DISCUSSION BULLETIN

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BULLETIN MATTERS

DB27 begins with Don Fitz's brief history of the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance (ST&LA). No action by the DeLeonist Socialist Labor Party had a more profound effect on the future of the socialist movement in America. It drove the reformers out of the SLP and was the vehicle that brought the SLP into the Industrial Workers of the World. Next we have four letters continuing the discussion of
syndicalism by members of the Industrial Workers of the World and the Workers' Solidarity Alliance. Interrogations, a French group which sends us material from time to time, adds to the discussion on labor time vouchers, and I have a letter to Internationalism, answering theirs in DB23 and another responding to letters and articles in DB26. The major article in this issue is the proposal by a branch of the Socialist Party of Great Britain for changes in their program. Unfortunately space considerations force us to publish this in two parts. Under reviews we discuss a fine collection of articles from the newspaper of the Glasgow-based Anti-Parliamentary Communist Federation (1921-1947), a group whose political orientation resembled that of many readers of the DB.

Once again we call on readers to write commenting on ideas in the DB or raising new issues that demand discussion. Please-- single space, narrow margins, and a dark ribbon,

Frank Girard
for the DB Com.

REVIEW


This 92-page, 8 1/2 by 11 inch pamphlet consists of articles from SOLIDARITY, the monthly publication of the Anti-Parliamentarian Communist Federation. According to the introduction the APCF began in 1921 as an amalgam of anarchists and Marxists in Glasgow, Scotland, during the immediate post-Russian Revolution period, when enthusiasm for the revolution was high even among anarchists. Soon disillusioned by events in Russia, the APCF came increasingly under the influence of left communists--Marxists who had broken with the Bolsheviks around 1921. These included the German Communist Labor Party (KAPD) and a Dutch group whose spokesmen, Anton Pannekoek and Herman Gorter, carried on polemics with Lenin and who became the theoreticians of a new Marxism that rejected the parliamentarianism of the social democrats and Leninists, recognized the essentially capitalist nature of the Soviet economy, and opposed the Leninist perversion of Marx's idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

For inclusion in this book, the Wildcat Group, which shares most of the positions held by the APCF, has compiled articles on four general topics under the following headings: "Principles and Tactics," "The Civil War in Spain," "The Second World War," and "Party and Class." It has supplemented these texts with an article, "A Brief History of the APCF," lengthy introductions to each section, and explanatory footnotes and comments. The articles in the first section, "Principles and Tactics" explain the APCF's opposition to electoral activity as based, not on anarchist principle but on the pragmatic grounds that it was not effective. Another article comparing revolutionary programs saw little difference between socialist industrial unions and workers' councils. It was clearly familiar with and sympathetic to DeLeonist ideas, which it saw as just

(cont'd on p. 15)
The Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance (STLA)

Organized to combat the craft conservatism prevalent in the American Federation of Labor (AFL), the STLA was the first explicitly socialist union in the U.S. In the late 1880's and early 1890's, the Socialist Labor Party (SLP) had worked inside of the AFL and the Knights of Labor to try and win them to socialism, a policy they called "boring from within." Despite the SLP's reputation as a divisive force within the U.S. labor movement, the prompts to form the STLA came from the AFL's denying a convention seat to the SLP's Lucien Sanial in 1893 and the Knights of Labor's likewise denying Daniel DeLeon his convention seat in 1895.

Ever since the SLP's origin in the late 1870's, German immigrants had formed the bulk of its members. The SLP was attracted to the Knights' enthusiasm for organizing the unorganized, even though the Knights had declined sharply after the Haymarket affair of 1886. The socialists found a new hope for reaching the American working class as SLP members became influential in the Knights District Assembly 49, a predominantly English-speaking local of New York. Daniel DeLeon had joined DA 49 in 1888, two years before he entered the SLP.

After a rapid growth in the Knights, the SLP supported James Sovereign's bid to oust Grand Master Workman Terrance Powderly. When Sovereign renounced on his promise to name the SLP's Sanial as editor of the Knights' journal and barred DeLeon from the 1895 convention, the SLP took out 13,000 members, leaving the Knights with 17,000.

The STLA was formed in December, 1895 as a combination of DA 49, the New York Central Labor Federation, the Brooklyn Socialist Labor Federation, the United Hebrew Trades and the Newark Central Labor Federation. The STLA won its strongest support from textile, shoe, metal, and machinery workers. During its first three years, the STLA issued over 200 charters and enrolled between 15,000 and 30,000 members. Soon after its formation, Alliance workers lost a textile strike at Slater'sville RI when the mill closed down. A strike by the STLA affiliated Pioneer Cigar Makers Alliance, which was sparked by a wage cut at the Davis Cigar Company, was broken by AFL members sent to cross picket lines.

The cigar strike reflected the bitter hostility between the STLA and AFL at the turn of the century. The SLP had frequently denounced the AFL as an aristocracy of labor which would rather endorse friendly capitalist politicians than support militant strikes or defend the unemployed. At its 1896 convention, the SLP openly endorsed the STLA, thereby showing its contempt for the AFL officials who avidly opposed socialist involvement in unions. DeLeon emphasized the need to side with any union against capitalists and opposed a blanket withdrawal of unionists from AFL locals which were not totally corrupt. But, the SLP became embroiled in an intense internal debate when the New York Volkszeitung, a newspaper controlled by the minority in the SLP, attacked the existence of the independent union as being divisive. In
1898, the SLP majority was able to induce the STLA to hold an extra
convention, at which it removed its first General Secretary, Ernest
Dohnan, and passed advertisements of capitalist politicians.
This precipitated the withdrawal of unions from the Central Labor
Federation, which then merged with the Central Labor Union to form the
Federated Labor Union of New York.

The STLA never recovered from the CLF departure and continued to
decline until it took 1450 members into the Industrial Workers of the
World in 1905. Conventional union wisdom has insisted that the STLA
degenerated because of its "dual union" strategy of organizing
outside of the AFL. This charge was popularized by Morris Hillquit
and others who left the SLP in 1899 and fused with Eugene Debs' Social
Democrats to form the Socialist Party in 1901. Ironically, it was
Debs who had led the American Railway Union to organize outside of the
AFL. This period of labor history saw the formation of several other
strong unions outside of the AFL: the Amalgamated Clothing Workers,
the Brewery Workmen's Union, the Western Federation of Miners and the
WFM's umbrella affiliate, the American Labor Union. Of course, the
Knights had surpassed 700,000 members as recently as 1886.

