About This Issue ................................................................. 2
Letter, Walter Petrovich ..................................................... 3
Letter, Steve Szalai ............................................................... 7
Letter, Robin Cox ............................................................... 9
Extract from a Report, Socialist Party of Great Britain .................. 11
Letter, Steve Szalai ............................................................... 12
The SIU Seen from the Jungle, Irving Silvey .............................. 13
Letter, Frank Girard ............................................................. 19
Fascism Anti-Fascism: Spot the Difference, Wildcat ...................... 23
Armed Anarchists, Laurens Otter .......................................... 27
The MacDonaldization of Society, Reviewed by Simon Scott ........... 28
In Memoriam ................................................................. 31
ABOUT THIS ISSUE

The revisions of the Socialist Industrial Union program reprinted in DB70 from New System and the De Leonist Review started a discussion in DB71, mostly between DeLeonists and World Socialists. It continues in this issue with Walter Petrovich’s defense of Socialist Industrial Unionism from Steve Szalai’s criticism in DB71. Next Szalai responds to Petrovich’s letter and Robin Cox answers another part of Szalai’s letter, his comments on reform. The excerpt from a Socialist Party of Great Britain discussion of the “process of revolution” was sent to us by Adam Buick and suggests a much less absolute opposition to organizing on the job than many World Socialists have indicated. Steve Szalai’s second letter answers mine in DB71 regarding what I consider revolutionary acts that destroyed governments from East Berlin to Tehran during the past few years. Irving Silvey’s article describes an

ABOUT THE DISCUSSION BULLETIN

The Discussion Bulletin is affiliated with the Industrial Union Caucus in Education (IUCE). It serves as the financially and politically independent forum of a relatively unknown sector of political thought that places the great divide in the “left,” not between Anarchists and Marxists but between capitalism’s statist leftwing of vanguardists and social democrats and the real revolutionaries of our era: the non-market, anti-statist, libertarian socialists. They are organized in small groups of syndicalists, communist anarchists, libertarian municipalists, world socialists, socialist industrial unionists, council communists, and left communists. The perspective of these groups with their rejection of capitalism’s wage, market, and money system as well as capitalist politics and unionism constitutes the only real alternative to capitalism in both its market and statist phases.

In the DB the often antagonistic groups that make up this sector can debate and discuss the issues that divide them, gain some understanding of their history and future possibilities and begin a process, we hope, of at least limited cooperation.

The pages of the DB are open to anyone in this political sector, the only limitation being that submissions be typewritten, single-spaced, and copier ready. We do no editing here. As to content, we assume that submissions will be relevant to the purpose of the DB and will avoid personal attacks.

Subscription Information

The Discussion Bulletin is published bi-monthly. Prices below are in U.S. currency.

U.S.: Individual Subscription $3; Library $5
Non-U.S.: Surface Mail Individual sub $5; Library $10
Air Mail Individual sub $10; Library $15

Back Issues: Nos. 1-8 $2 each, Nos. 9+ $1 each plus postage,

Expiration: The last issue of your subscription is indicated by the number on your address label. When your sub expires, we highlight it to remind you.

Sample Copies: A sample copy is sent on request. We mail copies not used to fill subscriptions to people on our extended mailing list

(to p. 22)
Re: the form that will grow out of a socialist political victory.

I got the Discussion Bulletin #70 shortly after your letter, and before I had a chance to respond to you. I believe that my letter to DB answers your question: Does the WSP have a program that workers understand will be in place when the present system is abolished? I include the letter to DB as my response to your question.

It also addresses, to some extent, the DeLeonist "socialism in one country" fantasy, but I'll expand a bit here with a simple question. How would a "socialist" U.S. protect itself from a capitalist Canada, Mexico ...? An independent, socialist U.S. is what New System #39 is talking about, and is a traditional "DeLeonist" approach that just doesn't make sense to me. If you're going to need national "defense", then your "socialism" is going to look a lot like capitalism to me.

Steve,

Thanks for your note and letter to DB. You've cleared up some questions I have held about the WSP.

At the outset, let's agree that none of us have an unabridged, unimpeachable version of what future society will be. As well as we can interpret the present, we simply have to develop our theories as conditions dictate, and trust they will fit the needs and circumstances of our class. Our theories should reflect the present stage of social development as well as the future direction we see as society's best bet. If we appear to discount or trivialize someone else's theories, let's consider that it may very well be our own lack of perception, for whatever reason, that we disagree on particulars. Let's also agree that since we're all in this movement to advance the human condition there must be a sense of mutual respect among us, regardless of the degree to which we may not think alike.

I like to think that when our class is sufficiently disenchanted with the present capitalist scheme, it will formalize its energies along lines laid out by all of us, and in its eclectic wisdom will do the right thing for itself and its society.

Questions. Questions. Questions!

From a pragmatic perspective, your "vision," or "concept," however loosely defined, but a vision or concept nevertheless, is, according to my understanding...
of how folks think and learn, so amorphous and lacking in substance that it's difficult to discuss it except to ask, "How will it work? What forms of cooperation will be created? How will the community interact with industry?"

