DISCUSSION BULLETIN

NUMBER 22 MARCH 1987

Published by the Discussion Bulletin Committee
Address all correspondence to
DISCUSSION BULLETIN, F.O. Box 1564, Grand Rapids, MI 49501

Contents:

Bulletin Matters ............................................. 1
Review of State Capitalism: The Wages System under New Management ......................... 2
More on First Lick the Capitalists, Sam Brandon .............................................. 3
Confusion Worse Confounded, Louis Lazarus .................................................. 4
Review of Class War on the Home Front ...................................................... 6
Comments on Comrade Fitz's Article on Neo-Utopianism, Hungrig Arbeiter .................. 9
Letter, John Zerzan ........................................... 11
Letter, "Thunder" ............................................. 12
A Little Sad Story, Marin Dekovich ...................................................... 13
Two Letters, Monroe Prussack ............................................................. 14
The Labor Theory of Value Versus Labor Vouchers, Revolution Internationale ............. 15
Letter, Frank Girard ............................................. 19
The Socialist Labor Party Revisited (Cont'd), Frank Girard .............................. 20

* * *

BULLETIN MATTERS

Back in 1983 when the Discussion Bulletin was getting under way, I was rather taken by the term "third force socialism" to designate the political sector that includes anti-statist, anti-market
syndicalists, Marxists, anarchists, socialist industrial unionists, council communists, etc. Unfortunately the rebirth of the American publication NEW POLITICS as the biannual house organ of "third camp socialism" puts a new light on the matter of naming our persuasion. "Third camp socialists" appear to be social democratic Trotskyists—or perhaps Trotskyist social democrats—who see themselves as offering a third alternative to the two super power ideologies. I suspect they are numerous enough and influential enough in leftwing circles to give the term currency for their tendency, thereby rendering third "force" socialism confusing.

While one might argue that we aren't a cohesive enough grouping to need a label, it does help to concisely characterize ourselves, to refer to ourselves without having to trot out the whole catalog of names and adjective that apply to us. I realize that this isn't exactly the most momentous problem facing revolutionaries today, but I hope readers will respond with some suggestions. I might add that I have no illusions about being able to christen a political tendency through an unofficial discussion bulletin.

The reference to responses above reminds me that we need your letters and articles for the next issue, 0B23. Again, remember that we print directly from your manuscript so use a dark ribbon. To conserve space, please use narrow margins (3/4 inch) and single space. We are prepared to type a page or two for readers who don't have a typewriter available.

And finally a note for new readers: the price of a six-issue subscription is $3.00.

Frank Girard
for the DB Committee

CLASS WAR ON THE HOME FRONT - 96 A4 pages - £1.50 (incl. P&P) from this address: Wildcat, c/o Raven Press, 75 Piccadilly, Manchester, M1 2BU, England, UK. Write to the same address for details of Wildcat's other publications and activities.


Adam Buick and John Crump—both DB subscribers and the former a frequent contributor of articles and letters—have written the first book-length analysis of state capitalism from the perspective of orthodox Marxism, uncontaminated by the Leninism or social democratic reformism. Although they begin by drawing up a balance sheet that compares the points state capitalism and bourgeoise capitalism have in common, their analysis goes far beyond this. Their more important purpose, in their own words, is "...to demonstrate how state capitalism functions, to identify the driving forces which provide its essential dynamic."

(Cont'd on page 23)
MORE ON "FIRST LICK THE CAPITALISTS".

In order to establish a Socialist society the working classes must be educated to their class interests. They must become class conscious and understand how they are exploited and robbed of the greater part of what they produce. They must know that Socialism means the end of the private ownership of the machinery of wealth production and that this machinery will become socially owned and operated by society; that production will be carried on for use and not for profit thus eliminating unemployment, poverty, wars and all the social diseases from which we suffer today. They will then be in a position to organize politically into a revolutionary political party and S.I.U's in order to "lick the Capitalists" and establish a new society. It is not necessary for them to decide today whether we will have labor vouchers, have free access etc. They can decide these questions once they have gotten the capitalist class off their backs. There is no reason as Comrade Girerd states to have second thoughts about what to do first.

He says that in DeLeiin's day divisions in the Socialist movement reflected differences in tactics, not in objectives. This is not true. The Socialist party goal was not the same as the S.I.U. Of course today we have dozens of groups and parties calling for the end of Capitalism with the goal of establishing an authoritarian society of one kind or another. But if our program as must be clear cut and evident to workers that it is entirely different from that offered by these groups. And it undoubtedly is!

Comrade Girerd opposes our call for unity because unity of "a few tiny splinter dissident splinter groups into a somewhat larger splinter group hardly constitutes any real unity." If these groups clearly support the DeLeiinist S.I.U. program their influence would be far greater than if they each remain independent! Obviously this is true. Comrade Girerd seems to feel that there are other groups which he terms anarchic-syndicalist who should be part of a united movement and that this unity will "be created by our class itself during a revolutionary struggle." I ask Comrade Girerd how can our class carry on a revolutionary struggle if they have not been prepared, educated and organized prior to such a struggle? Can they be class conscious, or assert the S.I.U. program unless prior to that struggle the education has taken place? And it cannot take place unless the DeLeiinist forces have been united and capable of making the working class aware of this program.

Rev. the Immaneul Wall, i.e., called for the formation of a DeLeiinist Federation as a first step toward unifying the DeLeiinist forces. It directed this call to
all the dissident DeLeonist groups including the Socialist Labor party. To reply was received from them! Are they also writing for a revolutionary struggle to bring unity of the DeLeonist movement? I believe it is also in the interest of the I.L.P. to foster the unity of the DeLeonist movement!

Comrade Girard says he can think of some good reasons for avoiding unity in the present time. He says the rise of bureaucracy in any organization that is large enough to provide for a paid staff. If he holds to this position, then unity is not desirable at any time not only at the present time. Until DeLeon died the I.L.P. was not permeated by a bureaucracy and yet it had a paid staff!

Contrary to what Comrade Girard believes DeLeon did not change his mind in 1907. At no time did DeLeon believe the Capitalist class would abide by a decision at the ballot box.

Comrade Girard's suggestion that our leaflets should begin with "DON'T VOTE" would mean adopting the position of those in the I.W.W. who debated this question with DeLeon in "As to politics". I adhere to DeLeon's arguments on this question because I believe he demolished his opponents arguments.

Comrade Girard should not be concerned about organizing S.I.U.'s today. When the workers organize into S.I.U.'s they will have the power to tell the capitalists and the F.I.L.M.B. what to do with their contracts.

by Sam Brandon

CONFUSION WORSE CONFOUNDED

Many who left the SLP, voluntarily or through expulsion, have either accepted bourgeois concepts or have committed themselves to their own introspective "philosophy," contrary to the pragmatic thinking of Daniel De Leon. In my opinion Comrade Frank Girard has fallen within the latter "philosophical" category. For a period, the SLP, too, departed from the basics as taught by De Leon.

