# DISCUSSION BULLETIN

**NUMBER 19**

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As the Discussion Bulletin enters its fourth year with number 19, we can all share in the accomplishment, for its continued existence has been the result of a collective effort by a wide range of "third force" socialists who have written the letters and articles that fill its pages and subscribed the funds that make its publication possible.

Our first issue, June 1955, described the circumstance that led us to establish the Discussion Bulletin:

"Unlike the Leninists and social democrats, each with a relatively neutral publication—the Guardian and The Times respectively—which serve as a sounding board and an arena for debate and discussion of their political persuasion, we have no such publication. This Discussion Bulletin is intended to serve that limited purpose, providing a forum for exchanging ideas, challenging assumptions, presenting theories, and perhaps resolving differences and beginning the first stages of limited cooperation."

We had rather more difficulty defining who we are and defining the expression "third force socialists" has not solved the problem. Historically we are the ideological descendents of the anti-revisionists—the "impossibilists" who resisted the reforms of the pre-WWI Second International, the element Lenin had in mind in 1917 when he wrote "Left-wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder" as part of his effort to stampede American and European revolutionaries into the Third International under Bolshevik command.

Semantic problems with words like "socialist" and "libertarian" make it difficult to describe this political sector. Various groups in it use terms like "anti-statist," "non-market," and "libertarian. The inhabitants of our political territory range from anarchists to the syndicalists in the Industrial Workers of the World to the orthodox Marxists of the Socialist Party of Great Britain and the De Leonist groups. Comparison will show little difference among them in objectives. The great diversity is in tactics, rhetoric, emphasis, and style—all the superficial matters that loom large during this period of working class apathy when our attention is directed toward competing with each other rather than reaching our fellow workers. On top of everything else, we are held apart by political feuds, some of which date back a century or more to the age of heroes and martyrs.

While it's hard to judge the degree to which the DB has helped to "resolve differences" in people's minds and there is no evidence of "the first stages of limited cooperation," beyond support for the DB itself, the growing subscription list and increase in articles and letters indicate that it is fulfilling its purpose as a forum.

As capitalism's internal clockwork runs down and the slump intensifies, we can expect that working class resistance to the effects will lead it to question the stability and safety of the

Cont’d on p. 31
The "Right of Recall" - We Can Do Better Than This Worn Out S.I.U. Concept

Last year, a woman I work with was feeling down because her supervisor was harassing her for using sick time. "Have you taken off more than the number of hours you've built up?" I wanted to know.

"No," she said, "but my supervisor explained it like this. We do earn sick leave. But, if your kids get sick too much in any one month, then you're abusing the right and get reprimanded."

"In other words," I replied, "our employer is saying that we have the right 'on paper' even though we do not have the right to actually use that right."

"Exactly."

Socialists usually have the identical attitude toward the "right of recall" that my co-worker's supervisor had toward the "right of sick leave". Unions and left organizations have loudly applauded the "right of recall" sections in their by-laws or constitutions. Socialist industrial unionists are especially likely to point to Marx' praising the Paris Communards for establishing the principle of immediate recall of all elected officials.

We are told that having this right written down on a piece of paper somehow "guarantees" rank and file control of an organization. Yet, if we look closely at socialist and labor groups, an amazing fact emerges: not one of these organizations regularly exercises this "right". In extraordinarily rare circumstances, an isolated person may be recalled...once every twenty or fifty years. Personally, I've never seen it happen. Have you?

All analogies can be stretched only so far before they snap. The difference between the "right of sick leave" and the "right of recall" is this: the "right of sick leave" is compatible with socialist organization of production and should be continued and extended. The "right of recall" is fundamentally impossible to apply at the point of production. But, the contradiction remains that the right to replace officers is indispensable for socialist industrial unionism.

The reality of preaching and practicing

Officers in socialist organizations as well as union bureaucrats have gone to great lengths to ensure that they will never be recalled. A major reason is their paycheck. For a person who lives off of a party or union, a recall petition is an unemployment notice. In the more grotesque of American unions, the bureaucrats will kill anyone who poses a serious threat. Catering to an intellectual audience, socialists are far more sophisticated in their methods of blocking recall. The individual submitting it didn't follow some arcane procedure. The petitioning section was unfortunately suspended. The delegate who was to submit the motion of recall to the convention did not have his credentials approved. You're more likely to see Ronald Reagan lead a gay rights demonstration through the streets of Moscow than you are to see a paid socialist bureaucrat allow the membership to have an honest debate and vote on her/his removal from office.

Ever since the demise of the IWW, American socialist industrial unionists have had a very difficult time relating to reality. After their retreat from actual
class struggle, they became armchair revolutionaries content with spinning apologies for abstaining from ongoing movements. This led to the idealist viewpoint that, if a paper program "calls for" economic organizations having the right of recall, it is totally irrelevant if a political organization actually practices it.

But, every political organization simultaneously has two programs:

1. what it preaches (its "paper program"); and,
2. what it practices (the day-to-day relationships between people within the organization).

The first may be thought of as the "formal program", the second as the "informal program". While most schizophremics perceive things that do not exist, socialists are prone to hallucinating the non-existence of the informal program. This often makes it difficult for them to relate to rank and file workers who observe the way socialists act toward each other much more closely than the way their paper program says a future society is supposed to act.

If the formal and informal programs are consistent, they buttress each other. Part of the strength of vanguardism is that their ideological justification of party hierarchies is perfectly in line with the way they spend all their time figuring out how to dominate people. Difficulties of organizations such as the Socialist Labor Party are exacerbated by the fact that people recruited by democratic phrases find an informal atmosphere where no one can voice differences.

Industrial unionists tend to slip into a ridiculous fetish on the legalistic form of rights while ignoring their substance in practice (or lack thereof). IF YOU DO NOT PRACTICE RECALL, IT IS ABSURD TO FANTASIZE THAT WHAT IS WRITTEN ON A PIECE OF PAPER SOMEHOW "GUARANTEES" IT TO YOU AS A RIGHT.

When they imagine that "constitutional guarantees" of democracy are what makes recall important, socialists miss what is its true revolutionary potential. Removing officers can potentially prefigure the total reorganization of industrial relationships of power and subordination. Bureaucratic class relationships in Soviet-type societies are based on the same people having positions of power year after year. If we can nip that practice in the bud during revolutionary crisis in America, we will have gone a long way toward developing true industrial democracy.

Removing without recalling

If industrial democracy is threatened by power-mongers' holding onto offices, industrial efficiency is devastated by incompetents' being in responsible positions year after year. The central problem with the "right of recall" goes beyond the fact that political organizations don't use it -- the problem is that economic organizations can't use it. This is because the act of recall simultaneously does two things:
1. removal; and,
2. humiliation.

Most of us are familiar with a supervisor or bureaucrat who is extremely nice and
gets along well with everyone, but just can't get the job done. If the person could simply be removed, the boss would do just that. But workers wouldn't stand for it. Partly because they wouldn't want a slave-driver instead. But, at least as important is the fact that the overwhelming majority of workers will not tolerate a basically nice person being publicly dragged across the coals. Democracy at the point of production with the "right of recall" will not change that concern. Most workers would produce below quota and endure the wrath of the "council of councils" rather than humiliate a person who they like but is miscoordinating the show.

The realization that recall involves both removal and humiliation allows for a solution: split the removal/humiliation process apart so that it is possible to remove without humiliating. The "right" to remove officers and coordinators would be guaranteed by the action of removing them in practice. Remove them this month; remove them next month; and, remove them every month to come. This may seem like a nonstop uproar that would be disastrous if emulated at the point of production. If everything were totally changed every month, it would destroy continuity and coordination, resulting in nothing getting done.

But, there is a way to preserve continuity at the same time as having continuous change. Continuity can be maintained by investing decision-making power in committees rather than individuals. Part of the committee can be changed each rotation period while the majority remains in office. For example, suppose that a Coordinating Committee (CC) of eight people is elected to make interim political decisions between conventions. The 8 can be elected for 1 year terms, with ⅛ of the members removed every 3 months. At that time, 2 new members are elected; but, 6 previous members remain. If a CC member is truly removed, that member is not allowed to stand for reelection at that time. The membership would have at least 3 months to evaluate how the CC performed without that member and whether they should reelect him/her.