Clearly, the decline of the STLA could not have been due to its
organizing outside of the AFL. More likely, the STLA was damaged by
increased control from the SLP, which was reflected in rules requiring
STLA officers to print in SLP members and prohibiting persons expelled from
the SLP from joining the STLA. When DeLeon proclaimed in 1896 that
the STLA was the revolutionary shield and the SLP ballot the
revolutionary sword, he was voicing a widespread feeling among many
German-American socialists who doubted the ability of strikes to
improve wages. Despite DeLeon's emphasis upon combining political and
economic action, many SLP members placed almost exclusive emphasis on
political organization. Uncertainty concerning the usefulness of
industrial action probably spilled over to the STLA, whose only well-
known strike victory involved 4000 Pittsburgh steel workers. It is
likely that most workers did not see the STLA as capable of defending
their standard of living. Even after it lost members, the STLA
continued to influence radical American labor thought, especially
through the speeches and pamphlets of DeLeon.

Though the STLA had never itself developed an industrial union
structure, it was a powerful force at the 1905 founding convention of
the IWW. STLA delegates argued that the AFL had become an auxiliary to
the capitalist class and denounced any attempts to work inside it.
Though it had the smallest vote of any of the "big five" labor
organizations, it was the only one which brought the actual membership
claimed into the new union. Under DeLeon's leadership, the STLA
delegated in including the "political clause" in the
original preamble to the IWW's constitution. The clause recognized the
value of political action by stating that workers must "come together
on the political, as well as on the industrial field and take and hold
that which they produce by their labor, through economic organization
of the working class, without affiliation to any political party."

Though many SP members complained that the STLA ran the IWW
convention, its 14 delegates had comparatively few votes or power and
no STLA member was elected to the IWW Executive Board. As the IWW historian Paul Brisenden wrote, the only domination exerted by the STLA was through its "supremacy of ideas."

Don Fitz, St. Louis MO, August, 1987


Dear Friends,

I was sorry to read that my last letter to the DB was taken as "organizational bashing" by some. I had wanted to highlight the piece on the SLP and to point out that others have had similar experiences in other groups. In thinking through I believe that we should use the clarity so evident in the piece on the SLP. A sense of history makes all the difference between "organizational bashing" and analysis.

The WSA can speak for itself. However, I would like to reply in some measure to Jon Pekken's letter.

In its early days, at least, the greatest strength of the WSA and the groups which preceded it was the ability of WSA members to dialog with all sorts of people while maintaining their identities and the group's integrity. Thus, we learned from council communists, Trotskyists, Zionists, Irish republicans, Leninists, anarchists and others while remaining in the anarchist-syndicalist family. This idea of dialog is what should give working class movements their vitality. It is what makes the DB worthwhile. It underlies solidarity.

We never doubted that revolutionary unions form an important part of anarchist-syndicalism but we were always hesitant to say that they form the only basis for anarchist-syndicalism. We came of age at a time when the feminist movement was developing other forms of libertarian working class organization and we had much respect for the council form of General Confederations of workers which surfaced during the major upheavals of this century. We favored a pluralistic approach which included all sorts of organizations and we placed ourselves very definitely at the far left of the political spectrum. We wanted to stress dialog and debate instead of any one form of social organization and some of us saw this as an intricate part of a theory of spontaneity. There is no contradiction here between the early WSA and the IWW as Jon Pekken understands it. No one in the early WSA ever believed in "infiltrating the reformist business unions" or said that such unions give workers "what they want." We did take part in some union reform efforts, as participants and as supporters. This activity came about because we deliberately placed ourselves in situations where we saw workers moving. We did this at great personal risk sometimes and we did it to learn and to participate and not to lead. When we did this we moved along with the workers and with our own common sense. The strength of some of these larger efforts testifies to our direction and sense: look at TDU or
the movement in the Shinbuilders to see what has been accomplished in the way of reform and developing class consciousness. If WSA members had some role, however minor, in this then it is to their credit and worth.

It is unfortunate that relations between the IWW and the WSA soured but these turned sour as a result of honest mistakes made while struggling around important problems in New York and Ann Arbor. I cannot think of a time in the early history of the WSA when we slandered anyone in the IWW. The mistakes were serious ones and were made by both groups. Time should heal the wounds.

I want to predict that eventually most of the IWW and most of the WSA will find themselves in the same organization and that that grouping will be neither the IWW nor the WSA. The more important problem is if such a grouping will have any impact on workers' struggles.

Fraternally, Bob Rossi

Jon Bekken's "explanation" of the differences between Worker's Solidarity Alliance and the Libertarian Labor Review really doesn't clarify very much. As a founding member of WSA maybe I can offer an alternative perspective.

The insistence that WSA is somehow not anarchosyndicalist doesn't derive from any knowledge or analysis of WSA's theory and practice. It kind of reminds me of the 70's when racist groups would denounce each other as "trotskyites". The judgement shared within WSA that the U.S. is in a prerevolutionary situation is, unfortunately, also true. There are today countries in which revolutionary unions organized along explicitly anarchosyndicalist lines exist. However we may wish otherwise, the U.S. is not one of those countries.

This leaves those of us who are anarchosyndicalists with the question of what we should do, other than emigrate. I suppose that it would be nice to simply proclaim ourselves a union and sign up the American working class. Or, we could participate in the actual class struggle that currently exists here and put forth anarchosyndicalism in doing so. In both the actions it encourages and the analysis it offers, WSA has chosen to do the latter. Those of us in workplaces and industries organized by the existing unions agitate among our fellow workers, a practice Comrade Bekken ingeniously characterizes as "infiltrating the reformist business unions". Infiltration implies that we seek to capture the bureaucratic leadership of such unions. The reality is that it is important to support all autonomous and antibureaucratic worker initiatives wherever they erupt.

Let's be honest: the dispute is not between WSA and IWW. There are both past and present members of the IWW in WSA. When the IWW was founded in 1905, it proclaimed a noble but flawed ideal: the One Big Union. The historical reality of class struggle is that there can be no one global organization or form that can be abstractly imposed on the living reality of the working class (an error of which council communists are also sometimes guilty). By forming an anarchosyndicalist
group affiliated with the International Workers Association, WSA offended those for whom the idea of One Big Union has ossified into an inflexible dogma. The very existence of WSA is a tacit acknowledgement that the IWU is not the sole vehicle for the workers revolutionary movement.

What defines all of us as libertarians is the recognition that no bureaucratic group is identical to the working class—no vanguard party, no trade union. What separates Comrade Bekken from WSA is our recognition that there exists no single organization of any kind that is presently identical to the working class. The fetish of the One Big Union imposes in advance a single form as authentic.

