agitational activity declined.

Unlike the Leninist groups which raise money by the simple expedient of assessing the membership, the SLP has historically relied on voluntary contributions. Monthly dues were one dollar when I joined the party in 1947 and remain at that figure today. The funds required for the Weekly People and the National Office of the party were raised in large part through an endless round of picnics, socials, dinners, and other entertainments. These were sponsored, not only by the American sections of the party but, in large cities, by language federations and Weekly People Clubs. In addition there were annual money-raising events like the Weekly People Thanksgiving Affair, DeLeon's Birthday, the National Convention and NEC Banquets, Paris Commune celebrations, etc. In places like Detroit there was a party affair or even two going on every weekend of the year. All this became a focus of party activity which, in terms of hours of planning and human effort, easily exceeded the agitational activity of the party.

Even worse, perhaps, was the intensified isolation created by this state of affairs. In many respects we came to resemble any small Protestant religious denomination with our own social affairs, business meetings, sermons, and evangelistic efforts. We became so tightly knit and clannish that it was difficult for persons attracted by the program to feel at home with us.

Cracks in the Monolith

By the mid sixties, though, the stability that had been the party's hallmark for twenty years began to erode. The members had grown older. Death and old age sapped the two remaining language federa-
tions: Bulgarian and South Slavonian. By the late sixties their newspapers had ceased publication, and the federations themselves had disbanded with a consequent loss to the party of financial support and, less obviously, morale. For in large industrial centers they contributed to the illusion of numbers and to the social life that gave membership in the SLP much of its charm.

But the same decade that brought the seemingly irreversible decline of the party also saw the heating up of social dissent, if not in the class struggle terms we expected and were prepared to exploit. The struggle against racism and against the Vietnam War, both of which helped to "radicalize" a generation of American youth, was sufficiently peripheral to capitalism's economic system for the dissenters to seek and expect relief within the framework of the system.

Although capitalism was able to contain the social ferment of 1965–73 through token concessions to blacks and women and through détente with China and disengagement from Vietnam, many young people made the association between capitalism and its progeny—war, poverty, racism, and sexism. Unfortunately the SLP was not the beneficiary of this new enlightenment. The Marxist-Leninist (read Mao-Stalin) groups and the Trotskyist denominations got the bulk of these recruits. The Revolutionary Communist Party was born and the Socialist Workers Party reborn during these years.

The age of the membership, our aloofness from events (We were not allowed to distribute leaflets even near a demonstration), and a sort of arrogance toward and contempt for the reformist direction of even the most violent demonstrations effectively destroyed the SLP's chances of gaining members and supporters from this movement. It is the memory of what current SLP leaders regard as the tactical blunder of the sixties that informs their fumbling efforts to marry revolutionary socialist industrial unionism to every single-issue movement that comes down the pike.

Under the pressures created by the party's disappointing performance during those years, its monolithic stability began to crumble as an increasing minority began to question the wisdom of tactics imposed by the National Office (read National Secretary Arnold Petersen, his protégé Nathan Karp, and the NEC Sub-Committee). (to be continued)

Pinocchio at the Unemployment Office (cont'd)

Chapter 10. AFTER JOINING THE UNION ORGANIZING COMMITTEE, PINOCCHIO MEETS A FOX AND A CAT

Pinocchio thanked the turkey for organizing the demonstration and left for the unemployment office. To his surprise, everyone seemed much more militant than they were the last time he had talked to them. A feeling that change could really happen was spreading throughout the office.
Several workers asked him to help on a union organizing committee. "We heard you are a socialist, Pinocchio, and socialists are supposed to know how to organize unions."

"Be glad to help," Pinocchio was puzzled that many who had argued with him the longest were now the most in favor of a union. But he responded eagerly, "The first thing we'll need is a strike fund."

"Let's donate one paycheck a year," Jim suggested.

"Isn't that a little steep?" Pinocchio asked.

"Not if it's something you believe in. Besides, I know a lot of people who spend more than that on home computers and video games."

Five workers donated their paychecks. When they asked Pinocchio to be treasurer, he promised to take the checks to Yoda where they would be safe. But, while they were talking, they were being watched by a sly old fox and a sleazy cat. (This pair had just come from Palo Alto, where they had run their Party's National Office and lived off estates they had talked comrades into leaving to the Party. After they used up the Party's funds, they went out on their own.)

When Pinocchio left the unemployment office, the sneaky pair cozied up to him. "Why, hello there," purred the fox in a soft, unctuous voice. "We were just looking for a revolutionary party to which we could make a financial contribution. You look like a revolutionary and we were wondering if you know of such a party?"

