Published by the Discussion Bulletin Committee

Address all correspondence to
DISCUSSION BULLETIN, P.O. Box 1564, Grand Rapids, MI 49501

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Bulletin Matters

With Discussion Bulletin 18 we complete our third year of publication. As usual the next issue, the first of the fourth yearly series, will be a 28-page edition and be mailed to the full mailing list, now well over 600. Also as usual, we will exhort all recipients to subscribe. But is the meantime we hope to garner some early renewals and new subscriptions through this appeal, for the low state of the DB's checking account indicates that we will have to resort to
deficit financing for the projected monster edition of DB19. The price of a six-issue sub remains a low three dollars, but we are willing to accept donations, since subs don't come close to paying the bills.

This issue contains the first installment of a three-part series, "The Third Camp Movement of the 1950's," which recounts an effort to develop a limited unity—or perhaps cooperation is a better term—by that part of the anti-Stalinist left that hadn't thrown in its lot with western capitalism. (Excluded as leftist here is the whole gamut of "third force" revolutionaries who, however they may be categorized, are not a part of capitalism's political left wing.) Comrade J.C. Banks of Canterbury, England, who consented to write this article for the DB, was the secretary of the organization and has access to its records.

In recent months the number of revolutionary socialist periodicals published in Grand Rapids has doubled with the advent of the WORLD SOCIALIST REVIEW, subtitled "a Voice of the World Socialist Party (USA)." The price of this twelve-page quarterly is $1.20 per year from P.O. Box 382, Marne, MI 49435.

As always we solicit your articles and letters for the next issue. DB19 will be pasted up toward the end of August. Please try to get material in by August 15. And PLEASE: dark ribbon, single space, and narrow margins—a typed line seven inches long is ideal.

Frank Girard
for the DB Committee

PUBLICATION RECEIVED

L'APPEL CONSTANT DU NATIONALISME, the French translation of Fredy Perlman's THE CONTINUING APPEAL OF NATIONALISM. No price given. Published by L'Insecure Sociale, B.P. 243, 75564 Paris Cedex 12, France.

REVIEW

FROM CAPITALISM TO SOCIALISM: HOW WE LIVE AND HOW WE COULD LIVE. 44pp.; the Socialist Party of Great Britain, 52 Clapham High St., London SW4 7UN England; 40p from the SPGB or $.75 from the WSP, P.O. Box 405, Boston, MA 02272.

In part it's what they didn't do that makes this most recent (February 1986) SPGB pamphlet superior to most other introductions to socialism. They didn't concentrate on a windy indictment of capitalism, and they didn't present socialism as a glorious but fuzzy technicolor extravaganza in which the details couldn't be made out.

Unlike many introductory socialist pamphlets, this gives a fairly specific description of the workings of a socialist society together with an examination of the principal arguments against socialism:

Cont'd on p. 22
THE THIRD CAMP MOVEMENT OF THE 1950's (also known as THIRD WAY)

(This account has been compiled from files that have lain unread for a quarter of a century, supplemented by the memories of the writer, who was International Secretary of the British Third Camp Movement from July 1954 until September 1955, and then Secretary of the International Third Way Movement until its formal dissolution in February 1958.)

BEGINNINGS. The idea of a Third Camp lying ideologically and to some extent geographically between Soviet Communism and American Capitalism originated in response to the Cold War and the development of nuclear armaments. It was formulated almost simultaneously by certain well-defined groups in a number of countries. These included pacifists, Gandhian disciples of non-violent revolution, anti-imperialists, ethnic minorities, decentralist socialists, ecologists, anarchists, and paradoxically, advocates of world government.

The geographical notion of a Third force first appeared in post-war France and Italy, where some politicians aimed to create a neutral Europe, colonial possessions intact, as a buffer between America and Russia. NATO and the Warsaw Pact, followed by decolonisation, put a stop to that particular program, but the independence of India, Pakistan, Ceylon and Burma in 1947 and 1948 gave birth to the concept of Asian neutrality that was to grow via Bandung (April 1955) into the non-aligned movement in what was known as the Afro-Asian Bloc, and later as the Third World.

The ideological concept of a Third Camp/Way ignored national boundaries, and indeed had its origins in America and among America's NATO allies as much as in Asian and African countries still in the grip of colonial struggle.

Its earliest expression surfaced at the end of 1951, in Britain, where a small quasi-anarchist group, Common Wealth, published a pamphlet 'Journey to Neutrallia', which attempted to bridge the gap between the two concepts and also to find common ground between pacifists and non-pacifists; and in the Netherlands, where a number of socialist, syndicalist and pacifist organisations set up a co-ordinating committee, De Derde Weg, to promulgate a declaration, the fourth paragraph of which read:

"THE THIRD WAY PEACE MOVEMENT aims at uniting in a common bond all those who are not prepared to accept the sentence of partition into two opposing camps which is now in process of being executed in the world, and who on the ground of their firm conviction that this partition must inevitably lead to war; those who are convinced that war can solve no problems but only move them; those who are convinced that this war can be and must be prevented; those who believe that if man is to be more than an animal, it is incumbent upon them to face the present problems with an open mind.

Only joint consultation by the many who are not hampered by vested interests of a material or ideological nature can open up a way of escape from the present impasse and lead the world to last-
Common Wealth had been in contact with various Dutch Resistance groups since 1945, and correspondence with De Derde Weg took place in February and March 1952, followed by chance meetings of their officers at Hoyward Heath at a National Peace Council school in August. These first contacts came to nothing at the time, but were later re-activated two years later as the result of an American initiative.

**THE AMERICAN THIRD CAMP.** This began with a "Seminar-Conference on the Outlook for a Third Camp" held in Chicago in October 1953 by a Gandhian group, The Peacemakers. It was successful enough to inspire a fuller conference, held in New York on 27-29th November, and attended by some 100 people from pacifist and socialist organisations. In addition to the Peacemakers there were the Fellowship of Reconciliation, the War Resisters League, the Independent Socialist League, the Socialist Youth League, the Young Peoples Socialist League, the Libertarian Socialist League, the Catholic Worker and an observer from the Workers of the World.

The main theme was expressed by Max Shachtman, speaking for the ISL and SYL, when he claimed the resistance of the peoples of the world to both war camps to be "a prime factor in deterring them from plunging the world into a holocaust."