When the person was again eligible, "recalling" would be transformed into "not reelecting." This transformation would encompass several features. First, a number of people would probably be candidates for election at the same time. Since only 2 can be elected, all others are not elected. No single candidate stands alone and humiliated as during a recall election. Moreover, such "non-election" is not a black and white affair as is an explicit recall vote. The non-relected candidate has another opportunity 3 months down the road and in another 3 months after that. As things currently stand, to recall an officer would be so devastating that that person would probably not stand for election for years (if not drop out of the organization). Knowing this, members voting for recall must choose between losing the talents of a good leader or enduring his arrogance endlessly. Non-reelection offers the milder reprimand of telling the candidate to mend his ways if he wants another shot at the CC in 3 months. Thus, automatically removing people after their term of office means that the membership has the right of recall in actuality because they exercise removal in practice.

The greatest danger to any rotation system is the decrease in efficiency from losing talented people. However, the balance between rotation and efficiency may be achieved by altering the length of time a person must be out of office before standing for reelection. If an organization is small and/or short of human resources, it might not have more than 10 qualified people who have the energy to put into being on the CC. In that event, CC members would only be off for 3
months before being able to stand for reelection and the rank and file would only have the illusion of being able to recall or non-elect their officers.

In contrast, a healthy organization would have dozens of members qualified and eager to devote their time to serving on the CC. In that event, the organization could require officers to wait 36 months prior to standing for reelection after an expired term. If it were possible to reach such a point, it would be extremely difficult for any clique to gain permanent control. Since a very large portion of the membership would rotate through the CC, this would contribute decisively to true rank and file control.

The problem remains as to how to get from here to there. The most common difficulty is not having enough people who want the job who you want to elect. However, an organization can set the stage for its own restructuring by (1) adopting the principle of a waiting period prior to eligibility for reelection, and (2) allowing for flexibility in the duration of the waiting period. A membership feeling that too few of its numbers are qualified can say to the newly elected CC: "Fine, we realize that there are only a handful of people capable of running our day-to-day operation. We will allow you to do so; but, only on this condition—that you are able to recruit and train a few new people to take over your jobs so that the waiting period can be expanded from 3 to 6 months at next year's convention."

If such a process could ever be set in motion, there is good reason to believe that the duration of the waiting period would continue to expand. First, it would require all officers to adopt the principle of training others to replace themselves so that the habit of grabbing for permanent positions of power ceases to be an option. Second, as the waiting period prior to reelection expands, an increasingly large number of people should become willing to participate. One of the greatest barriers to the rank and file's becoming involved with running an organization is that people with common sense realize that what is held out as "temporary" can actually be a lifelong trap if there's no replacement when the term of office is supposedly up. If people are prohibited from being reelected, more and more average members will volunteer. Meanwhile, the power-mongering careerists will feel increasingly uncomfortable in an organization that prohibits them from holding office continuously.

However, the greatest possibility for structural change comes from involving new people. A few people are unambiguously capable and some clearly are not; but, most are unsure about their own qualifications. Others are uncertain if they will handle the responsibility or not. As long as election to office is likely to be a lifetime undertaking, we are much more prone to choose the competent person over someone about whom we have doubts. But, once we're sure that a position is truly temporary, we feel much freer to vote for someone whose star is yet to shine. And, we're more comfortable encouraging the clearly competent to tone down their arrogance and become more responsive to the rank and file while waiting for the next round of elections 3 months down the road.

What will this mean for reorganizing production during socialist revolution?

One of the more tragic parts of Daniel Daleon's writings is his idea that the political party should disband the day after the revolution to pave the way for so-
cial reorganization by industrial unions. His successors have pushed this theory beyond all reasonable bounds as they argue that the political party's impending dissolution justifies the most contemptible police-state internal tactics. This supposedly poses no danger to socialism, since the party will play no "creative" role in organizing socialist relations of production. All of this is, of course, absurd. Socialist parties will play a very great role in creating whatever gods and demons emerge from the head of revolution, even if that role is limited to individual members' bringing their habits into the new socialist industrial union government. If socialists never practice removal, but only wave pieces of paper that profess empty abstractions of the "right of recall," then, this is the practice they will bring into the new social formations. Taking this as a cue, workers would reorganize the shop floor so that they would be "guaranteed" the right to recall those elected to coordinate production. But, there would be no wheels set in motion to actually rotate or remove officers and there would be no one with any experience doing it. The stage would be set for the "democratic" election of lifetime officers who would gradually evolve into a new bureaucratic ruling class.

The single most important reason for putting rotation and removal into effect in political organizations is to create a number of people who (1) have practiced substantive democracy, and (2) know how to publicly counterpose it to bureaucracy. They will then have the experience for applying it on the shop floor during the revolutionary crisis of workplace occupations.

Revolutionary economic organization will require a tremendous amount of coordination and discipline. The essential issue during revolutionary periods is whether these come from work groups' coordinating themselves or whether a new elite of disciplinarians will arise.

Daniel DeLeon has been praised and condemned for the way he described the need for discipline:

...just as soon as you have an orchestra, you must also have an orchestra director -- a central directing authority...
It needs this central directing authority of the orchestra master to rap all the players to order at a given moment; to point out when they shall begin; when to have these play louder, when to have those play softer; when to put in this instrument, when to silence that; to regulate the time of all and preserve the accord. The orchestra director is not an oppressor, nor is his baton an insignia of tyranny; he is not there to bully anybody; he is as necessary or important as any or all of the members of the orchestra. (Reform or Revolution? 1896, pp. 7-8)

DeLeon was wrong, but not because of liberal and anarchist complaints that a central directing authority is inherently despotic. He is exactly on target when arguing against the view that industrial society can proceed with every individual and every group doing as it pleases and ignoring others.

But, writing 20 years before the Bolshevik Revolution, DeLeon did not understand that the same directors, in power year after year would result in consolidation of their power in a way that no paper "right to recall" could undo. Had he lived through the Bolshevism of the 1920's, it is hard to imagine his continuing to ridicule worries over "bossism". Making a critical amendment to DeLeon, we can say that a socialist orchestra absolutely requires direction; but, by a director who
is chosen by the orchestra and rotates among orchestra members.

Of course, most work does not require the "one-man management" of DeLeon's orchestra director. Most productive tasks can be coordinated by a committee, which allows for much smoother transitions. Whether production is coordinated by a single individual or a committee, most people are unwilling to humiliate their fellow workers by recalling them, except in the most extreme circumstances (by which time, they may well have lost the right). If recall were ever to be used widely, those recalled would either be so demoralized that the work group would loose their talents for a very long time or they would be seething with resentment and quietly planning ways to recall their callers. One group after another would be recalled as the workplace degenerated into a cesspool of interpersonal hostility. Whether the result was demoralization or hostility, the widespread use of recall would so devastate production that people would welcome professional bureaucrats who would bring stability at the expense of participatory democracy.

Conclusion

Summing up, a "right of recall" which is not practiced does not exist. An organization which preaches recall without ever removing anyone has a de facto anti-recall program. The informal program of practice is far more important than what their paper program "calls for". It is the program that non-party workers will use as their model of revolutionary activity.

Socialist industrial unionists often condemn the bureaucratic structure of this or that group because of the "personality" of the current leadership. Short-sighted in the extreme, this attitude misses the fact that "personality" does not develop in a social vacuum -- all of our personalities grow in interaction with those around us. The "despotic personalities" of those who lord over a group cannot be separated from a membership which allows and passively encourages those personalities. Hallucinating that organizational problems can be cured by substituting "good" officers for "bad" officers is a thoroughly undialectical approach which ignores the way people are changed by being "entrusted" with power. The problem of democratic socialist organization is a microcosm of a major contradiction in the society at large: it is the question of how to establish equalitarian relationships with people that function over time. Until we seriously address our own political relationships to each other, what we "call for" in some distant economic organization is nothing but hot air.

In other words, building ongoing democratic relationships is at least as important as what we write down on paper. An organization which is simultaneously democratic in theory and democratic in practice will be a powerful example if its members participate in workplace occupations. People who have practiced overcoming political elitism will have the essential experience for participating in the birth of true economic democracy.

Don Fitz
St. Louis MO
Independence Day, 1986
Dear DB:

In the last DB Keith Sorel makes some comments upon ideas & action, and the politics of the Workers Solidarity Alliance, which I would like to reply to.

Sorel says that we do not give "the faintest definition of the content of...'Libertarian socialism'." Yet I think the WSA statement of principles, "Where We Stand," does in fact give a fairly clear statement of what we mean by "workers self-management of the society":

...self-management cannot be isolated in the separate workplaces. The economy as a whole must be self-managed by the entire workforce. To do this, it is necessary to create some means for bringing together workers from the different industries and localities in order to decide what to produce, what sort of technological development to have, and how to organize the defense of the revolution....through conferences of delegates, elected to present the ideas and goals developed by the base and approved by the local worker assemblies. This would provide people with a means of establishing priorities for production that are not determined by bureaucratic decree or the market but by collective, democratic decision-making...."