Such important questions and their equally necessary answers, theories certainly, are a natural outcome of thought when the idea of change begins to grow in the minds of the changers. I consider myself an idealist, a changer, as you do yourself, but your "theory" is quite a paradox, for its main thesis is: "Change is required because this system doesn't work for us, so let's convince others to see it as we do, but let the future society, figure out how it will work!" That seems to be a theory without a theory! What it amounts to is an invitation to change, but no clue as to even the slightest visualization of how a new system can better serve society than the present capitalist way. No visualization of a better way? Jehovah's Witnesses have the same problem. They say simply, "Give yourself to the idea, and the particulars will resolve themselves." I simply haven't the mind to abide by such enticements.

A Non-Theory theory?

Your objections to any kind of visual is curiously in opposition to the very way our brains formulate conceptions that ultimately find expression in our crude, often incomplete graphics, visuals, or schematics. You seem to find your concept of socialism explainable, yet unimaginable, again, a paradox, I would say.

It seems to me you have either misread or didn't gather in some points relevant to the Deleuzian concept that inspired the New System #39 schematic, plan, blueprint, however you wish to describe it.

The Visual as a Tool

Based on my experiences in this culture, and the limits it has placed on our understandings, I think the projection of the next step to a better future society has not yet been better conceived than what is presented in the New System #39 offering. For me it's far more easily overcome whatever arguments the present political and capitalist opposition can mount because it contains culturally-accepted community and industrial structures predicated on democratic principles which are popularly-accepted forms of industrial and social interaction. It's very clear to me, and it's extremely useful in engaging unclassconscious workers as well as classconscious ones, in a dialogue for change. The visual brings them into the material discussion. It's a great addition to the needed verbalization of an idea. In fact, I hope those who have seen the New System #39 will help refine its theoretical structure wherever it helps to explain better their own particular industrial and community understandings. You reject this concept because you feel that workers in a socialist system don't need plans and directions to fulfill their own and society's needs. They'll just do it! They'll simply get together and do it! Build a car? They'll just do it! Now is that a real convincing argument that any worker will easily understand and accept as the way the new society will operate? Methinks not.
Like It or Not, a Visual is There!

But I'm sure you have an idea that finds expression in your harbored imagination, yet you probably feel it's too presumptuous to even suggest what future society will find appropriate for its own peculiar conditions.

Well, for me, the future begins today and I feel I have a stake in tomorrow, and I find no reason to shortchange it, or deny it the ideas and visualizations I would like to see implemented as the next step, no matter how small or ultimately inadequate it may prove to be later on, but for right now, it's the best I can offer, and if you or others can improve upon it, you're obliged to do so. I think that's a far better approach than waiting for the vast majority to want socialism and then, without any conceptualizing to establishing what comes next, vote for it, get it, then ask, "What next?" I can tell you what's next. The established ruling class, politically disenfranchized but still in control of industry, jobs and the military will provide the answer.

WSP's Missing Link

The advent of socialism, or, in your terms, the legitimacy of socialism, by the people through the electoral process, presupposes a broad-based societal dialogue prior to an election victory in our communities and where we work, but the other factor, the one conspicuously missing in the WSM verbal "schematic," is the "how to" mechanism, the industrial component, industrial organization specifically, without which the political "legitimacy of socialism" becomes a hollow exercise in the ballot process. The "how to" factor is the building of the new industrial democracy, the network of cooperative industrial interaction that guarantees production continuity after the state and the system are legally dismantled, and simultaneously developing the community network that will convey social and individual needs and wants, thus completing the union between where we live and where we work, a factor that has been understandably missing from the original industrial union graphics found in the literature of the SLP.

Necessity of the Community Factor

The absence of the community factor in the original concept has had an easy rationale since the early industrial period found workers living pretty much in close proximity to their jobs, and the community pretty much clustered around the workplace. The company town phenomenon obviously has long ago changed to a community whose diverse, yet interdependent industrial connections make it imperative for a new component added to the industrial union concept, one that has become an inherent necessity, for who else but workers in their own communities, in concert with the potentials and capabilities of their own workplaces, know better their personnel, community, and ultimately their societal needs? And, as we understand the possibilities offered by our concept of the "next step," for future society, this form will also change to meet new requirements as the future society grows. To what? We can't know. All we can do is provide a positive framework within which any and all changes deemed necessary and good will be easily attained by the citizenry. Sound theory. I can see it. I can visualize its
workings in my own job experiences. I like it. I am committed to it. Any reasonable changes that will improve it and reinforce its democratic principles can only make our task of bridging the understanding gap between capitalism's social and political structure with this new and better one an easier, less complicated one.

Spontaneous Global Socialism?

I can't imagine how you could derive from any serious reading of our paper and from other Deleuzian publications, that we advocate a "socialism in one country" scenario, which you rightfully suggest is a fantasy of sorts, to the exclusion of the international character of the movement. I know the WSP sees a world socialist movement culminating in a global system, whose eventuality we all hope will materialize, but we have to recognize that given the present variations in the global industrial material development, as well as global class consciousness, it's highly inconceivable that we, as a global community, will all together, turn to the same page and get into the business of world socialism. Now there's a fantasy!