To dismiss the pretense that there is or can be One Big Union is not to trash the history or tactics of the IWU or to belittle its contribution to the workers struggle for freedom. But it is simply incorrect to identify anarchosyndicalism exclusively with the IWU idea of One Big Union. What would Comrade Bekken have us do: should the IWA simply fold its operations and urge its members to join the IWU? Or would it not be preferable to acknowledge that we are all comrades in the same struggle and to cooperate toward common goals? If Comrade Bekken can work with Wobblies who are not anarchosyndicalists, why not with anarchosyndicalists who are not all Wobblies? Enough of bickering; the task before us is too important and too great to be delayed by arguments over who owns the copyright to the term "anarchosyndicalist".

S. J. Gordon

Dear Friends:

In the interest of clarity of thought within the libertarian left, I would like to address certain remarks made by Jon Bekken in the November DB.

Among other things, JB asserts that the theoretical position of the Workers Solidarity Alliance is "akin to that of the council communists", and that we are opposed to "revolutionary unionism and other basic tenets of anarchosyndicalism." The organizational form of anarchosyndicalism, JB continues, "is the revolutionary union."

Now, the WSA is the American affiliate of the International Workers Association, which is the international anarchosyndicalist organization. Among the Principles of Revolutionary Unionism which govern the IWA and its constituent groups like the WSA, are the following, that "the goal of revolutionary unionism is the reorganization of social life on the basis of libertarian communism", and further, that "revolutionary unionism aims at ... the establishing of economic communities and administrative organisms run by the workers in the fields and factories, forming a system of free councils without subordination to any State power or political party." (Emphasis mine.)

These Principles of the IWA were first adopted at its founding congress in 1922–23. And they refer to councils because the council form of organization—also called soviets or Arbeiterräte—sprung up as a new type of revolutionary organism from
Russia to Ireland in the last days and in the aftermath of the First World War. The majority of workers who participated in these new organizations were not members of anarcho-syndicalist unions. Many were not even trade union members at all. Taking cognizance of this, the founders of the IWA allowed for the creation of varying forms of revolutionary organization, depending upon national characteristics and regional and local circumstances. The fundamental and guiding principle is that the workers organization, whether union or council or whatever, is under the direct control of the workers themselves.

It seems to me that JB's conception of anarcho-syndicalism is a rather narrow one, and appears to originate in the earlier period of the movement, around the turn of the century. His indictment goes beyond the WSA, and must be directed at the IWA itself, and its member groups like the Spanish CNT.

So far as the WSA's alleged "hostile activities" against the wobblies are concerned, I must say that I fail to see how the expression of an opinion is a "hostile" activity. JB quotes from a WSA document transmitted to the IWA and our sister organizations within it. Hundreds of copies were not dropped on the wobbly headquarters in Chicago by helicopter.

And lastly, the Boston Branch of the IWW has recently notified the local WSA here of a wobbly organizing effort in western Massachusetts. As part of our "opposition to revolutionary unionism" and "campaign of disruption" against the IWW, we have offered the wobs any assistance that we can muster. We do this not merely because elementary solidarity demands it, or because of the personal friendships between WSA and IWW members in this area. We support the IWW's organizing activities because, if successful, it would be a shot in the arm for the libertarian left here, perhaps even affect the mainstream labor movement in Massachusetts.

No, I don't believe that an anarcho-syndicalist rival to the AFL-CIO will ever appear. I share the pessimism of my organization. But I would be very, very happy to be proven wrong.

A Happy New Year to all.

Martin Comack
Workers Solidarity Alliance
PO Box 1453
Cambridge, MA - 02238

LE COMBAT
SYNDICALISTE
SEPTEMBRE 87
mensuel N°71 6Fr
Dear Discussion Bulletin,

The intellectual and ideological fuzziness of the Workers Solidarity Alliance has recently been demonstrated by Richard Laubach in his letters to your bulletin. The goal of anarcho-syndicalism is to meet human needs irrespective of individual talents or contributions (i.e. "to each according to need, from each according to ability"). Laubach's proposals for a mixed market syndicalism in which individual workplaces would compete for consumers and workers would be rewarded according to their productivity (or according to how well their plant competes), is incompatible with anarcho-syndicalism. Contrary to his claims, the CNT never practiced such a system. During the Spanish Revolution, collective members received a family wage, based upon the number of dependents. Free cafeterias were set-up in Barcelona and elsewhere, that fed anyone who carried a union card. The CNT "syndicalized" the industries under their control, phasing out small unproductive workplaces and concentrating resources in the most efficient plants. Every effort was made to avoid relying on market forces to rationalize the economy. I suggest Laubach read Leval's COLLECTIVES IN THE SPANISH REVOLUTION, Dolgoff's THE ANARCHIST COLLECTIVES, and Souchy's WITH THE PEASANTS OF ARAGON.

It cannot be denied that the CNT was seriously handicapped in their efforts by interference from the republicans, socialists and communists (not to mention Franco). However to suggest that where the CNT went wrong was that it failed to overthrow the Spanish government and put "a SINGLE democratic organism" into its place (a euphemism for a workers' state), is to abandon anarcho-syndicalism and boldly embrace marxism. This was the policy of the POUM (for which the WSA has always had an affectionate warm spot). Laubach seems to ignore that anarchists have always sought to replace the state with voluntary federations of communes and self-managed industries, not a central political institution no matter how "democratic". Laubach's positions come closer to Yugoslavian marxism than to anarcho-syndicalism.

Laubach's positions help to demonstrate the reason for the dispute within the WSA and the anarcho-syndicalists, who are grouped loosely around the Libertarian Labor Review. LLR represents the more or less "classical" anarcho-syndicalism, the tradition of the Bakuninist faction of the First International, the pre-World War II syndicalism of the IWA, the Spanish CNT and FAI, etc. We believe in building revolutionary unions which combine the workers' struggle for immediate demands, with the long term struggle for the replacement of the State and capitalism by self-managed industrial federations. The WSA, on the other hand, has a less coherent and well-defined doctrine, which borrows its ideology from marxism, council communism, trade union reformism, and claims these are compatible with anarcho-syndicalism. Rather than hold out for organizing revolutionary unions, the WSA takes a more "flexible" (or "opportunist" approach - depending on one's outlook) approach. WSA boldly follows current radical working
class tendencies in whatever direction these might lead. Thus
while in the past WSA has attacked the LWV and others for working
outside the AFL-CIO and mainstream labor movement and advocated
libertarian reforms within those unions, they have recently
flip-flopped on the issue and support NAMPU, the breakaway
meatpackers union.

WSA, which has called for a "synthesis of anarchism and
marxism", is closer to the "third force socialist" politics of
the Discussion Bulletin. At LLB, we feel that anarchism and
marxism (including DeLeonism) are distinct ideologies with
irreconcilable differences. Anarchism calls for a stateless
revolution, whereas all forms of marxism are politically
centralist, anti-federalist, and at best, ambivalent towards the
State. We do not necessarily reject any dealings with
non-anarchists, nor do we rule out the possibility of former
marxists becoming sincere anti-statists. However we are
unwilling to compromise our anarchist principles by pretending
that marxism and DeLeonism do not have serious flaws. Again this
reflects a different approach than the one pursued by WSA.

