One of the functions of this section of the Discussion Bulletin has become that of apologizing for putting my foot into it as non-editor of the DB. First a new case: DB15 Editorial Matters contains references to anti-state capitalist periodicals and anti-state capitalist revolutionaries. Whatever readers might infer from those references, I want to state that the DB does not hold that to be a "third force" socialist one must believe that the USSR and its empire have state capitalist economic systems.
Secondly, the DB, as final arbiter in all disputes it manages to embroil itself in, hereby declares the Rossi/WSA matter at an end with both sides retaining their honor and integrity. As Comrade Rossi pointed out recently, his letter was not written as a brief against the WSA nor for publication, and further, well meaning people can interpret the events surrounding his separation from the WSA differently.

Thirdly, the statement in Editorial Matters (DB15), "The DB is not meant to serve as an arena for airing the internal disputes of organizations in our political sector," needs clarification. A correspondent asked how I could square this statement with the publication of Comrade Perry's and my series on the SLP. Since then I have been racking my brain for some kind of sloezy rationale, but without success. I can say only that the DB is unwilling to publish allegations about an organization's internal policies unless they are substantiated, and even then we would prefer not to. It seems to me that the series on the SLP had a historical/analytical purpose and style that removed it from the category described above. -- But I realize that this won't satisfy everyone.

All this raises the question of just what should be published. P.O. Box 1564 receives quite a bit of mail addressed to me which is clearly intended for publication although the writers frequently don't specify that fact. In the past I have just used my judgement. Although I have never received any complaints, I may very well not have published things that writers did want in the DB. It would help a lot here if correspondents would use an appropriate salutation like "Dear Comrades" or "Fellow Workers."

We are happy to report that paid subscriptions have reached an all-time high. Anyone receiving an occasional copy and wishing to get every issue can subscribe for six issues at the ridiculously low price of $3. Again we solicit your letters and articles. Please type them single spaced with a dark ribbon and with narrow margins. We will be pasting up DB17 during the third week in April.

Frank Girard
for the DB Committee

THE DE LEONIST SOCIETY BULLETIN
Published Monthly
By The De Leonist Society
P.O. Box 285, Greensburg, PA 15601
(No subscription price given)
Dear Com. Girard:

I am responding to your letter contained within the Discussion Bulletin #15, December 1985.

My main criticism of the seven points given by you to identify "your socialism" (referred to by you as "our socialism") are the omissions and not necessarily the actual content, the corollaries notwithstanding. For example, the 7 points would not be acceptable in themselves to the SLP unless they received the additions that we have previously discussed as being part of the political philosophy of the SLP. And such additions, in my opinion, would negate and contradict the 7 tenets that you have laid out. If therefore you hold fast to these 7 tenets and, respectfully, do not waffle on the corollaries, you and the SLP would be at fundamental variance.

Because we are dealing in a social science, and because of the misinterpretations that historically have been performed by a multitude of sources, it is nevertheless necessary to clarify and correct (from our standpoint) some of your statements contained within the 7 points.

Re: #1. You refer to "the means of production..." This should read "the means of production and distribution."

Re: #2. You refer to "the political state." It would be preferable to just say that the state will be non-existent within socialism. Inserting the word "political" might infer that another type of "state" would exist.

Re: #3. I disagree with this statement. Most certainly, with the establishment of socialism the international World Socialist Parties would be disbanded as they would have no function to perform once their objective had been achieved. But socialism would be the quintessence of democracy; and therefore a socialist society, for example, would not forbid or prevent the existence of organizations that were in opposition to socialism. If, perchance, there were groups that favored the elimination of socialism and a return to capitalism they would be allowed to propagate their views. Alternatively, who knows, some might envisage another society as distinct from either capitalism or socialism. Democratic principles would necessitate, and make mandatory, tolerance.

Re: #4. Capitalism also produces "things for use." In addition, of course, these things under capitalism are produced primarily for profit as well as for use. In socialism goods and services will be produced and distributed solely for use. The operative word is "solely."
Regarding Corollary "A": Simply put, within socialism it will be the prerogative of the existing population at that time to organize the production and distribution of goods and services according to the wishes of the majority. It is irrelevant, politically presumptuous, and impractical to attempt to impose specifics on a society of the future. However, of course, this does not preclude us from defining socialism as we understand it together with its implications. Blue prints of any kind are, from a practical standpoint, a waste of time. Future organizational speculations can and should only be contemplated upon a broad and conjectural perspective.

Regarding Corollaries "B" and "C": The "limitations" that I refer to are "limitations" that are applicable to any society of the future when one recognizes that at any particular time, in any particular society, productive capabilities and resources must obviously have a finite factor. "Infinity" can be applicable to the universe but "limitations" will always surely be acknowledged here on earth. I was trying to convey this impression only. But from a practical standpoint the potential of the productive resources that exist today can easily satisfy the reasonable demands of a socialist population that will have automatically released multi-millions from occupations in capitalism that will be non-existent within socialism. As I have stated previously, the labor vouchers envisaged by Marx in the 19th century have no relevance today.

Even during past decades automobile factories have been able to turn out cars at the rate of one per minute, whilst the Kaiser shipyards during World War II were producing ships at the rate of one in seven days.

Under capitalism one of the major problems is over-production in the effective market place. We take the position, justifiably because supporting facts and statistics are available, that the problems of technologically producing a sufficiency for the world's population has already been resolved. Once the majority of the working class understand and desire socialism than socialism, as we envisage it, becomes immediately practical. The so-called backward countries will simultaneously become part and parcel of a unified socialist world that will have the capacity, potential and desire to satisfy the reasonable needs of its population without delay. We do not underestimate the ingenuity and capability of a worldwide socialist community. Look what the workers have achieved (for their masters primarily) under capitalism. How much more, both in quantity and quality, will they be able to accomplish when once they are released from their bondage.
Although "administration" can have an economic base in capitalism, when this term is used to describe the democratic administrations within socialism the expression is obviously describing a different function. Bread and butter function as commodities under capitalism but they only appear as food to eat in socialism.

Regarding my assertion that "the SLP even described the National Executive Committee of the Party as the government of the future", this information was obtained by me from the July/August 1948 publication of The Western Socialist. The author was Harmo. I contacted him on his article and he replied to me in part as follows in a letter dated October 20, 1985:

"I will admit that it is conceivable that I erred in my interpretation of the sentence.... On close scrutiny, I note that in the 1948 article I did not spell out the point that the 'N.E.C.' being the N.E.C. of the S.L.P. rather than the N.E.C. of the W.I.I.U. (The SLP's short-lived Industrial Union)...."