I think this paragraph refutes Sorel's insinuation that we are advocates of "commodity production."

On a number of more specific points, such as "labor time vouchers," I would point out that this might be as much a matter of disagreement within WSA as among the F3's correspondents. If this makes us "not authentically anti-capitalist", then I guess the same must be said for other DB correspondents.

What disturbed Keith, in past conversations I had with him, was that I expressed doubts about a certain traditional concept of communism, which he tends to accept uncritically. If society abolishes money, and people simply take goods from the available stock, how to decide what to produce? How to decide how much of each item? If there is no mechanism for individual consumers to arrange with individual producers for the production of things they want, then it would seem that the only way anything could be produced in a communist society would be if the whole society makes a collective decision to produce it.

A problem arises, however, where there exists a difference in taste or desire or opinion among the populace. If record production were decided by majority vote of the society, how many jazz records would be produced? How is the diversity of taste and desires to be accounted for? Or, to take another serious matter, how is it to be decided which books get published? How is it to be decided who has access to the pages of newspapers and magazines? Who has access to air time on TV and radio? It seems to me that having such matters decided simply by majority vote in an assembly, or workers congress, could easily end
up restricting freedom of expression. Don't we want to protect the rights of expression of minorities? And how could we do that?

A possible solution to this problem is to introduce something like "proportional representation" into production of consumer goods and access to means of communication. To take an example, the community might decide to allow any group of broadcast producers to have access to air time if they can demonstrate that they have a certain amount of support among the populace. This could be ascertained by an annual vote; perhaps this would be done by a mailing to all residents of a particular area by the Broadcast Industry Council. Thus, if group A gets 5% of the "vote", it might be allotted 5% of the total available air time. If there were only 10 available channels in the community, group A might share a channel with other production groups.

The community's collective decision-making organs would be left with making such decisions as, How much of the total budget would go to broadcasting (e.g. Are new transmitters needed? etc.) But the division of broadcast time would be arranged directly between individual listeners and individual broadcast groups. In this last respect, this idea of "proportional representation" is similar to the market in that what is produced is determined by individual consumers' direct relations to individual groups of producers. In this case, the "direct relation" is some sort of vote.

Nonetheless, this scheme is not a form of "commodity production." The products of a broadcast group are the various programs they send out over the air waves. Anybody can "consume" these "products" if they've got access to a functioning radio receiver. They don't have to "pay" anything for it. But the community must determine how much of society's total labor time is to be allocated to the broadcast industry, and this would be done collectively, not through market allocation. But within that totality, the decision about who has access -- and thus which programs are aired -- is determined by the votes of individuals. And the individual broadcast groups make their own autonomous decisions about their programs -- they don't have to get anybody's sanction before broadcasting a program.

This is just one possible solution for a particular problem in the concept of communism, especially as it applies to a highly developed and diverse society. Keith may not like my solution, but I have never heard him provide any solution. Keith can ignore the problem if he likes, but the problem of how to effectively protect diversity of taste and opinion under communism will still exist.

The second criticism that Sorel makes of WSA is in relation to the Spanish revolution. He says we "identify, as all anarcho-syndicalist groupings do, with the important role played by the anarcho-syndicalists in the Spanish Civil War of 1936-39..." This is not quite correct. We "identify" our politics by our understanding of the situation of workers, and how workers' self-emancipation can be achieved. I don't stake my politics on what happened in some distant land decades ago, but on my observations and thinking about the
situation of workers here and now.

Certainly it is true that we can learn things from the Spanish revolution, and from all of humanity's efforts to free itself. Certainly there were many inspiring things done by libertarian workers in Spain in the '30s. But from that it doesn't follow that we should simply copy some other movement.

As to Spanish anarcho-syndicalists, Sorel says we "can't offer any explanation" for their collaboration with the Popular Front government. Actually we have offered such an explanation (see "Workers Power & the Spanish Revolution," ideas & action #6), and we are having a debate on this question in our up-coming issue (#7).

Basically, my reply to Sorel would be to issue a challenge to him: Why is it that workers ever collaborate with their bosses? Why do workers vote for "concessions" in contract negotiations? Why do workers accept all sorts of compromises with the system? Why do workers look to governmental reforms? Why isn't the American working class revolutionary right now? I don't believe that it is plausible to answer these questions merely in terms of "brain-washing", "miseducation", "false consciousness", etc.

In my observation of the labor movement and workers rebellions, it seems to me that how far people are willing to consider changes at a given time is dependent upon their sense of what power they have at that time. I think the (predominantly anarchist-unionist) workers movement of Catalonia decided to not to try overthrowing the Catalan government in July of '36 because they felt isolated, both within Spain and internationally.

But once the CNT had decided not to carry out its program of workers councils to replace the state, they had to way to satisfy the desire of the working class for unity against Franco. Thus, they fell into collaboration with the social-democratic government because their lives were threatened and they didn't feel they had the power to "go all the way."

The local union militants embarked upon a revolutionary course of action: seizure of industries, organizing union militias, local militia patrols to replace the police, etc. But the revolution was not consolidated: workers congresses and coordinating committees -- to unify the militias and replace the state and coordinate a socialized economy -- were not set up. They weren't set up because the revolutionary unions (CNT and UGT) were not prepared to overthrow the government. Consolidation of the revolution was put off "until Franco is beaten." But a revolutionary "dual power" situation can't stand still -- a revolution that pursues half-measures will soon be undermined.

Anarchist unionism was the main influence among the working class of northeastern Spain, and this explains why the revolution went so
far in the direction of workers management. But a proletarian revolution cannot be successful if it is isolated to a small region (Catalonia is about the size of the San Francisco Bay Area) -- and the Spanish revolution is simply one more indication of this truth. No ideology, however "revolutionary," can overcome this basic fact.

Contrary to what Sorel insinuates, we disagree with the CNT's collaboration with the Popular Front government, and insofar as we "identify" with particular libertarian groups/activists in the Spanish revolution, we would identify with the role of Durruti and the Nosotros group, who pressed for the CNT unions to overthrow the Catalan government in July of '36, the Libertarian Youth Federation of Catalonia, who always consistently opposed the CNT's government collaboration, and the Friends of Durruti Group, who urged the workers to carry on the fight against the State in the May 1937 general strike and street-fighting in Barcelona.

Sorel favors the tradition of "workers councils" over revolutionary unionism, but if we were to use Sorel's logic, we could argue, "The German workers councils in 1918 preserved capitalism, the Russian workers councils of 1917 set up a bureaucratic state-capitalist monstrosity, the Hungarian workers councils of '36 demanded that a Stalinist hack (Imre Nagy) be put in state power; this shows the counter-revolutionary nature of workers councils." I think this is a rather simplistic type of argument.

Comradely, c/o ideas & action.
Richard Laubach PO Box 40400 San Francisco, CA 94140

SOCIALISM AND DEMOCRACY

What would council democracy (socialist industrial unionism) be like? Would there be controversy? Compromise? Discussion? Or would it be a sham? A revolutionary organization must pre-figure the new society. If it does not allow for different points of view, then it will stifle the revolution itself.

Can revolutionaries function within a multi-tendency organization? What if democratic socialist group "A" invites group "B" to join? These questions are not out of the blue. They are related to a concrete situation. I am a member of both "A" and "B."

Group "A" members hold a variety of views. Some would definitely not agree with DeLeon or socialist industrial unionism. But there is open commitment to inner party democracy. This commitment is what attracted me to "A." Group "B" calls itself socialist industrial unionist. The core of group "B" founded it as an alternative to so-called democratic centralism of other left parties. I joined group "B" for this reason.

Though I have been aggrieved at times after reading the literature published by both groups, I believe that a genuine socialist society will be full of diversity -- the stuff of real progress.

One may elect to join a socialist party. One may withdraw. But in a revolutionary society, to withdraw, or to refuse to participate in the
Members of the DB Committee

Dear Comrades,

Our cash intake increased substantially since July 3. Unfortunately the outflow increased even faster. DB19 has 32 pages compared to our usual 24, and we are circulating everyone on the mailing list, which means that we must pay for over twice the usual 250 copies. And there will be a corresponding increase in postage costs. So even our improved receipts didn't cover the cost of this issue, and we will have to resort of deficit financing. On top of everything else we have almost enough copy to publish another issue.

I suspect that the lesson to be learned from all this is not to publish an issue for the whole mailing list, but to include a subscription blank during the year with each extra copy we mail out.