The indication of his predilections appear in Comrade Girard's refutations of Comrade Sam Brandon's article, "First Lick the Capitalists" (DB 20). I shall lead off with a quote from Girard:

"De Leon's exhortation ['First lick the capitalists'] was given at a time when divisions in the socialist movement, at least in America, reflected differences in tactics, not in ultimate
objective...We are no longer the only movement calling on workers to destroy capitalism. Literally dozens of Social democratic and Marxist-Leninists-Trotskyist-Maoist-Castroist groups and parties are willing to provide the leadership for the 'socialist' revolution and shape the nature of a new authoritarian society every bit as authoritarian and exploitative as this one."

It is historically inaccurate to convey the idea that in De Leon's time "the 'socialist movement...reflected differences in tactics, not in the ultimate objective." It was in 1914 that De Leon wrote "First lick...the Capitalist Class." During that year, and the years prior, the so-called Socialist organizations took an active part in advocating reforms, but only paid lip service to a Socialist transformation.

Prescribing reforms cannot/considered as tactics in a revolutionary movement; for reforms repel a revolutionary program. In De Leon's day, the Nationalist Movement, the Social Democratic Party, the People's Party, and the Socialist Party abstained from teaching revolution and revolutionary tactics.

The Marxist-Leninist-Trotskyist-Maoist-Castroist, despite their impressive names, are the legatees of those would-be Socialists during De Leon's era. And Comrade Girard describes them ironically as those that have the potential to "shape the nature of a new authoritarian society every bit as authoritarian and exploitative as this." He gives an adverse description of the future functions of those groups. Hence to clear the air, he writes, "can only come from discussion"Actually to accomplish that effectively it can only take place in a De Leonist periodical. Diverse discussion in other publications, viewing all sides, only produce turmoil in thought --not clarity.

Comrade Frank counsels: "A preparatory step toward the unity of third force socialists [a term coined by F.G.] or any significant element among them -- or perhaps a unity -- or perhaps a substitute for unity -- might might be to do what the first issue of Discussion Bulletin suggested: to use this forum [the DS]." After 20 issues of the DB each contributor has stood firm in his convictions. Instead of concurrence of thought, the result is continued disparity. The situation
CLASS WAR ON THE HOME FRONT!

THE MYTH of Britain during the Second World War is that all classes in the nation united, pulled together, and made every sacrifice to defeat the fascist evil.

THE REALITY is that significant sections of working class people continued the struggle to defend their own basic needs and interests, in a situation of intolerably worsening living and working conditions.

In the face of universal condemnation, abuse and persecution from across the whole spectrum of capitalist parties, only a few isolated groups raised their voices in support of the class struggle.

One such group was the Clydeside-based ANTI-PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNIST FEDERATION (APCF). Class War on the Home Front is a collection of articles from the APCF’s newspaper SOLIDARITY. It reveals the hidden history of the CLASS WAR within the IMPERIALIST WAR, and the revolutionary views of the APCF.

“We stand for the victory over Hitlerism and Mikadoism - by the German and Japanese workers, and the simultaneous overthrow of all the Allied Imperialists by the workers in Britain and America. We also wish to see the re-institution of the Workers' Soviets in Russia and the demolition of the Stalinist bureaucracy. In a word, we fight for the destruction of ALL Imperialism by the Proletarian World Revolution!”

-- Solidarity October-November 1942.

Class War on the Home Front also records the earlier history of the APCF from its formation in 1921. Articles from Solidarity describe the group’s GOAL - a worldwide human community without states, classes, money and wages - explain its TACTICS - agitation for a class-conscious working class to organise itself into workers' councils to overthrow capitalism - and attack its OPPONENTS - the Labour Party, the trade unions, and the supporters of state capitalism masquerading as communism in Russia.

Another section of Class War on the Home Front deals with the anti-parliamentary communists’ involvement in and attitude towards the SPANISH CIVIL WAR - the forerunner and testing-ground for the wider conflict which followed. Finally, a fascinating debate on the relationship between the working class and revolutionary organisations is reprinted in full from wartime issues of Solidarity, with contributions from the APCF, the council communists ANTON PANNEBOERK and PAUL MATTECK, the Trotskyist FRANK MAITLAND, and the DeLeonist ABRAHAM ZIEGLER.

Class War on the Home Front is a unique and historic publication—a product of exhaustive research in libraries, archives and private collections throughout Britain. But its lasting message is for the present and future: in the midst of the deepening world economic crisis and the increasing drive towards a third world war, the basic principles of the APCF’s communist opposition to capitalism and capitalist war must be spread and acted upon!

See page 2 for information on how to order this book.
becomes one that the renowned English poet, John Milton, once expressed it as "confusion worse confounded."

Apropos of elections, Comrade Girard makes several fatuous statements: "Do we help capitalism to foster these illusions [of democracy] by participating [in elections]? Does our participation in these phoney electoral circuses help our cause with a working class that is beginning to recognize the futility of elections and to vote against them by staying away from the polls? ... Wouldn't we do far better by using election time to point out how and why elections are a fraud? I think election leaflets should begin 'DON'T VOTE.'"

It is perverse logic that is far from unique. Such allegations were and are expounded by the IWW and the Council Communists. Workers are advised against voting for a Socialist political party because they are told "elections are a fraud," and apprised "Don't Vote." Hence workers are being denied the opportunity to proclaim their inextinguishable desire for a fundamental change. If they will be discouraged from performing such simple acts as voting, how can they be reliable material for affecting the revolutionary act?

If a Socialist organization repudiates the use of the vote "the practical result [is] that," De Leon wrote, "instead of seizing the weapon furnished by capitalism, it gives capitalism a weapon against itself." De Leon also persists: "Of course 'political agitation' implies the setting up a political ticket, and that in turn, implies the 'the ballot.' Indeed the ballot may be lost; let it; the fruits, however, of the 'political agitation' are imperishable."

His admonishment of 80 years ago has proven De Leon categorically correct. He wrote then: "By removing the political clause from the preamble of the IWW and retaining the 'Take and hold' clause, the IWW would have to degenerate into conspiracy." At that time his remarks were pooh-poohed by the anti-political element, for the workers' power will be derived from the Industrial Unions. De Leon's warning was not heeded. Several years later
the States of California, Idaho, Montana, South Dakota, North Dakota, and Nebraska passed Criminal Syndicalist Laws. IN some of the States members of the IWW were tried in Federal District Courts and found guilty of conspiring to violate the Constitution of the United States.