As for myself, I apologize for an incorrect assertion and I accept your statement that the S.L.P.'s position is that it would disband the party after the revolution. However, after reviewing the Visualized Graph on page 11 of DB #15, I notice right at the top of the page the term National Executive Council in bold type and circled. And right at the bottom of the page, in very small type, the term National Executive Committee, Socialist Labor Party (this refers to the Copyright, 1935 - my comment). The two expressions National Executive Council and National Executive Committee are quite similar and possibly could give rise to a misinterpretation.

It is precisely because as you say there are those who "...have a gut hostility to the word 'socialism'..." that it is imperative that the "implications and nuances" to which you refer and to which I object, be either corrected or clarified.

At this juncture I would like to respond in part to Edward Wizik's contribution "Socialist Industrial Unions" And Internationalism. We take the position that a substantial majority of the international working class must understand and desire socialism before it can be established. This requires that the World Socialist Parties become (1) instrumental in this educational process, and (2) sends its appointed representatives to the Parliaments and Congresses throughout the world with a mandate for socialism, to eventually gain a majority in the various seats of power. I attach hereto a copy of the Object and Declaration Of Principles of the World Socialist Movement that I support which is self-explanatory and
should answer some of Ed Wizak's other questions also. Should this still prove insufficient I have written two books on the subject - World Without Wages (Money, Poverty & War) and The Futility of Reformism. Notwithstanding Ed's belabored and repeated reference to me as "Mr. Leight", I will attempt to emulate the good Lord Jesus, turn the other cheek, and offer to mail him both books as a gift, if I hear from him accordingly.

Incidentally, my above irreverence to "the good Lord" touches on yet another fundamental difference that we have with the SLP. Religion should not be considered as a private matter left to the discretion of the individual. It is a social matter based upon an unscientific premise that helps to confuse the working class, compounding their miseries, and detracting them from a true understanding of the nature of things.

Finally, the position that we take is only "exclusive" and "superior" in the sense that we claim it to be correct and in accord with reality. The ideas that we have discussed do not reflect "minor doctrinal differences." Examine the attached Object and Principles in depth and perhaps you will recognize some of these basic disagreements. However, should this not be the case and you find yourself in accord, the next step to take would appear obvious.

With best wishes,

Samuel Leight

Comrade Bulleteers:

The articles submitted by Keith Sorel were interesting but I find one section of "Have You Checked Your Labels Lately" rather disturbing. I refer to the assertion that "the ruling elite throughout the world are driven by the dynamics of global competition (as well as greed) to get the most out of their labor forces, to substitute machines where possible, and to get people to act like machines when this is unfeasible". Now, I'm certainly not in favor of dehumanizing people and making them act like machines, but what in the world is wrong with getting the most out of our labor? It seems to me that the increase in workers' productivity can only serve to make some form of socialism more probable, since it will become increasingly obvious that there really is enough for all being produced and that the money and wage games are unnecessary rubbish. Indeed, would not the ideal socialist world be one in which machines did all the work and people only had to pick and take the good which they wanted? To wrest control of the machines from the current power structure, to automate in a liberating rather than a dehumanizing way, will be difficult, but, I think, necessary tasks.

Freely,

Mike Gunderloy, 41 Lawrence St., Medford, MA 02155
Early socialists inherited the eighteenth and nineteenth century quest for man's true nature. The bourgeois of the time maintained that laissez-faire capitalism was the natural order ordained by God. Utopian communes reflected the belief that merely retreating from bourgeois corruption would allow people to regain their essential virtue. Despite his polemics against utopian thought, Karl Marx was not entirely free from the same world view. His famous dictum, "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs," naively accepts man's 'natural goodness' rather than making any attempt to tackle the complexities of building a socialist society.

When Daniel DeLeon clarified the socialist structure which Marx had left vague, his portrayal of the "natural" social order had a different twist. Rather than explaining socialist industrial unionism as a route for human liberation or even (less modestly) as the best route known at that time, DeLeon defined his schema as the path of socialist reconstruction. This was a reasonable pretension on DeLeon's part, since, in 1905, his was the best formulation. But, this outlook became a roadblock to theoretical progress after his death and deification. Worshippers of DeLeon mummified his theory and treated any attempt to incorporate world events since 1916 as sacrilege.

Too often, socialists of today continue to ignore earth-shattering attempts of the working class to establish a society without domination. Without any concern for the actual experiences and traumas of a class in struggle, they devise schemas of socialist society purely according to what seems nice in their own minds. Consequently, they depict socialism as a society where the "absolute good" will be reached instantaneously. Of course, a millenial paradise without conflict or disagreement is utterly unattainable. This neo-utopian vision retains the nineteenth century belief that all human vices are caused by capitalism, and, therefore, true human goodness will emerge as Athena from the head of Zeus the moment that the working class strikes down the bourgeoisie.

One of the great advances of twentieth century sciences is the understanding that there is no such thing as a "natural" human state. Socialists who comprehend this realize that post-capitalist society will develop many alternatives to class relationships. The destruction of exploitation will unleash a flood of human creativity that will result in countless patterns of social relationships. But, they will have one thing in common: all will retain horrifying memories of capitalist brutality. Ingrained habits will take years, if not generations, to fully overcome. Early socialist society will have to struggle with vestiges of domination if we want to ensure that the social relationships which become most prevalent are those which are truly non-exploitative.

Samuel Leight's article in DISCUSSION BULLETIN No. 14 (October, 1935, pp. 10-13) is like many others which fail to deal with the complexities of creating socialism. However, it is a good article to critique because it succeeds in making its arguments concisely and coherently. The author insists that socialist society (1) must immediately abolish labor vouchers as well as money, (2) cannot have unions because classes will immediately cease to exist, (3) must occur in every advanced country simultaneously, and, (4) cannot have leaders because every person will immediately know everything worth knowing. A couple of points seem to be left out. One is that there would be no such thing as labor discipline because every adult would freely devote her or his time to human society immediately upon the destruction of capitalism. Second is the argument that we should never mention the need to organize militias to defend socialism because we "don't know" if
the capitalists will be violent and, therefore, we shouldn't "turn people off" by preparing for the unknown. If these two points were incorporated, we would have a tightly reasoned neo-utopian flight from responsibility.