Jeff Stein c/o PO Box 2824
Station A Champaign, IL
61820

To Internationalism, ICC in the U.S.

Dear Comrades:

As the person whose job it is to assemble each issue of the
Discussion Bulletin, I feel called upon to respond to your letter,
published in DB25. To begin with I had best clear up a misconception
which I infer from your addressing the DB as a "discussion group."
Although DB subscribers and especially the active participants, those
who write letters and articles, could be thought of as members of a
far-flung discussion group which holds bimonthly discussion meetings
in the pages of the Discussion Bulletin, no organizational ties exist.
Membership in the "Discussion Bulletin Committee," listed as the
publisher of the DB, is an involuntary, unsought, and basically
meaningless honor given to any subscriber who contributes either money
to the DB or time in the form of articles or letters. DB Committee
"members" receive with each issue a dittoed "Report" containing a
financial statement and other information about the DB. Perhaps the
DB could use greater organizational structure, but it doesn't have it
now.

Your second misapprehension concerns the political development of
DB readers, which your assumption about the nature of the DB led you
believe was in a state of flux. I doubt if this is the case in most
instances. Most readers, I believe, are members of revolutionary
groups or parties with well defined positions and principles. A
majority would consider themselves Marxists, members of DeLeonist
groups and parties, council communist groups, or the Socialist Party
of Great Britain or its American branch. The other element, almost
half, are the largely non-Marxist syndicalists, members of either the Industrial Workers of the World or the Workers Solidarity Association (WSA), and the anarchists, some of whom are members of groups and some of whom are independent. As for the rest of us, the non-members, we are largely sympathizers and ex-members of the above-mentioned libertarian socialist groups.

Consequently the DB, since it is not an organization and since its "members" are already committed to political positions and principles, has none of its own. Rather it is a forum in which some of the differences—minor in most instances—can be argued and perhaps resolved or at least better understood. To respond to other concerns raised in your letter, DB readers as active members of their own groups and parties are active in the class struggle and in agitating among our class for socialism. In most instances they support one or more revolutionary journals through which they are informed about the class struggle worldwide.

The idea of unifying these divergent groups has already occurred to some readers. And I am sure it would be possible to write a set of positions and principles that nearly all of us would subscribe to. The problem is that having written the basic set of principles, we would all have additional points that would have to be added to satisfy us. Disagreement on these together with a history of organizational feuding that reaches back a century or more to the First International make any peacemaking difficult. Longstanding differences in organizational and agitational style would also make unity difficult.

As for the "unitary organizations," the mass revolutionary organizations which you see as distinct from the revolutionary organization of militants, the idea seems to me to be divisive and elitist. I think everyone in the DB's libertarian socialist sector would reject as a Leninist perversion the idea that I gather from your proposal, namely, that the workers who first become revolutionaries will become members of the revolutionary party of militants and the leaders ("...point out the general line of march.") of the working class masses will come later. This division between the leaders and the led stands in direct opposition to the view held by most readers of the DB that our class must act in response to its own class consciousness, not to the direction of militants who would "point out the general line of march."

The idea that the proletariat needs an international revolutionary organization at this time also sounds premature to me. Consider the four internationals organized to date. All have been failures in their roles as revolutionary organizations. The Second and the Third were worse than failures; they betrayed the working class. Doesn't it seem more reasonable to you that instead of trying to set up an international of miniscule national revolutionary parties we should wait until the level of socialist consciousness worldwide creates the need for one? And the same holds true on the national level; unity will come when our class demands it.

I enjoyed your thought-provoking letter to the Discussion
Bulletin and its fraternal tone. I hope it won't be the last.

Fraternally yours,
Frank Girard

Dear DB,

Tom Holzinger's Labour time, exchange, and the transition to socialism (DB 25) is actually representative of marxist (and anarcho) ideologies, explaining the history of humanit by the phenomenon of scarcity. Apparently, accessible goods and resources exist in limited quantities to satisfy the needs and desires of all human beings. Consequently these latter have no choice. The parsimony of nature condemns them to war: scarcity forces their desires to converge towards the same goods, establishing rivalries between them which are certainly regrettable... but in the end necessary. So scarcity appeared as a clear and simple concept resting on the "natural" limitation of the quantity of accessible goods and resources, on niggardliness of nature. Comparing this quantity with the dimension or the extent of the needs of humanity then allows the constraint exercised by scarcity on human activity to be represented. These needs being, in addition, defined as very large, not to say infinite, form a shifting horizon that Progress (under capitalism or the so-called transition to socialism) pursues endlessly without being able to catch up to.

This assumption of scarcity, as an unchanging phenomenon to which the human species is supposed to have been confronted since its beginnings, allows the responsibility for the phenomenon of scarcity to be shifted from human beings; it allows abstractions to be made from the relations between human beings. The contrast between needs and scarcity obscures the fact that this is only the expression of social conditions marked by the separation between exploiters and exploited. This is to project onto the past and the future of humanity a certain type of human behavior resulting from thousands of years of domination and especially of artificial or real shortages created by the mediation of money in relations between human beings. A mediation which in separating and then recomposing through the Market the act of production and consumption, has fabricated for us needs which correspond to the demands, at any given moment, of the apparatus of the production and circulation of commodities. The impersonal domination of an abstraction (money) has confronted us with an ever greater impossibility of directly producing our live since at one moment or other one always has to use money. So, human beings have been led to perceive themselves as potential rivals for whom the absence of genuinely human relations and activities finds its compensation in the frenzy of commodity consumption.

The abolition of the State, of money, of wage labor, as of all forms of domination and commercial relations, are not "transitional" economic decisions, but the hope of a world that will allow people to consciously control their activity, through the relations and interactions existing between them and the rest of nature. This implies the creation by human beings of new relations which would
DISCUSSION BULLETIN
F.O. Box 1564, Grand Rapids, MI 49501

REPORT #27

December 29, 1987

Members of the DB Committee

Dear Comrades:

No doubt the exclusive concern about the financial health of the DB that you read in these reports gets a bit tiresome. But actually there isn't much other news to report. We don't get many complaints. In fact most of our readers either approve of the way the DB is being handled or else hold their peace. Unfortunately the happy financial picture described in Report #26 has faded, as you will see from the figures below. This condition isn't unusual during the winter, but we must get out three more issues at $150 each before we can count on a large spurt of income when the bulk of our subs expire in September. So -- if you are thinking of making a donation, now is the time.