A persistent secondary theme featuring in most speeches was the need for pacifists and socialists to work together, to which grouping Dick Frederickson of the LSC added anarchists and syndicalists. Shachtman claimed that socialists who are not pacifists but militants "feel an infinitely stronger bond with the anti-war pacifists, specially those who support the ideas of the Third Camp, than we do with 'militants' who support the warmongers," a sentiment reciprocated by David Dollinger of Peacemakers when he said "we feel more unity and more hope in the possibilities of working with those whose understanding of society leads them to be revolutionary and not pacifist than with those who reject violence but can swallow the rest of the evil, false, destructive and violent society that surrounds us." Bogdan Denitch of the YPSC claimed that all the elements present at the conference were represented by their campus clubs, in which disagreements, particularly over non-violence as a principle, were minimized "since no one has yet showed us how a campus club can function differently."

The conference issued a Statement of Policy, and set up a Contact Committee, but the ISL withdrew on a disagreement over the paragraphs on Defence, rejecting the offer to include a disclaimer on the point at issue. The U.W. also decided not to participate.

The statement on the Third Camp agreed by the other organisations took up two pages of Labour Action for 14th December 1953, and cannot be reproduced here in full. It included an analysis of the two-Power conflict of American capitalism and Stalinism, before going on to the need for a Third Camp. This, it stated, "cannot be merely a Third force of power-states alongside of the two power-blocs which now dominate and divide the world... whose social and economic system is in no way to be distinguished from..."
that of one of the existing ones." Again, "the social and politi-
cal movements which make up the Third Camp . . must be animated
by a positive principle, the goal of a new, free, human and demo-
cratic order which is superior in all ways to what the two war
camps have to offer."

The Statement was presented as a means of drawing a wider
participation at home and abroad into the formulation of an ideo-
logy that would have meaning in the diverse conditions under which
the struggle for a Third Camp would have to be waged. The pacif-
ist rejection of war as an instrument of policy was coupled with
the equal rejection of private ownership and monopoly control of
economic resources on the one hand and bureaucratic State owner-
ship on the other. "We are for the democratic ownership, control
and administration of the basic resources and industries in all
countries . . what must be aimed at is the widest direct partici-
ipation of the mass of producers and consumers in all phases of the
direction, administration, planning and work in production, trans-
portation and distribution of goods."

It was also agreed that these ends would not be achieved by
"placing sole dependence upon parliamentary methods" but would
necessitate "direct action in strikes against segregation or in-
vasion of civil liberties, and the like." The necessity for
"moral and political restraints" on methods of achieving and con-
trolling power was recognised. The Third Camp itself could not be
a monolithic structure, but rather an alliance of movements
throughout the world "drawn together by concrete opposition to the
present war camps, and by a broad common aspiration for a demo-
cratic society."

There followed a message to Third Camp movements and groups
in Asia, the Near East, Africa and Latin America which concluded:
"Your struggles help us to arouse the conscience and consciousness
of the American people to the role their governments and ruling
class compels them to play in the world."

BRITAIN AND THE THIRD CAMP. In the Spring of 1954 a member of
Peacemakers, Newton Garver, a PG student at Oxford, began work on
the creation of a British Third Camp. His efforts led to a con-
ference at the university in May. This was sponsored by the vet-
eran Guild Socialist, G. D. H. Cole, was chaired by Raghaven Iyer,
of the Indian Socialist Party, and organised by Newton Garver and
a fellow PG. student, Clovis Makroud, member of the Socialist
Party of Syria and the Lebanon, and John Lloyd, an undergraduate
member of Common Wealth.

It was a single-day affair, and attracted a remarkably wide
range of socialists, anarchists, trotskystas, pacifists and non-
violeat resisters from both inside and outside the university.

As with many student-initiated events no provision had been
made for follow-up, but this omission was soon rectified by CU,
which had been well represented at Oxford, and now organised a
second conference, this time in London, on 3rd July. Advance pub-
licity was largely through Peace News, the editor, Allen Skinner,
being a member of both CU and the Peace Pledge Union, whose journal Peace News then was. Attendance was only 21, over half being from CU and PPU, but other organisations represented were the Independent Labour Party, the Council for U.N. Reform, the New Europe Group, the Crusade for World Government, the Congress of England and the Indian Land Return Movement. (There were some overlapping memberships.)

This motley collection nevertheless agreed a draft policy statement, and set up a committee to distribute it and to convene further meetings, which took place at monthly intervals for the rest of 1954. The next meeting, on 17th August, attracted 38 attendances, only 8 of which had been at the inaugural conference, and only 2 of which were members of CU. Significant newcomers included Bhawanpal of the Praja Socialist Party, Stuart Morris, secretary of the PPU, Anthony Bishop, assistant secretary of the War Resisters International and Geoffrey Cannell, of the Northern Ireland FOR, all of whom became regular participants.

Persistent advertising and personal mailing of contacts saw 13 more new faces on 17th September, and also Neaton Garver, on leave from Beirut, where he was now teaching, and Clovis Makroud. These two had shown some resentment when CU had followed up their Oxford initiative, but now recognised that a genuine British Third Camp was now in the making, dominated by no one group, although CU continued to supply an address and office space.

Three subsequent London meetings brought in another 27 contacts, including representatives from Plaid Cymru (Welsh National Party) and observers from the English FOR and the Hindu Association of Europe. Attendances at the six meetings between July and December had averaged 29, had involved some 93 individuals from 20 organisations, of which no fewer than 17 were to give sustained support.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS. During July 1954 Peace News published a pamphlet 'The Third Camp' by the writer of this article, which aimed at an international readership, contained an account of the New York conference, and had the distinction of being confiscated by the U.S. Customs in Boston, supposedly because of a single-line critical reference to American policy in Guatemala.

Also at the end of July the WRI devoted much of its Paris conference to discussion of Third Camp themes, and this led to the setting up of an international Third Camp committee in the persons of Allen Skinner, Stuart Morris, Nickolaus Koch of Dortmund, J. W. E. Riemens of De Verde Weg, Arlo Tatum representing the American WRL, and A. J. Muste, chairman of the Third Camp Contact Committee in New York.