The reality from which neo-utopian thought flees so fervidly is the repeated attempts of the working class to abolish class exploitation. They include: the Paris Commune of 1871; the Russian soviets of 1905 and factory committees of 1917-1918; the Seattle General Strike of 1919; the occupations of workers in Turin, Italy of 1919 and 1920; the German Spartacus Rebellion; the collectives of the Spanish Civil War; the Hungarian Revolution of 1956; the Chilean tomas and cordones industriales of 1970-1973; and, most recently, of Polish Solidarnosc. These movements provide some generalizations which any serious theory of socialism must address: there is never an identical revolutionary consciousness in all advanced countries at the same time; the ruling class always savagely counterattacks until it destroys the revolutionary upsurge; it is never possible to immediately abolish a labor voucher or accounting system because there are always some who don't pull their weight or attempt to consume more than their share; and, there are always some individuals with more knowledge and experience, which is essential for the oppressed to use if they are to have even the remotest chance of winning.

That every previous attempt by the working class to abolish exploitation has been plagued by overpowered weaknesses is obvious, since they would have won otherwise. When we study their weaknesses, it should not be for the purpose of finding excuses for dismissing their heroic struggles - rather, we should aim to overcome those weaknesses and make their dream a reality. Given the fact that revolutionary outbreaks occur in isolation or in a few countries at a time, claiming that revolution must occur in every advanced country simultaneously if it is to be socialist is exactly the same thing as saying that socialism is impossible. There is a real issue which needs answering: What is a working class to do if it finds itself isolated after seizing factories in 1917 Russia, having tomas in 1971 Chile, or creating a Polish Solidarnosc?

Given the fact that, whenever the working class seizes the means of production, the ruling class viciously attacks, to advise that we'll have to "wait and see" if the U.S. bourgeoisie will be violent is tantamount to disarming the American masses and preparing them for slaughter. The issue which needs answering is how the working class can organize a defense strong enough to defeat the bourgeoisie without laying the foundation for a "militarized socialism".

The self-organization of Spanish collectives during 1936-1939 has a lot to teach those who imagine that it's possible (or necessary) to immediately dispense with money or labor vouchers while laying the foundations for non-exploitative social relationships. Socialists should waste less time "calling for" the destruction of vouchers and spend some time studying the strengths and weaknesses of the various alternative distribution systems set up by Spanish workers in their attempt to create the material basis for the permanent abolition of money.

One of the most Pollyannish of socialist/anarchist fantasies is the faith that everyone will perform their share of social labor without any control mechanism to ensure cooperation. If this dreamboat will sail anywhere in the world, it will not be in America, where the division of labor we inherit from capitalism leaves us with the most alienating tasks imaginable, where the proletariat typically sees work as something to escape from rather than collectively control, and, where there is an epidemic of sociopaths whose primary occupation is manipulating systems to get something for nothing. The Bolsheviks stooped to one-man management precisely
because they had never imagined the problems of labor discipline in a worker-run economy and had no idea of how to deal with falling productivity in a non-authoritarian way. Those who refuse to consider how workers can collectively discipline their own labor because they suffer the illusion that all discipline is class-based should consider the following: IN ANY ADVANCED TECHNOLOGICAL SOCIETY, THOSE WHO DO NOT DEVELOP METHODS OF COLLECTIVELY DISCIPLINING THEMSELVES ARE DOOMED TO BE DISCIPLINED BY OTHERS.

Perhaps the oddest of neo-utopian reasoning is the logic that, since leadership evolves into bureaucracies, therefore, there should not be any socialist "leaders". The peculiarity of this belief is that, by writing it in an article, one is exercising a talent that most workers do not have, and is thereby taking the role of a leader. If those who write articles against leaders spent their time helping others to develop various skills (such as writing) and insisted that their comrades did the same, they would be laying the foundation for the self-negotiation of leadership. The only way that leadership can ever be abolished is by transforming it into its opposite as we universalize it. A society where no one had any more leadership initiative than anyone else would be so excruciatingly boring that the only virtue of such an idea is its utter impossibility. In contrast, a society where everyone is interdependent on everyone else's special talents is possible, realistic, and intrinsically interesting. Denouncing the wickedness of leadership is a destructive attempt to escape the responsibility of fully using one's talents to create socialism.

The "leadership" of Marx and DeLeon was able to contribute so much to our understanding of human liberation because their theories were based upon the assumption that revolutionaries would be actively involved in the great movements of their day. Any "rules" they put forth were guidelines for action, not apologies for do-nothingism. In particular, their arguments for not getting involved in a particular organization had an underlying assumption that there were other movements that would be more worthy of people's time.

DeLeon's greatest contribution was in showing how the organization of a future socialist society could grow out of labor struggles occurring at that time. DeLeon did not say that socialist organization of 1905 should be based on struggles of the 1840s. Many contemporary "DeLeonists" are unable to grasp the significance of this as they demand that socialist organization of the 1960s reflect the struggles of the 1910s. Current conceptualizations of socialist reconstruction desperately need to incorporate the ups and down of the working class movement of the last century - and not be frozen at one historic period. Trying to impose an organizational schema which leaves out the contemporary struggles of the working class is a form of "top down" domination which is at least as elitist as Leninism.

Since common sense requires any serious theory of socialist organization to include the most recent social developments, one wonders why seemingly intelligent people so persistently make excuses for ignoring the real world. The reason behind neo-utopian thought is disturbingly clear: by claiming that a totally unreachable goal is the only cause worthy of support, the neo-utopian absolves her/himself of responsibility for defending or participating in anything. Those of us who enthusiastically support imperfect struggles have the difficulty of proposing real solutions that some part of the working class might actually listen to. Meanwhile, the neo-utopian comfortably sinks into an armchair and dismisses the movement because it does not fit into some prefabricated mold. As Leight (p. 12) proclaims, any movement which committed the crime of using labor vouchers "...would not qualify... as a socialist one, and we would oppose it."
Such actions show that neo-utopianism lacks the most fundamental requirement for socialist consciousness: a sensitivity to the suffering of the masses which is the basis for solidarity with their struggles. Revolutionaries such as Marx and DeLeon often applauded movements whose tragic errors they criticized. Sadly, abstentionists of today lean back in the air-conditioned luxury of America, observe with disinterest that other people's blood is being spilt, and flee from responsibility for dealing with real problems.