Why rummage through views, conglomerations of nonsense, which will help "shape the nature of a new authoritarian and exploitative society," when the De Leonist program positively points the way to the Socialist Commonwealth.

Louis Lazarus

COMMENTS ON COMRADE FITZ'S ARTICLE ON NEO-UTOPIANISM

Don Fitz's article in last February's DB brought up some very good points which I would like to comment and expand upon. Hopefully, these comments will lead to some thorough discussion on the matters he brought up.

First off, Comrade Fitz's revelation that humans will all have one thing in common after the revolution, the "horribly memories of capitalist brutality. Ingrained habits will take years, if not generations, to fully overcome." I would say that I am in agreement with this statement.

Taking what Don wrote into account, it only follows that socialism cannot obtain a society of free access, of statelessness and of classlessness immediately, contrary to what our neo-utopian friends say. I do not disagree that socialism will ultimately be a stateless, classless society of free access. I just don't believe it will happen in one week, one year or even in one decade for that matter. Just because the majority of workers will be socialists and had the revolution does not mean that their old habits, prejudices and thoughts will change immediately. Right after the revolution, workers will still be thinking about getting their children in the "best schools," living in the "best neighborhoods," those with no adequate housing will want adequate housing, those with adequate housing will want more than that, those with "bad jobs" will want the "good jobs," and anything else that workers were taught to put into "us and them" categories during their lifetime under capitalism. Workers will still be in turmoil with each other until through practice and experience of living in socialism finally overcomes the notions workers bring into the new society.

Workers will not be the only ones in turmoil. The bourgeoisie will not stop thinking and acting like bourgeois just because of the revolution. They will still be locked into their need to consume wastefully, to "put on a show of class," and they will most likely be involved in some sort of struggle, along with their bootlicking lackeys, to retain the means of production and distribution that they will still feel is rightfully theirs (under their logic.) Personally, I don't really believe that the capitalist class as a whole will lie down and let the workers take the means of production and distribution from them. The capitalist class will most likely fight back through sabotage or civil war, or both. This means that the workers will need to have a militia for defense against such capitalist counterrevolutionary actions. Not to form and have ready such a militia would be suicide for the workers.
Having a militia means that there will be a need for some sort of workers' state. If the historical precedents are followed, this workers' state will probably be in the form of councils. This is not a blueprint, but just an analysis based on historical precedent. Through practice and time (living everyday life with the means of production and distribution controlled by workers, new generations who don't remember capitalism coming to the forefront of society in making the decisions, and the final victory of the working class over the capitalist class) this state will "die out." Those who refuse to admit that the above problems, along with other unforeseeable problems, will exist right after the revolution are indeed utopian. Socialist consciousness will not remove the above problems, and even though the means of production and distribution are indeed advanced enough to obtain free access to most goods, old capitalist society thoughts, prejudices and habits will still exist. As Marx stated: "What we are dealing with here is a Communist society, not as it has developed on its own basis, but on the contrary, as it is just issuing out of capitalist society; hence, a society that still retains, in every respect, economic, moral and intellectual, the birthmarks of old society from whose womb it is issuing." (Gotha Program, pg. 38, NVTN, emphasis mine.) So, our utopian friends would do well to think about whether or not the advent of TV, Radio and the computer will indeed overcome the moral and intellectual remnants of the old capitalist society that will inevitably be carried over into Socialism.

The second item I would like to comment on is Comrade Fitz's comments about Comrade Leight's article. I agree with Don that Sam's article did leave out important points. Some of those points were covered above. The stance that Comrade Leight takes about the revolution being simultaneous in every advanced country sounds great (indeed for socialism to be brought about we will need a world revolution) but lets really give this some thought. Just because the workers in Britain (an example) revolt, does not mean that the workers in the rest of the world will get out of bed the next morning and say: "Hey, they revolted in Britain yesterday, let's get on the ball and have our revolution today." By historical precedent, revolutions don't happen that way. Indeed, such a revolt by British workers would raise the revolutionary temperature in every other country. But, most likely workers in countries outside of Britain will wait and see what happens in Britain. If the workers in Britain succeed in defeating the capitalist class there and do seize power, workers around the world will probably start onto their revolutionary roads to social revolution and ultimately seize power in their countries as well. One thing that brings up some question marks is our comrades who insist that revolution will come through the ballot box. While it is indeed possible that the ballot box might be used for revolution, doesn't this defeat your simultaneous theory Comrade Leight? The last time I checked, no two bourgeois countries held elections on the same day, let alone the same year! I would also like to know Comrade Leight, what about those economically advanced countries like Poland, the USSR, East Germany, etc., who have no democratic ballots? Do we have to wait until the ruling classes of those nations give the workers there access to the ballot (since according to your party's program anything short of revolution is futility and reformism and workers there should not be concerned with such things, thus the ruling classes will have to willingly hand over such rights) or do you call for different means for obtaining revolution in these countries?

Don's criticism towards those who argue we should never mention the need to organize militias also brings up some questions for our NSW/SPGB friends. You take the stance that there will be no armies in socialism. You also claim that "there is no need for a 'transition period' between capitalism and Socialism. ...Socialism can be established as soon as a majority of workers want it, with free access." (SPGB pamphlet, Questions of the Day, pages 105-106.)

These two claims do not seem contradictory. However, when you compare them to a
document I have in my possession, they are indeed very contradictory and I for one would like a clarification.

REPORT ON PARTY'S ATTITUDE TO VIOLENCE—AN SPGH CONFERENCE REPORT—JAN. 1977

"(3) Introduction

...... Acts of violence, sabotage or any other form of anti-social activity will not be tolerated at any stage. Assuming that we are mainly dealing with acts of violence during the immediate post-revolution period, obviously force would be used if argument and reason failed."

"(4) Conditions for the establishment of Socialism

(The SFB quotes its famous article 6 of its D of P, then states the following) Implicit in this conception has always been recognition that, in the period of changeover, control of the armed forces would be continued for as long as necessary in the light of conditions then existing. It has never been the Party's case that simultaneously with gaining control the armed forces would at once be wholly dismantled. ... This has not meant the armed forces would have to be used."

First, our SPGH/WSP comrades claim that socialism will immediately be formed, with no transition period and that there will be no armies in socialism. (See Adam Bullock's article in BE 16, Feb. 1966, pp. 10-11.) Then, we find you have a document that states there will be an army and a period of changeover (is this your own words for a transition period?)! Which is your party program? I for one would like a clarification in this area.