It was decided in Paris that the New York committee should serve as international correspondence centre and should draft a manifesto, while De Verde Weg was asked to act as a documentation centre, recording all Third Camp activities and statements worldwide. Thirdly, the new committee was charged to call an international conference as soon as possible, preferably in Asia or Africa, otherwise in Europe.
THE LAREN CONFERENCE. In the event the international committee decided on Laren in the Netherlands, with De Derde Weg as host, the date to be in the last week of December, 1954.

One incidental outcome of these decisions was the first official contact between the American Contact Committee and its British counterpart in a letter dated 16th November from Charles Walker in Philadelphia to David Wickes in London.

As an international event Laren was somewhat disappointing, with attendances of 19 from Holland, 8 from Britain, 2 from Germany, and one each from Switzerland and the United States, but not a single representative of any Asian or African country.

Laren nevertheless produced two results: (1) the movement was henceforth to be renamed Third Way, a recommendation somewhat reluctantly accepted by the British and Americans out of deference to German and Dutch objections to 'Camp', which to them suggested the pre-fix 'concentration', and (2) there was to be a 'world' conference in London in September, 1955.

PREPARATION FOR THE LONDON CONFERENCE, January/August, 1955.

Laren had been criticized as ill-prepared, and the British Movement, in accepting responsibility for the proposed London conference, was determined to avoid a similar accusation. The activities of the British Movement had in fact to change radically under the impact of conference preparation: fewer meetings designed to enrol new supporters, and much more individual involvement by those already contacted in the tasks of conference arrangements - booking of accommodation, translations, printing and addressing of invitations, and the like, as the Minutes of the next months indicate.

Miraculously by the end of March residential accommodation had been booked for 3rd/6th September, a month later 1,000 copies of the policy statement approved at Laren had been printed, with translations in French, German and Italian completed by the end of July. Hundreds of addresses were supplied by De Derde Weg, by the American committee, from the files of Peace News and the Socialist Leader (ILP newspaper) and from the contacts built up by CW during its earlier work with British and French colonial freedom organisations in the Congress of Peoples Against Imperialism.

One hitch-up occurred in June, when Stuart Morris advised Arlo Tatum that preparations were insufficient to justify the expense of bringing an American delegation to London. This fear turned out to be unfounded, and in part reflected a gut-reaction on the part of some of the older PPU members that association with the Third Way was compromising the purity of pacifist doctrine - the very attitude that David Dellinger had rejected on behalf of Peacemakers eighteen months earlier.

Fortunately Allen Skinner was able to reassure Arlo, who from then on attended the meetings of the arrangements committee, bringing Stuart with him. In fact an augmented C.A.C. was taking on the form of an international body, with Shirley Lerner of the ISL, Joseph Murumbi, a Kenyan representing the Movement for
Colonial Freedom and providing an African presence, and John Roddam of the World Socialist Movement, a body launched after the Oxford Conference under the auspices of D. H. Cole, Dharampal, while not attending the N.E.C., continued to provide an Indian Socialist connection.

By the end of July enrolments were coming in, and in fact 100 people were to turn up, 73 from 14 British organisations, 27 from 13 overseas countries representing 27 organisations. 62 were delegates, the rest visitors and observers. 67 of the British were from England, 5 from Wales, 1 from N. Ireland. The 13 overseas countries sent 7 delegates and visitors from the U.S.A., 5 from the Netherlands, 5 from Syria & the Lebanon, 2 from Germany and 1 each from Australia, Burma, Ceylon, France, India, Italy, Kenya and Madagascar. Messages of support came from 12 more organisations overseas, 4 from Europe, 4 from Africa, 2 from the Middle East, 1 China, 1 Australia. Some of these led to active participation in Third Way affairs after the conference had disbanded. Finally, a number of individuals indicated their support, the best known probably being Martin Niemoller, Czeslaw Milosz and Fanner Brockway.

(To be continued) 

J. C. Banks

The Editor,
Discussion Bulletin,
Dear Sir,

The excuse of "Harmo" (Discussion Bulletin, Feb. 1946) for his confusing the National Executive Council (N.E.C.) of the Socialist Industrial Union administration advocated by the Socialist Labor Party, with the National Executive Committee (N.E.C.), of the S.L.P., is pretty weak.

An elementary investigation would have made it clear that representatives on all levels of S.I.U. administration, from the shop units to the National Executive Council or All-Industry Congress, would be elected by the workers from the industries and services, and that the political State and political parties would be non-existent. Harmo is at least guilty of a sloppy investigation of the S.L.P. goal.

There is a vast difference between the N.E.C. of a political party being "at the top of the heap" and in bureaucratic control of the economy, and the workers' own democratic administration through their own democratically elected industrial representatives, responsible to, deriving their authority from, and removable at will by their own rank and file.

Harmo's paragraph from his July-August 1948 Western Socialist article
identifying the N.E.C. of the S.L.P., with the highest body in the Socialist Industrial Union administration, is quite familiar to me. I'm sure it is the article I answered, pointing out it's obvious falsification of the S.I.U. administration advocated by the S.L.P. Unless my memory fails me the Western Socialist did not print my letter, but did publish a short paragraph informing it's readers of my objection to it's false statement on the S.L.P.

While on the subject of the World Socialist Party I might ask them: "How are the workers to exercise 'democratic control of the means and instruments for producing wealth' except through administrative bodies elected from the industries and services by, and responsible to themselves?"

Sincerely yours, James Winal
Section Vancouver, British Columbia
Socialist Labor Party of Canada.

Dear Frank,

I'm sorry to have taken so long to respond to your letter. In reference to various materials I've sent you, I was not the author of the article "Have you checked your labels lately?" I should have credited that article to my friend Jack Straw (a pseudonym) here in Berkeley. I've always thought that that article was a fine exposition of what capitalism is and what its revolutionary negation implies. Also I am in fact the author of the War or Revolution leaflet. I don't really mind your having attributed it to me, although I very much appreciate the concerns of the person who stood up for my anonymity and sent the leaflet to you. Most of the facts in the leaflet I took out of Soldiers in Revolt by David Cortwright, published by Anchor Press/Doubleday in 1975. It appears to be something of a suppressed book, its out of print and hard to find at libraries. I got my copy at a used bookstore. The book contains a lot of useful information in spite of the authors' completely ludicrous objective of "democratizing" the armed forces and having a 'democratic' foreign policy. I could just imagine that we could hold elections and form 'affinity groups' before going off to slaughter people for the market economy, 'directly democratic' Imperialism and a unionized Navy.