Don Fitz

Dear Comrades,

I have been following with interest the discussion sparked off by Sam Leight's comments on your leaflet "What Is Socialism" and would like to offer some comments of my own.

I think that the best definition that can be given of socialism is: a system of society based on the common ownership and democratic control of the means of production by and in the interest of the whole people. This framework definition implies a number of important corollaries:

1. Socialism will be a classless society. This is a consequence of common ownership since, if the means of production belong in common to all, this means that no section of society --i.e., no social class-- has a privileged control over their use and that in fact every member of society stands on an exactly equal basis with regard to decisions about them. This is why definitions of socialism which talk about "collective ownership by the workers" or of "workers' control" are less adequate. They can be misleading in that the word "workers" is also a term used to describe one of the classes of capitalist society, which, just as much as the capitalist class, will disappear in socialism. In socialism we will cease to be "workers" in the sense of "members of the working class" and become simply free and equal men and women members of socialist society. Hence the above definition of socialism as being a system based on common ownership and democratic control by the whole people. Of course since the work of producing what society needs will continue in socialism those engaged in such activity could be called (and might well continue to be called, since we can't predict or dictate the evolution of language) "workers", but even in this case it could be misleading to talk of socialism as being based on common ownership and democratic control by "the workers" --for what about those in socialist society who, for one reason or another (the old, physically handicapped, nursing mothers, those studying or simply resting, etc.), will not be engaged in such activity? They too will be entitled to an equal say with everyone else as to how the means of production should be used. So, for the sake of clarity, let's stick to speaking about "the whole people" or "the community" or "society as a whole" owning and controlling the means of production in socialism.

2. Socialism will be a society without a social organ of coercion, or State. This is because the State is a feature only of class-divided societies where its role is to protect the interests of the rule...
class and to maintain the class basis of society. In a classless society such a social organ of coercion—composed of armed forces, police, prisons, Courts, etc.—will be completely redundant and will be abolished as soon as socialist society is established. A confusion can arise here because "the State" is now also associated not just with coercion but with certain necessary social functions too (such as housing, sanitation, education and health). What envisaged as happening after the socialist victory at the ballot box that will place the socialist-minded working class in control of the State machine is that the coercive aspects of the State will be lopped off, so abolishing the State as such, i.e., as a social organ of coercion; but the other, administrative functions of the existing State will be retained but adapted, in particular by being thoroughly democratized internally and by being made subject to full external democratic control, to help administer production for use. I must say, since I suppose I am called upon to commit myself, that I am with those who feel that the word "government" is too closely associated with the State as a means of coercion to be employed in any description of socialist society. I suggest it be dropped and that we speak only of "administration"—"central administration", even "industrial administration" if you like—but never of "government" with respect to socialist society. But can we say anything more about the administrative and decision-making structures of socialist society other than that they will be purely administrative and non-coercive and thoroughly democratic? Some feel that this is not enough and that we should go into more details. This is legitimate enough as long as we realise we are only describing possible arrangements for our own personal preferences as to what these forms should be rather than laying down what they will or must be. Among those who want to go into details are those who argue that future socialist society should be organised exclusively on industrial lines: the unit of democracy would be the local place of work and the central decision-making body would be composed of delegates from the various industries. This is indeed a possible form, but it strikes me as having a number of serious drawbacks, in particular the exclusion of the "non-workers" I mentioned earlier from the decision-making process and the fact that it makes production the most important aspect of human social life to the detriment of other equally, perhaps more important aspects. Having said this however, it is inconceivable for me that the various work places and industries in socialism will not be run by democratically-elected and recallable delegate bodies of one sort or another. This must be taken for granted and in all probability will evolve, at least partially, out of the industrial organisations which the working class will have formed under capitalism. But the question is not whether or not such industrial delegate bodies should exist in socialism, but whether the administrative and decision-making structure of socialist society should be exclusively composed of them. We can't anticipate the future but I think it highly unlikely that future socialism will opt for this solution. It seems more likely to me that, beside the structure of industrial delegate bodies (concerned mainly with the day-to-day organisation and running of production), there will exist another structure, based on the local community, for deciding on all aspects of social life including what should be
produced. After all people live in local communities while they only work in factories; it is here that the needs to whose satisfaction production will be subordinated arise. This is why the local community is a much more likely candidate than the local work place for adoption as the basic democratic unit of socialist society, with the central decision-making body being composed of delegates from the various regions that groups of local communities would constitute. Of course we have now entered the realm of speculation or at least of personal preferences, but I have done so to try to show the "industrialists" that they go too far in proclaiming their system as the administrative and decision-making structure of socialism. At best it is only one possible such form and, in my view, arguably far from being either the most realistic or the most appropriate one.

3. Socialism will involve the abolition of the wages system. This too follows from its classless nature for what does the existence of the wages system reflect but the existence in society of one class in a position to buy the working abilities of other human beings and of another class obliged to sell its ability to work for money in order to live? The wages system thus automatically disappears along with the division of society into employers and employees and indeed with the whole concept of employment (and unemployment). With voluntary agreeable work even the distinction between "work" and "leisure" will begin to become meaningless.

4. Socialism will be a society without money. This is because, being based on common ownership, whatever is produced in it will also be commonly owned as soon as it is produced and so can only be distributed not exchanged since exchange implies private ownership of products—which is precisely what will not exist in socialism. Obviously if there is no exchange there will be no need for any means of exchange such as money nor for all the rest of the paraphernalia of a money, buying and selling economy (banks, insurance, pension schemes, etc.). All socialists must agree—otherwise they are not socialists—that in socialism the exchange of products on a market will go and be replaced by some system of direct distribution. But what system? Pre-20th century socialists came up with four basic ways of directly distributing consumer goods in a socialist society:
--people are given what the central administration decides (either democratically or technocratically) they need.
--people are entitled to an equal share of what there is to be distributed.
--people are issued with labour cards entitling them to withdraw from the stock of consumer goods set aside for consumption an amount proportional to the number of hours they have worked.
--people have free access to the stock of consumer goods according to their own self-defined needs.

