While the May date of this issue indicates a three-month interval since DB16, which was dated February, the actual delay in the bimonthly schedule we have been trying to maintain is more on the order of a week than a month. The February issue was mailed out at the very end of the month, as previous issues have been. The problem was lack of time to get this issue out, not lack of money or copy. In
fact, besides the second half of my letter, there are a couple of reviews being held over for DB16. I must apologize about the next unpublished item, a letter by Com. J. Minal of Vancouver, British Columbia, responding to Com. Harro's letter in DB16. I took it to work to shrink it a bit on the copy machine. Somehow it disappeared there and hasn't reappeared as I had hoped it would. Fortunately, Com. Minal kept a copy, which will be published in the next issue.

We are grateful for copies of books and pamphlets which publishers, aware of the political bent of DB readers, send us for review. When the topic of the book would seem likely to interest a lot of readers, we publish a short review; but even if interest may be limited, we feel obligated to mention it at least. The following is a case in point. Readers interested in a detailed history of the birth of British Trotskyism and its development up to 1938 should investigate AGAINST THE STREAM: A HISTORY OF THE TROTSKYIST MOVEMENT IN BRITAIN 1924–38, by Sam Bornstein and Al Richardson; 302 pages. 5.95L ($9.22 on May 1) from Housmans Distributors, 5 Caledonian Road London N1, England.

As always, we solicit both subscriptions and copy. If you would like to assure of getting each issue of the Discussion Bulletin, we urge you to subscribe—six issues for $3. As always we need your letters and articles either responding to others or raising new topics of interest to third force revolutionaries. Please type with a dark ribbon. The ideal line length is seven orches (3/4 inch right and left margins for standard 8 1/2 by 11 inch paper). We are prepared to type a page or two of handwritten manuscript for readers who don't have a typewriter available.

Frank Girard
for the DB Committee

(Cont’d from p. 24)

accumulation of individual efforts." But what Marx also noted was that the differences among workers in natural speed and dexterity tended to average out and that this "average" labor time was the sole quality that all goods and services have in common: they all represent congealed or crystallized labor time. In fact, as under capitalism, the total production of a socialist society will be the material result of the total labor time expended by those who work. What better way, then, to distribute the product and services than in proportion to the time citizens of a socialist society choose to use their time in working for the common good of society?

One more point in this connection. Labor vouchers will be a bookkeeping device, not a wage and not a new form of money. People will not be "trading" or "selling" their time for vouchers. Rather the vouchers will be an accounting device, a record of one's contribution in hours of labor time to the social store and thus of one's rights to a portion of the cooperatively produced goods and services. (The second half of this letter, dealing with Com. Fitz's ideas about neo-utopianism will appear in DB18 -- F. G.)
Dear comrades,

Readers of the Discussion Bulletin may be interested to learn of a new book due to be published in the UK by Macmillan Press, probably in Spring 1987. Non-Market Socialism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, to give the book its full title, is the collective effort of six revolutionaries motivated by a desire to rescue the terms socialism and communism from the abuses to which they have been subjected during this century.

Anyone who has spent any time trying to spread socialist/communist ideas among working class people will know that they are often forced to spend more time explaining what they don't mean than spelling out what they do stand for. In most people's minds, 'socialism' and 'communism' have become synonymous either with the oppression of the working class in the state capitalist dictatorships of China, the Russian bloc and elsewhere, or with the left-wing capitalist policies of the Social Democratic and Labour Parties in the Western democracies. Wherever Leninists and Social Democrats have come to power, 'socialism' and 'communism' have been turned into ideologies camouflaging the continued existence of inequality, privilege, and production for profit.

In the face of this ideological onslaught, these terms' genuine sense - meaning a world-wide community in which the means of production will be used to satisfy human needs in abundance, and in which the state, classes, money, wage labour and exchange relationships will be completely abolished - has only been kept alive thanks to the efforts of a tiny number of practically unknown groups. The authors of Non-Market Socialism identify this 'thin red line' as being comprised of the Anarcho-Communists, Impossibilists, Council Communists, Bordigists and Situationists. While these currents have disagreed among themselves about the means of achieving socialism/communism, they have shared a common attachment to the same end of razing the basic features of capitalist society to the ground, and it is this common goal which is emphasised in our book.

Non-Market Socialism sets out, chapter-by-chapter, to describe and assess the origins, principal theoretical ideas, and strengths and weaknesses of each of these five currents. John Crump demonstrates the capitalist role played by Leninism and Social Democracy, and outlines the basic principles of 'non-market socialism'. Maximilien Rubel looks at the vision of emancipation which inspired both the first generations of industrial workers in the nineteenth century, and those who sought to theorise working class demands, such as Marx and Engels. Alain Pengan's chapter on Anarcho-Communism draws a sharp distinction between those who, in the nineteenth century,
advocated a capitalist form of 'collectivist' anarchism, and those who promoted the revolutionary demands of communist anarchism. Steve Coleman explores the origins and development of Impossibilism, particularly as expressed by the Socialist Party of Great Britain and its companion parties, and the Socialist Labour Party. Mark Shipway draws heavily on the writings of Anton Pannekoek in his outline of Council Communism. Adam Buick assesses the contribution of the 'Italian Left' by focussing on the writings of Amadeo Bordiga. A second chapter by Mark Shipway examines the roots of Situationism in post-war France and the contribution this movement made to the 'May events' in Paris in 1968. The book is rounded off by a select bibliography, and a guide to groups and publications which are active in propagating the basic principles of non-market socialism today.

Readers may want to know why the authors of this book have felt it necessary to coin yet another label - 'non-market socialism' - to describe our ideas. The vocabulary of socialism/communism has been so successfully taken over and perverted by capitalism that there is probably no term we could have used which wouldn't have been open to widespread misinterpretation. After much discussion, we adopted 'non-market socialism', which expresses our opposition to the current fashion in some circles of posing a so-called 'market socialism' as a supposed 'alternative' to capitalism. Although this incurs the risk of giving a certain credibility to the advocates of 'market socialism', we make it clear in the book that 'market socialism' is a contradiction in terms, because socialism can only exist where the market has been abolished.

Some of the contributors are committed to the particular ideas put forward by one or other of the currents discussed in the book; others believe that the revolutionary movement of the future will emerge through a process in which the issues which currently separate each of the five currents will become steadily less distinct. Some of the contributors are members of groups standing in the tradition of one or other of the currents; others belong to no formal organisation. Although our collective effort had its fair share of disputes and heated moments, we hope the end result will set an example of how the sectarianism rife among revolutionaries can be overcome if a serious effort is made. At the present time, when the vast majority of working class people have no idea what socialism/communism really means, what separates genuine revolutionaries is of far less significance than what we have in common.