Dor's opinions on leadership were pretty sound in my opinion. There are, however, two types of leaders. No, not good ones and bad ones. There are those who lead through example and hard work and logic. These leaders will try to use logic and example to sway the populace in the right direction. Then, there are those who want to lead unconscious populations by the nose for their (the leader's) own personal glory and self-interests, i.e. Stalinists. I think that it will be vital for a socialist society in its early years (and indeed in the period leading up to the revolution) to have the first type of leaders I mentioned above. I agree with Comrade Don, it would indeed be a boring society where no one bad leadership initiative.

Comrade Fitz's questioning of the neo-utopians ignoring the real world is also very strong. It is indeed pretty easy to sit on one's rear-end, in an air-conditioned apt., drinking a beer and emering to the struggling masses: "This struggle of yours is reformist. You are wasting your time. What you need to do is to have a socialist revolution." While the idea of a socialist revolution is sound enough (we would all love to have it tomorrow,) put yourself in the shoes of those workers who are locked out of the factory be cause they refuse to take a $2 hr. pay cut, or in the shoes of a worker in South Africa who is persecuted just because of their skin color, or perhaps in the shoes of our fellow South American workers who is struggling to regain his/her basic freedoms of speech, assembly, and others taken for granted here, and being killed for wanting such rights. You wouldn't be spouting off so much about this and that being reformist. Our neo-utopian friends should think about adding solidarity, right-back, anti-war, etc., struggles to their party program. Doing so will vastly increase the number of workers that socialists can reach with their programs. The impact of socialists and their organizations working beside workers in class struggles will create a sound line of communication between socialists and the working class. The working class will listen more readily to those socialists and socialist organizations that are struggling with them than they will to those socialist and socialist organizations who show up as outsiders, armed with leaflets, papers and pamphlets and chanting "revolution,
revolution, revolution." Also, taking part in everyday struggles will give us socialists a chance to defeat the self-seeking reformist on their own field. Not to take part means abandoning the field to the reformist. What I am basically trying to say is what Marx and Engels stated in the Communist Manifesto:

"They (this means us socialists) do not set up any sectarian principles of their own, by which to shape and mould the proletarian movement. ... in the various stages of development which the struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie has to pass through, they (us socialists) always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole. ... The Communists fight for the attainment of the momentary interests of the working class, but in the movement of the present they also represent and take care of the future movement."

Engels quote the above lines also on Jan. 26, 1887 in an essay entitled "The Labor Movement in the United States." He stated that those lines still held true to that day and that the SLP should abide by them if they were to make any impact on the working class. His major reason for upholding those views stated in the CM was that they apply to socialists when they "are but a small minority of the working class." Despite the economical advances made since then, socialists are still but a small minority of the working class. That is why we need to apply the outlines of the Communist Manifesto to this day.

In closing, I hope our NSF/SPGB friends do not think I am going out of my way to make trouble for them. It is not so, I just have many questions is all. I enjoyed Comrade Fitz's article and I can only hope that more discussion will develop in the future on this topic.

Yours for Socialism,

Hungry Arbeiter

P.O. Box 3505
Grand Rapids, MI 49501

Discussion Bulletin:

I found Don Fitz's endless anti-utopia tirade to be sterile, absurd, and repressive, the perfect exhibit of his type of neo-stalinist commitment to production. "Revolution" for him would certainly not mean the end of such institutions as factories, coal mines - or nursing homes! Thus he is eminently in character in his longing for discipline; the god of production demands it.

Conversely, he is blind to the fact that industrialized, technicized life is made up of two equal and equally crippling parts, domination of nature and divison of labor.

Fortunately, a few people are showing themselves willing to re-think the whole nature of what would constitute a radical transformation. They can already see it does not consist in defending the repression necessary for the current chamber of horrors.

Give it up, Fitz! Ultimately, nobody wants your mines, factories, nursing homes or other prisons.

John Zerzan
In Number 21, Frank Bine suggested an SIU would collapse altogether or need to come into an agreement with the capitalist employers to exist under NLBB rules. I could raise this objection. Such unions can only come into existence when the workers become class conscious. I do not expect such revolutionary class consciousness to be isolated by region or occupation. Therefore, I do not expect the SIU's to be small isolated organizations struggling to make a living. If I am correct, then the workers will not need to obey the NLBB, the courts, the employers, or the police. Police violence will only increase the number and size of the SIU's. This will amount to a "no-win situation" for the capitalists. As the old Chinese proverb says:

"An eagle cannot start a prairie fire."

"Harpo", in Number 21, argued a militant working class can retain the managers inherited from capitalism. Further, this is to be done without a class conscious worker's organization or socialist collective decisions. It seems to this writer that such schemes have been tried by every anti-socialist tyrant from Lenin to Teng Hsiao-ping. The "former capitalists" not running tear industries is renamed "communist" China, or the so-called "NEP-men" in Brazil have never run anything in the interests of the workers. How can "Harpo" guarantee that in his ideal socialist republic the managers inherited from capitalism will run anything in the interests of all the people?? Indeed, if the counterrevolutionaries are any example of the kind of managers we will one day ask to run industry, then I would prefer the nuclear bomb!

Many contributors have raised the question of socialists participating in capitalist-held elections. I consider election campaigns just one of many ways of reaching our class. It is not the only means nor the best means to reach people but only one of a hundred ways to speak to people.

I always think those Americans who do not vote do so because they are disgusted with the system but can not understand why the system so angers them. They seem to sense something is seriously wrong but can not diagnose the capitalist illness.

Over a century ago, Marx and Engels concluded the Communist Manifesto with the immortal words: "The Communist Manifesto to conceal their view and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained...." Every public forum expresses our "views and aims".

"Thunder"
January 21, 1987
DISCUSSION BULLETIN
P.O. Box 1564, Grand Rapids, MI 49501

REPORT #22

March 1, 1987

Members of the DB Committee

Dear Comrades,

For the benefit of recent subscribers who don't understand why they are getting this "Report" and being addressed as "Members of the DB Committee" I should explain that the report goes to all subscribers who have contributed money to the DB in excess of a year's subscription or time in the form of letters or articles. Regardless of your wishes in the matter, you are members of this committee. Since the DB has no organization to report to, the committee serves as the recipient of the financial report and, in theory at least, an advisory committee on policy. I hope all of you involuntary committee members will feel free to send us your comments and suggestions.

CONTRIBUTIONS

From January 1 through March 1 we received the following contributions: Harry Mullian $10; Ronald Girkens $4; William Friesser $2; Herb Edwards and Lillian Frantin $10; Mike Brandise $7; Thomas Dooley $2. Total $35. Thank you, comrades.