Those of you who have already resubscribed will have on your address label a new code B24, B30, as the case may be, the number being the DB issue number with which your sub expires. In the future the entire remittance will be applied to the subscription unless a portion is designated for a donation. This leaves us with the problem of past remittances all of which may have been intended for subs but part of which I may have counted a donation. If this happened to you, please take the time to inform us. In the case of large donations—we made the breakoff point $50, we are simply extending subscriptions indefinitely. Those in that category will find a "*" on their label. I earnestly hope, though, that we will have no decline in donations. We can't keep going without them, as you may have noticed from reading the financial report.

CONTRIBUTIONS

From July 4 through August 27, we received the following donations: Ed Jahn $2; Ben Perry $7; Adam Buick $7; Mike Gunderloy $2; Mark Shipway $4.23; Mike Riemerthal $2; Frank Smith $20; Ronnie Somerlott $12; Harry Wade $20; Frank Girard $22. Total $96.23. Thank you.

FINANCES

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**Balance**  August 27, 1986  $53.44 (deficit)

Additional bad news is that the bulk mailing cost to mail out DB19 will amount to nearly $50.

Fraternally submitted

Frank Girard
for the Committee
decisionary-making process out for fear of losing one's ideological purity is losing by default. If revolutionary politics must pre-figure the new democracy that we advocate, then what is the harm in joining a somewhat larger body of democratic socialists, even though they may not be explicitely SDU-ist? Can we realistically expect that revolutionary councils of workers will be without factions? I hope not!!

I pose these questions to help us examine our own commitments to democracy. Socialism and democracy are synonymous.

Tim Mills
Belvidere, IL 61008

FROM THE FUTURE
by Rich Poland

(The setting is sometime in the distant future. A old man is talking to a young fellow. Let us tune in...)

"This is a sad story. A story about a movement that was for true economic and political freedom. A movement that was for the liberation of all people. A movement that wanted to end exploitation, war, starvation, racism and any other evils that were caused by or agitated by the evil, unfair system called capitalism. It was a good idea, my friend, and many people knew it."

"Unfortunately, the movement was divided, divided badly. However, the causes of many of the divisions of this movement were of such small importance that it now seems almost unbelievable that this wonderful cause was killed by these little, petty issues."

"What's that? You want some examples? Well, the first difference was over the interpretation of a saying that they all used and believed in. They, each group in this movement, called for a system of society in which everyone would 'give according to their ability and take according to their need.' I agree with you, my friend, it is a good idea. However, the movement got sidetracked on this subject because each group had different interpretations as to how this would be handled in the new society. Some groups called for the use of 'labor vouchers', others called for 'free access' and others called for some sort of other measurement or non-measurement to be used in the producing and distribution of the goods in the new society. Somehow, this stupid little non-issue became a focal point and helped to drive the different organizations further apart. Somehow, these revolutionaries couldn't come to realize that this issue was not for them to decide, but that instead it should be left up to those who would build the new society after the revolution."

"Another issue that divided the cause was over some nation that called itself the example of the new society. In reality, this was just a cover to help keep a new ruling class in power, so that they too could enslave and exploit the workers of that country. The different groups in this movement all realized that this nation was not the new society. However, they foolishly spent large amounts of time fighting over the definition
Dear Comrades,

The difference in attitude between the socialists of today and DeLeon's kind can be summed up in one sentence from DeLeon: "The revolutionary organization of today can be compared to the head of a lance that is followed by the shaft, the rest of the working class and others." Unfortunately DeLeon died in 1914, before the Russian Revolution when progressive minded people's hearts and minds were set ablaze with wishful thinking. Unfortunately the Socialist Labor Party rode the crest of that tide and still does for what propaganda value it can obtain. If the SLP still had the quality, understanding, and character of DeLeon, it would have announced that industrial feudalism is established when the Communist Party replaced the workers' and peasants' power of the Soviets. Even though the SLP catered to the hopes of the masses based on ignorance, it has not attracted a large following and is defensive in its approach to major issues where the Soviet Union is involved.

If any of you are agreed that the Soviet Union has industrial feudalism and that a DeLeonist movement acting on that understanding can be accepted by the working class and all the people of the world, you should make yourselves known so we may organize for an invincible purpose. The time is ripe because capitalism is on its way into the death throes of the longest and deepest economic depression ever. The credit system is sick to death with bad loans, and without expanding credit the mountains of surplus value would glut the economy to a standstill. However, Socialism is not inevitable when capitalism collapses because a new dark age of industrial feudalism is also possible, to paraphrase DeLeon. Since the Soviet Union already has industrial feudalism, it may be a dominant factor in the reorganization of the world in its pattern with the compliance of the leading plutocrats and other elements of out ruling class. Surely our ruling class wants to be on top even if there is no capitalist system possible. Instead of owners of industry we will be ruled by war lords and inquisitors in a worldwide feudal society. Let us now put the cards on the table for us and for the American people and win the world together as free and enlightened men and women.

Fraternally yours,

Monroe Prussack

263 Hutton St.

Jersey City, NJ 07307
If what this society was. Some called it 'state capitalism', others called it 'deformed workers state', and others called it 'bureaucratic state despotism'. Because of this petty little difference, the different groups stayed apart. Somehow, they couldn't see that they all realized that this wasn't the new society. They put their pride before wisdom and stayed apart, even though they could have united into one organization that could have taken all these different interpretations into account and at the same time put forth to the workers that this nation that was in question was not the new society. This was the important issue, but somehow they missed it. Just think of it! We continue to slave today because those people couldn't settle on such a non-issue. Instead, they used this small non-issue to drive themselves into further isolation from each other and the workers."

"These different organizations used to fight, very wickedly might I add, amongst themselves as to who was the real organization fighting for the new society. Because of their refusal to listen to what each other was saying, and putting their pride in front of their true interests, they couldn't realize that they were fighting for the same thing. They also fought over tactics. Each claiming that their method was the only way to obtain the new society. Each of them put their narrow minded views into 'party lines' and refused to listen to any other alternatives, thereby isolating themselves from each other even more and also further from the workers. They somehow couldn't realize that each form of tactics was valuable in its own way. Think about how foolish it is to set your tactics down in stone when your enemy doesn't hesitate to use any tactic at all in stopping you from achieving your goal. To make matters worse, they would get together at meetings and spend most of their time screaming at each other and calling each other 'reformists', 'sectarians', 'fakers', 'anarchists' and any other word they considered an insult at each other. They literally attacked each other so badly that workers stayed away in droves because they were turned off by such displays of arrogance and childish behavior. Instead of fighting the true enemy, the capitalist class, they instead fought amongst themselves, dividing and weakening their movement until finally, after a long painful decline, it died. Quite sad isn't it?"

"It is quite astounding to me that these people, who had so many wonderful ideas, couldn't get together into a united organization. A organization that would have reflected the future society they talked and dreamed about. A organization in which each person could have put forth his/her tactics, ideas, comments and thoughts without having to endure a barrage of idiotic sniping and criticisms from their comrades. Why couldn't they realize they were all fighting for the same future? If they had, we wouldn't be living in the hell of today's industrial feudalism"

(The old man holds his head in his hands and cries for several minutes. Then, the young fellow says something and the old man lifts his head and says...)"
Dear Comrades,

In his letter in DB 18 on "Neo-utopianism and Anti-neo-utopianism" Frank Girard poses the question of whether or not the world is capable of sustaining its present population of 5 billion inhabitants at the same average standard of living as now prevails in North America and Western Europe, at least not without further polluting and disturbing the natural environment.

The first point to be made is that world resources are quite sufficient to feed, clothe, house and otherwise sustain 5 billion human beings (and more if need be). Any number of studies by experts in the field of agriculture, nutrition, etc confirm this, see for example the September 1976 special issue of the Scientific American on "Food and Agriculture".

But, to come to Frank Girard's second point, can this be done without harming the environment in terms of pollution and exhaustion of non-renewable resources? Capitalism, by its very nature as a system motivated by the pursuit of relatively short-term economic gain (monetary profits), is inherently incapable of taking into account the long-term considerations which ecological science teaches are vitally important. Capitalism uses the cheapest resources available at any time without concern for the longer term consequences. Hence its reckless consumption of non-renewable resources, its equally reckless recourse to dirty and dangerous processes such as nuclear fission, its plunder and waste of mineral and water supplies, and its general pollution of the environment by chemical and other industrial waste products.

But the question that needs to be asked here is whether this pollution and waste is inherent in industrial production as such or whether it is a result of the application of industrial productive techniques within the capitalist system of production for profit. Industrial production, indeed all production including agriculture, does by its very nature upset the pre-existing ecological balance, but this is not a reason in itself for rejecting it since ecological science teaches not that any particular balance with nature is to be preferred to another but merely that some sustainable balance should exist. In short, there is no inherent reason why industrial production should not be compatible with a sustainable balance with nature.