I want to make a few points about some of the other things that have appeared in the Discussion Bulletin. One of your back issues contained an ad for the anarcho-syndicalist publication Ideas and Action. While the publishers of Ideas and Action fill their pages with gentlemanly discussions with Trotskyists and brain-dead leftists who advocate that anarchists should work for 'libertarian socialism' inside the Democratic Party, there are a lot of things that you will most likely never find in the pages of Ideas and Action:

1. Nowhere in the pages of Ideas and Action will you find even the
faintest definition of the content of their supposed "libertarian Socialism", other that the nebulous term "workers' self-management of the economy". If you talk in person to the people who produce Ideas and Action you will find that their version of 'socialism' is based in part on a market economy, hence their self-conscious vacuity about clearly defining what capitalism is and what socialism or communism is. Can political groups that refuse to clearly argue and fight for the abolition of commodity production and the market be considered to be authentically anti-capitalist?

2. The 'Workers Solidarity Alliance', the people who produce Ideas and Action, pride themselves on being the official anarcho-syndicalist grouping in the United States, having the franchise from the International Grouping in Madrid. This anarcho-syndicalist grouping (the W.S.A.) identifies itself, as all anarcho-syndicalist groupings do, with the important role played by the anarcho-syndicalists in the Spanish Civil War of 1936 to 1939. Doesn't it seem strange that these supposedly anti-capitalist revolutionaries can't offer any explanation for why their anarcho-syndicalist ancestors went over wholesale to the side of the capitalist state in Madrid during the civil war, or how the anarcho-syndicalist organizations like the W.S.A. and the M.A.T. helped to manage the exploitation of the working class and the war effort of the capitalist state in Spain in the thirties? Or how the anarcho-syndicalist organizations and their leaders (yes, leaders) helped to repress and derail the movements of the Spanish proletariat towards the violent destruction of the Spanish state in July of 1936 and again in May of 1937? Don't the actions of the anarcho-syndicalist movement in derailing the movement towards proletarian revolution in the place where anarcho-syndicalism had its greatest relevance forever condemn anarcho-syndicalism as a counter-revolutionary form of left-wing capitalist politics, just like social democracy and Leninism?

I'm putting these points forward for the Discussion Bulletin because I think these issues should be debated, there should be more real healthy argument in the pages of the Discussion Bulletin about the very complex and contradictory movements towards anti-capitalist insurrection in the twentieth century, about political currents like Bolshevism and Social Democracy, and a really critical examination of supposedly revolutionary leftism, (anarcho-syndicalism, DeLeonism, the I.W.W.). There has been a very unfortunate tendency for the Discussion Bulletin to function as a simple clearing house for marginalized and largely irrelevant leftist ideologies. A lot of the contributions in the Bulletin from DeLeonist socialists have been particularly awful. All the mumbling about "socialist industrial government" and "Democratic Industrial Government" is so totally outdated and devoid of any real subversive content. I hope the provocative tone of this letter will begin a process of real-living debate.

A small number of us have formed our own political tendency and we are in the process of completing the first issue of our publication, the Angry Workers Bulletin, which we hope to produce two to four times a year until our effort can be superceded by more meaningful efforts. We produced a "quickie" version of the A.W.B. for the recent commemoration of the Haymarket events in Chicago. When the final version of the A.W.B. is out I'll send you a copy. I think that the Discussion Bulletin is a very necessary project and I hope that it can evolve towards being a forum for a sophisticated theoretically coherent analysis of capital, class conflicts and authentic communism, a forum for debate of differing ideas that doesn't
exist in any "marxist" or "libertarian" publication in North America at the present time.

for play and dancer,

Keith Sorel

* I should maybe describe our tendency not as being a "political tendency", but as an anti-political tendency, not in the sense of ignoring "politics" or of ignoring the State the way the old anarchists did, but in the sense of aspiring to destroy all of the capitalist terrain of what is usually referred to as politics.

BOOK REVIEW


For those of you interested in a readable, philosophical history of the Western Marxism movement you will want to look into Martin Jay's book Marxian & Totality. Jay's work deals with the first generation of Western Marxism to the second, exemplified by the Frankfurt School.

Western Marxism was a movement that arose during the 1920's in Western and Central Europe. In Jay's words the movement "identified solely with a subterranean tradition of humanist, subjectivist and undogmatic Marxism that was the negation of its official Soviet (or Eastern) counterpart. The latter had been turned into a doctrinaire ideology of legitimation by a tyrannical regime, whereas Western Marxism, nowhere in power, had retained the libertarian, emancipatory hopes of the Socialist tradition." The Western Marxists wanted to take the emphasis away from the state and political economy, towards one directed to art and philosophy. To challenge what they saw as the "fatalistic economy" of the Second International.

The author states that for the Western Marxists, the political economists were not able to see that behind their theory lay a world of historically changing relations among people. The "totality" of real life. Jay quotes Marx from THE GERMAN IDEOLOGY: "Our conception of history depends on our ability to expound the real process of production, starting out from the simple material production of life, and to comprehend the form of intercourse connected with this and created by this (i.e. civil society in its various stages), as the basis of all history; furthermore, to show it in its action as State; and so, from this starting-point, to explain the whole mass of different theoretical products and forms of consciousness, religion, philosophy, ethics, etc., etc., and trace their origins and growth, by which means, of course, the whole thing can be shown in its totality (and therefore, too, the reciprocal action of these various sides on one another)."

MARXISM & TOTALITY gives us an excellent historical overview of the movement. Jay goes on to explore the works of the major figures. He gives us a look at Georg Lukács, Karl Korsch, Antonio
Dear Comrade Willey:

Thank you for your letter of criticism of April 17.

Over the past 3 - 4 months, I and other members of the NUP have been involved in the rank-and-file movement in support of the P-9 strike against Hormel in Austin, Minn. We have twice been in Austin for rallies, and we have participated on a weekly basis in the Twin Cities P-9 Support Committee. A number of us have been active in the local work of the Committee, including leafleting, manning literature tables, arranging meetings, etc.

On the basis of these and prior experiences and contacts with rank-and-file workers, allow me to put your mind to rest on one of your major concerns: there is absolutely no chance that anyone is going to become "confused" because the NUP uses the term "New Unionism" instead of "DeLeonism/Industrial Unionism." Those few people who are familiar with DeLeon readily identify us as DeLeonists, while for the other 99%, never having heard of DeLeon precludes their becoming confused about the terms.