Above all, we hope our book will strike a blow, however small, towards the day when millions upon millions of working class people
the world over adopt as their conscious goals the ideas which the
revolutionary currents of the 'thin red line' have struggled to
sustain for so long in the face of great adversity.

Yours for the revolution,
Mark Shipway.

Dear Comrades,

I was asked, (as a member of the Canadian companion party to the one Sam Leight
belongs to) to reply to Ed Wisek's and Frank Girard's criticism in DB 15 of Sam's
letter in DB 14. I prefer though, not so much to criticise Ed's and Frank's ideas
specifically as to criticise SLP in general.

Sam expounded the scientific Socialists' position on national boundaries, and whilst
Ed says nothing any Socialist can disagree on in his sentence concerning this on pg. 3,
DB 15, I question that this is the SLP's position. It may be a case of an intelligent,
questioning man disagreeing with his own party on one aspect of their dogma. I have
read nothing in SLP literature to give any indication that they realise a Socialist
society will have no need for countries.

Similarly with vouchers; Frank and Ed present arguments to the effect that under certain
conditions in the early days of Socialism, they may be necessary. They might be proven
right; I don't think so, but only events will tell. However, that isn't the point which
is that SLP literature, indeed all SLP'ers I've spoken to insist on labour vouchers for
all time in Socialism; (at least their literature never says the day will come when they
will become obsolete).

SLP terminology leaves a lot to be desired, particularly the term government. one must
assume then that someone is to govern and someone must govern, if you don't mean that,
then don't say it.

Concerning the Soviet Union, SLP terminology tends to reflect their own inconsistent
record analysing the nature of the Soviet regime. As for the term "bureaucratic state
despotism", which I read in "Weekly People", why not just call it exactly what it is -
'Capitalism'.

When members resign from SLP most list among their disagreements, peeves etc. - the high
handed undemocratic attitude of various prominent members. Since I've never been a
member, I can hardly be an expert on internal matters but, I'll mention one instance for
what it's worth in its arrogance and lack of understanding. In their pamphlet, "Why We
Have Left the SLP of Great Britain", Jim and Masrin Plant mention a discussion when
someone asked what would happen in the rest of the world when Socialism is established
in the U.S.; the answer given was that the rest would have their revolutions when they
receive orders from the SLPers in the states to have them. I don't think I need comment
on that.

As for Mr. De Leon, I cannot see how you expect people who are mature or even half way
there, to accept you seriously with all the shit you churn out about that guy. Let's
first examine his record in respect to unions - defeated in his efforts to capture control
of Knights of Labour and AF of L - his ST & LA went no-where with membership declining to
600 - kicked out of the Wobblies - his own Detroit based Wobblies went no-where. As for
S.I.U. - between 1891 and 1904, he spoke mostly, and correctly, on the need to capture power through the ballot, whilst paying lip service to economic organisation. When he did expound on S.I.U., he knew he would have to enter into an economic alliance to stay in the forefront of the class struggle, and proposed views similar to which others were advocating.

Membership declined during his years as SLP el supremo, including many individuals quitting as well as the big walkout which led to the founding of S.P. of A. Much of this was due to his intolerance of all who expressed different ideas.

This does not mean he did not make worthwhile contributions and certainly his historical works, such as "Two Pages From Roman History" must have assisted in spreading a wider and deeper understanding of the Materialist Conception of History. What it does mean though, is that De Leon can hardly be what the SLP represent him as being. Lenin's praise of De Leon should surely count for little among Marxists, considering it was Lenin who more than any one person, gave the world a distorted view of Marxism. Any party which speaks of anyone in "he can say or do no wrong" terms must have pretty weird problems.

So religion is considered a private matter! The only fit person to work for Socialism is a Socialist and to be one it is necessary to have at least a basic understanding of the Materialist Conception. Anyone who has would not be religious. Louis Frankel writing to the Western Socialist in 1973, said; "Marx is not a proper person to consult about religion ... he had little insight into the true meaning of religion ... not a devout believer in any religion." Of course not - no-one in Marx's time gave a better analysis of how religious ideas originated. No-one can have religious beliefs and claim to be a scientific socialist.

When I read the Weekly People, I can't help but notice the emotionalism of some of its contributors. They refer to the Capitalist class as the "criminal robber burg" and say they are "terrified of our truth" (yeah, you guys have sure got 'em running scared).

Many articles are from the premise that the ruling class and its political errand boys are aware of what Socialism is all about and are plotting against Socialists. This is nonsense. Most of them are abysmally lacking in an understanding of these matters as the working class and are themselves compelled to act in accordance with their economic interests.

I am able to understand the difference between labour unions and industrial unionism, in fact. I may be the only Marxist opposed to labour unions, for the same reason I am against reforms, which is that I'm against anything which makes for a continuation of Capitalism. The whole idea of Industrial Unions hasn't worked, whether it be the I.W.W. or the Syndicalists, because to build an effective union of any kind within Capitalism, membership must be open to any worker regardless of his or her political opinions. If only Socialists can make it work, then given today's lack of knowledge, it won't achieve much. In a political organisation these problems do not exist and agitation can continue.

Socialism, as one of your writers has pointed out, is not inevitable. I can only envisage one way that it would be possible. Man's consciousness is a reflection of his conditions; with that premise in mind, I might add that the day may come when economic conditions force people to re-organize their lives in a different way - a Socialist way. In the early days of this first phase they will have their minds full of garbage about religion, the monarchy, racism etc; however, through their changing conditions and through the work of the Socialists in society, these ideas will cease to exist.
Certainly, Socialist type organisations will come into being in every aspect of society, whether it be heavy or light industry, agriculture, social services, the daily running of the community such as transport, road cleaning, parks, libraries etc. As Socialist ideas and organisations spread, it will be increasingly seen that in the final analysis Socialism cannot be established until a Socialist majority captures political power, hence the W.S.P. insistence on political organisation.

Though a new economic order cannot be prevented from coming to fruition once the economic laws for its establishment are set in motion, it is possible through the use of political power to hasten or lessen the birth pangs.

Having captured power, the elected Socialist deputies will then take whatever steps are deemed necessary to dismantle the Capitalists machinery of government, replacing it with a democratically controlled administration of things. Only a naive person would think that this will be soon, and since it won't be, how can anyone prepare a blueprint for it? I consider it presumptuous of SLP to do just that. Though the basis of Capitalism remains intact, the superstructure is always changing. Socialists in, let's say, 1900, did not discuss society in terms of jet aircraft, computers and space travel. Then how can SLP predict what it will be like in years to come?