Because Marx, in 1875 in some notes not written for publication, mentioned the labour card system as a possible transitional measure to full free access according to self-defined needs this system came to be widely favoured in the working class movement. Here I would agree with Sam Leight: the development of the forces of production since Marx's day (and Marx never saw a radio or an electric light let alone computers or nuclear energy) has made this whole concept of labour cards (as well as the central allocation and equal sharing
options) quite out-dated and obsolete: once established socialist society could now go over very rapidly to full free access according to self-defined needs. I say "very rapidly" rather than "immediately" because it is at least theoretically conceivable that in the very early days of socialism not all goods may be available in sufficient quantities to allow full free access to them, in which case of course some other system of distribution will have to be temporarily applied. The details of such a temporary distribution system for a limited number of goods that might be in short supply would have to be left to those faced with this possible problem to decide in the light of the particular situation in which they might find themselves, but I honestly cannot see them resorting to the labour card system as a way out. Imagine the bureaucracy that would be necessary to measure both how long each person had worked and to calculate a labour-time "price" for each good -- such labour-time accounting would be just as wasteful and time-consuming as existing capitalist monetary accounting! Besides, as kropotkin pointed out in the last century, the labour card system is based on the illusion that it is possible to measure an individual worker's contribution to production. But this is not possible for the simple reason -- noted by Marx -- that production today is "socialised" in the sense of being the collective effort of the whole workforce as a single unit and not an accumulation of individual efforts. In my view, should some goods be in temporary short supply right at the beginning of socialism, then some ad hoc system based on equal sharing, with allowance for special cases (such as pregnant women), is most likely to be adopted. Having said this, a world-wide division of labour today means that the only socialist that can be established today is a world socialism. The productive potential of this world-wide productive apparatus is capable of providing enough to satisfy the basic material needs of the whole population of the world, including those in the so-called underdeveloped countries. Within the framework of world socialism (and only within this framework) a crash programme can be implemented with a view to eliminating world hunger, poverty, disease and ignorance within, say, a decade.

If we are agreed on what socialism is then another debate opens: that of the best way to get there. For the moment I suggest two basic principles. First, that socialism cannot be brought about by gradually reforming capitalism, therefore socialists should not
advocate or propose reforms. Second, that socialism can only come about democratically in the sense both of having majority support and of using democratic methods.

21 rue Gambetta,
77400 Thorigny,
France, Europe.

Yours for the Revolution,
Adam Bulck

Dear Comrades,

I am writing in response to a letter written by Comrade Otter. At the end of his letter, Comrade Otter states that article six of the WSP’s Declaration of Principles can be interpreted to mean “the WSP & its companion parties intend to set up a transitional working class government, retaining the use (for a period) of armed forces of the nation & believing that these can be used for workers’ self-emancipation.”

Apparently, Comrade Otter either missed or chose to ignore the fifth principle, which states; “That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.” If you add this paragraph with paragraph six, it would seem obvious to me that the WSP & the companion parties would not be able to con, or be in a position to con a conscious socialist working class into accepting a transitional state that would use military power to achieve the revolution. Conscious socialist workers would not accept this. Notice the word conscious comrade Otter. This word is part of the sixth principle.

I would now like to take the time to add a couple of quotes that come from the WSP and its companion party the SRGB. I feel that these quotes will help to clarify principle six further and that they will answer some of the questions that the other comrades posted in the DB. The first quote comes from a SRGB pamphlet entitled “Object & Declaration of Principles.” This quote appears on page 21 and describes the sixth principle. “Lastly there is the question of converting the instruments of oppression into the agents of emancipation. This is quite a simple issue. It is necessary for a socialist working class to gain political control, but only for the purpose of dispossessing the capitalist class and opening the way for the community as a whole to take over the means of production and distribution and democratically use them for the good of all. The state, with its coercive machinery will be dismantled as its function—the custodian of private property—will have disappeared. New social institutions of administration based on the new social conditions will be democratically formed.” Notice that the socialist working class dismantles the state and its coercive powers. So much for a transitional military state.

The second quote comes from a WSP leaflet entitled “Our Declaration of Principles.” In describing the sixth principle, the WSP states; “But how, then should the working class organize to end capitalism? Naturally, it must be on the political front but it must certainly be more than merely political. And that is why our proposition has before the word politically the term consciously. This is the key. The working class
must not leave the thinking to "wise leaders, political messiahs, etc." They must know what they are doing. Once in control of the seats of power, a victorious socialist working class can immediately declare the end of class ownership and immediately convert the government over people into an administration over things."

Instead of the transitional government using military might, comrade Otter, the WSP and its companion parties make clear that the state will be dismantled so that it cannot possibly be used to stop the co-op operation of the working class. I do believe that these quotes will also answer some of comrade Wizik's questions.

If anyone would like to study these items further, please write to:

WSP
P.O. Box 475
Boston, MA 02272

or to:

R. Poland
974 Four Mile Rd. Apt. 2-D
Grand Rapids, MI 49504

For World Socialism,
R. Poland

NATION, STATE ... OR HUMAN COMMUNITY?

The State (that is, the organised separation of men into masters and subjects of power) has always depended on the notion of territory, which has always corresponded for different exploiters to the necessity of both confining their subjects - their slaves - to a given territory, and of marking out space with their ever-present menace in order to signal that at such and such a point all men, animals and plants belong to them and no one else.

The whole notion of nationalism relies on myths that grew out of the sedentariness and statism of communities in a particular area; myths of the homeland, myths of the fatherland, the alien...myths that limit and mutilate a global vision of the world. The development of market relations, at first determining and then dissolving the hierarchical or communitarian relations through which men's dependence on cooperation with each other was expressed, never threatened this reliance on territoriality, since in fact the formation of nation-states and the myth of the fatherland are really the direct result of the development of capitalism. While it incorporates both the limits and the aspirations of earlier communities, capitalism destroys the whole set of real community but of the image of a community as symbolized in the sickly fetishizing of national heroes and the flag. The increasingly impersonal character of relations between men is then accompanied by the invention of community-as-destiny which serves to mask the divisions between antagonistic social classes; this makes capitalism to rationalize its domination by imposing on its officials and administrators - themselves divided by competition on the marketplace - a unity corresponding to the ultimate interests of the State as the guardian and manager of social relations in general, protecting them against the potentially corrosive influences of the marketplace.