You say the "Industrial Union Program (was) set forth by Daniel DeLeon early in this century." Do you mean, Comrade Willey, the Socialist Industrial Union Program? Why do you coin another term for SIU? Is your "Industrial Union Program" socialism or CIosm?

You also say we are all striving for the same goal, the establishment of a "Workers Republic of Free and Emancipated Labor." I have been in the DeLeonist movement for 20 years, and this is the first time I have heard this expression. Why are you trying to confuse me?

As I'm sure you can see from the examples in your own letter, your criticism of our way of communicating the DeLeonist program is arbitrary and capricious. Surely you can't be suggesting that we must use the language that was current early in this century to communicate in the 1980s? However, if precedent and tradition is that important to you, our usage does have solid scriptural validity as DeLeon himself referred to the classconscious unionism of the STL as the "new unionism."

I agree that we must use "language that is clear and unequivocal." Probably the least clear and unequivocal word we have is "socialism," given the many contradictory meanings the word denotes and connotes in common usage.

Just off the top of my head, here are some of the socialist groups that have been involved or distributed literature in the P-9 movement: Socialist Workers Party; Workers League, IWW; Progressive Labor Party; International Socialist Organization; Workers World Party; News and Letters; Communist Labor Party; League for the Revolutionary Party; Spark; International Committee Against Racism; U.S. Marxist-Leninists; Spartacist League. (Apologies to those I failed to mention.) One quick and easy way to distinguish the DeLeonist program from their varied programs is to use a term that is unique to us, with, "New Unionism." Believe me, Comrade Willey, there is nothing more sinister to it than that.

I believe I reflect the feelings of the NUP when I say we are sympathetic to the suggestion of establishing a Federation of DeLeonist Organizations. In fact, we made this very proposal a couple of years before the IUP, and at that time it was roundly rejected by the IUP. The reason for our not pursuing the idea
REPORT #18
July 3, 1986

Dear Comrades,

Along with the next Discussion Bulletin (#19) many of you will receive a sub renewal form that will seem clearly out of place because last year you sent us money in excess of the three dollars for a year's sub, in some cases fifty dollars or more.

The origin of this problem dates back three years ago when we started the DP and didn't want to accept subs for longer than one year, the mortality rate for periodicals of this kind being what it is. Unless we were specifically informed to the contrary, we assumed that the portion of remittances in excess of three dollars was intended as a donation. All subs were assumed to fall due at the same time. Thus most current subs end with this issue. (You can check. If your address label has on it "R3," your sub has expired according to our records.)

A subscription sheet will be enclosed with each copy of DB19. If you figure that your sub has not expired, you will be able to fill in a space provided for an estimated expiration date. BUT, as "Bulletin Matters" in this issue points out, we are really in need of funds for DB19. The increased number of pages and more than doubled press run (650 instead of 250 copies) will greatly increase printing and mailing costs. So please send in your renewals and/or donations early. As you can see below, our cash flow has declined to a trickle.

CONTRIBUTIONS

From May 7 to July 3 we received the following donation: Harry Mullian $5. Thanks

FINANCES

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Fraternally submitted

Frank Girard
for the DB Committee
when suggested by Comrade Brandon was the all-consuming problems of maintaining our own organization
and activities we were experiencing at the time, and the feeling we could not then embark on any additional
project.

If a Federation is established, there will need to exist an openness and tolerance among the
affiliates concerning tactics, including propaganda techniques and language, or I am convinced the project
will fail. I believe the NUP has demonstrated its tolerance in this regard. We have never, for example,
criticized the IUP for using the word "socialist" in its propaganda because we have enough respect for their
experience and understanding to appreciate their reasons for doing so.

Yours fraternally,

Jeff Miller
Editor, New Unionist

c. Discussion Bulletin

NOTE: Discussion Bulletin readers may receive the April, 1986 issue of the New Unionist referred to by
Comrade Willey in his letter published in the May, 1986 D.B. by writing: 621 W. Lake St., Suite 210,
Minneapolis, MN 55408, or by calling (612) 823-2593.

[The following article is the continuation of a letter begun in DB17.
-- fg].

Neo-utopianism and Anti Neo-utopianism

In his DB16 article "Neo-Utopianism as a Flight from
Responsibility" Comrade Fitz offers what appears, at least, to be
capitalism's conventional--and cynical--wisdom about human nature as
an antidote to what he asserts is the romantic and utopian notion held
by Marx, DeLeon, and the rest of us neo-utopians of a good--or
perfectable--human nature, a nature which, left without interference
could enable humankind to build a "natural" human order--a new society
based on justice and equity.

Comrade Fitz seems to be telling us that while socialism is
possible sometime in the future, we must settle for something less
than the libertarian, egalitarian society we neo-utopians have in
mind. For one thing, he argues that if we want to get socialism and
keep it we must expect an armed conflict with the ruling class. And
also, humans being naturally lazy, we will need someone or something
to discipline us--a touch of the whip perhaps. We'll also need
leaders--the whip wielders? And finally since this "socialism" is
rather far in the future, we must all work to improve conditions in
the real world, i.e. under capitalism.

Let's consider his contentions. The first is the evidence of
what he calls the "failed attempts of the working class to abolish
class exploitation." I submit that all of these cases resulted from
social cataclysms of one kind or another. They were in the nature of
social convulsions, unplanned, unprogrammed, and unled, until a
self-appointed elite of "socialist" leaders placed itself at the head of the masses and transformed a convulsion into an insurrection. The point to remember is that the mass of the people in every case was not consciously attempting to establish socialism. This is not to denigrate the heroism of the workers or their motives, but it does explain why they were doomed to failure. Note should also be made of the non-socialist objectives of these "socialist" leaders and of the lack of the productive forces needed for socialism in the cases he cites.

Basing his views on the military force available to the ruling class, Com. Fitz asks whether we can expect to destroy capitalism and its political state without prolonged violent struggle? Without quite answering no, he implies that avoiding such a military struggle will require our class "to organize a defense [military?] strong enough to defeat the bourgeoisie without laying the foundation for "militarized socialism."