Nor must it be assumed that the tools of production in a Socialist society will be what they are in the final days of Capitalism. In some cases yes, in some, no. Socialism will mean a vast change in many productive aspects of society. Gone will be the conveyor belt, unless its robots who will work on it. Many of the harmful and tedious aspects of factory work will be eliminated; factories as we know them, might. Some industries such as the auto industry (cars are a “perfect” symbol and symptom of Capitalism) may become redundant.

The armament industry would certainly become redundant as well as banking, advertising, credit and I'm sure, many other types of work. At no time have I read or heard anything to the effect that the SLP realise this, though I'm sure many individual members do. You may find that when you tell workers that in a Socialist Society they will run their own factories, they may say "fuck the factories". I truly hope Socialism will abolish them and better ways found to produce what is needed.

Well, that's all I can think of, except to say congratulations on providing such a fine forum for debate.

Fraternally,
Ray Rawlings

SOLIDARITY

Journal of the London Solidarity Group. Issue 8, Summer 1985. 60 Pence

Solidarity, c/o 123 Lathom Road, London E6, England
Dear DB:

I agree with a number of the points that Don Fitz makes in his piece about "neo-utopianism". There are some socialists who tend to talk of socialism or communism as an abstract goal, without considering that its character would necessarily be determined by the particular social movement and particular social/economic circumstances that give rise to it. Thus the contrast between a social system in which neighborhood associations/meetings are the basic units versus workplace associations/meetings isn’t just a matter of abstract "preferences", as Samuel Leight seems to assume, but will be determined by the movement that generates a socialist type of system.

If we see the direct class struggle as the vehicle for this social change, then workplace-defined forms of association are likely to predominate in the movement that creates a worker-run system. Hence the idea of a workers convention (or "council", as some would say) as the means to unify the workers movement in a revolutionary situation implies that this would be the vehicle of workers power.

On the issue of labour vouchers vs. free sharing, it seems to me that Don is right to take the World Socialist Party folks to task for their dogmatism. How can we predict exactly the method of distribution that workers will find most practicable when they have collective power over the economy? It seems to me that it is this collective workers power over the economy as a whole (NOT isolated enterprises in a market economy) that would define a newly emergent social set-up as "socialist".

There are indeed dangers involved with a medium of exchange — in particular the danger of it acquiring the character of capital. To take an example, a person might use labor vouchers to buy combs and scissors. And then set up a haircutting business by agreeing to give their employees a share of the labor vouchers that people give them to get their hair cut. This obviously means a move in the direction of capitalism. How can this sort of evolution be securely and effectively prevented?

On the other hand, there are also problems with free sharing, or communism. Adam Bulick, in his letter, says that a socialist society has no relations of exchange. While it is true that a society without a market is not characterized by exchange of privately owned goods between individuals, there is a kind of exchange that must inevitably take place. Each individual does his or her share of the work necessary to produce the total social product. They do so on the assumption that everyone else will do their share of the work. This is a kind of exchange. A worker, in effect, says to all others in society, "Okay, I’ll keep my part of the social bargain, I’ll do my share of the work, but in exchange I expect all of you to do your share of the work, too."
But if people can simply consume whatever they want of the social product, without having to first prove that they've done their share of the necessary labor, how can we be certain that everyone will do their share of the work? I agree with Don Fitz that there is likely to be a problem of freeloaders, especially at the beginning, when many people are still used to the I-don't-care-about-you-I'm-going-to-get-whatever-I-can mentality encouraged by competitive capitalist social relations.

This is not some sort of abstract moral problem. It has to do with whether a socialist society would actually survive. If a society’s capacity for production is undermined, it won’t be able to satisfy people’s needs and wants. If that happens, people will struggle for social change and eventually the system will be replaced. Now, if the freeloader problem became severe, if a large minority of people were taking advantage of the free sharing system, obviously production would suffer because the total work performed in society would seriously decline.

Getting people to perform their share of society’s necessary work is, I gather, what Don calls "discipline". I would prefer to call it "the individual’s responsibility to others" because "discipline" is too ambiguous. All too often the term "discipline" refers to a top-down discipline, a discipline imposed on people by a hierarchy, like the discipline in the army or in the high schools. But genuine socialism would mean that the workers collectively control the whole economy. This means they control what they are going to be doing when they work -- since work is actually the main thing to "the economy". And it also means they would control how production is carried on and how the fruits of their labor are distributed. The issue of distribution is secondary to that of control of production.

If people find that a particular method of distribution is being taken advantage of by freeloaders, and too many people are shirking their responsibility to everybody else (i.e. their obligation to work), then the way in which goods and services are distributed can be changed. But the "discipline" that is thus imposed on workers is a discipline that the total workforce (all those obligated to work) impose on themselves. It is not a top-down "discipline" -- and that's why I think the word "discipline" is probably a poor choice of terms since it conjures up the image of the drill sergeant and the authoritarianism of a high school.

The problem that I have with Don's talk of "leadership" is that I'm not sure what it is that he's trying to defend. I've found that "leader" is a pretty slippery word. And I think that not being clear about the different things that it can refer to can lead to all sorts of political confusions.

In both bourgeois society as well as the countries ruled by Marxist-Leninist parties, the term "leader" is used to mean "the people constituted to make the decisions for everyone else." We see the term used this way in the AFL-CIO unions where the head
of a certain national union will refer to himself, or be referred to in the press, as "the leader" of this union. This doesn't just mean that he is a particularly experienced and well-regarded militant who is listened to by lots of workers. It means he has the formal power to impose decisions on the organization, to make deals in the name of the members. In short, this is the leader-as-manager, as person who is formally empowered to make decisions on behalf of others.

I believe that the leader-as-manager is based on the assumption of some people having power over the rest, that is, the basis of class society. As such, our aim should be to eliminate the leader-as-manager as much as possible from our movement. A movement based on the leader-as-manager at the top is incapable of creating a society where power is democratically, collectively exercised by people. Hierarchy cannot generate a non-hierarchical society.

However, there is another meaning to the term "leader". For example, when an idea is first suggested to deal with a situation that faces a lot of people, and it "hits" and is picked up by others, then the people who first advanced this idea were "exercizing leadership", in a sense, even if the idea didn’t spread because its originators gave orders. Often movements or organizations have certain individuals who are more experienced than others, or more eloquent than others, or more energetic and committed than others. Thus these individuals may have a certain influence in virtue of this.