To start at the beginning, we can imagine an industrial society whose main source of energy would be renewable sources such as solar energy, water, wind and tidal power, etc. We can also imagine that this industrial society would practise the systematic recycling of metals; because of its economic value this already happens today with gold of which it is said that 90 per cent of the amount mined since the time of the Pharaohs is still in use. If this can be done for gold, it can be done for other metals too. Similarly, goods could be made to last and not to break down or wear out after a given period of time (the "planned obsolescence" denounced by Vance Packard in his 1960 book The Waste Makers). Resources could also be saved by making machines easier to repair and by standardizing their spare parts.
Pollution could be avoided either by abandoning certain processes altogether (as, for instance, nuclear fission) or by finding ways of re-using or neutralising chemical by-products without releasing onto the environment, as is technologically possible but generally not practised under capitalism because of the financial cost.

In these ways, industrial production could be integrated into a sustainable ecological balance with the rest of nature. Of course this can never happen under capitalism because of its competitive and profit-seeking nature, but it could happen in a world organised on a different basis, of common ownership, democratic control and production geared solely towards producing for use not sale or profit. In other words, in a socialist world.

There are two other reasons for supposing that a socialist world could maintain industrial production methods (even if not necessarily those used today under capitalism) without making the planet unlivable in the medium or long term. First, many of those who (correctly) warn of this danger often unconsciously assume the continuation of capitalism. Thus a frequent error is to take the energy, mineral and water consumption of a leading industrial power such as the US and then divide this by the number of inhabitants to reach a per capita consumption figure; this figure is then multiplied by 5 billion to arrive at impossibly high figures for what energy, mineral and water consumption would have to be if the whole world's population were to live at "American standards".

The error in this reasoning is that it attributes all the waste of capitalism to the individual consumer. But this is clearly invalid since, as I've just tried to show, it is possible to imagine an industrial society which could provide us with the same standards we expect today (better in fact) such as electricity, hot and cold running water, etc without the waste of capitalism. Once the waste of capitalism has been eliminated -- and this waste includes not just the reckless use of non-renewable resources, neglect of recycling, etc, but also all the resources used up by armaments and the armed forces, by all financial and commercial activities, and by the bureaucracy of government -- then the per capita consumption of energy, minerals and water needed to sustain a standard of living equivalent to today's average in America and Europe would be cut drastically. The waste of the armed forces, buying and selling, and government is immense, perhaps as much as half today's production.

The second point is that, although initially there will have to be an increase in production after socialism is established, to clear up the mess inherited from capitalism and in particular world hunger, disease and ignorance. The populations of the so-called Third World have the same right as those of North America and Western Europe to a living place supplied with electricity, water and an efficient system of sewage disposal. But once this initial problem has been solved, production levels can begin to even off and become stabilized or tied to the population level (which could also be stabilised). Socialism could do this as being a society geared solely to producing for use,
it would not be under the blind pressure that capitalism is to keep on producing more and more, and more and more cheaply, in order to accumulate capital out of profits. The insane logic of "growth for growth's sake" which governs capitalism will no longer operate and socialism can adopt a policy of no (or slow) growth. After all, once needs are met what is the sense of continuing production?

So socialism could establish, on the basis of carefully chosen industrial methods of production, a stable and therefore easily sustainable balance with the rest of nature and at the same time meet the material needs of the whole population of the world. And even during the period while production was being expanded, ecological considerations can still be satisfied since profit considerations would no longer count.

But what about access to goods and services? I can't see any real objection to this being free right from the establishment of socialism. One reason many people find this hard to accept is that they believe that, under conditions of free access, people would take more than they needed and that this would lead to waste and the breakdown of the system. But why should they? When people can be assured that the stores will always be stocked with what they are likely to need, it makes no sense to take more than you need; this would merely clutter up the place where you live. Of course if you take the average person under capitalism today, with present-day attitudes, and suddenly place them in conditions of free access, he or she might well start to hoard (for fear that the bonanza wouldn't continue) or demand useless prestige articles to try to match the parasitical ruling class we are today taught to ape.

But transporting a capitalist-minded population into a socialist world is not what the SPGB/WSP advocates. Because of its very nature as a society without a coercive State and so based on voluntary cooperation, socialism can only work on the basis of majority understanding and active participation. Indeed, this is why it can only be established by, and with the active participation of, a socialist-minded majority. This means that those living in a socialist society will understand all its implications and so will be prepared to behave in a responsible way and not go around demanding Rolls Royces, yachts and gold-plated toilets like the decadent members of the present ruling class.

In any event, people would only have free access to what it had been democratically decided should be made available for consumption and not to anything whatsoever some individual might happen to fancy. Not everybody could go to the Moon if society had not decided to make provision for this. Nor will people be able to kill themselves and others by smoking cigarettes if society decides not to grow tobacco. People in socialist society can be expected to opt for a normal, healthy life based on living in a clean and quite environment, consuming real, natural foodstuffs and using solid household goods made to last not to become obsolescent.

It would just not occur to such a population to take more than it
needed to lead such a life, and so they would not need to be restrained, disciplined or rationed into not doing so. People would also be able to understand, and voluntary restrict their consumption of certain articles, if in the very early days of socialism it should prove necessary to give an absolute priority to using some kinds of good to relieve starvation, inherited from capitalism, in some part of the world.

To sum up then, socialist society can institute free access to the available goods according to people's self-determined needs because, firstly, resources will be sufficient to meet these needs without having to harm the environment and, secondly, because people just won't want to take more than they need.

--Adam Bulck, 21 rue Gambetta, 77400 Thorigny, France, Europe.

Dear Frank,

Given that my point was that we all use language in peculiar ways, Louis' letter in refutation, confirms rather than contradicts my main point.

Marx is not so unvarying in his views as Louis would suggest, his position in polemics with Lesselle is very different from that in polemics with Bakunin, and varies again from his articles in the N.Y. Herald Tribune; and in all of these he departs from the common line of the four passages Louis quotes. But even if that were not so, it would not alter the fact that for any ordinary usage of language you cannot have a government unless (a) it has someone to govern, & (b) it has an area within which its rule is predominant, & (c) it has an executive apparatus; which three factors constitute in ordinary parlance a state.

A government in normal English is a body of people set aside from the commonality whose function is to govern. Louis attempts to show, from Marx's belated support for the Paris Commune & his post facto attribution to it of the role of a revolutionary government, that a direct-democracy body in which everyone had a direct say in the running of events, constituted a stateless government, wielding authority (presumably over its own members.) In fact the Communards did not regard themselves as a revolutionary government and most were opposed to wasting time setting up such a body; had circumstances been different it might well have degenerated into a state; but if the entity of stateless government ever existed or could exist, it would be at most a very short-lived (weeks not months) transitional stage.

Leninists have no hesitation in claiming the Commune as an example of a workers' state, there is at least a logic in their position, that I fail to perceive in Louis's

fraternally

Leurens Otter
(Note for those readers who do not get the Discussion Bulletin regularly: The article below is Part 2 of a three-part series on an international effort to build a left-wing peace movement in the 1950s. Part 1 appeared in DB18.)

THE THIRD CAMP MOVEMENT OF THE 1950's (also known as THIRD WAY) - 2

The second international conference of the Third Way Movement, meeting in London, 3rd to 6th September, 1955, was concerned with three main themes: the threat of war, human exploitation and tyranny, and the definition of a Third Way out of the human dilemma.

In his keynote address A. J. Muste, the American delegate from the F.O.R., encapsulated all three when he said:

"What is really needed is not merely a cessation of nuclear warfare, the end of the balance of terror, a series of truces, nor even co-existence. What is needed is a new Society."

The Third Way Movement, he went on, repudiated not only the military preparations of both power blocs, but also the over-centralised, over-mechanised society which deprived the individual of an effective voice in his own affairs, an outlet for his creative abilities, and a "sense of mattering."

The new climate which resulted from the Geneva Conference* had given to the world a respite and an opportunity, but if the nations retained the society which had led them to the brink of nuclear warfare that respite was likely to be brief.

To attend disarmament conferences without at the same time considering the consequences of disarmament; to talk of co-existence except in the context of peaceful social revolution, was both dishonest and misleading. It might well be the smoke screen behind which the nations were secretly preparing evermore deadly weapons.