"Not a party. Not yet, anyway. But you can contribute to a union organizing drive." Pinocchio told them all about what unemployment workers had to put up with.

"That's unbelievable!" The fox folded his arms in indignation.

"Unbelievable!" repeated the cat.

"But they made you treasurer, Pinocchio." The fox looked at him out of one eye as he twisted his whiskers. "A treasurer is a very responsible position."

"Very responsible," echoed the cat.

Pinocchio beamed with pride. "And how much are you two going to contribute?"

"Well,..." started the fox. "We don't make contributions in exact dollar amounts. We help pure revolutionaries multiply whatever they have."

"How do you do that?" Pinocchio wondered.
The fox slid his arm around Pinocchio and looked each way. Then he put his nose very close to the puppet and said in a low tone, "We do it in the Field of Quick Victories."

"The Field of Quick Victories," Pinocchio asked, "What's that?"

"Not so loud, Pinocchio. You don't want the magic formula to get out to some other party. It works like this. You get workers to turn over their paychecks to the pure revolutionary party. That's you, Pinocchio. Then we'll show you just where to bury them in the Field of Quick Victories. You come back in an hour and see your Victory Tree. It will have money all over it. You pay back the workers, plus some. And you still have plenty left over for building your party."

"I don't know." Pinocchio was starting to hesitate.

"Oh. Don't worry, Pinocchio," reassured the fox. "Vanguards do it all the time. If you were a pure revolutionary..." the fox winked at Pinocchio "...you would know that the membership should place great trust in their leaders..."

"Great trust," nodded the cat, "very great trust."

"...and that a truly revolutionary membership..." continued the
fox. "...wouldn't mind at all if their leadership invested their money in a grand adventure."

"Wouldn't mind at all," agreed the cat, "not at all."

The fox turned to the cat and, patting him on the head, explained, "He's my protege. He's studying my sophisticated political behavior so that one day he will be able to stand in my shoes and make creative and original contributions of his own."

"Creative and original contributions," smiled the cat. "Very original contributions."

"It's so nice to have someone like him." The fox scratched the cat behind the ears with fatherly affection. "You know, everyone who's disagreed with me has long since been expelled."

Chapter 11. FINOCCHIO HAS A GREAT INSIGHT AT THE FIELD OF QUICK VICTORIES

"But where is this Field of Quick Victories?" Pinocchio wanted to know.

"Come with us, my fine puppet." The fox put his arm around Pinocchio and led him along. "This grand adventure will be your initiation for becoming a pure revolutionary." The fox made a great flourish with his other arm. "The Field of Quick Victories lies just beyond the Valley of Many Slogans."

"Hm-m-m-m," thought Pinocchio as the three walked together. "The Valley of Many Slogans. That place sounds familiar."

After an hour had passed, the fox announced, "Here we are!"

Pinocchio looked around but couldn't see that the place they were at was all that different.

"We'll help you dig the hole. Not too deep, Pinocchio," warned the fox. "There. That's right, my fine puppet, put the paychecks right here."

The cat started giggling, "Someone's gonna get to leave Palo Alto and fly to New York," but the fox quickly slapped a paw over his mouth.

"Now, Pinocchio," the fox soothed, "you'll need to hide behind the rock over there while the Victory Tree grows."

"And why should I do that?"

"Don't be disruptive, Pinocchio. The membership always hides its
eyes while the leaders are doing pure revolutionary magic. You'll learn from the experience. Trust me, you'll learn."

Since he was always eager for new knowledge, Pinocchio obeyed the fox.

"Now, you have to stay away for an hour, Pinocchio," the fox shouted when he was out of sight. "...or else the pure revolutionary magic won't work right."

As Pinocchio sat behind the rock, each second seemed like an hour. He couldn't wait to see his very own pure revolutionary Victory Tree covered with hundreds of paychecks. He closed his eyes and imagined it was in front of him. He could see himself picking off the checks. He picked a handful and rented a building for a national headquarters. He was just picking some more to buy a newspaper staff when he thought he saw something eating its way from the trunk of the tree. It seemed like he had seen that little bug before.

He had! It was his very own conscience, the Talking Cricket. But it wasn't talking very nicely at all. "Pinocchio, of all the wooden-headed Marxists I've seen, you're the most wooden-headed of all. Now, did you believe that quick victories could bring anything of lasting value?"

"Stop that! You'll keep the pure revolutionary magic from working!"

"There's nothing magic about being revolutionary, Pinocchio. Lose everything, you will."