It is quite possible for this sort of "leadership" to exist even if the organization or movement is organized in a non-hierarchical way and does everything it can to encourage rank-and-file participation and collective decision-making. This suggests to me that this sort of informal "leadership" is possibly inevitable to some extent. And I think this is the sort of "leadership" that Don is defending, though his DB piece doesn’t explicitly distinguish this sort of leader-as-influential-activist from the top-down leader-as-manager.

Yet I think it is important to make this distinction. Don describes "leadership" in terms of "special talents" of people, but "making decisions on behalf of others" is not a "talent" that we should wish to encourage in anyone.

The failure to make the distinction between leader-as-energetic-and-experienced-activist versus leader-as-manager can lead to political confusions and self-defeating demoralization of committeu people. I’ve seen it happen in anarchist groups where certain individuals have political disagreements with certain individuals who were highly motivated and intelligent activists in the group. Instead of honestly and forthrightly debating the real political issues, the energetic and committed activists were attacked as "bureaucrats" or "dominators". (I understand that this sort of thing has also plagued feminist groups at certain times.)
In one magazine collective I was in, the group was labeled "hierarchical" by one member because we were dependent on the skills of a certain woman in the group. She was the only member who knew how to operate a printing press, but in fact the decisions that the members of the group were really interested in were made in meetings open to everyone. Few members of the group were interested in becoming printers.

On the other hand, while recognizing the more benign character of the leader-as-committed-and-talented-activist, this does not mean that we shouldn't do everything we can to equalize participation and develop talents, knowledge and self-confidence in all movement participants.

For a world without bosses,
Richard Laubach

Dear Comrade(s) Richard Poland and copy to Discussion Bulletin

I have just received DB no 15 with your letter in it. I am afraid you misunderstood/misrepresented me.

I was showing that such is the history of the libertarian socialist tradition that all of us use language in a specialised way, unconsciously referring back in it to debates that have gone before.

I gave instances where both De Leonists and anarchists use words/phrases to denote concepts, when the plain meaning of those words -- as understood by the majority of our fellow workers -- would suggest a somewhat different concept. That though this is an unusual (indeed almost perverse) usage of language, & though inevitably it works as a barrier to our reaching the working class as a whole, (since workers when they first meet our material naturally do not understand the usage;) I would argue that it is unavoidable and not blameworthy.

There was a three-way debate going on at the time: - Anarchist & non-orthodox De Leonist/UFDWSP - & it would have been unreasonable had I not shown that the WSP-SPGB, (which is normally I would accept freer from jargon than most,) does also occasionally adopt an abnormal usage of language.

I was at pains to say that Sam Weight would not believe, what to an outsider is the obvious and literal meaning. That indeed was my point. That said I did not say that Article Six "Sam be interpreted to mean 'the WSP & its companion parties intend to set up a transitional working class government...'; but that only by a specialised usage of words can it be interpreted to mean anything else."

The fact that I said that Sam Weight did not believe the Principle in the way that it would be interpreted by any casual reader means that I was perfectly well aware that there is an abundance of SPGB material interpreting those principles; in order to say that it means something other than what it actually does say, I would
horribly regarded the WSP-SPGB as being part of the libertarian socialist movement if I thought they took their Declaration of Principles literally.

I had not ignored Clause 5. If you ask any Leninist (even including Stalinists) or indeed any left-of-centre-parliamentarian-social-democrat you will find that they will endorse that quote from Marx. The one will tell you that it means that workers should act directly to free themselves under the direction of a vanguard party. The other will argue that self-emancipation comes through the workers organizing and joining the mass unions and electoral bodies of the working class, and perhaps using a degree of direct action to push negligent parliamentary representatives into enacting "socialist" measures. Both would claim that the working class transitional governments they advocate which vehicles for the self-emancipation of the working class.

Whether the SPGB-WSP or these Leninists & reformists are using language in the literal way is a matter for debate; I would naturally have considerable sympathy with your claim that at this point yours is the more literal usage. However there are millions of workers in the world, perhaps hundreds of millions, who have been convinced that when Marxists say "that this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself" that they do not see this as inconsistent with a transitional workers' state. After all the bulk of the evidence suggests that Marx himself believed in such a transitional state; which is one of the reasons why the SPGB now holds that Marx was at times mistaken.

So I could have cited Clause 5 as well as Clause 6, as an example of peculiar (if not - as in the latter case - positively perverse) usage of language, by your party.

The fact that there are pamphlet(s) & leaflet(s) interpreting the SPGB Declaration of Principles in fact proves my point. One would hardly need to write a pamphlet explaining how the SPGB understands its own Declaration of Principles, if the meaning of that declaration was immediately understandable in its literal sense by everyone who read it.

In fact of course re-interpretation of the principles has occupied changes in the SPGB as it developed. I knew Con Lehane (the original secretary of the SPGB) when I was at college in the Fifties. He insisted that the party initially did believe in forming a government to legislate socialism and that this was the basis of their disagreement with the SLP. I also knew Sam Cash throughout the Fifties & for some of the Sixties. He insisted that the immediate reaction of Fitzgerald to the October Revolution was to send Lenin a telegram of support, & that the critique he developed which caused the party as an whole not to endorse Leninism, was not because it was a transitional state but because it wasn't a transitional workers' state. Such an interpretation of Fitzgerald's views is certainly consistent with his earlier views at the time of the debate about "voting on reforms according to their merits". Even as late as 1955, when Tony Turner was forced to resign; (I would refer you, if you can get a copy to the issue of 'Forum', the SPGB internal paper of the time, that reported the debate; unfortunately I have to quote from memory as I lost my copy.)
DISCUSSION BULLETIN
P.O. Box 1564, Grand Rapids, MI 49501
REPORT #17

May 6, 1986

Dear Comrades,

I don't have much news to report. The sharp decline in the proportion of contributions to subscriptions results from a change in policy. Henceforth, unless subscribers specify otherwise, the full amount of all remittances will be applied to the subscription.

CONTRIBUTIONS

From February 24 to May 6, we received the following contributions: John Crump $4.55; Ben Perry $2; Harry Wade $20. Total $26.55. Thanks.

FINANCES

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Fraternally submitted,

Frank Girard
for the DB Committee
though Tony had evinced other heresies, the attacks on him were purely because he wanted to change the Clause so that it would say "the destruction of the powers of government...forces, which are now an instrument of oppression, allowing workers to produce their own agent of..." (or something to that effect.) I have elsewhere shown that the S.P. of Canada from which the S.P.C.B. derived, first adopted its no reforms platform, in accordance with Laurence Gronlund's idea that the way to attain planning was for the capitalists to be frightened by a militant workers' party, so that they would turn to the planners for aid.