As with any and every organism, its seemingly spontaneous birth is predicated on its indigenous environmental factors, or by a great deal of external nutritive encouragements from other sources. However we wish for the new system to be simultaneously spawned and developed in all global communities, it seems as far fetched as a burst of embedded spontaneous combustion in a glacier.

From National to International

I see my role in a very simple way. I don't have an impact on my global working class brothers. I like to think I have some input on workers immediately within my geographic sphere, and to some degree, beyond my own region. I work to teach class consciousness in my workplace, and in my community which, hopefully, will contribute to a national class consciousness, which is a prerequisite to any dramatic changes we contemplate for this society. My own impact on my global neighbors is minimal, if not totally non-existent. I believe the new system must have a beginning where conditions suit its birth. Because our industrialized society is alive with all the elements bursting and waiting for our working class to organize its components into an industrial and community democracy, an advanced class-conscious society may very well become a reality in our nation, in the northern part of this hemisphere sooner than anyone now thinks. A socialist America is not beyond my comprehension, which, after all, is where I work for it. Its conception on these shores will, hopefully, serve as a springboard for other like-endowed societies to cast off their own ruling class oppressors, and with our careful nurturing they will have every material and ideological support we can offer to begin the process of eventuating the global socialism we all concur is an absolute necessity if we are to live in harmony with our environment and our global neighbors. Sounds reasonable and practical to me.

Is Survival Anti-Socialist?

Another reservation you cast out
to unnecessary ridicule is the foreseen possibility that the deposed capitalist class may seek ways to circumvent the new system with domestic disruption, or form coalitions from abroad similar to the Paris Commune debacle, to forcibly bring back their political and industrial structures, and demolish the new way. You conclude that if the new system needed any kind of national "defense", then "your 'socialism' is going to look a lot like capitalism to me" Honestly, I can't take seriously that kind of dismissal of the validity of the new system primarily because it stands up to defend itself from the incursion of the old, oppressive way. Also, it's difficult to respect the view that says until conditions are perfect, meaning the total absence of any remnants of the old system, like the need to defend itself, it becomes a mirror image of the old system. I don't think the American Revolution would have been preserved were the new U.S. remiss in resisting the British attempts to recapture their colonial properties. Certainly their new freedoms were flawed, but not because their former masters wanted to regain control.

It's not beyond my understanding that in the initial stages of a new system the implementors will most likely retain military mechanisms left in place by the deposed capitalist class, and thus certainly would be considered as a temporary, but necessary component, because of the very scenario you pose, that of a capitalist Canada or Mexico attempting to upset the new society. It would be absolute folly to do otherwise.

If we can't understand the survival instinct as a necessary part of the new system growth process, and its "natural" propensity to defend itself, then we'll never be on the same page no matter how many times we both reaffirm the need to change the system. At present it appears we strongly disagree about the elements needed to build the next one. Rather than wait for the day when there's a global readiness to adopt socialism, I think I'll continue to use words and pictures, and whatever else it takes to bring about a working class consciousness here in the United States, and when that day comes we'll take it from there.

Discussion Bulletin

Re: Wally Petrovich's 16 April response to my letter of 2 April.

I will cover only a few of the points raised by Petrovich, because I have dealt with others before in these pages, and because I don't want this letter to be as long as my last one.

Petrovich claims that the WSM position offers "no clue as to even the slightest visualization of how a new system can better serve society than the present capitalist way." First of all, socialism will not serve society any better than capitalism does. What socialism will do is serve humanity, instead of an anti-human society. The DeLeonist blueprint really offers "no visualization of a better way", but instead offers an organizational plan that is supposed to be "better".

Socialism will be better for those who would otherwise be working class, no matter what internal organizations people choose, because it will produce for their use, not for profit. Socialism will end
poverty and war, and allow the creation of world-wide environmentally sustainable production. To some people, SIU organization may be an important and inherently desirable feature of a new society, to me, it isn’t. Also given the problems that the SIU provides, including a separation into producers as producers and whatever the rest of society (as envisioned by DeLeonists) is, I prefer to avoid it.

In my letters there were no “objections to any kind of visual”, so I cannot otherwise comment on Petrovich’s claim, except to say that I do not have such objections.

My idea of the establishment of socialism is apparently quite different from Petrovich’s in that he says, of what will happen after a socialist success “I can tell you what’s next. The established ruling class, politically disenfranchised but still in control of industry, jobs and the military will provide the answer.” When I think of a socialist success, I think of a world where the vast majority, the working class, have taken ownership of the planet. That includes “control of industry,” and the military, so I cannot imagine what Petrovich is talking about, unless he thinks that a socialist success leaves the capital class in control of industry (which it has now only because we allow it the ownership of industry), and that the military is not composed of members of the working class.