FINANCES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Balance</th>
<th>January 1, 1987</th>
<th>$158.21</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Receipts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributions</td>
<td>$35.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subs</td>
<td>42.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>$77.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disbursements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postage</td>
<td>$37.60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printing</td>
<td>$5.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.O. Box rent</td>
<td>22.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>$54.60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance</td>
<td>March 1, 1987</td>
<td>$80.61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fraternally submitted,

Frank Gizdard
for the DB Committee
Frank Girard, in his DB #20 piece, "First Do Some Planning," says he stands by the ideas about socialist industrial unionism, but he does not believe such unions can be set up, as DeLeon, Haywood and others believed: unions that would serve as schools for transforming workers into revolutionaries, and also to create the framework for the new society within the shell of the old.

If Girard does not think such unions can be organized before the revolution, then WHEN? AFTERWARDS? If so, then I would call such a notion a "beautiful dream" in which the revolution would be accomplished legally and peacefully, somehow. But the trouble with this dream is that the ruling class would never allow this to happen. No ruling class in history has been so foolish as to allow a new government to take over without armed struggle. The capitalist class will do what it must do, and the workers will do what they must do. To wait to organize revolutionary unions AFTER the revolution is to invite disaster.

If the revolutionist does not agitate to organize industrial unions prior to the revolution, to take, hold and operate industries, a take-over of political power in itself would not be enough to prevent the capitalist class from crushing it, for it would still remain in control of the industries wherein lies the real social power.

Revolutionary socialist industrial unions are the only weapons workers have to enforce any political victory gained through the ballot box. If the workers do not make the attempt to organize industrial unions along socialist lines before any significant social upheaval takes place, then what would follow will be something like this: There were four of them; a Marxist, a Trotskyite, a Maoist and a Castroite. They were Everybody, Somebody, Anybody and Nobody. There was an important job to be done (agitaton), Everybody was sure Somebody would do it, but Nobody did. Somebody got angry because it was supposed to be Everybody's job. Everybody thought Anybody could do it (after the revolution), but Nobody realized it would be too late after the revolution. It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Everybody should and could have done.

What a pity! A tragedy!

In conclusion, let us do what we can do before the revolution to set up the essential industrial organization to preserve the new society. We would be doing the ruling class a great favor were we to wait for a political victory before organizing industrially.

On another point, Girard says unity at this time is not desirable. I can agree with him only if the element of workers involved do not have the same goal, strategy and tactic. You cannot unite oil and water. Unity requires sameness of thought and action. No unity -- no victory. In both war and strikes, history supports this conclusion. First comes unity of teaching, then unity of action.

If you do not relish the idea of working for unity at this point, then you are going nowhere. The Discussion Bulletin then lives as a debating society preoccupied with hair-splitting. Or it can more aptly be viewed as a bag filled with horns that all point out in different directions. What a waste of time and energy! Revolutions are not accomplished by debate; they are achieved by men and women who have among them a decided unity of thought and action.

*********

In the same DB#20, Monroe Prussak asks which name most correctly describes the Soviet system: the SLP designation of "State Despotism" or DeLeon's term "Industrial Feudalism?"

How can you have industrial feudalism without state despotism? They are two branches of the same tree.
Dear Comrades,

A revolutionist should have his mind directed to just two prime thoughts if he desires to be understandable to himself as well as the public. His first thought should be that capitalism is not the first social system for humanity because its nature makes it vulnerable to collapse. That, in my opinion, is the essence of Marxism. His second thought should be that the failure of the people to take over and run production for their own benefit would result most likely in industrial feudalism. De Leon never said that the democratic industrial government is inevitable. He believed in struggle. This spring March 18 is celebrated for the triumph of the working class of Paris who seized the city and showed the world they could function without the capitalist class. March 18 is also the day all organized resistance was crushed in Kronstadt in a short and bloody war against the Red Army. It overwhelmingly supported the resolution of February 28, 1921, that declared for "Soviets without the party." The defeat of the stalwart sailors and workers of Kronstadt who fired the first shots of the Russian Revolution signified that the Communist Party then took full control and that the workers' councils or soviets became its tools to help hold the people down.

If the Socialist Labor Party in 1921 were aware of the nature of Russian society, it would have given understanding to people of Russian developments. To many the hope of the world was the Soviet Union, but that was a false hope as most people can now see. Karl Marx opposed the feudalism of Czarist Russia in 1848, and we must likewise oppose industrial feudalism from outside this country as well as within this country. Certainly we can not triumph if we do not know what we fight for as well as what we fight against.

Fraternally yours,
Monroe Prussack

Dear Comrades,

Recently I wrote to the De Leonist Society's monthly Bulletin to comment on an article on the Soviet Union. It reaffirmed that the Soviet Union has nothing in common with true De Leonist socialism in that it has the political state, the wages system, and no industrial democracy. My comment was that the Soviet Union has a planned economy and accepts Karl Marx, which De Leonists do in principle. To this Aaron Orange relied that Lenin appreciated De Leonist principles of Socialist Industrial Unionism and Stalin wiped out any trace of appreciation and that they have Industrial Feudalism in the Soviet Union today. However, did they not have a planned economy in the early stages of European Feudalism when booms and busts on the manor were unknown? If industrial democracy does not succeed collapsed capitalism, De Leon predicted that the new social system will be Industrial Feudalism because a feudal system does not have booms and busts because of a planned economy. The knowledge of Marxism by the Russian leaders justifies their faith in the eternity of their social system because they know that the life of capitalism is limited. In an exuberant moment Khrushchev stated, "We will bury you."
Although the De Leonist Society does not accept the Soviet Union as it is today, it approves of Lenin. In the same sense the Trotskyites approve of Lenin and Trotsky. If only Stalin did seize control, the Soviet Union would have been a workers' paradise. However, was not Lenin intolerant of criticism because he feared it would be counter revolutionary? In the same sense I believe the Socialist Labor Party did not tolerate much criticism within the party because it sought to emulate the "success" of Lenin. It sticks in my mind that Rosa Luxemburg was sometimes critical of Lenin, but the Socialist Labor Party stated that with no elaboration.

Fraternally yours,

Monroe Prussack

THE LABOR THEORY OF VALUE VERSUS LABOR VOUCHERS

Marx devoted the whole beginning of the *Poverty of Philosophy* and of the *Grundrisse* to reducing the value concept of the labor-hour voucher and the direct measurement of labor by itself (...). Marx himself made the definitive criticism, and one from which there can be no appeal, of these same vouchers which he proposed in the *Critique of the Gotha Programme* as a transitional form of instrument for generalizing labor and developing the productive forces, establishing at the same time, in opposition to Proudhon, Gray, etc., that between the wages system and communized production (implying a collective consumption) there is no intermediate model of distribution, but a struggle to the death between two irreconcilable tendencies: the law of value and the production according to needs of use-values (whether rationed or in abundance does not matter here).