Dear Comrades:

It is a pity to resort to a common confusion of language. (Conclusion in that a term that has a specific meaning to socialists, but a rather different meaning in common parlance, is used, ostensibly in the one usage and in reality in the other.)

"Utopianism" in socialist jargon is not a reference to any alleged overly-far-reaching nature of the proposed early 19th Century Communist experiments. It refers to the fact that those who advocated these had a misplaced trust that the ex-Jacobin and similar statements then in power would favourably sponsor such schemes.

It was a failure to appreciate that those who had previously led the masses against aristocratic and mercantilist privilege in the cause of liberty, fraternity and equality, were now the inveterate enemies of these aims. The agents of a new ruling class who would see all socialist schemes, "designed to complete the Jacobin revolution" as menace to their newly won power.

The neo-Utopians (in today's bureaucratic-collectivist society,) are those socialists -- notably the main-stream of Trotskyism -- who fondly imagine that social transformation can be attained in alliance with the Stalinist & Social Democratic leaders.

Dear Comrades:

The quotation from Marx that never satisfied me was "Philosophers find different ways to explain the world, but it is for us to change the world." In the four decades I was active with DeLeonism, I have continuously searched for philosophical satisfaction. In fact, I believe that scores of people who were DeLeonists and later lost interest did not coordinate their philosophical or religious search for fulfillment with their historical, political and economic understanding. The Bible's statement that man does not live by bread alone sounds right to me.

A clue to what sort of philosophy I have found is that I have long identified myself with the existentialists that abounded in Europe during and after Nazi occupation. Jean Paul Sartre was a leading advocate of that school of thought as well as one in the...
resistance against the conquerors and oppressors. He realized that it was necessary to unify the population against the Nazis who proclaimed the "New Order." To achieve unity and singleness of purpose, it was necessary to drop old beliefs, creeds and prejudices that distract from the spirit of resistance. We socialists must put our program above all in the same spirit of total commitment.

The problem for us is what we can direct our fear and hatred against in this capitalist country we inhabit. Surely we can't hate capitalism as the resistance hated the Nazis. Marx did not really hate the capitalist system; he merely tried to use it as a step to a new social system. However, I believe we can hate Soviet despotism which is a rival to capitalism and threatens our freedom as well. The Soviet Union is even ready to exploit and move into any power vacuum in the world. Its ruling calculus justifies its usurpation of social progress by disinformation to build supreme power. If the capitalist world is demoralized by one of its economic crises, it has hopes to establish a new order in the world. As we well know, only the working class united to run our economy can stop them.

The SLP currently directs its ire against Reagan and his foreign and domestic policy. What we really need is the reality of evil to hate and fear, and that is the all-powerful state that a decade ago wiped out half the population of Cambodia. President Reagan is too much like one of our neighbors, but the all-powerful state is the ultimate power of class rule that has long seized upon the Soviet Union. By uniting against an evil that threatens all people we can create a social system where the state will die and working people will control their own lives.

Fraternally yours,

Monroe Frussack

In the following letter to the editor of the NEW UNIONIST (621 West Lake St., #210, Minneapolis, MN 55408), Com. Willey speaks to the same semantic and organizational problems raised in other recent letters.

Dear Comrade Miller:

"New Unionism", as described in the April, 1986, issue of the New Unionist, is simply another name for the Industrial Union Program set forth by Daniel B. Seidman early in this century. Socialists ever since have been endeavoring to educate the working class in the principles of Deleanism. By coining a new name for Seidman/Industrial Unionism, the N.U.P. is doing a disservice to the cause of Socialism by creating a potential for confusion in the minds of the workers.

In that issue it is also stated that "Socialism, Communism, Trotskyism and yes, New Unionism too—all offer different 'isms' to the workers to solve the problems we face". In exactly what way is "New Unionism" different from Socialism—other than in name?

To achieve our common goal we must all use terms that have the same meaning, or significance, to all parties concerned; to do otherwise would smack of the tactics of the capitalist politicians who change the names of programs, parties, etc., to suit their own purposes.
We are all striving for the same goal—the abolition of class rule and the establishment of a Workers' Republic of Free and Emancipated labor. To do this we must work together to make our program clear to the workers. Applying different names to identical programs is merely using semantics and can confuse the workers and impede our efforts.

We must strive for the common objective, using language that is clear and unequivocal. If all parties cooperate, we can establish an effective educational program that, with the existing disunity of the Delemonist parties, is impossible at the present time.

Approximately six months ago, Sam Brandon sent out a letter to the various Delemonist groups appealing for a federation of Delemonist Organizations. What is the response of the New Union Party?

Sincerely and Fraternally, E.S. Willey

ON UNIONS

As permanent organizations, the function of the unions is based on the sale and determination of the price of labour power, or wages. From their first appearance the unions have attempted to be recognized as institutions of negotiation and representation, and the evolution of capitalism has led to its acceptance of syndicalism. If at times they have played a combative role at the period of their conception, the unions have since become instrument of class collaboration. They guarantee 'businesses' profits, property (state or private) and values (professionalism, defense of family, nationalism, etc...) which allow this society to continue to exist. As capitalist institutions, the unions participate in the management and structuring of wage labour within its various categories (state, mixed, etc...). They have enthusiastically contributed to the "national effort" during every capitalist war, have helped to send the workers to the battle front, and have maintained workplace discipline behind the lines. The unions manage and regulate the labour market for the needs of capital, play an ideological role, and exercise a day-to-day control over the workers to the point of physical violence. Within and outside the workplace, syndicalism is a pillar of the capitalist system.

Capitalism as a social system based on division and competition provokes confrontations between the ruling classes within given geographical perimeters. Because the economic and political goals of the union bureaucracies appear different from other capitalist tendencies, the latter see them as competitors and oppose them. The confrontation between the managers of exploitation enables the unions to conserve an image of organizations that fight against the system. This image hides their active and direct participation in the rationalization of the system of exploitation itself, and makes it appear normal: this is what they are paid to do (in France, for example, the unions receive money from the state to train their militants who are given time, positions of power and "facilities"). This does not imply an absence of "union struggles". Channeled and programmed conflicts are entirely beneficial to the social partners: unions that sell labour power and the bosses that buy it.