Day 1 of socialism is not really an important question at this time. And the DeLeonist blueprint is hopelessly inadequate to describe a society that may decide to replace the big city paradigm of today with smaller cities or towns, or otherwise radically alter how society looks on the surface. The DeLeonist SIU organization is precisely an answer to ill-informed, “what will the surface of socialism look like” type of questions that I do not wish to promote. It is the underlying basis of socialist society that is the important issue, for now, and for all time. Cosmetics is interesting, but the mode of production is significantly more important. If the working class can only be convinced to support “socialism” by showing it is cosmetically different, then the working class will never decide to support socialism as a real, day-to-day system.

Perhaps a major difference between DeLeonists and the WSM is that the WSM does not promote the (confusing to me) concept of “industrial democracy” as something different from real democracy for humanity.

I still fail to understand why DeLeonists seem to think that society will collapse without the state. “The network of cooperative industrial interaction” exists today, and I don’t see why it should suddenly disappear just because people have decided to establish socialism. The capitalist class and government have very little to do with the day-to-day operation of the productive machinery, except that we make sure that the needs of the capitalist class are met today. We already operate and control (as much as anyone can control an anarchistic system) capitalism today. What is the DeLeonists’ big worry?

Petrovich cannot imagine how I could derive advocacy of “socialism in one country” from DeLeonist literature. He then says that “a socialist America is not beyond my comprehension ...” which could “serve as a springboard for other like-endowed societies to cast off their own ruling class oppressors” and that a “socialist America” could “offer to begin the process of eventuating the global socialism we all concur is an absolute necessity ...”. Sounds like “socialism in one country” to me.

Petrovich “can’t take seriously” my claim that a country that needs national “defence” would look a lot like capitalism. I have never, and the WSM has never, claimed that socialists should not protect themselves and socialism from the dispossessed minority. However, to establish a “socialist” nation
in the midst of a capitalist world, would mean the “socialist America” would still be sending its youth off to die for “their” country and kill workers from other countries like “Canada and Mexico.” That is not defending socialism from a dispossessed minority. Perhaps because America would have the best weapons it could kill the most, but it is not at all likely that the living relatives are going to be pleasantly disposed towards the system existing in a nation that just killed their kids, and bombed “their” city. And what mechanisms would DeLeonists, or the IUP, suggest for convincing the American “socialists” to kill workers from other countries (to whom they are giving such “careful nurturing” towards “socialism”).

I did not claim, as Petrovich suggests, of a new system that “until conditions are perfect ... it becomes a mirror image of the old system.” Perhaps I worded my letter poorly. My claim is that to maintain a national defence force entails a great deal of unsocialist activity. Instead of being able to free up people working in the military and arms industries, they will have to continue their production of death unless “socialist America” wants to fall behind in its ability to defend itself from the remainder of the non-socialist world, or to rely on using the U.S. nuclear arsenal to defend itself.

Petrovich argues “however we wish for the new system to be simultaneously spawned ... in all global communities, it seems as far fetched as a burst of embedded spontaneous combustion in a glacier.” The WSM doesn’t expect, nor base its analysis on, some magical, spontaneous, global socialist understanding occurring. Instead we maintain that “socialism in one country” is completely impossible, and therefore socialism must be a world-wide system — no matter how “far fetched” it may seem to some. We also claim that capitalism breeds its own gravestones and that this is happening in every nation on the planet, at some level. While the level of socialist consciousness may not be identical in all nations, it is small in all of them, and can grow in all of them. The U.S. does not have a big, if any, lead as far as I can tell.

Steve Szalai

---

Dear Comrades

Steve Szalai (DB71) says I was wrong to assert that reformism has an essentially economic focus - that is, that it is concerned with economic (as opposed to, say, political) reforms. I argued that this must be the case as what reformism seeks to “reform” is capitalism (what else?) and capitalism is itself “an essentially economic construction”. His counter-argument is that “capitalism includes all the changing political appliances attached to it” and that it is “political power which maintains capitalism, not its economic power”.

To take Steve’s first point first, it is not logical to say that something called capitalism “includes” something which is “attached” to it; that “attachment” presupposes we are talking about two different things to begin with. This may sound nit-picking but the implications are not unimportant. The fact is that the “changing political appliances” to which Steve refers are not, and cannot be, any part of an essential definition of “capitalism”. Is a one-party state dictatorship integral to the nature of capitalism? Or a bourgeois democracy? Well obviously they cannot both be. Nor does the absence of one or the other make the system any the less capitalist. Thus,
the nature of the political state presiding over capitalism is merely historically contingent; it may change as conditions change but you can no more say that whatever "it" is - i.e. one-party state or bourgeois democracy - is part of our definition of capitalism anymore than you can say the Model T Ford is - as if capitalism did not exist before the era of mass production.

So by capitalism we mean a specific mode of production which entails a specific set of class relations to the means of production: the division of society into workers and capitalists and all this entails. This is an essentially economic definition of capitalism and this is the definition we in the World Socialist Movement (WSM) have always employed with regard to capitalism.