Despite the fact that the domination of capitalism protects itself behind national frontiers, it nonetheless is dependent on the tendency for market relations to spread across the world, and on the imperialist drive to conquer, unify and if necessary construct markets for itself. Colonization, world wars, the development of new poles of accumulation and the constitution of new nation-states were all stages in this process. In the contemporary era, market exchange tends to make life all over the world increasingly uniform: education, city planning, food, information, all become more and more similar everywhere. What local color is still safe-guarded only functions as a kind of commercial gadget complementary to the generalization of exchange. On the other hand, nationalism and xenophobia develop exactly.
to the degree that man's rootedness in
and awareness of his own environment is
correspondingly degraded and detoriated.

It's time to dump those old notions of
territory, state, nation and fatherland.
The problems that humanity faces are glo-
bal problems. They can only be resolved by
the action of a world-wide human community
totally shattering all its national and
international shackles. This presupposes
the abolition of nation-states and of mo-
ney, the expressions of competition and
exploitation.

With men no longer held prisoners behind
national borders, they would be able to
circle anywhere they wanted, when they
wanted for however long a time they de-
sired. The only collectivity would then
be that of a human community organised ac-
cording to egalitarian principles, which
would obviously take the form of particu-
lar collectivities, but where humanity
would no longer wear the nationalist blin-
ders it wears today, since it would be un-
derstood that on the one hand the diffe-
rences existing between communities would
no longer amount to obstacles to their op-
ening onto the outside, and on the other
that it would be possible to join with and
participate in such and such community with-
out one's birthplace acting as an obsta-
cle to one's integration into that commu-

SOCIAL INSECURITY (L'INSECURITE SOCIALE)
B.P. 243
75564 PARIS CEDEX 12
FRANCE

POURED INTO THE INDUSTRIAL MOLD

"The industrial principle of one union...excludes, as a matter
of course, the jellyfish conception of oneness. The oneness of the
high structure of the human being is a different oneness from that
of the lower jellyfish. As the structure of the human being implies
parts and coordination to parts, so does the structure of industrialism,
a concept born of the higher development of modern society, imply
divisions and sub-divisions. The field upon which industrialism
operates warrants the parallel with a modern army. One though an army
is, it has its separate divisions. These are also imperative to the
Industrial Army - it also has and must have companies, battalions,
regiments, brigades, divisions."

Daniel De Leon

The industrial setup is the mold into which must be poured the
molten metal - an awakened classconscious working class. Facts of
production, therefore, determine the divisions between the Industrial
Unions and the subdivisions within the Industrial Union.

Keeping in mind the central principle that the form must be in
accord with the facts of production, we must first determine the
external boundaries. The output is the determining factor. It is
a union which must also include the unemployed.

"In the first place," said De Leon in his presentation, "The
Burning Question of Trade Unionism," "the trade union has a supreme
mission. That mission is nothing short of organizing by uniting and
uniting by organizing the whole working class industrially - not
merely those for whom there are jobs, accordingly not only those who
can pay dues."
Despite their specialized labor workers help produce the "output" which determines the boundaries of their union.

The industrial union makes possible instantaneous action and solidifies the workers for the great act of backing up the Socialist ballot by taking and holding the industries of the land. Lastly, it organizes the workers into the only human machine capable of operating the industries without interruption as the changeover takes place and under the Socialist Industrial Republic of Labor.

Comrade Tom Johncock

Dear Frank Girard:

In regard to the references to me in D.B. #15 by you and in your use of a quotation from a "response" by Louis Lazarus (p.10) I feel that I can remain aloof from the discussion no longer. The particular issue was referred to me by a Boston comrade for my attention last week. I should also acknowledge, at this time, that D.B. numbers 12 and 13 had been forwarded to me last October by my comrade Sam Leight of Tucson, together with certain pertinent correspondence relating to a "sheer fabrication" (Lazarus's words) of mine in an article some years back (The Western Socialist # 4, 1960). The reason that I chose to not respond before this was simple. After close to a half century of activity in the World Socialist Movement I felt that my energies, at this stage of my life, should not be used in polemics with other professed socialists--valuable as such activity might be.

However, I cannot let the matter rest now after noting your piece in D.B. #15. So, to begin with, I must acknowledge that I did err in that 1960 article (an answer to a defender of the SLP who had challenged some of my statements in a previous article on that Party--statements which I further documented from SLP literature). The sole error in that article was my inadvertent confusing of the NEC of the (still non-existent Union) with the NEC of the SLP. In fact, I had not noted that the "C" in the Union's NEC stood for Council rather than "Committee" and that, no doubt, added to my befuddlement. It was, nevertheless, a careless error and no "fabrication" on my part. As you yourself point out in your response to Sam Leight (D.B.#15, p.10), errors do creep in
when ass are edited "in a hurry" by amateur writers. For that matter, the professionals are good at errors, too. And, in fact, you yourself in your letter to Leight dated Oct. 6, 1966, presumed that the "Visualized Graph..." leaflet did not really exist, that "it must be the work of a not too acute WSP zealot," etc. Zounds! Can it be that even Frank Girard Himself can commit the occasional booboo! Frank Girard who describes himself in his letter to Con. Leight, referred to above, as "close to being an expert on SLP publications..."

But while I am at it allow me to delve further into my grievous error. I had taken the reference to the "Visualized Graph..." from an earlier and more comprehensive article of mine in WS for July-Aug. 1948. I had written, at that time:

"...To the S.L.F., industry is an end in itself. The new society will be completely centered around production with the various union representatives constituting the new Congress and the National Executive Committee at the top of the heap. This is how it appears in the blueprint they distribute entitled: Visualized Graph of Socialist Industrial Union. They even describe the N.E.C. as the "governmnet of the future."

So, finally, I would like to point out two facts of interest:

(1) Prior to this response under consideration there had never been a challenge to my erroneous sentence in the 1960 piece. We invariably took note of errors when brought to our attention and made the necessary corrections at the earliest opportunity. And we always had a fair number of readers of DeLeonist persuasion, readers who frequently would involve us in debate in our journal. Is it possible that the fact of the SLP being no Industrial Union; the fact that the SLP had not arisen from an Industrial Union--a seeming contradiction to DeLeonist theory; that such facts might have served to befuddle SLP members themselves into confusing National Executive Council with National Executive Committee? Especially when the bottom line of the VISUALIZED GRAPH leaflet reads: Copyright, 1935, by the National Executive Committee, Socialist Labor Party. (emphasis mine, H/M)
(2) None of the other charges and criticisms of the SLP made in the two articles in question were ever challenged by DeLeonists. In fact, not even as a result of this discussion, by either Frank Girard or Louis Lazarus, or anybody else in the Group. Why not? In the event that any readers of D.B. would like copies of those articles I will be happy to oblige.