CONTRIBUTIONS

From November 6 through December 29, we received the following contributions: Frederick L. Gratiot $20; Ronald Sims $1; Robert Blau Jr. $4.50; Tundra Wind $5; Margaret Begovich $12. Total $42.50. Thank you, comrades.

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Fraternally submitted,

Frank Girard
for the DB Committee
completely determine all other activities. So productive activity would not be what production is today, minus money. The disappearance of exploitation would signify that production would no longer be determined by the present "necessities" of profitability and of competition, implying waste and pollution as well as the mutilation of human faculties. This change of finality will imply profound changes in the productive process, through the rediscovery and creation of techniques that do not subjugate human beings. This would be an expression of their humanity which will not strip them of their other dimensions, such as love, play, and dreams. To conclude, the end of domination will not come from things, from so-called progressive decisions, but from human beings themselves.

INTERROGATIONS,
C/ L.S., B.P. 243
75564 PARIS CEDEX 12
France

Dear Comrades,

This letter is a response to articles by Adam Buick and Tom Holzinger on labor time vouchers, RDW on the Jehovah's Witnesses and the "Old" Socialist Labor Party, and Donald Busky on the joys of deconcentraltist socialism.

My views on labor time vouchers (LTVs) are rather like those of Tom Holzinger, who accepts the Leninist idea of a transitional stage and believes that LTVs would serve as a transition to the free access of goods and services which will come with pure communism. Without agreeing that a transitional stage is necessary, I believe that a post-revolutionary society will need to balance demands for goods and services with production and that for a time and in some, but not all, areas of production the use of LTVs would be the method most in keeping with socialist aspirations.

Another factor—not emotional, as Comrade Buick described it, but eminently practical—is simply that when discussing socialism with non-believers, we sound less like born-again Christians describing the wonders of the New Jerusalem when we refer to the use of LTVs.

In my own case the matter is less than an article of faith. I believe that society will make decisions on distribution in keeping with the social needs of the time. But Comrade Buick, I think, takes the matter much more seriously. I suspect that despite his attempts to show that LTVs are unworkable, a part of the problem for him is that by supporting the need for LTVs even for a very short period, he would be rejecting an important article of Socialist Party of Great Britain faith: that we can step from capitalism directly into the plenty of socialist production with no serious dislocations at all. I hope that he and the SPGB are right, in which case the new classless, stateless society will not use LTVs, and Tom Holzinger and I will rejoice.

The "Old" SLP and the Jehovah's Witnesses

As a former member of the "Old" SLP I found RDW's analogy
painfully accurate in some respects. To his list of organizational and psychological similarities between the SLP and the JWs, I would add agitational methods. We found ourselves competing on the street corners with Watchtower salesmen and other ardent evangelistic types. Of course that parallel, I am sure RDW would agree, was thrust upon us as it is on any group of fanatics who seriously want to propagate their ideas. And if one thinks it through, he will see that most of the invidious comparisons RDW finds are inherent in any small group--political or religious--that seeks to justify its existence, retain its identity, and recruit new members. Consider the first items in RDW's catalog: uniqueness, infallibility, and urgency. Would members of any revolutionary socialist party or group--SLP, SPGB, IWW, or whatever--make the sacrifices that active membership entails if they thought their group was not unique. The same goes for infallibility. Why would revolutionaries organize a party if they didn't think it had the answers to social problems. In fact, we can go through RDW's list and find that most of the parallels came with the territory. They are the survival techniques of ideological minorities of all kinds. This isn't to say that I defend all of them. But as a former member and still a true believer of sorts, I can understand. It's just here that I think RDW's analogy fails. He was never there.

Re Decentralist Socialism, the SLP, and Social Democrats

Donald Busky's article in DB26 started from a reading of "The SLP Revisited," which he saw as "placing the blame [for the authoritarianism in the SLP] on industrial workers and immigrants."

"Why," he asks, "should the immigrants' barely able to speak English' be any more or less authoritarian than native-born Americans?" Why indeed? And why does Busky think I said they were? My point regarding industrial workers and immigrants in the SLP--and I was a factory-worker member throughout the first decade of my membership--was not that we were authoritarian but that we saw socialism as a completed system that needed no remodeling by intellectuals and academics. We supported the Petersen/Karp/Hass leadership, which was producing the Weekly People and the kind of literature we believed would save the world. It had created a tight organization with high morale, and to rock the boat, the good ship SLP, was to endanger the hope of humanity.

I don't believe that academically trained intellectuals are inherently democratic minded either. Quite the contrary. The CP and other Leninist denominations are full of them as are the U.S. State Department, the CIA, and Time Magazine. My point, developed at greater length earlier in the series, was that the loss of such people as Reimer, Solon De Leon, Fraina, and others removed from the SLP the competition that could have prevented Petersen from establishing his dominance of the party.

Busky may be at least partly correct in saying that the source of the authoritarian strain in the SLP can be traced back to that quality in De Leon. With the departure of many of the most prominent members in the 1989 split, De Leon became a large frog in a small puddle. His stature in the party derived from his talent as writer, speaker, and
thinker. During the decade after his death another internal upheaval placed the power in Arnold Petersen's hands, and the domination became purely administrative.

I have serious reservations about the blessings of decentralist socialism. In fact, with his talk of producers' cooperatives, state owned factories, national governments, and the like, it is obvious that what Busky regards as socialism is a diversified market economy. In other words, capitalism without, presumably, multinational corporations, a Department of Defense, and Ronald Reagan. A capitalism in which conglomerates allow workers to manage industries, nice people are elected to Congress, and the lion lies down with the lamb.

Frank Girard

(Cont'd from p. 2)

one variation of the left communist/revolutionary socialist/anarchist vision of the new society. In another article it urged all these groups--whose descendants we are--to bury their differences and merge into a revolutionary alliance.

In the sections on the Spanish Civil War the APCF--mistakenly, as Wildcat points out--took a position of uncritical support for the CNT/FAI, the anaarchist and syndicalist organizations, which at that time had entered the Republican government, becoming a supporting element in the state apparatus which would eventually smash the revolutionary workers in Barcelona.

The APCF actively opposed WWII, its publication SOLIDARITY in an article "Resist War," May 1939, calling for a general strike to prevent conscription and urging workers to "...let them [the capitalists] defend their profits, their treaties, with their own blood, not yours." It also reported worker uprisings in axis countries. Included in the pamphlet are two articles, "Axis Workers Show the Way" and "Events and Trends," written in 1943 and 1944 by Icarus, a merchant seaman who had been active in the German mutinies at the start of the 1918 German revolution and a left communist. These describe mutinies and strikes by axis workers, the sort of thing the capitalist press preferred not to report.