The important points of Marx's criticism of labor vouchers can be briefly summarized. This is necessary because even those who think that vouchers are no longer valid today do not deal, as far as we know, with the very absurdity of this model from the point of view of the Marxian theory of value.

The theory of the direct and scientific measurement of products by labor time starts from the illusion that a product is the bearer as an inherent quality of the labor time socially necessary for its production. But the product of labor presents itself first as a specific object, a use-value, an incommeasurable concrete quality, and which nothing indicates how much time is on average imposed on society to make it. A product does not carry on its forefront its "value" as an attribute which is intrinsic to it. The value of a commodity is not a quality which belongs to it. It is distinct from the commodity itself. It is a general social relation which reduces by the anarchic process of the market the concrete, particular labor to average, social, general labor.

A particular product of labor has, as a specific object, no value for the simple reason that the concrete labor which gave rise to it is not, as a particular labor, social labour. It becomes social through commodity exchange. What determines the value of a commodity is not the concrete labor time embodied in it, but the overall average of abstract
labor necessary for its production at the time it is offered on the market. If it took me 1 hour to make a shirt and at the time I bring it to the market the level of social productivity allows it to be made in half-an-hour, I have worked half-an-hour too much and my shirt is only "worth" half-an-hour. From the point of view of value, the real time, the sweat and the art crystallized in the commodity (this only fulfills the condition that it be a use-value), is not important — only the necessary time determined by the overall productivity of society counts. This abstract labor time does not exist in the direct relation between producer and product; it is only established via the market.

It can thus be seen straightway that the "labor hour" of the same worker or even of some factory has no relation with the average hour. Nothing indicates to the producer if this time is necessary or wasted, if he has gone beyond the average time or if he has remained below it.

But we will now see concretely the impossibility of "calculating" it. The absurdity of the calculation of the "average" time only brings out the intolerable contradiction in which you get bogged down as soon as you want to make the law of value (abstract socially necessary labor-time) an instrument for dominating production when this law is the result of the isolation of the producers. Value is by definition a blind movement.

1. If labor is not directly social, vouchers are impossible

Before dealing with Marx's model, let us examine this first case. If society is still a collection of isolated producers, of autonomous enterprises, non-integrated nations, etc., in a word, if labor is not directly social (which would imply that consumption wasn't either) there is no way of determining the mysterious "Average Hour".

— it is strictly impossible in a society where productivity is not uniform in each branch to calculate the "necessary time". Further, there is no means of determining "scientifically" who, comrade Stakhanov or comrade lazy man, deviates from this famous mythical time. In the absence of confirmation on the market, via prices, nothing indicates this abstract time. Even the arithmetic average of the different concrete times is not the socially necessary time (since this is a perpetual movement which precisely constantly eliminates those who are underproductive, "lazy", etc).

— to enable the voucher paid to the worker to be "worth" an hour, the productivity of labor time would have to be kept stationary, which is impossible if it is wanted to retain expanded reproduction.

Paper labour money would enjoy a constant appreciation ( ... ) The time-certi, representing average labour time, would never correspond to or be convertible into actual labour time; i.e., the amount of labour time objectified in a commodity would never correspond a quantity of labour time equal to itself, and vice versa, but would command, rather, either more or less, just as at present every oscillation of market values expresses itself in a rise or fall of the gold or silver prices of commodities (Marx, Grundrisse, Penguin edition, London, 1973, p. 135 and p. 139).

Marx clearly showed that you would fall into the same mess: speculation in vouchers, etc. (We will be told, as the Dutch Left have done, that workers can be obliged to consume their entitlement immediately so
that there is no speculation in vouchers. How wonderful is this "communist" society of poverty in which the proletarians would only be able to consume goods corresponding to short-term savings! Unless provision is to be made for "exchange" banks which would change at a fixed date over-valued vouchers against depreciated ones and whose "hours" would of course be paid by the productive workers in addition to those of the police charged with surveying this concentration camp world.

--the less productive workers (either so by choice, or because they had less modern machines or, as in the Third World, no machines at all) would rob the more productive workers. On the assumption of isolated producers, how avoid that the more productive workers, subjected to a much more intense rhythm, do not revolt against this situation by putting a break on productivity, so reducing productivity to a lower level?

--nothing except a monstrous bureaucracy hitherto unknown in the history of mankind could prevent each producer or productive unit from cheating, from declaring useless hours, from degrading to the uttermost the quality of products, from engaging in speculation, from accumulating products. An omnipresent Big Brother, an overgrown repressive organ, would be needed to keep alive the fiction of the Four Raisons d'État. Nothing, except a Bolshevik State could ensure order and prevent the producers from wanting to get their hands on safer values than these derisory tickets.

A society of "autonomous" producers would inevitably resuscitate a market and so the laws of exchange (supply and demand, general equivalent, real values to cover the vouchers). The enterprises which couldn't keep up would become bankrupt, "lazy" workers would be dismissed, thus forming a mass ready to sell its labor power. The average hour is determined by the ruthless market (...).

2. If labor is directly social, what use are individualized vouchers? It will be replied that Marx had in view, not a society of isolated producers, but that the communization of the means of production had been established. We would point out that in the 19th century such a possibility was ruled out until after a long period of development of the productive forces and that Marx and Engels repeated this to satisfy. But let us concede that it has become theoretically "possible" to calculate approximately and at the cost of grim calculations some "average hour". It would still be necessary to pose the problem: what are the criteria of what is "socially necessary"? And if we are given the answer "what men will freely determine", we will say that in that case it would be the concrete hour, which differs according to the activity and the individual! But further, we will now see some of the necessary conditions for this calculation which make it quite pointless. Marx himself wrote in the Grundrisse "this demand for labor money can be satisfied only where it can no longer be raised" (p. 172) (when labor is directly social and when the means of production are communized). It would require:

--a planned calculation on a world scale, using the permanent and unified participation of all mankind to follow step by step each change of productivity and to work out the repercussions, through millions of operations, on each part of the process of production;
-- Permanent assessment by the assembly of the community of the consequences of these changes, which assumes a collectivity welded together as a bloc, where free and conscious as individuals succeed in voluntarily and spontaneously establishing a permanent dialectical (in both directions) link between the "average" hour and their "hour";

-- Uniform distribution of the means of production and the end of differences in productivity. A world planning of quantities of labor-time;

-- Finally, a complete unconcern on the part of each "producer" as to the link between what "he" produces and what "he" consumes, without which this calculation would be falsified by his inevitable tendency to "cheat".