The task was not an easy one, he contended. We had been left entirely without guidance for the formulation of a program. In America there was no Socialist movement to speak of. In Britain the Labour Party had sought to impose the welfare State upon an economy geared to war preparation; it had created something vastly different from the "workers' control" and "society of equals" envisaged by William Morris and the early socialists. There was no international Socialist movement comparable to the international Communist movement. It remained for the Third Way or the Third Camp to provide the revolutionary vision from which democratic socialism could spring.

*A. J.* was supported by Sir Richard Acland, the founder of Common Wealth who had abandoned his creation to become a Labour Member of Parliament, but who earlier that year had resigned his seat in protest at the decision of the Conservative government, supported by Labour, to manufacture the H-Bomb in Britain.

* Conference co-chaired by China and U.K. which marked the end of French colonial occupation of Vietnam (21.7.54).*
"I believe that this country can best serve the cause of humanity by pulling out of the whole business; pulling out of major war preparations, and out of major war alliances," he said.

He thought the best policy for the U.K. was to devote its resources, not to the making of atomic war, but to the War on Want, which, he affirmed, "is an integral part of that peaceful social revolution of which Mr. Muste has just spoken." He was not himself an absolute pacifist, but hoped that the Third Way Movement could provide an organisation within which pacifists and non-pacifists could work together for the survival of the whole human race.

Tyranny of the atomic age.

These ideas were carried a stage further in two paragraphs of the Declaration issued at the end of the conference, which read:

"Even if war as we have known it were eliminated, it would only mean condemning mankind to some other nightmare of inhumanity, centralisation and regimentation, and dehumanisation, perhaps based upon an open or tacit agreement by the two highly centralised and colossal powers, the United States and Russia, to divide the world into spheres of influence."

"The technology of the atomic age would place well nigh absolute power at the disposal of the masters of such a totalitarian world, whoever they might be."

Subsequent sessions devoted to War on Want and Colonial Liberation were led respectively by Tom Wardle, a Unitarian minister and member of the British Co-ordinating Committee, and Joseph Murungi, representing the Movement for Colonial Freedom and destined to become the first Minister for External Affairs of an independent Kenya some ten years later. Throughout the first of these sessions the warning was repeated that economic aid from the West must not undermine the social values peculiar to 'under-developed' countries already under pressure from more materialistic cultures. Dharampal went so far as to say "I do not think that Western Europe has much to offer the East except to get out of her colonies" and went on to give a reasoned criticism of the cult of efficiency. Jayamanda Ratnake, from Sri Lanka, claimed that: "In our villages we say 'from each according to his capacity, to each according to his need.' You say to us: 'that is communism'; we say to you 'it is Ceylon society.'" Bayard Rustin of the American W.R.L. said that the Third Way contribution to the War on Want should lie in the heavy emphasis it placed on brotherliness, friendship and an interchange of ideas, so that members from one country should become aware of what was happening in other countries, and of their differing ways of life.

In the session on colonial freedom Joseph Murungi said:

"We in Africa ask for freedom to rule our own country, we ask for the four freedoms, for the Declaration of Human Rights, which many of the Western Powers have signed and solemnly promised to carry out."
He went on to describe the sufferings of his people that had led to the Mau Mau revolt, then still raging, against the British colonial government. J. W. E. Riemans of De Derde Weg spoke of the bond between many Dutch and Indonesian people created by their mutual experience of alien military occupation, and pledged his movement to wage unrelenting war against imperialism. G. Walusinski, of the Zimmerwald Group in France, expressed his shame at French colonial policy, and joined with H. A. Waleed, of the al-Ba'ath Socialist Party of Syria in proposing a motion condemning French policy in N. Africa (the Algerian War of Independence had started in November, 1954), which was accepted by the conference.

Beyond political democracy.

Another session, led by the present writer, was devoted to Economic and Social Democracy. This dealt with various forms of violence inherent in society, with particular reference to relationships at work. 'Workers' Control' was seen as "an essential part of the non-violent society" and "meant that people engaged in work should hold in their own hands the power to make the decisions affecting their own work." The application of this principle was then extended to a number of other social relationships.

This concept was supported by C. Doglio, an Italian member of the World Socialist Movement, and by Tom Wardle, who stressed the importance of decentralisation, believing that 'smallness' was even more important than 'ownership' in the determination of control. Tom was in turn supported by Ivor Lewis of the Welsh National Party, but Edith Adams of the Toldas Group dissented, saying that while her association would probably accept the whole position of the Third Way, they regarded anything other than complete concentration on unilateral and total disarmament as disastrous side-tracking.

Apart from this disclaimer, there were spirited disagreements between Marxists and non-Marxists regarding the meaning of the term 'materialism' and the role of small agro-industrial communities, derided by some delegates as 'medieval'. Today non-Marxists would avoid the first misunderstanding by using the word 'consumerism', while the decline of mass industrial employment has strengthened the case for small-scale co-operatives. Even at its most controversial the Movement was to be prophetic.

Essential features of the Third Way Movement.

In his message to the conference Professor Lo Meng-tze, chairman of the Chu Lieu (Main Current) Society of China had written:

"We are not trying to create a power to fight this or that simply, but are trying to moralise or decentralise most of the existing powers that menace the people in various forms in the world. The Third Way is for the population as a whole, not for the particular groups who merely do not belong to either of the two blocs politically. By following this Way, we should work out far-reaching and comprehensive programmes not only for those who follow it, but also for Communists and Capitalists who now both face no way out, and can
exist only by means of depending on each other's injustice."

This approach is reflected in key paragraphs of the Declaration:

"The purpose of the Third Way Movement is to bring together all those who oppose and reject both the capitalist and totalitarian systems and who refuse to give support - 'critical' or otherwise - to the war preparations and activities of either side in the contemporary power struggle, or to any alternative military alliance . . ."

"Being truly a force for peace, and not merely an organ for 'peace' propaganda, they will have friends, actual and potential, in all parts of the world, including multitudes in both American and Communist lands . . ."

"We recognise as central and basic in our philosophy the dignity and worth of every human being, his need and inalienable right to self-determination. Only on this basis are men able to achieve true self-expression and to make their full contribution to the development of community among all men in all relationships and throughout the whole world."

"From this central conviction it follows:

1. The Third Way Movement believes unequivocally in the right of all peoples to independence from foreign control, whether military, political, economic or cultural. It will endeavour to bring to an end all forms of colonialism and will strive for the achievement by all people of equal status as members of an inter-dependent world of free and equal peoples.

2. We believe in the abolition of exploitation, segregation and discrimination wherever these exist.

We repudiate high living standards, special opportunities or favoured status based on the tyranny of one group over another, whether that tyranny is expressed through force of arms or through the more subtle means of economic exploitation.

The War on Want must be recognised as an immediate and urgent task for all peoples, especially those now privileged, and must be energetically pursued until all peoples have the basis for equal status, opportunity and personal dignity.

This requirement bars aid bestowed as charity or in such a way as to maintain or create conditions of exploitation and inequality.

3. We believe that the natural and productive resources and key instruments of distribution and communication belong to all, and should be socially owned and democratically administered through the people's own co-operative, community and other instrumentalities.

We believe that technology must be the servant and not the master of the human race. Irrational support of technological efficiency for its own sake and of a so-called 'ever-expanding economy', and the centralisation of power entailing the growth of bureaucracy and statism, which go with such a policy, violate our democratic faith and threaten to destroy any possibility of a self-governing society.
The sound goal is the development of a reasonably balanced agroindustrial economy for communities in which all members share responsibility for and power over the conditions of their life and work.

4. We believe in the defence of the civil liberties of all persons and groups, in freedom of religion and conscience, in the need for constant struggle against the pressure for conformity and regimentation, and the vigorous defence of all victims of tyranny and discrimination."

Executive decisions. These were:

1. Establishment of an International Council upon which each organisation associated with the Third Way should have the right of representation.

2. The minimum financial contribution to be made by each associated organisation should be £5 per year.

3. That an Executive Committee should be appointed by the conference with as wide a range of representation as possible, charged with the preparation of an international bulletin, and with the arrangements for a further international conference in 1956.

The London conference dispersed in an optimistic mood. As Muste put it in a letter to Peace News (16.9.55): "the veterans of labour and peace conferences present ... repeatedly remarked upon the spirit which prevailed and the exceptionally objective and mature character of virtually all the contributions to the discussion throughout the four days," and "we now have the framework of an international organisation."

Postscript on attendance.