But it is part four, "Party and Class" that makes the pamphlet a must for revolutionists of our persuasion. It consists of a debate on the merits of traditional party organization among the advocates of various currents of libertarian socialism: Anton Pannekoek, council communist; Frank Maitland, Leninist; the APCF; Paul Mattick Council Communist; Abraham Ziegler, DeLeonist/SIUist [but not an SLP member at that time as the pamphlet mistakenly suggests].

Pannekoek and Mattick, both councilists, argued very effectively that party organization was outdated, that the time when the workers' councils needed leaders was past, and in fact, that the sectarian, competitive nature of parties was divisive. They opposed all pre-revolutionary organizations aimed at leading the working class. Frank Maitland saw parties as a natural result of historical forces. (Cont'd on p. 24)
[Below and on the following pages is the greater part of a proposal by the Guildford Branch of the Socialist Party of Great Britain for "an alternative model of social evolution," one they regard as more realistic and credible. It has been circulated to all groups in the SPGB as well as its companion parties in other countries. Before giving the DB permission to publish it and make it available for discussion by our readers, the Guildford Branch (c/o H. Harwood, 5 Willowmead Rd., Marlow, Bucks SL7 1HS, England) required that we emphasize that the ideas set forth here are proposals by the branch, not positions of the SPGB. Unfortunately space considerations demand that we publish the remaining three pages in our next issue.]

TO:
Companion Parties SPGB Branches & Groups

THE ROAD TO SOCIALISM October 1987

THE PROBLEM OF CREDIBILITY

1. If we are to be brutally frank with ourselves it would be difficult to deny that today, more than 30 years after the formation of our party, socialism still fails to figure on the political agenda. As it is, we find ourselves engaged in a constant battle against atrophy. All too often frustration with our lack of progress leads either to a despairing disillusionment - a wholesale caving in to the seemingly immovable reality of capitalism - or else a withdrawal from that reality (and the personal pain of political failure) into a sort of dogmatic shell that insulates at the same time as it saps, the revolutionary.

2. Neither extreme is tenable or to be desired. The steady lack of progress does not have to continue indefinitely. However, this does require that we do something about it - or rather, since no one improvement can dramatically alter our prospects, that we take a whole series of steps (only one of which we consider in this circular) to transform our party into the dynamic political force it is high time it became. But before we can do that we need to find out what it is that makes its progress in the first place.

3. We can sum up the Party's predicament in a single sentence: it simply lacks credibility. Up to a point, this is something that cannot be helped at the present time. Any small proselytising organisation is bound to find itself handicapped by its small size inasmuch as it is not taken seriously on that account. It is reasonable to suppose that as we reach a "critical threshold" of numerical credibility - perhaps several thousand members - we will begin to break out of this apparent vicious circle. At such a time we can reasonably expect to see a much quicker pace of growth; the very factor which had for so long restrained our growth will begin increasingly to work in our favour.

4. Having said that it needs to be recognised that our present lack of credibility is by no means entirely due to circumstances beyond our control. It stems also, we would maintain, from an inadequate development of our ideas which gives an impression of theoretical naivete. The purpose of this circular is to highlight this shortcoming by focusing on a particular aspect of the Party's case and to suggest in a constructive way, how it can be strengthened.
RELATING SOCIALISM TO THE PRESENT

5. A few years ago a wide ranging discussion took place in the Party on the incompatibility between socialism and central planning which led to a committee being set up to consider the practical organisation of socialist society, leading to the publication of several reports and a pamphlet, Socialism as a Practical Alternative.

6. This development within the Party was one of the most positive and promising in years. It marked a decisive move away from the rather simplistic approach to socialism that had hitherto characterized Party propaganda. The feeble pretext upon which we have airily dismissed the nagging doubts of the perplexed questioner, will no longer suffice. The fact that it is not for us to decide now how a future socialist society may run its affairs is true but beside the point. Such a pretext only makes us a hostage to the future. As the Report of the Production for Use Committee to the 1984 Conference put it:

By consigning the question of socialist organisation to the "future", we desert the political ground on which the future is being decided now and thus leave the field clear for our opponents (p.14)

7. We need to relate socialism to the present, to demonstrate convincingly how in practice a socialist society could, not will, get to grips with existing problems. If we fail to do this then all we have to offer is a pat formula not a real alternative. We will have cast a vote of no confidence in socialism as a realisable objective in the near future. And we can hardly blame others for their incredulity when we ourselves fail to invest that objective with much credibility.

APocalypse Now?

8. What applies to the organisation of socialism applies equally to the road to socialism. It is this latter which we mainly wish to address in this circular for here too it is vital that we forsake formulae for revolutionary realism. Indeed, it is arguable that the need is even more pressing in this case: how often have we encountered the uncommitted sympathiser in agreement with our objective as a "nice idea" yet sceptical about how it is to come about.

9. The problem is basically one of how do we get from here to there. The Party's traditional answer to this has been broadly as follows

- Socialist consciousness will develop roughly evenly throughout world capitalism, arising out of the material circumstances of universal class struggle and aided by the educational work of socialist parties.
- Socially conscious workers throughout the world will develop concerted plans for the conversion of capitalist institutions and enterprises for production for use only, to take effect only after the formal enactment of socialism.
- This enactment will legally establish and legitimise common ownership and democratic control by the whole of humankind of the entire worldwide stock of productive wealth.
- This enactment will be affected through the democratic capture of state power - to ensure that it cannot be used against the revolution - by means of the vote in every country throughout the world.
- For practical reasons the enactment will not be undertaken until the support of an overwhelming majority can be guaranteed.
- It is anticipated that once a significant minority become convinced of the need for
socialism the idea will spread more and more rapidly.

10. Traditionally, therefore, we have held that a socialist revolution would be cataclysmic in character because of (A) the nature of the method we propose to use in order to effect a revolution - i.e., parliamentary elections - and (B) because the successful application of this method throughout the world is bound to occur within a short though undefined timespan due to the roughly even spread of socialist consciousness everywhere. This is illustrated in the graph below.

Graph showing the growth of socialist consciousness, leading to the "enactment" by an overwhelming majority. (say 80%)

II: Undoubtedly, Parliament will play a role in the achievement of socialism, something which we shall later consider. But the traditional Party emphasis on the use of Parliament alone (as above) is unsatisfactory.

12. There are a number of reasons why the traditional "big bang" theory of socialist revolution must be regarded as inadequate and why we need therefore to construct a more sophisticated multi-dimensional model of socialist transformation which nevertheless incorporates the more useful insights of the old theory.

I. The Barrier of Self Sacrifice

13. An unqualified commitment to some future "enactment" of socialism, conveys the impression that our sole concern lies with the long term interests of our class. The corollary of this is to suggest an unconcern with our short term interests within capitalism. It is almost as if we see the latter as an obstacle to the former and that consequently we feel compelled to call upon working people to abandon (rather than transcend) the pursuit of their short term interests in order that the long term objective of socialism may be realised.