In peoples' struggles in the past, and in some which are taking place today, organizations such as workers' councils, strike committees controlled by the workers themselves and sovereign general assemblies have appeared in a more or less concrete manner representing a process of workers' autonomy with respect to other social classes, the state, and the institutions. As opposed to ultra-leftists who consider that a communist revolution is unrelated to organizational
forms, and that councils, parties and unions are ultimately the same thing; it is our opinion that the question of revolution is also one of the organizational forms it will take, and that structures which intend to manage the state and the workers cannot contribute to the latter's emancipation. The widespread formation of structures which refuse the division of tasks, in which the communities in struggle intend to hold on to the power to make decisions, will be important expressions of new relations between human beings. With this in mind, it is not our belief that communists should presently mechanically support past organizational structures by proposing, for example, that the workers organize in councils as opposed to parties or unions. If the past can furnish elements of comprehension, it does not provide a "manual for the future. Concerning the question at hand, these elements are clear-cut: it is up to the movement to create its own structures, it is not the opposite. To advocate the creation of a mass organization in the present situation, even if it is called "councils," would only amount to another structure.

That characterizes the present period, amongst other factors, is that a tangible workers' milieu in which ideas of revolt are circulating no longer exists and that there is an absence of proposals to use the accumulated experience to create another society. Nothing in the present workers' situation, in the workplace or elsewhere, represents positive elements of rupture which would lead to self-emancipation. Proletarian autonomy is still on the agenda a tendency which it is important to support but one that will only be put into practice if a widespread break with the present order exists.

L'INSÉCURITÉ SOCIALE, série 2, nb 3.

Dear friends,

In 1983, I wrote an essay entitled "A Call for Socialist Unity." I said that the Left should join together in the face of reaction. Realizing the ideological differences which have kept us apart, I nevertheless insisted that we agree to disagree, under a common banner heralding the resistance to the anti-labor, anti-people, pro-war, etc. measures carried out by both of the bourgeois political parties.

"A Call" received the all-too-familiar response, digging up the polemics and historical divisions among us, emphasizing all of the reasons for disunity, while ignoring the concrete battles that should bring us together.

The class struggle rages on, with victory after victory for the bosses. The ruling class still holds a monopoly on thought and action. The socialist voice remains weak and pathetic.

I am reminded of a photo taken of UFCW P-9 President Steve Guyette addressing a crowd of strikers and other working people. Behind the podium hung a large banner which read: "1985 -- The Year the Unions Unite." In February, 7000 electricians went out on strike. On their banner: "1986 -- The Year the Unions Unite."

It has been said that all that is necessary for evil (i.e. capitalists) to triumph, is for well-meaning people to do nothing. Let's not let another year pass. Let's take our cue from those dedicated unionists who have chosen to block the master's whip: "1986 -- THE YEAR THAT THE LEFT UNITES!!"

1221 Whitney
Belvidere, IL
61008
Shoulder to shoulder,

Tim Mills
Dear Frank Girard,

In the February DB Adam Buick posited freedom from coercion as an indispensable quality of socialism, also wondering if production is the "most important aspect of social life." And he mentioned "voluntary agreeable work", which would redefine the concept of work. Don Fitz is more authoritarian, if more coherent; that is, he realizes that industrial civilization requires repression and division of labor. This can be seen in his denigration of proletarians who "typically see work as something to escape from," and his emphasis on "collective discipline," among other explicit references.

Who indeed would do factory work unless forced? This basic question is the undoing of all workerist/collectivist ideologies, for no free creature would submit to the exigencies of industrial production or would seek out its culture's specialized roles. Thus the whole nature of modern domination is routinely missed by DB's many architects of world socialism. Within this perspective, the following brief review may be of interest.

Boy Igor's provocatively titled And Yet It Moves: The Rezilization and Suppression of Science and Technology gets off to a start that suggests real depth. It challenges modern science as inseparable from the development of capitalism and pronounces "proletarian" science as bourgeois as proletarian art or the proletarian state.

Unfortunately, it fails to define modern science, and thus lets it come in by the back door--by the expedient of establishing its death as an automatic result of the "abolition of capitalism." The question that remains is whether capitalism really perishes without the explicit abolition of modern science and technology. Ignoring Galilee and Descartes in the chapter on history, and the essential 17th century creation of mathematized, anti-sensuous science, no fundamentals of what science is are presented.

The current horror show of genetic engineering, artificial intelligence, cybernetics, Star Wars, etc. leads directly back to the definitive 17th century foundation of science as absolute separation of humanity from nature. To ignore this has one attacking merely the excesses of science, not its inner logic, its characteristic distancing of the subject from his/her senses, which opens up the hideous domination of living nature so rampant today.

This deficit becomes even clearer regarding applied science, wherein Igor upholds the lie of the neutrality of technology by condemning only "the capitalist organization of technology." So far from attacking the logic of today's painfully estranging technology per se, he sees robotics as useful and muses about the design of factories of the future! Liberation demands the
eradication of such categories of social life as division of labor, economy, and production. How could authentic, unmediated existence go on within them? Igor is light years from seeing this.

Hence his conception of abolishing capitalism would leave some of its central content, modern science and technology, quite intact. In closing, consider the meaning of this passage: "To dream a little with the machines which surround us so that these machines can let us dream softly. Today I think I'll go and make cars." Not surprising, by the way, that Fifth Estate, which has questioned technological society for years, is nowhere mentioned.

John Zerzan

DeLeon & Anarchism, Part III: DeLeon's Potentia lContribution to a Wider Anarchist Theory -- by Laurens Otter (Concluded)

(Most of the second installment was devoted to an examination of DeLeon's debate with non-political IWW members published in As to Politics.) It continues here.)

Giovannitti diverts (or attempts to divert) the discussion, for him the revolution is not the social general strike but an insurrection, and so preparation for revolution is preparation for insurrection, not for a general strike, naturally, therefore, he adds nothing to the argument; and indeed provides De Leon with a convenient excuse to follow the diversion away from serious debate. It is curious that Giovannitti should have done this after quoting Fabbrica, whose insistence on the social general strike was all pervading, though the fact that he also quotes Korel, for whom the strike was a "motivating myth" (a phrase that it is all too easy to misinterpret,) may explain this.

De Leon, benefiting by the diversion, repeats his assertion that means that all his critics are abandoning "the civilized method of settling disputes", (a comment which would only have validity if he were claiming that the ballot can settle revolution, - for this is a dispute such as a boundary dispute between neighbours which can be settled by a compromise and some give and take, this is a dispute in which one party denies the right of the other to its valued possessions, - but, as De Leon has repeatedly depreciated & repudiated such a belief, the comment is meanless.) There are of course subsidiary illogicalities. Giovannitti had referred to the International having "got the men together" - obviously it hadn't got sufficient men together, but the fact is it had got a large number together, & these had come together primarily in response to union agitation and propaganda, not to party agitation and propaganda, & there was no evidence that they could not have continued this process - De Leon derides this without answering it. But Giovannitti's diversion, here provides De Leon with credibility for as sleight of hand (which intentionally or unintentionally) he had been using throughout to misrepresent his opponents' position. He had constantly referred to the union-action only as position as an advocacy of "physical force", and - in that the most peaceful "taking & holding" (even if done in a purist Gandhian satyagrahi manner) would be "physically forcing" this is not a characterization that could be denied.
But it was clearly meant to imply violence: and answering Giovannitti the distortion is carried one stage further to refer to "physical force only".