It can be immediately seen that it would be a question here of a society that had full communication of the means of production, hence a fully integrated socialized distribution thanks to the communized character of the product, and the abolition of all independence of producers and enterprises. And it is on such a community that it is wanted to impose this prehistoric rubbish of paperwork, control and individual "incentives"! It is on this indivisible collectivity on which it is wanted to impose these ridiculous calculations concerning "my" labor time, when already in the barbarism of today "modern industry hides the share of each in the total product"! It is to this community that it is wanted to play the old refrain about "my" consumption, a concept which already appears absurd at the present time!

It is such an association of free and creative men that it is wanted to force to make uniform the products of labor in a way even more totalitarian than in miserable present-day society (for, from the moment men want to create an infinite diversity of use-values, of concrete goods, for art, finish etc, the average hour and abstract necessary time would be pulverized)

And this community where the products are simple use-values which are directly collective is to be imprisoned in the narrow corset of individualist "sharing"! You might as well sell pure air to flowers "divided up" in bags! An indissoluble community in production and a mass of egotistic wills in distribution -- that is the real meaning of labor voucher. (....)

The theory of vouchers announces itself as an expression of the utopian demand of the small producer: "for a concrete equal labor, an equal share of the social product!" But social production has eliminated the isolated worker; in place of individual or cooperative labor power has been substituted global labor power; the socialization of production has laid the basis for the product to assume from the start an indivisible collective form. In these conditions, the calculation of individual labor time and shares become reactionary attempts to stick on the social productive forces an out-dated form of sharing-out.

Dear Comrades,

Because I paste up your articles and letters for each issue, I am in the enviable position of answering criticisms is the same issue that carries them.

Regarding unity, I think that Comrades Brandon and Dekovich read more into my letter than was there. I am not opposed in principle to unifying De Leonist groups, but based on past experience (1960-70 and the late seventies) I think success is unlikely. The lack of response to Comrade Brandon's letter to the various groups speaks for itself. Obviously the time for such an effort is not at hand. Doesn't it seem more likely that the impulse toward unity will come in connection with significant changes in our class's interest in revolutionary ideas? The demand for literature, speakers, organizers, and the like will be a powerful force toward unity, not just of De Leonists, I hope, but of many elements in our political sector.

To Comrade Dekovich, who asks what purpose the DB serves if not to advance the cause of unity, I would answer that discussion, argument, and reading and understanding each other's views, develop the ability to recognize what is important and what is unimportant in this movement, a necessary first step in the direction of unity.

Three quarters of a century has passed since De Leon was advocating electoral activity by socialists as a tactical weapon and a thermometer for taking the revolutionary temperature of our class. All this made sense in an era when the media were the printed word and the public meeting, both within the reach of socialists. Today we can't reach our class during elections. Aside from the difficulties of getting on the ballot, we can't wage a campaign because we have no access to the television, the only effective way of reaching large numbers of workers.

I am not opposed in principle to the use of the ballot, and I agree with De Leon that to take an organizational position rejecting the "legal" method of advocating revolutionary change would be to invite repression. But these sentiments, which I share with many DB readers, shouldn't prevent us from calling on workers not to vote now and pointing out the purpose the ballot serves in this late stage of capitalism.

In the long run, Comrade Lazarus would seem to be right about the SP's reformist tactics shaping its goal. Both the modern SP and its splinters and other descendants including the Leninists attest to that. But in De Leon's day the SP had a program very similar to the pre-1900 SLP's together with a strong left wing that included Debs and other revolutionaries. Certainly at that time the SP's vision of socialism was not authoritarian, which was my point.

As to when Socialist Industrial Unions will be organized, I suspect that Comrade Dekovich and I are closer than he seems to think. I agree that socialists must always hold out the program to our class;
but for the reasons I gave, it seems more likely that such unions will be organised as part of the revolutionary act itself, not prior to the revolution as De Leon and the early SLP envisioned.

Probably all readers of the DB at times have doubts about the purpose it is serving. I think anyone who envisioned it as a device through which he could convert the heathen to the true faith was doomed to be disappointed. Readers are almost always convinced adherents of a particular element in our political sector of libertarian socialism and are unlikely to change their views easily. Regardless of the tone of some articles and letters, the DB exists as a forum to promote understanding of the various viewpoints among us and cooperation where and when that is possible.

Fraternally,
Frank Girard

The Socialist Labor Party Revisited (Cont'd)

The appearance of unity and the apparent solution to the "Headquarters problem," which had cheered members at the 1976 Convention in February were not destined to last. By the 1976 National Executive Committee (NEC) session in August, the internal stresses that would decimate the party a year later were already beginning to appear. In part they resulted from a conscious decision by National Secretary Karp and his Headquarters Staff to encourage discussion of, and thus dissent against, the changes proclaimed at the 1976 Convention.

This new policy of internal party democracy, which also included a secret ballot in elections and referenda, was introduced with some fanfare and negative comments about the bad old days together with invidious references to Arnold Petersen and his authoritarian regime. The clear resemblance to events in Russia after the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union two decades earlier almost to the day, was not lost on members then and later.

The convention had charged each section to devote a special meeting to discussion of the acts of the convention prior to balloting on them and to return a summary of the discussion to the National Office (N.O.). These were published with the 1976 NEC Session Minutes and Report. Most explicit in their opposition were those of Sections New York and Kings County (Brooklyn), which questioned the wisdom of the changes and the "new analysis." Other sections reported dissent views on other topics including the N.O. reorganization scheme, Karp's criticism of NEC members, and other matters.

Although the membership approved the changes overwhelmingly in the referendum, the vote was far from the near unanimity that had prevailed in Petersen's day, when opposing votes on any item could usually be counted on the fingers of one hand. The dissent was greater than anything the party had experienced in the previous fifty years, and Karp was well aware of the trouble that was brewing for him and his new Headquarters Staff.
Insurrection

The center of opposition was New York and northern New Jersey, perhaps because the members there knew Karp and were less in awe of him. First was Section Monmouth County; members there supported the "changes" but offended Karp. In a letter reporting the section's discussion of the report of the 1976 Convention they criticized the tone he used in correspondence with dissenters. Karp, who is touchy about such things, demanded that the members responsible for the "slanderous charge" retract it. When no retraction was forthcoming, he began the process at the 1976 NEC Session that would lead to the suspension of the section eleven months later for failing to accede to the NEC's demand for an apology.

But far more serious for Karp was the opposition from sections New York and Kings County (Brooklyn). The old NEC Subcommittees through which Petersen had controlled the party for a half century had been drawn from these sections, and the members were well known and highly respected as writers and speakers for the party. In fact, if an SLP intelligentsia comparable to the leadership in Leninist denominations could be said to exist, it was in the New York City sections.