Doubts have been expressed as to exactly which organisations took part in the London conference (e.g., in a Theoretical Supplement to Workers Power, Feb. 1964 - "The bankruptcy of 3rd Campism") The following list should dispel any uncertainty (figures refer to number of representatives):

From the U.K. 5 each from 3rd Way co-ordinating committee, Common Wealth, Fellowship of the Spirit*, Welsh National Party; 4 from Fellowship Party*; 3 from Independent Labour Party; 2 from Peace Pledge Union*; 1 each from Gravesend Discussion Group, N. Ireland F.O.R.*, Pacifist Youth Action Group*, Socialist Review Group, Toldos*, and from each of 5 branches of Fellowship of the Spirit* and 3 branches of Common Wealth. Victory for Socialism Group and Braziers Park School of Social Research sent observers, and there were 27 visitors. (* - wholly pacifist organisations).

From outside the U.K. 5 from De Derde Weg; 4 from the American 3rd Camp co-ordinating committee; 3 each from the Al-Ba'ath Socialist Party and the World Socialist Movement; 2 from the Socialist Party of Syria and the Lebanon; 1 each from Arbeitsgemeinschaft Danaher Freundsabund (Germany), the ISL (USA), and the Zimmerwald Group (France). The All-German People's Party and the WRI sent observers, and there were 5 overseas visitors and invited speak-
ers from USA, Madagascar, Ceylon, India and Burma.

The total attendance was therefore exactly 100, not counting casual visits for single sessions. Voting representatives from the U.K. outnumbered those from overseas by 2 to 1, but this imbalance was in part rectified by the allocation of three votes to each overseas representative, a move they much appreciated, but which turned out to be unnecessary because points of disagreement were few, and never followed a U.K. versus-the-rest divide.

Absent from the conference, although credentials had been asked and sent, were the Third Force of Tel Aviv (currency refused); Young Readers' League of Dar-es-Salaam (entry visa refused); and the League for Freedom and World Friendship of Melbourne (did not show up). Kenneth Kaunda of the ANC, N. Rhodesia, would have attended but lacked the fare, while Freeman B. Asare, who later formed a co-ordinating committee for W. Africa, and the Swedish Peace Party complained that their invitations arrived too late. The Libertarian Communists in Italy, France and Switzerland were prevented from attending because of a date clash with their own international conference.

Messages were also received from the Federal Pacifist Councils of Austria and Australia, from Österreichische Friedensgesellschaft of Vienna, the Egyptian Socialist Party, the South African F.O.R., and the Dockworkers Union of Nigeria and the Cameroons.

The Workers' Power Supplement referred to above ignores the alliance of independent socialists and pacifists that first promoted the Third Camp/Way, and the later involvement of the colonial freedom movement, attributing its origins to the Tribune Group of British Labour Party M.P.s. Some of these may have made neutralist noises, but none showed interest in the Third Way as an organised Movement.

Corrections: to first installment, p.2, para.2: (1) the LSL withdraw from the New York conference on the issue of defence, not the ISL; (2) for U.W. read I.W.W.

(To be concluded).

J. C. Banks

The Socialist Republic

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Dear Comrade,

I would first like to thank you for sending me your Bulletin. I always look forward to reading the lively, informed discussion it contains. An important service it performs is to increase communication, breaking down the isolation of one individual and another, and thereby creating the possibility of joint action.

Towards that objective, I would like to make several suggestions. For example, your readers may well be unaware of the Center for Socialist History, at 2633 Elma Berkeley, CA 94704. This is a library that contains much material that may well be relevant to a study of the American SP. Then there are several academicians—James A. Stevenson's work on De Leon immediately comes to mind—which could well be of interest. The same goes for my own books, "The Origins of British Bolshevikism", published by Rowan & Littlefield (New Jersey), which contains a lot about the early years of the British SP, and "John S. Clarke: Parliamentarian, Poet and Lion-tamer", published in Britain by Pluto Press, the study of a man prominent in the British SP from roughly 1905 to 1920.

If your readers would be interested in my short biography, I would willingly send you copies—say, 10 or 20—and these could be sold to raise money for the Bulletin. I want no payment whatsoever.

In Britain, John Saville and Joyce Bellamy edit an encyclopedia of biographies of persons who have been prominent in the British working-class movement. Almost all the entries tend to be of Labor Party and Communist party people. I have tried to establish a more balanced approach by sending contributions about individuals who took an independent Marxist position.

I enclose a copy of my submission on that pioneer of the British SP—Leonard Cotton. Obviously it could be improved. If anyone has any extra information, I would be glad if they would get in touch with me.

That also goes, incidentally, for any American socialists visiting Britain. Should they decide to journey up to the north east, a part of the country that is very beautiful and has many historic places, I would be glad if they would get in touch with me. It's always a pleasure to have a chat with a kindred spirit.

Very best wishes,
Yours Fraternally,
Raymond Challinor

Note: Comrade Challinor came through with the books. We have them here at Box 1664 and are selling them as a money raising venture for $7.00 postpaid—first come first served. Although the price is substantially higher than in Great Britain, buyers get the additional satisfaction of helping the Discussion Bulletin.
Leonard Cotton received practically no formal education. He began work at the age of six, scoring crowns. Throughout his hard life, he had a succession of poorly paid jobs, interspersed with periods of unemployment—a fact that probably explained his near-skeletal appearance. Yet, despite his personal difficulties, he remained in the Socialist Movement for more than half a century, serving on the SFP executive committee in 1898 and continuing his activity until 1954 when, trying to revive the flagging fortunes of the SF, he died impoverished in a caravan near Edinburgh.

Leonard Cotton played a prominent part in the dispute within the SF that led to the formation of the SIF. At the SIF's 1901 conference, he incurred the disfavour of the Federation's leadership by proposing that the journal Justice should be democratically run by the membership instead of remaining the personal property of E.M. Hyndman. He caused further annoyance by arguing that the SIF delegation to the congress of the Second International had been wrong to support the Kentucky resolution, which sanctioned socialists joining capitalist governments. This, he argued, was a sign that the leadership had become unprincipled and reformist.

At the 1902 SIF conference, the left opposition began to organise itself while, at the same time, Hyndman and his colleagues, realising it constituted a threat to them, resolved to expel the dissidents. This task was accomplished at the 1903 SIF conference.

The opposition was determined to leave the SIF with the maximum number of supporters. Although comparatively strong in Scotland, its backing in England remained weak. As a member of the SIF executive committee, Cotton was by far its most influential English supporter. Being such, he helped to organise the nationwide speaking tour of James Connolly in 1902. This achieved only limited success. A public meeting at Oxford ended in near riot, with Connolly hitting a heckler with the Red Flag and running off pursued by undergraduates and unemployed workers. For his part in the disturbance, Cotton lost his job as a labourer at the Oxford Botanical Gardens. He had previously served a one-month sentence for his part in the free speech campaign at Piggotts Clough, Manchester, and his employers probably thought this second incident took matters too far.

Leonard Cotton was a foundation member of the Socialist Labour Party. He accepted implicitly all the ideas of the American socialist, Daniel De Leon. The rigidity of his thinking at times created problems, as, for example, in 1905 when De Leon modified his views on socialist industrial unionism. Although the British SF endorsed the new line, Cotton adhered to the old position and resigned from the Party. He still continued, however, to sell SIF literature, and in this way, despite being outside the Party, he made an important contribution to extending its influence.

One of the places where he sold The Socialist was Ruskin College, Oxford. Students there, increasingly at odds with academic orthodoxy, were highly receptive. When their quarrel with the College authorities led them to create their own educational organisation, they called it the Field League and had the Journal Flecks as its monthly organ. This title was derived
from De Leon's pamphlet, *Two Pages from Roman History*, which, thanks to Cotton and E. Brand, was widely circulated, as was the rest of his writings.

In April 1910, Cotton applied to re-join the SLF, and within eight months had secured the position of national secretary. He remained national secretary from 1910 to 1919. During that time, the SLF grew from a small, isolated sect into the biggest revolutionary grouping in Britain. In militant areas, such as Clydeside, it yielded considerable power.

Remarkably, Cotton performed his duties as general secretary in his spare time. While the SLF secured headquarters in Glasgow, Cotton stayed in Reading. From 65 Dornington Gardens and later 53 Waverley Road, Reading, he dealt with the routine business in a quiet, efficient manner. It was only with the appointment of a full-time general secretary, T. Mitchell, that he relinquished the post.

Cotton disagreed with many of the deviations from De Leonite orthodoxy which had crept into SLF practice, particularly during the First World War. He was suspicious of the involvement of some SLPers, like Arthur MacManus and Tom Bell, in the shop stewards movement and their recruitment into the SLF of members without a thorough grounding in Marxism. When the MacManus faction accepted "Moscow gold", he denounced them.