Steve's other point, that it is "political power which maintains capitalism, not its economic power" is one that I thoroughly endorse. As a member of the SPGB * I obviously concur with him about the need to democratically capture state power; I have never found the counter-argument of many anarchists and syndicalists on this subject to be particularly convincing or well thought out. The problem is that I can't see the relevance of this point to our discussion about reformism.

Finally, Steve claims that economic reforms and political reforms are "not really all that much different" as "neither alters the basic structure of capitalism". Well, neither does trade unionism but that is not a basis for saying there is no distinction between advocating reforms and trade unionism. Economic reforms are an attempt to modify the economic behaviour of capitalism; Political reforms are an attempt to change the political superstructure that presides over capitalism. There is clearly a qualitative difference between them.

As for saying that political reforms are "no more than ways of ensuring the continuance of capitalism", surely this cannot be so? If it were the case then there would be no point in socialists seeking to establish elementary political rights where none presently exist. The view held by the WSM is that we should seek the establishment of such rights precisely in order to create the possibility of democratically capturing state power to inaugurate socialism. If the establishment of such rights only serve to ensure the continuance of capitalism one might as well ask "why bother?". We bother because they "ensure" nothing of the sort. If anything, they ensure that we at least have the means - if not the certainty - of ensuring capitalism's discontinuation.

Note:
* Contrary to the opinion expressed by your reader, Alan Kerr, the SPGB has never been "reconstituted." The title of "Socialist Party of Great Britain" was not abandoned by our organisation; it was democratically decided at our conference that only

(to p. 12)
[Note: Under the date April 6, Adam Buick sent us the following: "Extract from the Report of the Proceedings of the 1994 Autumn Delegate Meeting of the Socialist Party of Great Britain" for publication in the DB. In further refutation of the parody of our position that capitalism can be simply voted out of existence by a majority of Socialist M.P.s. Notice Buick’s comment about organizing in their place of work to keep production going, etc. and the general tenor of the discussion, which would suggest that the difference between DeLeonists and World Socialists is one of emphasis. -- fg]

17. The Party’s representation of the process of revolution is not adequate. (Lancaster)

D. Klynn (Lancaster): some of our opponents like the ICC and CWO parodied our position by saying that we held that all that was necessary to establish Socialism was a majority vote in Parliament for it. We did of course believe in using Parliament in the process of revolution but this was only the icing on the cake; the actual ingredients were the self-activity of the democratically-organised working class outside Parliament. The trouble was we didn’t emphasise this enough.

R. Cook (Birmingham): as Marx had pointed out, we couldn’t lay down blueprints. All we could say about the revolution was that it must be thoroughly democratic.

D. Perrin (Central): the Party did say that workers should organise economically as well as politically to establish Socialism.

J. Bradley (Enfield & Haringey): discussing practical plans now for the changeover to Socialism was not setting up an ideal society to which the future had to conform.

A. Buick (EC member): we had been partly responsible for the parody of our position by loose talk in the mid-1970s of “the parliamentary road to socialism”. In fact, as had been pointed out, we stood for workers organising not just into a mass socialist, political party (to win political control), but also in their place of work (to
keep production going and convert to production for use not profit). The important thing was not just “socialist understanding” but this plus democratic self-organisation in all spheres of society.

P. Lawrence (non-delegate): of course in the run-up to the socialist revolution people will be organising outside Parliament and preparing and formulating practical plans to be implemented when Socialism was established. This wasn’t blueprintism but common sense.

R. Best (Lancaster): since we held that the key element is the socialist revolution was the self-activity of the working class we should say this and so nail the lies of our opponents.

C. McEwan (Glasgow): we said that Socialism had to come democratically. Going through Parliament was the obvious if not the only conceivable way of carrying out a democratic revolution, but it was idle to speculate now on what non-parliamentary democratic means could be used if Parliament was abolished.
under certain circumstances would we refer to ourselves as “The Socialist Party” (i.e. for publicity purposes). For official and legal purposes, we continue to be known as the SPGB. The dogmatic sect, known as the Asbourne Court Group, an undemocratic faction expelled from the Party for their persistent and anti-democratic contempt for majority decisions, has subsequently sought to claim the name of our organisation. Lacking the political guts to stand on their own feet as a completely separate organisation in all respects from the organisation from which they were expelled, they have sought to cling to the trappings our organisation - namely, our name - for motives that are as contemptible as their rejection of our democratic socialist principles. 

Robin Cox

Discussion Bulletin,

In DB71, Frank Girard suggests that I “consider what we have seen of revolutions in the last few years ... East Germany, the Baltic republics, Poland, Hungary and other “Peoples Republics, the USSR, the Philippines, or Iran [where] the ‘governed’ have withdrawn their consent, and the rulers and ruling classes—despite their control of the coercive powers of government—realized that the game was up and fled.”