Sandgren had of course suggested an amendment in words that were meant to be a draft document open to further amendment, that is clear from "to suggest an amendment for the next convention to consider" (not on which to vote), & — though Wagner & Vasilio had taken up De Leon's distinction between ballot-directed political activity & other such activity, stating this in fuller detail, & making it the central point in their own argument — De Leon asserts that the proposition to expunge the political clause can only mean expunging both, whereas Wagner & Vasilio had clearly & fails to consider the fact that all his stated objections to Sandgren, La Bille, Wagner & Vasilio could be met by a simple revision of Sandgren's draft motion, so that it could have become: "Strike out reference to ballot-directed politics in the IW preamble."

Instead of which De Leon claims: "No opponent of the People's position can quote the successful agitation of the IW, whose platform has the political clause, as evidence that the ranks of the IW can be recruited with the necessary numbers upon the principle of physical force only."

This clearly confuses two distinct things. It can either mean that recruits can only be won if the IW engages in political agitation on its own account, on its own basis, — an activity that Sandgren, La Bille, Wagner & Vasilio had all insisted should be done, — which is logical. Or it can allege that recruitment can only be brought about through the separate electoral propaganda waged by the political parties. Which was not logical and which was in the immediate following years disproved by events.

Hoffman's letter is not really relevant to the IW, which is not mentioned, — certainly arguments such as his appear frequently in anarchist polemics against the SLP & SFB & SFB here (the SLPBG has long ceased to take any interest in it or intervene in any political process & only anarchists with an interest in exotica ever bother to track it), & I readily concede that they stem from a misapprehension of the "impossibilist" socialist case & are invalid. However Hoffman provides a further diversion from the real debate, & permits De Leon to repeat his untrue claim that no one has addressed themselves to the problem of recruitment.

In view of De Leon's claim (mid page 52) that Labriola (as a member of the syndicalist union of the Italian Socialist Party) is misrepresented, the editors might, in honesty, have mentioned that that syndicalist union was soon thereafter expelled from the S.P. by the then secretary, Mussolini.

Sandgren in his second letter, regrettedly did not link his case to a revision of his original motion, a revision which would have followed logically from: "The IW can do & is doing, everything in the way of agitation that the political organization is doing, it can address by word of mouth, it can distribute & sell literature, it can organize, & what more can the SLP do?"
He had earlier said: "Political organization & agitation without faith in the ballot or without, as in Russia, demanding the ballot, or as in Sweden, an extension of the franchise, is like running a windmill without any grain to grind, or without any millstones to grind with..." and had shown that some 18,000,000 members of the working class were at that time deprived of the vote.

Once again De Leon wrote as if, unlinked to the ballot, the sort of agitation, speaking, propaganda, & education in which the Irish was already engaged would be impossible; & claimed that no one had answered his question as to how the Irish would prosper without doing it. Curiously when commenting on the disenfranchisement, no where does De Leon meet the implied challenge in Sandgren's view: "Of course where we can we will campaign to extend the franchise. '(To fail as to campaign in anarchist terms, though in fact most anarchists have said that one needs to attain the vote in order to be able to abstain from using it, & so anarchists have frequently been active in suffrage campaigns, it would scarcely be excusable, one would have thought in Marxist-Impossibilist terms.)"

Retrospectively— With hindsight one can see that De Leon was somewhat more remiss (page 75) when he accused Sandgren of misrepresentation for quoting Labriola, once again stating that Labriola correctly understood that Labriola's syndicalist union was a section of the Italian Socialist Party. De Leon claimed that Labriola's views were substantially the attitude of the S.I.P. If that were the case, is it not curious that De Leon made no complaint in the International when the Labriola group were expelled from the PSI? Is it not even more curious that De Leon did not respond to the question: have the workers any choice..." to reply "no, but not in the sense you expect this answer, for if the workers use means alien to the ends sought, they cannot achieve those ends"; but the choice that De Leon explicitly & Eherich implicitly suggest is far from the choice that underlies the debate with Sandgren.

For all that Kiefe's letter is pretty shallow he does say: "For this reason the IW was organized & not like pure & simple unions..."

**** Warning for those wishing to check this; there were at the time two prominent Labriolas, both with the initial "A", one syndicalist one a more orthodox marxist, (though his views materially changed later.)

One of the causes of bitterness I don't mention, but which could be another footnote was that some of the IW members believed De Leon actively campaigned in favour of the laws condemning "criminal syndicalism". No doubt a ridiculous canard, but the fact that — despite all the gossip & vitriol with Labriola — the SLP was not similarly hit by these laws fathers such myths.
a la AFL to get for the workers an increase in wages & a possible shortening of hours.  - If the capitalist class fears this proposition (((freeing the workers by economic action))) so much that it would not tolerate such an organization, because it trains its members for the Social Revolution, how is it that it allows a political party... to make propaganda for socialism?"

De Leon chose to interpret this as an implied smear that all "socialist political bodies, indiscriminately, are in the pay of the capitalist class"; (& certainly for all I know Kiefe may have intended that;) & so he ignored the (possible) suggestion that his own insistence that the capitalists would treat the NW as a conspiracy was somewhat paranoid.  He had after all convincingly and correctly dismissed the suggestion that was the class struggle was already in a situation of open war; though he didn't use the word paranoid, since such psychological terms were not then commonplace, he certainly implied the attitude described by that word.  But if it were paranoid to regard such things as the kidnap of Haywood, & the nullification of the Colorado vote as open war, so - had he been that prescient - would it have been paranoid to see the NWs against "Criminal Syndicalism" as constituting forcing the NW into a conspiracy engaged in such open war.

Compare: (page 105): \( f \) (reply to Nice):

"The social theory of anarchy... presupposes government to be identical with class rule, or despotism.  The theory is based upon a myth."

with the following by Marx:

"States reflect the class divisions within a society" or

"A government is the executive committee of the ruling class"

& indeed De Leon's own works provide abundant evidence that when he was not arguing against anarchists he knew very well that the theory was not based on a myth.