"Oh, you awful cricket." Pinocchio searched for insults. "I don't even think you are a cricket. I think you're a cockroach with bureaucratic deformations."

"Pinocchio, you're sounding more and more like a turkey."

But the little puppet was terribly worried. He ran out from behind the rock and looked for his Victory Tree. Nothing was there but an empty hole in the ground. "I've been robbed! I've been robbed!" the puppet sobbed. "I'm no closer to being a real revolutionary... and... what will I tell the people I work with? What do I do now, cricket?"

But Pinocchio had only imagined the Talking Cricket. When he realized that he was all alone, he ran as fast as he could back to where he had first seen the Good FAiry. "Maybe he can tell me what to do," Pinocchio thought.
Chapter 12. PINOCCHIO GRIEVES FOR THE GOOD FAIRY AND MEETS A TOAD FROM UNION HEADQUARTERS

But when he reached the spot where they had met, he only saw what someone had written on the side of a building:

THIS IS TO COMMEMORATE THE GOOD FAIRY, WHO USED TO HANG OUT AROUND HERE. SHE LIVED THROUGH THE LAND SHARK, COPS, A KANGAROO, JAIL, AND VARIOUS THUGS. BUT SHE DIED OF GRIEF WHEN ABANDONED BY HER LITTLE BROTHER PINOCCHIO, WHO FORGOT EVERYTHING SHE TOLD HIM AS HE RAN OFF TO DO PURE REVOLUTIONARY MAGIC.

Pinocchio was stunned. He couldn't move. Then, there was a familiar voice from over his shoulder. "You taking it kind of rough, kid?" This time it really was the Talking Cricket.

Pinocchio sat on the sidewalk and told him everything about the fox and cat. "Well, you're not the first to have fallen for those types," the cricket reassured him as best he could. "But you really have to explain to your friends what happened to their money."

Pinocchio promised that he would. And he also promised that he would read and study so that he could learn from what had happened.

When Pinocchio got to work, he found that the union organizing drive had fallen apart. Without any revolutionaries around, the organizing committee had asked some union bureaucrats for help. But the bureaucracy warned the committee that they couldn't talk about striking. So the most enthusiastic organizers got disgusted and everyone else got bored. The five who had donated their paychecks were feeling so down that they didn't even ask Pinocchio about their money.

Pinocchio met a couple of new workers who had been sent down by Union Headquarters. "I wonder why management would be so eager to hire someone from the union," he thought.

One of them was a bug-eyed toad with suspenders. He hopped right up. "Hi, puppet. My name's Lampwick. I hear you're a socialist."

"Yeah..." Pinocchio answered cautiously. Most workers were very timid when they were first hired. But Lampwick acted like he knew all the ropes. Pinocchio wondered if everyone from the union office was that pushy.

"Well, that's okay." Lampwick hopped on Pinocchio's desk and put his bug-eyes right in Pinocchio's face when he talked. "I'm a socialist, too."

"Really?"

"Oh, yeah. Lot's of people at Union Headquarters are socialists."
Of course, we're DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISTS," Lampwick said with his thumbs in his suspenders. "We call ourselves the 'Alliance.' Hey, work is almost over. You wanna go down by the levee with us? We're gonna see if we can spot the Land Shark."

"That sounds like fun, Lampwick." Pinocchio picked the social democrat up to help him off his desk. But, as Pinocchio was putting him down, the little toad peed all over a copy of the Communist Manifesto he had been reading.

"So sorry," the toad apologized, without looking the least bit upset. "It's a purely involuntary reflex. I can't control it at all."

Pinocchio was dismayed; but, there didn't seem to be anything he could do about it. "What are you gonna do if you see the Land Shark, Lampwick?"

"Oh, I'm on the Union Committee for Fair and Equitable Theft. I want to find the Land Shark to give him a petition asking him to lower interest rates."

When they got to the levee, some of Lampwick's friends were already there, but the Land Shark was nowhere in sight. "You don't mind if I read while we're waiting?" asked Pinocchio.

"What you got there, puppet?" one of Lampwick's friends asked.

"Well, there's an essay by Kollontai and..."

"Hey, you'all come look at this dumb stuff the puppet's reading!" he called to the others.

They came over laughing at Pinocchio. "You'll never get on the Union staff by reading this stuff," Lampwick said as he tossed one of the books in the air.

"Stop that!" Pinocchio was angry.

One of them grabbed a book and threw it right at him. Pinocchio dodged. But he was hit by a DeLeon pamphlet. And a book by Luxemburg landed on his head.