Aside from the romantic to-the-barricades thinking this suggests, I would argue that great mass social upheavals, when they come, are almost always accomplished with very little violence. Consider the most recent: the Iranian Revolution and the overthrow of Marcos in the Philippines and Duvalier in Haiti. In all cases mass support was so overwhelming that military action by the ruling class was unthinkable.

On the other hand, insurrections by elite/vanguardists as in El Salvador, Nicaragua, Mozambique, etc where the masses are or were unready or unwilling are invariably violent and prolonged. And when these elites are successful in establishing a new social order—we can't call them socialist—they must establish police or military force to keep themselves in power.

The weakness Com. Fitz discerns, then, is not a result of flawed human nature unable to build socialism but rather of a flawed concept of socialism and social revolution: the idea that a tiny minority can, by an act of will, force socialism on a majority just as Franco could force fascism on an unwilling population.

Human Nature

At the same time that we reject some of Com. Fitz's comments on human nature, we must recognize that socialism can't be built on illusions about human nature. The first task of socialists would seem to be that of analyzing it to see if its qualities make socialism impossible. Most writers in this field suggest that much of what we regard as human nature is the result of social conditioning, not of some inborn genetic program each of us has in his internal computer and is doomed to play out. At the same time, though, there are certain inborn, fundamental needs or drives that are common to all organisms including humans. One is the need to survive, to continue living. Another is to reproduce, and a third is the strong drive to avoid discomfort including pain, hunger, thirst, etc.

Next are certain social behaviors that seem, at least, to result from our having highly developed central nervous systems, like the
ability to cooperate for a common good and the desire for the good opinion of our peers, even to the point of depriving ourselves of some of the needs listed above. Human nature, then, is highly adaptable, so far as social conditions are concerned. The will to live, for example, was so strong that even in Stalin's labor camps people were capable of the behavior needed to survive both as inmates and as guards. As one can see, there is nothing ideal or inherently good in human nature or, for that matter, in the working class. But the question is whether there is anything about human nature that renders us naturally unfit for socialism.

Labor Discipline and Human Nature.

Among the behaviors that could affect the smooth running of a socialist society are those involving work. Certainly the glib answer we've all given in arguments with non-socialists--that automation will eliminate the dirty and boring jobs and that the small amount of work each us will have to do when millions will be freed from the unproductive work needed to maintain capitalism--won't wash.

The fact is that unless they are motivated to do so, people may very well not commit themselves to activity they find boring, tiring, or otherwise unpleasant, especially on the regular basis "work" implies. Up to the transformation from primitive tribal society to class divided social organization, the motivation was hunger. Afterwards it was hunger plus whatever "discipline" our masters could enforce to get us to produce the surplus for them.

This surplus above the cost of maintaining us workers did more than keep our masters in luxury; it was the capital which made industrialization possible. Will we choose to continue to produce a surplus for expanding and developing industry? Com. Fitz may label as sociopaths those people who prefer not to follow ruling class mores regarding work, but this whole question of work, levels of production, standard of living, and ecological considerations will have to be decided somehow. The standard solution for anti-neo-utopians is to give society a period of instruction on the importance of hard work and labor discipline taught by revolutionary cadre during the period of the dictatorship of the proletariat. In fact, Com. Fitz's emphasis on leadership suggests that solution.

I am beginning to question the belief I have always held in the past that society as a whole would determine its total needs and that we would all pitch in and produce what was necessary. We may find instead that we have needs representing billions of labor hours and labor commitments amounting to much less. In fact, it is at least possible that our society will simply abandon this industrial civilization and return, perhaps by degrees, to subsistence agriculture. Certainly a decision not to mine coal a la the SPGB pamphlet, would be a step in that direction.

In the meantime, it struck me that while the great debates about industrialism/standard of living/ecology raged in the early years of socialism, the labor voucher would be a useful tool. But I am less certain of that now after reading Comrade Buick's letter in this issue.
with its catalog of the difficulties attendant on the use of labor vouchers. I wish, though, that Com. Buick—a fellow neo-utopian—would reassure me about the ability of our society to reach the level of world industrial production needed to satisfy the wants of four billion people after the revolution and about the effect of that expanded production on the global environment, matters that his letter didn't deal with.

And finally a question for Com. Fitz: Why does anti-neo-utopianism seem to carry with it so many of the arguments I hear from reformists of various kinds to whom socialism is an "unreachable goal," anti-reformism is "abstentionism," and reforms are "real solutions that some part of the working class might actually listen to?"

Frank Girard

Dear Comrades,

From the replies in DB 17 I see I'm going to have to go into more details about the impracticality of the labour voucher system!

The first point I'd like to make is that I'm not sure if its advocates fully realise how complicated such a system would have to be. On the surface the idea seems simple enough. As the leaflet "What is Socialism" in DB 13 (which sparked off this discussion) put it: "If you work a thousand hours a year, you will get goods and services that took a thousand hours to produce". This seems clear but on examination it turns out to be too simple to be true since it assumes that all the goods and services produced in, say, a year will be goods produced for individual consumption. But this won't (can't) be the case since, even if we assume that none of the newly produced goods are used to expand the stock of means of production (i.e., that what Marx called "simple reproduction" obtains), some will have to be used to renew the existing stock and others to provide various collective services (education, health, etc) as well as to maintain those unable to contribute to production such as the old, the sick and the handicapped. So, already there would have to be a reduction of the amount of vouchers issued compared with the actual labour time of any producer.

If 20 per cent of the wealth produced in a year was to take the form of means of production and social services, then 1 hour's labour would have to be reduced by 20% (to 48 minutes) if the amount of vouchers issued was not to exceed the total labour-time face value of the stock of consumer goods and services available for the consumption of the actual producers. Clearly, if the system is to work this balance must be respected, otherwise there would be a surplus either of unclaimed goods or of unusable vouchers (leading to their depreciation?). Of course the system can be saved, but its defenders can no longer say that "if you work a thousand hours a year, you will get goods and services that took a thousand hours to produce", but only that your annual claim on goods and services would be proportional rather than equal to the number of hours a year you worked. Which is not quite the same thing since, on our assumption, if you work a thousand hours a year, you can only get goods and services that took 800 hours to produce.
It is easy enough to work out how many labour vouchers should be issued to each producer: you simply record how long they have worked (and then scale this down, as above, to take account of the production of producer goods and social services). But this is only one side of the equation. The labour-time "price" of the consumer goods and services in the stores must also be calculated and here a very real problem arises: will this "price" (from here on I'm dropping the inverted commas since it will soon emerge that we are talking about a real price system even if one expressed in labour-money rather than existing money), will this price then, be calculated according to the actual amount of time taken to produce a good (in which case the same good produced in different factories would, because of differences in productivity, have a different price depending on where it was produced) or on an average? Clearly, the second solution has to be adopted but, in this case, what average is to be used since a number are possible?