I have considered these “revolutions” from capitalism to capitalism. One clear feature of them was that the governed were unhappy with the current government of capitalism and desired a different one. In all of these countries (except Iran because I am not informed enough of the situation there, but suspect my analysis may hold there as well) the ruling class was in disarray. The existing economic management was failing, at least in the sense that it was ‘radicalizing’ the workers. Sections of the ruling class were already supporting changes. We saw Gorbachev proceeding and Yeltsin arguing that it wasn’t going fast enough. In the Philippines Corazon Aquino was hardly one of the working class. Note that Aquino had (according to general opinion) already won election as president and therefore had already legitimized her position. Parts of the military (at all levels) accepted that legitimization and supported her. Had they not, the “revolution” might have had dramatically different and bloodier results.

The results of these “revolutions” left the ruling classes in power (without big changes in either personnel or elimination of class division). The ruling class did not lose. The working class was temporarily quieted down.

While I understand the importance of withdrawal of consent by the governed — it is absolutely necessary for a socialist revolution — the particular cases mentioned by Girard are more closely related to the constant “democratic” reformism of capitalism by changing governments, creating and removing “social programs”, and other distractions, than to a socialist revolution.

I think the that a revolution which threatens the ruling class as a whole is likely to see a more concerted effort to thwart the revolution’s aims than a “revolution” that will prop up at least a section of the ruling class. In class society there is always some disagreement between sections of the ruling class and the different sections are always trying to get a better deal for their section. That is what has happened in these recent “revolutions”.

By the way, I agree with Girard and DeLeon that revolutions make their own laws, but caution that
in "revolutionary" fervour, the material conditions have oft been ignored, leading to the bloody defeat of the "revolutionaries". It exactly that which the World Socialist Movement seeks to avoid.

Steve Szalai

THE SIU SEEN FROM THE JUNGLE

Dear DB, April 16, 1995

This is in response to your several attempts, lately, to focus attention on socialist industrial unionism. Two articles devoted to that topic in Number 70 are the subject of a few critical remarks of mine, which follow after some comments to put them in perspective. To begin:

In 1993, at it's party's national convention held in May of that year, Section Los Angeles of the SLP submitted to the delegates a rather brazen resolution for their consideration. The resolution, listed as 1-D on page 176 of the convention's published proceedings, is headed "TO UPGRADE THE SOCIALIST INDUSTRIAL UNION CONCEPT". Though the resolution was not adopted, it had a marked influence on subsequent articulations of the party's program as expressed in it's propaganda organ, "THE PEOPLE".

Frustration with the excuse-ridden reluctance of the SLP executive to deal substantively with the subject was what finally decided the active members of section LOS ANGELES to put their resolution before the convention. In it they deplore the SLP's inconsequential treatment of socialist industrial union structure, and the long standing refusal to enlarge on De Leon's brief formulation of it. Blame for the concept having been ignored in working class struggles of the past 80 years is attributed to the SLP's failure to develop it in step with evolving industrial conditions. There is further remonstration with the SLP on how little use to the working class is it's faint hearted representation of the socialist industrial union. So faint, indeed, that in it's present form it is virtually indistinguishable from the industrial union enclaves which perform so well as capitalist mainstays.

In mediation, the resolution lays out, with great specificity, a broadly enhanced socialist industrial union scheme, incorporating those of De Leon's precepts considered essential for it to assume the central role in socialist society. 1-D offers a comprehensive outline of proposed forms and methods based on three axiomatic principles purposefully designed to enforce De Leon's insistence that, first and foremost, industry be directly controlled by workers in the shop.

The three principles are as follows: 1. THE BASIC SHOP MIX; 2. CYCLIC ROTATION; 3. CAUCUS. Together these form an organically inter-laced network of elements. All are culled from anthropological studies of ancient and primitive societies, much as did De Leon in exploiting knowledge of the Iroquois Confederacy to fashion an image of socialist industrial unionism. The first principle, that of 'BASIC SHOP MIX', is an evolution from tribal totemism that relates directly to industrial organization on the shop floor. The second principle, 'CYCLIC ROTATION', issues from immortal rites of renewal essential to the maintenance of production. The third principle, 'CAUCUS', was an age old practice of the Algonquin Indians that entered American political life early on as a grass roots mechanism to preserve democratic consensus in a population of growing diversity.

The concept of socialist industrial unionism as envisaged by De Leon
rests exclusively on a system of worker controlled councils. No where, however, does he provide more than a generalized statement regarding their structure. The three principles proposed in the resolution address this lacuna by providing specific rules to methodically select councils. As per De Leon, councils are linked in an ever widening pattern spreading from the plants, then to local and national levels and, finally, to an all-industry congress.

Subtending the notion of councils, the principle of "BASIC SHOP MIX" assumes that in any industrial plant there will be a diversity of skills and a division of labor into functional groups, or enclaves, variously called 'shops', 'offices', 'departments', 'units', etc. This is a fact of life in most industries which promises to continue while. There is nothing new in it. The only thing new is that it is a fact taken cognizance of in the principle of 'BASIC SHOP MIX'. According to the principle, councils at all levels are to incarnate within their structure all of the basic divisions of labor employed in their industry. For instance, if a plant separates it's basic operations into those of assembly, inspecting, engineering, packing, trucking and stock keeping, then it's plant council is constituted to reflect those basic operations. This principle is equally applicable as councils expand to the local, national and all-industry levels.