In point of fact Landauer did not - in 1893 or subsequently - regard himself as an anarchist.  The facts are that he, a Marxist, argued within the international that anarchists should not be excluded from meetings of the international; that socialists being a persecuted minority ought not to provide justification for such persecution by turning round and persecuting their own minorities.  He was expelled from the (Second) International, & so, while remaining theoretically & ideologically a Marxist, he joined the remnant of the anarchist international (the First International had split in two) & the anarchists maintained their part longer than the Marxists, though it was exclusively anarchist since people like Caesar De Pape who had a mid-position between Marx & Bakunin, belonged to the anarchist section.)  Years later, when under Council Communist influence the German workers attempted revolution in 1920-2, he played a prominent - though not particularly radical - part.  He was a somewhat introspective & erudite writer and one can hardly imagine him turning a bomb, advocating the use of one, or even associating with those who did.  It is a pity that De Leon's obsession with hanging the charge of assassination on anarchists should have led him to such a baseless smear.
Finally, remembering how often De Leon asserted that the new society should emerge ready for war, as it displaces the old order, it is somewhat shocking to note on re-reading: "The downfall of capitalism from the causes indicated in the SLP platform is by no means equivalent with the uprisal of the Socialist Republic." So there is to be a transitional period after all!

I said earlier that an anarchist is one who maintains truths derived from Marx about the state if necessary against Marx himself; & I fear it is necessary to add that an anarcho-De Leonist maintains developments of Marx derived from De Leon, is necessary against De Leon himself.

Dear Comrades:

Although I still have the feeling that Sam Leight is trying to avoid my comradely embrace, his letter in DBS makes it very clear that his views on socialism are so close to my own and to those of the SLP, IWW, WSA, NUP, IUP, and various other syndicalist/socialist/anarchist/libertarian groups and unaligned "third forists" as to reduce the differences to matters of style, emphasis, and tactics. Increasingly the larger organizations like the SLP, the and the IWW--and for all I know, the SPGB--are becoming affinity groups whose members feel comfortable with each other and with the tactical styles they have become accustomed to. Few of their members believe that their organization is destined to become the sole vehicle of revolution--the revolutionary party or group. Another phenomenon is the great number of socialists of our persuasion who reject membership in any of the present groups.

Now to Comrade Leight's disagreements with my letter. First I'll concede the linguistic nits. In the future I intend to submit my writing to a triple distillation process to increase its purity. Meanwhile I intend to keep confidential my estimate of the number of angels that can stand on the head of a pin. Now to his third point. I agree entirely with him and Daniel DeLeon: the party of revolution will disband immediately after the revolution since it will have no further function. As to voluntary associations of people for whatever purpose, there will be no reason and no agency in a socialist society to prohibit their existence. I intend to take up Com. Leight's other substantive comments in response to Com. Buick below.

Re Adam Buick's Letter

While I'm sure Com Leight was disappointed by Com. Buick's failure to include the all-important word "distribution" along with "means of production" in his definition of socialism, I find it one that any "third force" socialist can agree with. Socialists from a syndicalist/socialist industrial unionist background see decisions about the organization of production--how--as the province of the workers in a given industry or service, since they understand the complexities of production in their field. On the other hand, the ownership and "control"--i.e. the decisions about what and how much goods and services to produce--will be social decisions made democratically by all the people through other social organs, a concept that has always been inherent in SLU/syndicalist thinking.
Like Com. Buick I think we can only speculate on the exact nature of the organization and express our preferences. My own in this case is informed by a fear that "worldwide" socialism could result in a democratic, delegated "administration" so remote as to become insensitive to local needs. Hence I would hope that the citizens of social planet Earth will keep global organization to a minimum and handle as much as possibly through autonomous local associations.

My only serious objection to Com. Buick's description of socialism lies in matters that he implies are self-evident "givens" but which I feel are speculative and rather doubtful. One concerns the matter of "world" socialism. While agreeing that socialism must and will become world wide, I don't think that we can assume that the combination of socio-economic forces that will cause our class to destroy capitalism and build socialism as a class conscious act in industrial nations will cause an identical and simultaneous choice by all other people on the globe. Even with such factors as the collapse of western capitalism, the poverty and desperation of much of the world population, and the instant communication made possible by TV images that could produce the desire in non-industrial populations to emulate the industrial working class, there are other social factors that almost certainly will delay such action.

However, because my doubts are based on impressions and preconceived notions, not objective data, I would like to see what Com. Buick has in the way of factual evidence for his assertions about world socialism and the implication of simultaneous world revolution. And the same desire for further hard data holds true for my second doubt: regarding the matter of "free access," which Coms. Leight and Buick counterpose to capitalism's market/money/wages system and add to as accountable socialist system (labor time vouchers) for distributing the goods and services we will produce cooperatively.

Two questions arise in my mind regarding their position. One concerns the capacity of our planet to produce enough of everything to satisfy the wants—not needs—of everyone in the world. The other is the human factor, the matter of voluntary work, which Don Fitz raises in his DB16 article about neo-utopianism.

As to the former, I think Com. Leight is hedging a bit when he says, "...the potential of the productive resources that exist today can easily satisfy the reasonable demands of a socialist population..." The key here is "reasonable demands." If we assume that the reasonable demands of the four billion people on this planet will be a standard of living equal to that of a General Motors assemblyline worker in Michigan, then I don't think planet Earth can accommodate socialism. For the limitations on production will not be solved by freeing the workforce from the unproductive activity of capitalism, as Com. Leight implied. Indeed, labor is a minor factor in a world where much of the population is unemployed or underemployed. The real problem is the finite nature of the planet's resources, both fossil fuel energy and the minerals and other natural resources needed for unlimited production.

While I have no figures, I would guess, basing my estimate on the
fact that only about one fourth of the people in the world live in industrial nations and that many even of these live in abject poverty, that to raise the standard of living to that of the GM assemblyline worker—around $25,000 a year—would require a ten-fold increase in production. Of course part of this could replace strictly capitalist-oriented production including military materiel and luxury goods for "the rich and famous." But I think that would be a comparatively small part of what would be needed.

The flip side of this question has to do with ecology and environment. To raise the standard of living to "acceptable" levels will require us to rip the hell out of Mother Earth. And as we dig up the last tons of coal to smelt the last tons of iron ore and use our depleted fresh water in the process, what will our socialist world look like?

Labor Vouchers

The matter of "voluntary" work really belongs in the response below to Com. Fitz's article; however, Com. Buick speaks to the matter of labor vouchers, an aspect of the subject. While agreeing with him that a labor voucher system will probably be a temporary (and partial, in my opinion) expedient at the beginning of socialism, I am interested in what I regard as his rather curious—for a Marxist—objection to it: that "...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 (Cont'd on p. 2)