Partly prompted by the American SLF, which disliked the way its British counterpart had developed an independent political position, Cotton and a small group of others split from the SLF at its 1921 Dewsbury conference to form the Socialist Propaganda League. But by that time the SLF was in decline: the formation of the Communist Party, the growth of unemployment, the lessening of industrial militancy, all helped to eliminate the basis for the existence of a revolutionary organisation outside the CP. By 1925, only a handful of people still adhered to the old SLF principles.

Leonard Cotton made many attempts to revive the Socialist Labour Party. He continued selling many of the old De Leonite pamphlets, many of which had been printed in huge quantities and therefore remained in stock for up to 30 years after their original publication. While he secured a small but steady sale for them, he was less successful with his attempts to re-launch either the SLF as an effective party or The Socialist as a widely read journal. He died expressing the same views, but with much less support, than he had possessed a generation before.

-- Raymond Challinor

Publications:

*Socialism and the State*, 1942
*Marxism versus Stalinism*, 1950
*The Passing of the British SLF*, *Weekly People*, March 26, 1925.
Comrade Bulletears:

I've been following the debates in DB with interest although I have not had the time to write lately. In particular I do intend to respond to the one letter addressed directly to me -- but this is going to have to wait until after my impending move to New York.

Adam Bulock's letter in the most recent issue was very intriguing. I do think he has identified a number of problems with the labor voucher system -- now perhaps he should employ the same reasoning powers to thinking about the free access system. I had a lot of fun trying to defend free access in THE CONNECTION (a sort of libertarian version of it) a year or two back. The particular problem which most interests me is that of new goods. It seems that there will be a period directly following the introduction of any exciting new invention when the demand will vastly exceed the supply. Under capitalism this leads to very high prices. What happens when we try to preserve the free access of all to the store of goods? Do the fasteast get the new product? Do we set up some form of lottery? Must goods be stockpiled before being distributed so as to prevent this situation, denying new things to any until they can be supplied to all? Or shall we simply discourage invention and so avoid the problem completely?

Mike Gunderloy, 6 Arizona Ave., East Greenbush, NY 12061

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Dear Comrades/Palow Workers

It has been brought to my attention by a comrade in Grand Rapsids that a reader of D.B., after responding to my offer in D.B.#16 to send copies, on request, of certain articles on the S.L.P. (published in The Western Socialistist in 1948 and 1960) had his letter returned as undeliverable by the Post Office. Upon checking on my D.B. letter I find that I did, indeed, give my address at the bottom correctly. However, I signed it with my pen name—Harmo—a contraction of Harry Morrison, and neglected to note that fact.

So I must apologize once more for "laziness" and assure any interested reader that I will follow through on any request for said copies promptly.

In regard to the complaint of James Minal (S.L.P. of Canada, Vanc.) in D.B.#15, I see no reason for apology. Although I do, vaguely, recall having had correspondence with him some quarter of a century ago my recollection of the details is at least as skimpy as his own, if not more so. It should be obvious to him that had he called my attention to the particular erroneous phrase in my 1940 article it would have been acknowledged and corrected, as it was when finally pointed out by Frank Girardi in 1986 in the course of some correspondence with my comrade Sam Leight. My explanation for the error is clearly stated in D.B.#16 and need not be repeated here.

However, I must thank Minal for the opportunity he gives me with his query to me in the current D.B. to lay bare the shoddy thinking behind Industrial Union control under socialism. The very concept of a body of the population such as those who work in industry having interests separate from those of the rest of society in a social-
ist world is remarkable—to put it mildly. It should be apparent—but for some strange reason is not—that such a concept can only arise in class-divided society. For those who adhere to the Marxian picture of socialism, the era of political divisions will come to an end which can only signify that the material interests of working people will be identical with the material interests of each and every other member of society. Other problems may certainly arise, issues which we cannot foresee as of now, but we certainly should concentrate all of our efforts with matters of first importance—the propagation of genuine socialism.

So, to be specific: representatives to administrative bodies in a socialist world will not be “responsible to themselves,” as Minal quaintly puts it. They will be responsible to the entire population. The reason that representatives under capitalism do not speak for the population as a whole has nothing to do with the nature of the institution of parliament (congress) but only with the fact of class-divided society.

Finally, I would suggest that there is a tacit recognition in DeLeonism that their concept of a socialist society does, indeed, include class divisions. How else can one explain the affectionate embrace of the Bolshevik regime in the U.S.S.R., throughout so many years of its rule, by the Socialist Labor Party of America? Surely James Minal has read enough documentation of that fact in articles published in The Western Socialist. If he has forgotten (or mentally suppressed) that truth I will be happy to forward to him copies of the pertinent evidence. Yes. Even without the existence of “Socialist Industrial Unions” or “labor vouchers” as a substitute for coin-of-the-realm; and even with the palpable existence of class differentiation within the population, the Socialist Labor Party of America has, throughout most of the years since 1917, regarded the U.S.S.R. as something other than state capitalism—something in the nature, it would seem, of incipient socialism.

Please, James Minal! Why not challenge me to “put up or shut up?” For that matter, I will welcome such challenge from any other defender of the (DeLeonist) faith.

102 Tremont St., Apt 417
Brighton, MA 02135

Yours for world socialism

Harry Morrison ("Harno")
system and to search for an alternative. In the competition with the
vanguardists and social-democrats who would resurrect the old system
in the name of revolutionary socialism, the divided condition of our
political sector—actually splintered to atoms is closer to
—a severely limits the chance of reaching our class with a voice that
speaks out the liberating function of socialist revolution. Our
success will depend on the extent that third-force socialists can put
aside their differences and cooperate against the real enemy:
capitalism including its leftwing.

To that end we call on readers:
1. to subscribe to the Discussion Bulletin and otherwise support it
financially. [You will find the subscription pitch in our shocking
risk centerfold.] and
2. to join in the discussion with letters and articles.

Note: Articles and letters for the DB must be typewritten,
single-spaced, and camera ready. No editing is done here. We simply
paste them up for the printer. Please use a dark ribbon and narrow
margins to conserve space. A seven-inch typed line is ideal.

A final note. Although with 32 pages this is the largest issue
we have yet published, we did not have room for articles by Comrades
Brandon, Buick, and Otter, an answer by Comrade Cox to a review in
DB17, not to mention the conclusion of "The SLP Revisited," which I
have been saving for filler.

Frank Girard
for the Discussion Bulletin Committee

REVIEW

John S. Clarke: PARLIAMENTARIAN, POET, LION-TAMER; by Ray Challinor;

The cover of this paperback carries the unlikely picture of the
debate editor of the SLP of Great Britain's newspaper THE SOCIALIST
standing next to a sleepy looking lion, whip in hand. The back cover
blurb elaborates on the title:
"John S. Clarke was an adventurer, archeologist, antiquarian,
cowperhead, editor, gun-runner, historian, horseman, journalist,
lecturer, lion-tamer, magistrate, Member of Parliament, poet,
revolutionary, secretary, and zoologist. He was a leader of the
Socialist Labour Party, spokesman for the shop stewards' committees at
the time of the first world war, a lecturer for the National Council
of Labour Colleges. He also cured Lenin's dog of a illness."

American readers who weren't lucky enough to have been around
when the SLP's New York Labor News was still selling a collection of
his poetry, SATIRICES, LYRICS AND POEMS [note the SLP acronym],
published by the British Socialist Labor Press, will rejoice in the
large sample of his poetry that Challinor has included, nearly all of it political and much of it satirical.

But to many of us the interesting parts will be those dealing with Clarke's activity in the movement. He joined the SLPGB in 1911 after enough activity in the Social Democratic Federation and Independent Labor Party to convince him that the reformist parliamentary tactics of these groups were futile. The SLPGB at the time he joined had a membership in the range of 300, and his obvious gifts as a speaker and writer elevated him to prominence rapidly. In 1914 he was elected editor of THE SOCIALIST for the first of three times. But his real rise to prominence began when the wartime economic struggle between industrial workers and their masters created the shop stewards movement. In the wide open rebellion of Glasgow workers Clarke's skills as a teacher, writer, and speaker made him immensely popular.

Readers of the DB will be interested in another development brought on by the rise in revolutionary temperature among Clydeside workers: party barriers tended to drop. In this milieu Clarke became editor of the Clydeside workers' weekly newspaper, a development which brought him into conflict with less ecumenically minded elements of his own party. He resigned from the SLPGB in 1920.

His trip to Russia as a delegate to the second congress of the Third International, his disillusionment with the CP and return to the SLP, and his departure from the movement as the revolutionary temperature declined are all spelled out here as is his subsequent career. [N.B. For information on how to order this lively, well written book from the Discussion Bulletin, see page 26.]

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