The second principle, 'CYCLIC ROTATION', provides for seats on all councils to be rotated cyclically through an industry. This means, firstly, that each shop is to be periodically empowered to hold a seat on a council for a term and, secondly, that throughout it's term it will be the responsibility of the empowered shop to elect one or more of it's own members to fill the seat until the term expires. Upon expiration of it's term a shop will vacate it's seat and another shop, performing the same basic job functions, but from a different plant of the same industry, will assume the responsibilities of that seat. This method of rotation is designed to maintain a council's strict observance of the 'BASIC SHOP MIX' rule.

In this rule it is possible to recognize a suture that term limitations' are observed strictly and methodically to guarantee democratic control. This control, in conjunction with De Leon's edict that council delegates be replaceable at any time by their constituents, portends a force of immediacy more compelling than union ballooting presently elicits. This rule also deals with the problem of having to vote for anonymous and unknown council contenders. Under it's auspices, workers vote for none other than their immediate shopmates, whose capabilities are well known to them and whom we assure they are more intimately acquainted with than persons outside their shop.

Of equal importance, by restricting the number of shops having the vote at any time, 'CYCLIC ROTATION' reduces the size of elected bodies to manageable proportions while, at the same time, it ensures that each shop shall have it's turn on the various councils.

In a socialist society the genuine mutual interest of all concerned must be the basis for cooperation. 'CAUCUS', the third principle enlarged upon, is an age old method for reaching consensus. As outlined in the resolution, it refers to a system of all-inclusive, overlapping conferences affecting shop, plant, local, national and all-industry jurisdictions. Those familiar with the purpose of town hall meetings may gain some small sense of 'CAUCUS'. The difference is that, in the context of an industrial society, the groups that form caucuses would be organic 'extentions' of
industrial enclaves, just as the original town hall meetings reflected interests of geographic enclaves and the property owners thereof.

The resolution presented to the SLP convention did not pretend to be the last word on the socialist industrial union, certainly not a "blueprint" cast in concrete. It was intended, rather, to free the party of its paralysis on the subject of socialist industrial unionism and open it up once again for working class consideration. Unfortunately, in seeking to render it's message with a minimum of verbiage, the resolution made use of complex graphic material that demanded of the delegates a larger degree of concentration than, under the circumstances, they are generally called upon to exercise. Much of this material (which I choose not to inflict on you in this review) consists of abstract matrices designed to demonstrate how the proposed principles would operate separately and together. It must be admitted that that part of the text is not an easy one to negotiate without attention to details. But, that's what precision is all about.

At the convention, these formulations were apparently too precise for the party's National Secretary, Mr. Robert Ellis. For, though the resolution is primarily about basic principles and uses the word 'blueprint' perhaps once in it's entire discourse of 10 pages, I'm told that during the debate on the floor he leapt to his feet and, as the section Los Angeles delegate, Mr. Alan Bradshaw, was attempting to speak for the resolution, he shouted him down with the cry, "No blueprints!". Shortly (within a few weeks) after this alarm was raised by him, issues of "The People", under his editorship, carried a revised declaration of the party program, featuring a newly inserted paragraph, subheaded "NOT A "BLUEPRINT"", nestled seven inches beneath it's column's main heading, entitled "REVOLUTIONARY PROGRAM".

For those not imbued with the proper lexical spirit, the use of a dictionary is probably a nuisance. In this instance, however, if one would make the effort they would find that it exposes a severe dysfunction in the party organ's speech. For the fact of the matter is that the terms "blueprint" and "program" are synonymous. Each defines the other!

In fairness, please note that the disclaimer to being a "blueprint" is in reference to a chart at the bottom of the article's page, labelled "THE STRUCTURE OF SOCIALIST INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM". But, what does it mean when an outright organizational blueprint is boldly presented to readers along with an equally bold denial of it's right to be considered a blueprint? The article explains that the chart "is intended to illustrate graphically...." a "principle". But, since when has a blueprint ceased to be a "graphic expression", as it is so crisply defined to be in my unabridged 1969 edition of THE AMERICAN HERITAGE DICTIONARY? In so far as the SLP's "REVOLUTIONARY PROGRAM" combines both political and industrial action, with the industrial depending wholly upon it's socialist industrial union base, the disclaimer introduces an element of equivocation on a point of vital concern that cannot be ignored. The blatant manner of it's publication must arouse suspicion of the motives, convictions or, to be generous, of the level of literacy to which the party has tumbled since De Leon's death.

The committee which reviewed and rejected the resolution, the report of which appears on page 151 of the proceedings, denied that "the socialist industrial union concept" (and not just the "chart") was or had ever been a blueprint for the building of a socialist movement or society.", leaving one to wonder, again, at the nature of it's party's proud pretensions to "a
two-fold program". Interestingly enough, while denying the socialist industrial union concept is a "blueprint", but condemning the principles contained in the resolution as such, it chose to "view the representational scheme presented in the resolution as only one possible way in which the working class could choose to fine-tune worker representation in the socialist industrial union structure." But, in it's resolution, section Los Angeles had as much as made this point by requesting that the study of socialist industrial union structure be treated as "an ongoing process".