The average of the actual amount of labour time used in the various factories producing a particular good would be the simplest solution as it would preserve the equation "total labour vouchers = total face value of goods available", but this would not correspond, as Frank Girard seems to suggest, to the situation under capitalism, where a different average is used — that of what labour time is "socially necessary" to produce a good. This is an average that can only be established by the market after the goods have been thrown on to it and it has been established whether or not they corresponded to a market demand for them. In practice this average is biased in favour of the more productive factories acting as a pressure on other factories to improve their productivity. If it could be calculated under the labour voucher system (which it couldn't be, unless it were proposed to allow the prices of goods, even though nominally expressed in units of labour-time, to fluctuate in accordance with labour-voucher demand for them; which presumably advocates of the system would rule out — or would they? I'd be interested in hearing their views on this) then the total face value of the goods would become less than the total number of vouchers issued. So, another reduction, as compared with the actual number of hours worked, would need to be operated, but at whose expense? That of all workers or just of those in the less productive factories? Plenty of arguments in prospect here for those such as Don Fitz and Richard Laubach concerned about "freeloaders" to take part in!

Another problem in connexion with productivity is that, as this would tend to improve over time, labour-time prices would tend to fall so that vouchers issued in one year would be worth less in terms of labour-time purchasing power than vouchers issued in previous years. If nothing were done to counteract this, then an imbalance would develop between goods and vouchers. One technical solution would be to require the vouchers to be used within a given period on penalty of becoming worthless but this introduces yet another complication taking us away from the original simple idea of allocating consumer goods strictly according to time worked.

In fact, the whole system involving, as it would have to, recording working hours, calculating average labour-time costs so as to fix prices, printing and cancelling vouchers, etc would require an enormous waste of resources in paperwork and bureaucracy comparable to that involved in the present money system.
A further objection to the labour voucher system is the problem mentioned by Richard Laubach of people accumulating vouchers and using them to pay others to work for them. Other likely abuses spring to mind: people lending vouchers to others for interest, people hoarding vouchers to take advantage of falling prices, people forging and stealing them and even organizing raids on issuing offices to obtain them. How are these abuses to be eliminated if not by the construction of some law-enforcement system (re-enter the State!)? Or perhaps they are not abuses at all, but the natural outcome of a system of "paying" people vouchers with which to "buy" the things they need and so practices which would be bound to develop and which would in the end become unsuppressible. This would be my view and would be why I would say Frank Girard is wrong when he claims that the labour voucher system would merely be an "accounting device" to calculate a person's entitlement to consumer goods. I'm afraid it would be much more than this and would in fact amount to a system where people would be effectively selling their labour power for vouchers which they would use to buy the consumer goods they needed to create their labour power to sell for vouchers to buy the goods and so on, just as today. The labour voucher system would be tantamount to retaining the wage system, even if it had the rather reluctant approval of Marx, at least in the private notes he wrote on the 1875 Gotha programme of the German Social Democratic Party. I can only express surprise and regret at Marx's mistake here after the brilliant refutation of labour-money proposals he had given in this A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy published in 1859 and in his posthumously published papers known as the Grundrisse. And unless we are incorrigible dogmatists we must have the intellectual honesty to recognise that Kropotkin, even if he was an anarchist, was right to criticise this system.

In my view, the sooner the labour voucher proposal is thrown overboard the better! It is both impractical and undesirable and has more in common with "funny money" theories and currency crankism than socialism. Socialism means the disappearance of all forms of money, including so-called labour money, and the application of the principle of free access to the stock of consumer goods and services society has decided to make available. As I said in my previous letter, should temporary shortages require a limitation on the free consumption of some goods in the very early days of socialism, then some other system should be adopted, with the perspective of achieving within a few years at the most full free access to all available goods and services according to self-defined needs. But the labour voucher system, never!

--Adam Buick, 21 rue Gambetta, 77400 Thorigny, France.
PS. This discussion on labour vouchers has already taken place in France in the 1970's. If there is sufficient demand, expressed in letters to me, I'd be prepared to translate and make available some of the more interesting articles that appeared.
Dear Comrades,

In the Discussion Bulletin of May 1986 (No. 17), Laurens Otter disparages Daniel De Leon's observation wherein he states, "Anarchy... presupposes government to be identical with class rule, or despotism. The theory is based upon a myth."

That is, De Leon contends that all governments do not connote class rule; for Socialism is an industrial form of government, sans classes. To bolster his argument in order to prove that De Leon mistated the facts, Otter misquotes Karl Marx:

"A government is an executive committee of the ruling class." Does Marx assert that any government would conduct the affairs for a ruling class? That is not what Marx was conveying. He referred specifically to a political government where classes exist. Such are his words:

"The executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie." ¹

In several of their writings Marx and Engels confirm that they considered the future classless society as consisting of a government, but not of a political state. With regard to the state, Marx wrote:

"The working class, in the course of its development, will substitute for the old civil society an association which will exclude classes and their antagonisms, and there will be no more political power properly so-called, since political power is precisely the official expression of antagonisms in civil society." ²

In the "Paris Commune" Marx establishes that Socialism will constitute a form of government:

"The cry of 'Social Republic' with which the revolution of February was ushered in by the Paris proletariat, did express a vague aspiration after a Republic that was not only to supersede the monarchical form of class-rule, but class-rule itself." ³

Daniel De Leon describes a Socialist government as a "central directing authority". In this regard Engels said:

"Is it possible to have organization without authority?" And among other things Engels wrote: "Wanting to abolish authority in large scale industry is tantamount to wanting to abolish industry itself, to destroy the power 1oom in
order to return to the spinning wheel. 4
Laurens Otter has attempted to perpetuate the myth.

Yours sincerely,
Louis Lazarus

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   pp. 146-147
   p. 378 and p. 379.