14. It is quite true that we do impress upon workers the need to organise within trade unions to protect their living standards. But as an organisation we are not based in the economic or industrial sphere. We draw a rigid line of demarcation between this
and the political sphere which we see as our true domain. Yet it is precisely as a political organisation that we appear to neglect altogether the short term interests of our class interests and links the spread of socialist consciousness to the pursuit of these interests rather than relying simply upon the agency of "abstract propaganda". In doing so, such a scenario nevertheless, steers well clear of the pitfalls of reformism and its illusory assumption that capitalism can be run in the interests of working people. Reformism, we insist, offers no way out of the capitalist jungle whatsoever which, on the contrary, it takes for granted as the inevitable background to any vision of the future.

2. Is Revolutionary Restraint Realistic?

18. Let us consider the situation that will exist long before we have obtained the "overwhelming majority" necessary to "enact" socialism. This once again we can illustrate by means of a graph. (See page 20)

19. As the above graph suggests a hypothetical number of, say, one billion socialists, randomly distributed around the world in groups ranging from a few individuals to tens of thousands strong, will be well placed to effectively disrupt capitalism in all areas and to feel very strong and confident in some..... Yet they must wait until they become an overwhelming majority - say, four billion cut of a present world population of five billion- before they can "enact" socialism to get to grips with their pressing problems.

20. Some no doubt - the well disciplined, the well healed, the philosophical, the lethargic - will be able to face the situation calmly, confident that in a few years or a few decades the solution will be at hand. But what about the underfed, the homeless, the suicidal? What about the energetic, the rash, the impatient? Will these people continue to honour the imperatives of capitalism? The idea is absurd.

21. If we're expected to await the overwhelming majority necessary to "enact" socialism, what will be the consequence of this restraint? It will mean that those with every reason to be impatient will forcibly impress themselves upon capitalism, will disruptively
Serious disruption & a violent reaction, likely to occur by the time there are one billion socialists. Proposed safe enactment.

Decline of consciousness inevitably following social disruption.

Intervene, if necessary with violence, in the practical running of capitalism's affairs in order to get their way to meet their pressing needs. We can envisage, for example, a steep rise in the amount of wealth re-appropriated with impunity by working people from their capitalist robbers. We can envisage paralysing industrial sabotage and strike action by a much more militant working class who are yet expected at the end of the day to concede to the capitalists their right of ownership having delivered a series of mortal blows to the source of their wealth. And during this critical period when socialists have become a significant force able to effectively disrupt the economies of capitalism, when the socialist movement will consist of somewhere between one and four billions, they will be opposed in varying degrees by the billions who would not yet be ready for socialism and who would likewise have to bear the consequences of such increased militancy for the profitability of capitalist enterprises. The result would be massive dislocation and chaos.

22. We need therefore to envisage an alternative scenario which circumvents this difficulty at the same time as it realistically acknowledges that we cannot expect people to wait the overwhelming majority necessary to "enact" socialism before doing something about their immediate problems. The desire among working people to take such practical steps themselves rather than, as today, abdicate their responsibilities to leaders, will grow in proportion to the growth of socialist consciousness itself.

3. The Profit Motive and the Big Bang.

23. As the day draws nearer when we shall have an overwhelming majority of socialists, when a "victorious socialist working class can immediately declare the end of class ownership and immediately convert the government over people into an administration over things " (The perspective for world socialism WSPUS p.47 our emphasis), what is to become of "business confidence"? Do we not repeatedly state that in capitalism production only takes place when there is the prospect of profit? But how are capitalists to be persuaded to invest in the future when it is becoming increasingly obvious that for them as a class there will be no future? What then are they going to do? More to the point, what are working people going to do if they are to secure a living?
24. The problem is even more acute in the case of large scale capital projects. Here capitalists are often obliged to take a more long term view. For example, in the case of the Channel Tunnel now under construction, some investment analysts have argued that small investors would be well advised not to risk their capital on such a scheme as it will be well into the next century before they can expect a decent return. Only big investment institutions should apply on that advice. Would they want to invest in such a project if we could reasonably expect the "enactment" of socialism before the turn of the century? Or would the profit motive which we see as essential to capitalism imperceptibly fade from the scene?

25. The big bang scenario has no answer it can possibly give in the face of such real life problems which it would have to confront. Something is bound to give long before we reach the hypothetical stage at which we propose to "enact" socialism.

4. Central Planning and the Big Bang

26. The Socialist Party has in recent years come out decisively against the notion of central planning. There is no need to go over the arguments in support of this decision which to some extent were covered in our two circulars on the subject, mentioned earlier. All that remains to be done is to consider the significance of central planning in relation to the big bang scenario of socialist revolution.

27. We would argue that the Party's rejection of central planning disposes of the big bang scenario itself. If a victorious working class is to immediately declare the end of class ownership - that is to say, move from a situation of capitalist ownership of the entire worldwide stock of productive wealth to one of common ownership of that productive wealth virtually at a stroke - then it is absolutely essential that it should have prepared for this event well in advance to ensure continuity of production. Certainly, we can envisage a great many plans in many different parts of the world being drawn up for this purpose. Nevertheless, because they will be implemented more or less simultaneously, they will need to be coordinated. Yet this is hardly feasible on the scale envisaged in the big bang scenario - because it is upon the immediate conversion of the entire stock of productive wealth across the world to common ownership. It is simply not possible to plan or, what amounts to the same thing, coordinate different plans on that sort of scale. It follows therefore that the very complexity of planning rules out the big bang scenario. Furthermore, the sheer scale of change telescoped into such a short time is psychologically daunting.

THE SOCIALIST TRANSFORMATION: RIGID PATTERN OR ORGANIC CONCEPT?

28. This apocalyptic theory of socialist revolution has to some extent, gone hand in hand with our traditional approach to socialism itself i.e. that it is not for us to speculate on the 'nuts and bolts' of a future socialist society. Just as we have begun to discard the latter so we need now to refine our view of the revolutionary process itself.

29. We need, in fact, to sharpen our awareness of certain developments taking place within capitalism today, developments which could evolve into, if they do not already constitute, new patterns of social relationships that prefigure socialism well before the so called enactment of socialism, emerging in opposition to the capitalist ethos itself.