The 1977 National Convention

Karp met the New York Tendency head on at the Chicago convention in May 1977. On one side was half of the New York delegation: John Emanuel, Barbara Graymont, Bernie Reitzes, and later Israel Feinberg. Their supporters included Jean Steiner and Josephine Clement from California and New Jersey respectively. Opposing them were the Karpites: Nathan's two sons, Alan and Stanley, both delegates from California and writers on the Weekly People staff; Richard Bell, another staff writer, and Robert Massi, a New York lawyer who had become Karp's principal lieutenant in the East.

In his opening report Karp drew up the order of battle and identified and labeled the enemy: the New York Tendency, "...a group based in New York which has uniformly opposed all proposals to change the party's course," and "...denies that the party's current crisis is in any way connected to our past theoretical, practical, or organizational activities." He had more trouble defining a second group consisting of Sections Minneapolis and Monmouth County, which supported the changes but rebelled against Karp's continuation of the Petersenian style of National Office management of the party.

The third tendency he found was centered in the National Office. The future of the party, he told us, depended on continuing support for what he called the "National Headquarters Unit," a new entity for which no constitutional provision existed nor precedent in party practice.

Karp's twenty-one page report, which amounted to an indictment of his opposition, didn't mention what might be termed the "fourth tendency," the great majority of the members and delegates who quietly watched the giants clash. Unquestionably the majority sided for
ideological and personal reasons with the Petersenites of the New York Tendency. Had it come to a straight vote on the changes with no other factors involved, Karp would have lost.

But there were other factors. For one thing Karp and his "unit" controlled the machinery of the party and the national convention. In a party that accepted as revealed truth De Leon's dictum that "the principles and the organization are one," control of the organization was all-important. The NO Tendency elected the chair, openly caucused on the floor of the convention (unheard of in SLP practice), and packed the important committees with their supporters.

The New York tendency presented the convention with the report of "The Special Joint Committee of Sections Kings County and New York," which forcefully labeled the new positions as "changes" and "reversals" in party policy, asserting that they constitute decidedly incorrect departures from the party's basic Marxist-DeLeonist revolutionary principles, and that the organizationally improper or questionable means by which some of them were introduced and adopted represent distinct threats to the SLP's organizational integrity and, indeed, to its continued existence as a revolutionary political party."

The three resolutions introduced by the New York Tendency—actually Sections New York and Kings County—were examined by the Committee on the State of the Organization, whose election had been carefully engineered by the NO using the aforementioned caucusing technique. The five members—Alan Karp, Stephen Emery, Robert Vassil, Bruce Cozzini, and Julius Levin—were Karp supporters to a man. Committee meetings, under the new democratic dispensation, were open to members who could testify before the committee and watch the proceedings. The outcome was quite clear by the time the hearings ended.

The Committee's report consisted of two "statements" submitted by the National Secretary condemning the New York Tendency for its supposed violations of organizational procedures and its false charges that the National Secretary had violated constitutional procedures and had improperly changed long held positions of the party. Not only did it reject the three documents submitted by the New York sections; it condemned the manner in which these had been drawn up as unorganizational and recommended that both sections and John Emanuel, the region's NEC member and a member of the "Joint Committee," be censured.

Debate on the report was muted. Recognizing defeat and convinced that Karp's statements would be accepted at face value by the delegates, the New York Tendency remained silent for the most part. The report was accepted overwhelmingly by the convention.

The Aftermath

The results of the Karp's victory became apparent within a few
weeks as the old guard began to resign. Lost entirely through resignation were Sections Waltham, Massachusetts, and Greensburg, Pennsylvania. But more serious was the loss of all except a corporal's guard in New York. Section Kings County was disbanded, and Section New York was reduced to around ten members. To the loss by resignation must be added those who quietly allowed themselves to be dropped for non-payment of dues. Two other sections were also lost.

The greater part of Section Minneapolis left as did Section Monmouth County New Jersey, both of which had opposed Karp's management style.

Perhaps just as serious was the continuing disaffection. Karp had won the battle but had alienated the majority of members who, in their heart of hearts, were opposed to many of the changes but were so tied to the party by decades of membership and emotional ties that they couldn't bring themselves to leave. (to be continued)

(Cont'd from page 2)

In accomplishing this purpose they differ widely from the standard Leninist exposition of state capitalism theory familiar to most readers. For one thing they find the roots of state capitalism in the pre-WWI Second International, a part of the theoretical luggage of Karl Kautsky, its most prominent theoretician and of Lenin, his ardent disciple in those days before the Russian Revolution. State capitalism according to these authors, then, made its appearance in Russia, not with the NEP or as a fall from grace after the death of Lenin--the Trotskyist version--or the death of Stalin, as Marxist-Leninists would have us believe, but as a result the understanding of socialism that Lenin carried with him and employed in the development of the soviet system.

In the Soviet Union we have the first example of what the authors term "revolutionary state capitalism," a variation of capitalism that obtains in nations that lack a bourgeoisie capable of seizing state power from the politically backward elements holding it at that time in countries like Russia and China. It is this combination of Lenin's state capitalist theory and the historical necessity for the accumulation of capital through the exploitation of wage labor that informs the Soviet system and those of its imitators.

The authors see state capitalism as endemic in Western capitalism. In varying degrees the capitalist class has always used its political state in this capacity in certain functions like communications and transportation. State owned postal systems, railroads, telephone systems and now space transportation and communication are examples. Capitalism's increasing need for state involvement in many new areas as the system decays dovetails perfectly with the state capitalism of the western social democratic parties, assuring them a political partnership.

The authors also slug it out with those who would defend the USSR and similar states against the charge that they are state capitalist. In a chapter devoted to the dynamics of the system, they take up the question of whether commodity production takes place in such
economies. They discuss the existence of wage labor and its concomitant, profits, under state capitalism, along with the nature of the market in such a system, and the question of ownership, which befuddles some writers on the subject. Perhaps the most effective section is that dealing with the integration of these systems with capitalism's world economic system. Here a very persuasive set of data tell the story. For example, figures for Russian foreign trade turnover (imports and exports) amounted to 15 percent in 1977, approximately the same as that of the U.S. in 1970. Yugoslavia's foreign trade amounts to about one third of its GNP, while Hungary's is 50 percent. And there is a wealth of additional information on the subject.

In the final chapter, "The Alternative to Capitalism," the authors describe a real socialist society in terms that make the difference between socialism and state capitalism clear to those whose ideas of socialism have been distorted by reading state capitalist writers. The chapter ends with a statement few readers of the Discussion Bulletin will differ with: "It merely confuses the issue to talk of socialism being anything other than a moneyless, wageless, stateless, world commonwealth."

fg