Dear comrades:

Understanding that it will be of interest to some DB readers, we
pass along here our reply to Sam Brandon of the Industrial Union
Party, which proposed a federation of DeLeonist organizations.

Our group has endorsed the proposal for such a federation. In
addition, we have approved three specific steps to further cooperation
among socialist industrial unionist publications. These proposals
are: (1) to exchange advertising space among s.i.u. organizational
publications; (2) to experiment with co-publishing; (3) and to
mutually encourage members to subscribe to all s.i.u. publications.

To follow through on the second point, WD proposes to the
Industrial Union Party that we co-publish one issue called Socialist
Republic/Workers' Democracy, and one issue called Workers' Democracy/Socialist
Republic, with each organization responsible for
one-third of the content of each issue, and the remaining third
determined together.

We look forward to moving into cooperative work and federation.

Fraternally, Jeff Sutter, for Workers' Democracy
P.O. Box 24115, St. Louis, MO 63130
Dear comrades:

These are my first comments on DB correspondents' contributions; two pieces in DB#17 are impossible for me to pass up. Pardon me if they are more critical than constructive but I have to be very brief.

Laubach's letter is very interesting. I thank him for perceptively considering problems seldom raised, but really central to socialism. What intrigues me is the difficulty people have with the idea of "discipline." Let's agree, say, to call it the "individual's responsibility to others." I haven't a problem with the word 'discipline' since its meanings associated with self-discipline, training, and improvement are as important as those connoting submission. The essential problem remains. How are those lacking responsibility toward others, uninterested in cooperation, or desiring to free-ride on the efforts of others, treated? The fact that the "discipline" of social production is imposed on the whole group by itself (collectively) does not mean that everyone agrees, cooperates, or has no incentives to "cheat." And if many people do so, which I think is likely, it is not enough to just say that we can change the way in which social production and distribution take place. That's too vague; it doesn't help.

On labor vouchers. At page 2 the (unsigned) writer says they "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." But at the same time, "the vouchers will be an accounting device, at 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." I don't understand this. Say (hypothetically) that the vouchers are not transferable and workers are not bid for competitively. Does everyone receive the same quantity of vouchers for the same hours of work? Are there no incentives to offer more to some people in order to keep them from leaving? What happens when people run out of vouchers? Have they exhausted their rights to social produce? Just renaming the economic institution and waving some abstract socialist phraseology over it does not solve the very concrete problems of making it work properly. We also have to think through the incentives people may see for using vouchers in unanticipated ways. I would love to hear more explanation of "vouchers" and details of distribution.

Yours,

Jeff Sutter
over-population, human nature, scarcity of resources, and the problems of growing food for everyone and of allocating water. While I feel it dismisses some of these too easily, it takes a refreshingly sensible approach to others. For example, to that of finding workers willing to to risk life and limb to mine coal in a socialist society, the pamphlet argues that if no one will go down in the mines simply for the social approval such action would bring, the our society will obviously have to do without coal.

Although the SPGB's socialism is clearly technology-oriented, the solution described above strikes me as one that might satisfy those libertarian socialists who see in technology a force as alienating as the capitalist system itself. This pamphlet implies that once our species has liberated itself from class domination, it can--if it wishes to--free itself from the machine, from work as socially required activity, and from other less obvious kinds of alienation.

It's easy to understand the SPGB's insistence that socialist revolution must be the conscious act of the great majority of our class, but less so to understand the election fetish it shares with the American Socialist Labor Party. Somehow the SPGB identifies the socialist revolution with the capture of what Daniel DeLeon of the SLP called "the robber burg of capitalism," the political state. DeLeon's rationale for this election fixation seems to have been legalistic: the desire to give the revolution constitutional legitimacy. He saw the real power of the capitalist class in its ownership and control of the means of production, the industries.

The SPGB, on the other hand, seems to see the state as the source of capitalism's power. By that reasoning, capturing control of the state, then, must precede the socialist revolution. How else can one interpret the following (p.44):

"The state is the machinery for the defence of a system of minority ownership by a ruling class, and also that class's instrument for administering the system. It follows therefore that before capitalism can be abolished and socialism established the state must be taken over, firstly to prevent its being used to forcibly resist the change and secondly to utilize its administrative facilities within the system."

Besides seeming to relegate the role of the working class during the revolution to that of mere voters, this creates a new mystery about the SPGB's intentions regarding the state's "administrative facilities." (The italics in the quotation above are the SPGB's.) Page 44 also raises a question with the following exchange: "Where does the state's power come from?" [Answer] "The power to form a government is invested in the votes of the electorate, where there is an electoral system." Although the SPGB may mean simply that capitalism can't function without the acquiescence of the working class, it does seem to say something unMarxist about the source of state power under capitalism.

Despite Having raised these questions--I thought I owed it to Cont'd on p. 24
TO CURE YOU NEED
ILLUSIONS THAT WORK.

A lot of people aren't fooled by the new technology. They know it means new
kind of realism where work is required for survival.
That's why, we're working to change the view in the
next. Our calculations can help them view their domestication as inevitable, almost
unshakable. And when they do, we can

You see, at AT&T we know even the most advanced technology can be

AT&T. We help keep domination up to date.
Comrades Leight and Harmo--I would recommend the pamphlet as an introduction to socialism.

fg

REVIEW

ADVENTURES IN SUBVERSION: FLYERS AND POSTERS, 1981-85 [by]
Anti-authoritarians Anonymous, no date; $2 from AAA, P.O. Box 11331,
Eugene, OR 97440.

ADVENTURES IN SUBVERSION is thirty-two pages of posters designed
to kick a self-satisfied capitalism in its soft, vulnerable backside.
AAA's favorite stunt is to write new text for those smug, self serving
full-page ads that large corporations publish in slick magazines like
Harpers and Scientific American. As Dan Todd and John Zerzan state in
the introduction, "...we're constantly watching for new ads that can
be modified so as to replace their affirmation of existing conditions
with a negative charge."

But the menu isn't limited to these. It also includes witty
polemics against the puffy self righteousness of the peace movement
and makes other iconoclastic attacks on the sacred cows of leftism,
especially the technological ones. Perhaps the best thing about the
pamphlet is its usefulness. Published in 8 1/2 by 11 format, the
posters are available for copying, besides serving as a source of
ideas for one's own posters. [See example on p.23]

fg