Yours for world socialism

P.S. I just remembered another grievous error that I made in both articles. I mis-spelled the name: Arnold Petersen! At least twice!

109 Tremont St., apt. 417
Brighton, Ma 02135

Dear Comrades,

This is to comment on Ed Wizek's article on the John Birch Society in the September D.B. It eluded Mr. Wizek that the SLP and the John Birch Society should have much in common in that both organizations rabidly oppose the Soviet Despotism that most people unfortunately think is Socialism, the salvation for all useful workers. If the SLP at the time of the Russian Revolution had not become infatuated with Lenin because he approved of DeLeon's goal and spoke highly of his writings, it would have condemned the undemocratic party rule that was taking over in that turbulent country. It was not till Stalin and Hitler signed a mutual assistance pact in 1939 that the SLP made a decisive break from hopes that Russia was the workers' motherland.

If the SLP and other DeLeonists in the future are to make clear to John Bichers and others what we stand for, we must recognize the Soviet Union threat to all decent people and oppose it with our unique education. When the SLP advocates nuclear disarmament or non-involvement in Central America as do Russia lovers and millions of others, it helps the Soviet Union achieve military and propaganda objectives. It is my belief that new recruits to DeLeonism will come in reaction to a capitalist economic crisis that the great Communist Manifesto said can't be prevented. Let there be no doubt that we DeLeonists are worthy to guide the multitudes who can see no other social organization than Democratic Industrial Government.

Sincerely yours,
Monroe Prussack
De Leon certainly would not have considered the possibility that the Wobbly & syndicalist actions used were "propaganda by the deed"; throughout his polemics he assumes (whatever his opponent may have said in explanation) that "propaganda by the deed is identical with assassination. But let us look at the three actions. The first, the refusal to collect fares, — which had been used in Canada, Australia & the USA by public transport workers, — was specifically designed to overcome the perennial problem of strikes setting the worker as producer against the worker as consumer. It hit the boss where it hurt (his money, ) without hitting workers & fellow public transport users. Where people insisted on giving money the bus was stopped until the payer left the bus, so that other bus-users who became involved in persuading the payer to leave, made a stand on the bus-workers' struggle and so became involved in it.

(A development of this tactic in Australia led workers in the canning industry between the most expensive and the cheapest grades of salmon, so that poor workers and pensioners who could not afford the expensive grades might be able to share the better food. This of course was a form of sabotage & so doubly anathema to Australian Petersenite-De Leonists. Obviously in this form — unlike the transport workers — there was no propagandist value in the action.)

The second, the lightning strike, when used — first to gain union recognition, later to improve pay and hours, — by the French cooks in London, took the form that at the height of the lunch-hour in expensive restaurants in the "City" (the commercial & insurance centre of London) all the cooks in a number of restaurants simultaneously stopped work, (allowed food in pens and ovens to burn where appropriate) and announced that there would be no food served until their demands were granted; and that they were staying in situ so that no one else could take over their work. Their demands were granted very rapidly.

The third, used especially to prevent the delivery of raw materials to factories; was obviously open to the flaw that the police could and would break their own law and prevent people crossing the pedestrian crossings; but it meant that the police had to be ready to be seen to do so, without good reason, & helped make nonsense of the normal attempts to put all blame on the strikers, so that it did serve a propagandist role.

One can appreciate that even where the means of coercion/persuasion are entirely non-violent that there is still a danger of small groupings imposing their will on the many; and that, validly, De Leon would have evinced an element of distrust about small group NVDA. (Indeed despite his influence on the committee of 100, despite belonging to the earlier & smaller Direct Action Committee & Non-Violent Resistance Group, Allen never quite shed disquiet about such direct action.) But it is worth pointing out that in each case where such actions have been significant:
Indians in South Africa resisting white racist laws,
Indians in India resisting Imperialism,
Untouchable Indians in India resisting Brahmins
landless, jobless peasants in Southern Italy & Sicily
seeking a means of livelihood,
the 1970s struggles of the blacks in South Africa (& S. Africa),
the blacks in the USA,
anti-militarist struggles, (anti-imperialist ditto,)
the Latin-americans in the USA,
the Amer-Indians in the USA & Brazil,
the civil rights movement in Ulster;

the action has either been by a largely unenfranchised majority, or by an
antifically created minority; the gerry-mandered partition of Ireland was
intended to ensure that Catholics will remain for all time a minority in
the Six Counties, anti-militarist struggles by the anti-militarist minori-
ties within metropolitan (as by anti-imperialist minorities) are only in
these metropolitan countries minority actions, their governments pursue
policies with a direct influence on other nations, which, however anti-
accl list, nevertheless do not (unless in the hands of a puppet regime)
endorse the militarist and imperialist policies of the Great Powers.

The reasons therefore that De Leon's successors have chosen to dismiss such
acts have not accored with what De Leon meant by those reasons when he
used them.

Turning to De Leon's attempts to ensure that the industrial unionist conve
exclude all non-SLP members, one must distinguish two distinct attitudes;
which is one thing to exclude all reformists (and when the Preface
Socialist reconstruction quoted Vincent St John, suggesting that he had
in two years altered his position, it was because it had failed to make
his distinction.)

It was quite a different thing (if, for the sake
of argument, I may speak as if the JW account is unchallenged,) to
attempt to interpret the constitution so that the commitment to politi-
cal action should be seen to mean exclusively action in support of the
SLP, which was a minority faction within the union as an whole.

Naturally any revolutionary union organization has to tread a narrow path
between a quasi-vanguardist rigidity, and a laxity which would allow a
loss of commitment by the rank & file and consequent growth of bureau-
ocracy and degeneration into mere trade unionism. Although the Wobbly
activists had voted to exclude reformists in the past and would take meas-
ures to so do again, may nevertheless have so reacted against what they
thought was a purely organizational coup to gain control, by that they may
apparently have embraced a "liberalistic" rhetoric, that had it been mat-
ched in action, would have allowed all & sundry to join.