30. There is afterall, no such thing as a "pure" social system, uncontaminated by social relationships other than those by which it is essentially defined. Nor indeed was there ever such a system. Life is far more messy and complex than even the most sophisticated model we can produce. We describe society according to the dominant system of social
relationships that prevail between its members but we do not, or ought not to, preclude the intervention of other types of social relationships. When we talk of "world capitalism" we should not imagine it to be an unalloyed entity. Thus, for example, a market economy coexists uneasily with a self-provisioning peasant economy throughout most of the Third World and in some parts of it the balance is still heavily tilted in favour of the latter. There are moreover still tens of millions of slaves in existence while in many parts feudal landlords still exert a powerful hold over their subjects, economically and politically. And we don't mean our beloved monarch.

31. Indeed turning to the more economically advanced countries like Britain we find that here too, the pattern of social relationships is far more complex than can be conveyed by an analysis of society into the class categories of capitalism, vitally significant though these are. Such an analysis is based on the assumption that the wealth of society is produced by a working class employed by a capitalist class for a wage or salary. But if by wealth we mean goods and services that we deem useful to ourselves and others then this is far from being the only source of wealth. Within the micro-economy of the household the economic relationships between members of a household are by and large unmediated. Indeed it seems out of place to describe them as "economic" so much so we tend to take for granted their unmediated character. Yet the numerous daily chores (which it should be recognised tend to be done mainly by female members of the household) add up to a substantial and unpaid contribution to the process of wealth creation. According to Charles Handy, "over half the nation's productive work hours are spent in the household or around it" (The Future of Work, p. 19). This figure is apparently rising. Yet because such work falls outside the market economy and therefore cannot be accounted for by the conventional yardstick of capitalist accounting, we tend to overlook its significance so pervasively does the capitalist ideology intrude into people's mental picture of the world around them. The same can be said of all forms of voluntary work outside of the household which according to Handy amounts to the equivalent of 500,000 workers in Britain alone working a full 40 hour week unpaid.

32. Now if world capitalism today still bears the imprint of the past, as the remnants of feudalistic relations attest, then why should it not also carry within its womb the foetus of a socialist future? Indeed to deny this is to reject the dialectical view of social change - and its crucial concept of the interpenetration of opposites - in favour of a view that is frankly metaphysical, as Engel pointed out in Anti-Dühring. For the metaphysician things and their mental reflexes, ideas, are isolated, are to be considered one after the other and apart from each other, are objects of investigation, fixed, rigid, asserted once and for all. He thinks in purely irreconcilable antitheses: His dictum is yes, yes; no, no, whatever is more than these comest of evil. For him a thing exists or it does not exist; a thing can never simultaneously be itself and something else. Positive and negative absolutely exclude one another. This mode of thinking appears to us at first sight, to be extremely plausible, because it is in accordance with so called common sense. But sound common sense, however respectable a fellow he is within the homely realm of his own four walls experiences very wonderful adventures as soon as he explores the wide world of research.

33. When at the 1987 Annual Conference our delegate made the point that the day before socialism would be "legally enacted" would in fact be much like the day after such an event, he met with the dismissive response that capitalism was a world system and logically could not coexist with socialism. You had to have one or the other. Clearly the point had been completely missed. So that there can be no misunderstanding about what we are proposing as an alternative scenario let us make quite explicit what we do not mean by such a scenario.
34. Firstly, we do not mean to suggest that socialism could exist in one part of the world while at the same time capitalism could exist in some other part. In this respect, the traditional scenario is fundamentally sound: there is every reason to believe that socialist ideas would tend to develop more or less evenly throughout the world and in any case it is nonsensical to postulate socialism operating in one country when production today is a globally integrated process.

35. Secondly, we do not mean to suggest that those relationships which we see as prefiguring socialism, constitute as it were islands of “socialism” — indeed how could they if they prefigure socialism. Socialism like capitalism and indeed, as the very word itself suggests, is a social system embracing human society as a whole. A social system is the dominant pattern of social relationships through which human beings relate to one another. The dominant — that is to say, the most influential and formative — relationships that obtain today are bound up with the class structure of capitalism itself, the opposing interests of wage labour and capital. These relationships however are likely to be increasingly challenged by other relationships which prefigure socialism and can therefore be legitimately described as “socialist”.

What are the forms of socialist relationships that could emerge prior to the supposed enactment of socialism? Here of course we cannot be certain. But they are likely to manifest themselves in a variety of institutions such as workers cooperatives, socialist schools and colleges, a whole spectrum of different communities to suit the varying taint of individuals. Needless to say some of these institutions already exist to a small extent. For example, there are approximately 30,000 workers organised in producer cooperatives in the Federal Republic. In this country alone, a figure which represents a very rapid growth over the past few years. The growth of the socialist movement will greatly increase the scope for these and the other institutions mentioned, to come into being and flourish because it will interact with capitalism, pushing it further along the road of bourgeois democratisation and greater tolerance.

37. For example, for a capitalist enterprise to succeed in business, it needs to induce in workers a sense of loyalty to the firm, the perception of a communality of interests with their employers. This has been very successfully implemented in the case of certain Japanese companies in which a corporate collectivism serves to smother class conflict. It is not surprising that in the post-war era, the Japanese economy has risen phoenix-like from the ashes of military defeat into a major industrial power. It has been able to do this in part by harnessing the collectivist traditions of Japanese culture to the accumulation of capital. In a sense what could serve as a flywheel to promote a socialist consciousness has been used against it.

38. Nevertheless, with the growth of a socialist consciousness it will become more and more difficult for employers to induce in workers a sense of loyal subservience. In attempt this employers will tend to grant / offer increased democracy within their enterprise in much the same way as politicians will be tempted to buy off the growth of the socialist movement with more generous reforms. This will be welcomed by workers as a material and psychological gain. The various institutions we have been mentioning will also benefit from this because of the increased toleration for self-determination following on from the growing level of democracy. And the rising expectations associated with greater democracy will make it more and more difficult for the capitalists and their political henchmen to strike out the concessions they had been forced to make. To deny this is to fall for the Trotskyist claim that the capitalists are as it were free political agents who can at any time act against the grain of the social environment and crush the democratic gains of the working class.

To be concluded in the next issue.
(Cont'd from p. 15)

But he made a distinction between bureaucratic mass parties like the social democratic parties or the Russian CP and parties of propaganda, rejecting the former and supporting the latter in their role of integrating the class conscious minority with the mass of unconscious workers by providing leadership and the will to topple the system.

Ziegler, at that time [1941] the secretary of a DeLeonist splinter group, the Socialist Union Party, presented the orthodox DeLeonist view that the party's role was educational—a teacher, not a leader—and that it had no function after the revolution. At that time workers in their socialist industrial unions would organize society.

I can't recommend this book too highly and wish that it were available in the U.S. When and if Philadelphia Solidarity succeeds in efforts to become its distributor here, we will inform readers. In the meantime we can only suggest the British address and remind readers that the pound is now worth about two US dollars.

fg