Just as though De Leon
had been in 1905 prepared without qualification to join in an union numer-
ically dominated by members of a rival socialist party, and embracing anarchists whose motives and actions he had (intentionally or otherwise) misrepresented only four years before, & must therefore, in fact, have seen the merit in 39U9 as an "united front at the point of production", he may well have been piqued by a comparatively minor disagreement into making demands to tighten the organization which were not intended as a coup but were inevitably so interpreted. But he had himself described the IWW as the workers' republic in embryo, & talked of it as the proper sphere for workers' political debate, a definition which pre-supposes the possibility of serious disagreements without that meaning that one or other party to the disagreement had ceased to be revolutionary. Why then after only three years did he reject the possibility of such debate? & the value of such an united front? We will never know, unfortunately.

It is possible that "As to Politics" provides a clue to the wobbly split, it may be that De Leon feared that anti-political views were gaining currency not just in the IWW but amongst those who had previously been associated with (if not actually members of) the SLP. That he felt it necessary, for the sake of the SLP's unity to combat this development: feared that he could not do with this, while the SLP continued to play a role in the united front of the IWW, & so therefore (consciously or unconsciously) provoked a split knowing that it would produce bitterness on both sides and end communication between the two.

It is interesting, incidentally, that at the founding De Leon had accepted the clause "without affiliation with any political party" in the IWW's Preamble. That he made no great objection to this being changed to "the IWW does not wish to endorse or be endorsed by any political party" That moreover he himself moved the rule that no organizer of any party might be an organizer of the IWW, (though perhaps this was largely as much moved in the knowledge that since the majority of the IWW membership were in the SPA it would exclude Deba, than self-denying on De Leon's part.)

Curiously De Leon's answer to Sandgren made no mention of the fact that Sandgren had listed the professional class with the capitalists rather than as "workers by brain". No doubt the majority of the professional class, subjectively, do see themselves as aligned with the capitalists, but one would have expected De Leon to argue that they certainly can be won to the revolution.

But more important is that it is not only Sandgren who confused the ballot with political action; firstly for De Leon totally ignores anarchist groups which engage in all the propaganda and agitation in which socialist parties engage;

secondly because he denied that the union can engage in propaganda and agitation on its own behalf, and that being an union on the IWW model, that that 'its own behalf' can include the aim of the social general strike;

"political agitation enables the revolution to be preached in the open, & the carry enables the revolution to be brought before the million-masses", before and after 1908 the IWW engaged in political agitation arguing the need for a change in society and that the union should be the vehicle for such change, & it is De Leon - who by ignoring this fact - m de the greater confusion between politics and the ballot. No doubt, to the extent that the IWW was an united front, there
were limits to what it could say in its political agitation/propaganda; & therefore there was much that would have to be left to the constituent groups to say; to this extent there was certainly still a role for the LNP, but it had no monopoly of political agitation.

This conclusion comes over, even more clearly, in the answer to La Bille:

"Say when he can proclaim revolution without having to do so underground!"

Yet De Leon is saying that it is illegal (or likely to be so made) to campaign for abstention from the vote, arguing the socialist case as a reason for so doing, & that socialists should (if this be the case) cowardly accept this fact and adapt their approach to meet the law; & I for one do not believe this of him, then the passage only makes sense if again - despite all disavowals - he is equating political action with the ballot.

Thus is the answer to Wagner and Vasilio less confused. Though (inter alia) they say:

"A revolutionary organization of the working class that aims at the overthrow of the capitalist system & the establishment of the cooperative commonwealth is essentially political in character - & such is the 'IW', as Comrade De Leon himself ably proved in his Chicago speech on Sept. 12, 1906." (my emphasis)

&:

"In the first place it (political party activity) is an incessant criticism of the actual system of society based on the private ownership of the means of life, for which it intends to substitute another system, based on the social or collective ownership of those means - the cooperative commonwealth" (the argument as a whole through the bulk of the pamphlet that this describes) function can be as well done by the IW, as by the LNP.

De Leon replies, - as if they have not even considered who is to do this, - "How do you expect to recruit and organize your Industrial army if you begin by rejecting the peaceful method of solving the Social question, to wit, the political method?"

It would have been an arguable case for De Leon to have claimed that a party was better fitted than an IWW to perform the propagandist/agitational/educational tasks, provided that he had produced reasons for claiming this, had he so done, even those who disagreed would have respected the argument, but faced as they were by a blank refusal to consider what they were actually saying an constant misrepresentation (intentional or otherwise) no wonder that the debate became bitter.

As it was all that he did instance by way of an argument, (and having asserted it, he provides nothing more in the way of supporting argument than to repeat it three paragraphs further on), remarking on the way that "a simple denial of this conclusion does not refute a conclusion drawn from the irrefutable historical experience from which the conclusion flows" but not designing to give any chapter and verse as to the historical experience, or to show the stages in the logic that lead to the deduction for this remarkably tautologous, yet meaningless assertion;)

"by removing the political clause from the preamble of the IWW & retaining the 'take & hold' clause, then the IWW would have to degenerate into a conspiracy"
Why? Obviously the answer will depend on the definition of a conspiracy, & certainly there may be definitions that aid De Leon. Indeed in two British cases in the last quarter of a century, (one brought against anti-militarists, the other against anti-fascists,) the judges ruled respectively:

"There is no need for a conspiracy to have taken place for the conspirators ever to have met, or corresponded — whether by letter, or by word of mouth (over the telephone) — or in any other way communicated, nor is any element of secrecy essential to a conspiracy."

"The allegation that a criminal conspiracy has taken place does not stand or fall on the existence of illegality or otherwise of the action whose planning is alleged to constitute conspiracy."

No doubt if those constitute a definition of a conspiracy the IWW has — since its split & indeed before it — constituted a conspiracy. But De Leon, despite his professorship in law, nowhere says in what way that the IWW would (any more than the SLP) have to constitute a conspiracy (merely because the one spent time campaigning on the ballot and the other did not.

We are forced to the conclusion that for all his effort De Leon (in the answer to Sandgren) in distinguishing that part of political activity that is concerned with the ballot from the constructive agitational part that he does in fact confuse them himself, in that he alleges that any political activity other than that aimed at the ballot is conspiratorial.

(Note: "As to Politics," the reprint of an exchange between anti-political IWW members and DeLeon—the pamphlet Com. Otter is discussing above——can be obtained for 75¢ postpaid from the SLP publisher, New York Labor News, 914 Industrial Ave., Palo Alto, CA 94303)