However, the committee went even further in it's attempts to evade the issues, by creatively coining a new form of reference for it's basic socialist industrial union concept, now terming it "SIUISM" (as in "socialist industrial unionism-ism"!). So, making another trip to the dictionary, we find...

**ISM -n.** A distinctive doctrine, practice or school. Generally used disparagingly.

**ISM -suffix**
1. Action, practice or process, as in 'terrorism', 'nepotism'.
2. State or condition of being, as in 'pauperism'.
3. Characteristic behavior or quality, as in 'cowardism'.
4. Doctrine, theory, system or principle, as in 'Platonism'.

Though there may be 'isms' within 'isms', ad infinitum, it is obvious which definition of the socialist industrial union the committee wishes us to use. But, regardless which is used, the result is to raise it to a level of abstraction hovering even further above the reach of the working class than it has heretofore been. Apparently we are not even permitted to wonder, if ever 'SIUISM' were to attain a 'state of being', where to look for it's fine tuning knobs. How is one to search for them where no 'blueprints' are allowed?

On the other hand, it would certainly be admirable if a motive for the disclaimer is to make it clear that the SLP does not wish to constrict the actions of the proletariat by recommending an untried, untested and incompletely thought out version of the socialist industrial union. This, to it's credit is, in a sense, what the committee considers the final reason for rejecting the resolution. It states, thus, "There are, no doubt, any number of ways in which the workers themselves might choose to refine that structure as their own experience dictates -but such choices must be left to that experience and the workers themselves". If one is inclined to applaud such a grandiose pronouncement, first ask if the SLP is in a position to prevent the working class doing just that very thing, and without asking the SLP's permission, thank you!

Of course, no one can foresee in future what expedients will be required, and it is certainly advisable that flexibility be maintained in face of the unknown. Does that mean, though, that uncertainty cancels the need for educated guesswork (which may be the result of "experience"), or that existing tactics should be addressed with as little precision as possible in order for the proletariat to react to Capital's trepidations...
with the utmost spontaneity? In that case, is spontaneity to be the principal measure of value in building the socialist industrial union? If so, where is that stern, disciplined approach preached by De Leon?

Not only in inspirational terms, but as a tactical matter, as well, it is essential to be convinced of the efficacy of a proletarian form of government as a goal worth the striving for. In De Leonist terms, the socialist industrial union is supposed to serve, not only as the battering ram of the working class, but as the governing framework of any future socialist republic. In the face of Marx's stated reluctance to concoct recipes for a future society, it is absolutely daunting for any Marxist to suggest the shape and form of what we hope will be the higher level of civilization issuing from a successful socialist revolution. It is historical fact that De Leon is one who did dare to suggest just such a form. The question today is not whether, but how far, the SLP has backed away from him?

Judging from the record of the past 80 years, during which the SLP has not been able to significantly develop the notion of the socialist industrial union beyond De Leon's initial vision of it, it may not be amiss to suppose that the inspiration which gave rise to it was put to rest with him. In fact, the abandonment of his vision probably began not long after his death, when memorialization of his life and work was institutionally monumentalized by the party hacks as a principal means of securing control over the membership. This is a fairly common expedient in the annals of the twentieth century to which we have become fairly accustomed. The effect of creating such a monument is to suspend further development of the dynamics of the revered through an entombment meant to maintain for as long as possible the appearance of life in death. Over time, however, decay generally sets in. Concerning the SLP, this decay is observable on two fronts, both of which are important for De Leonists. The first is evident in the cessation some twenty years ago of the party's active participation in the electoral process. The second, more long standing symptom is it's above mentioned inability to contribute to the development of socialist industrial unionism, either in thought or in action.

It can be questioned why, with regard to it's socialist industrial union chart, the SLP should now be openly back tracking from the position it previously held for so many years with rock hard firmness? Has the disparity between their earlier "blueprint", "chart" or "graphic illustration" (Take your choice.) and present strategies of the class war become too obvious? If so, perhaps it was felt wise to reclassify the offending "chart" to serve another purpose, albeit an even more illusive and mysterious one than before. At the moment, one must be excused for asking, "Who is being served?"

But, enough of the SLP. The De Leonist Review paper titled, DEMOCRACY--POLITICAL AND INDUSTRIAL, which was printed in DB #70, has strong doubts about a socialist society administered solely by workers in the shops. But, at best, it has nothing more to contribute than disquiet over the presumed lack of caucus that would eventuate in a society split between those holding down jobs and those perceived as jobless. End that perception and all that remains to be asked is, "What was the shouting all about?". Being jobless is not a condition that disqualifies a person from belonging to the working class. Even capitalist economists make no distinction on that score. In fact, every worker will and must suffer periods of "joblessness", hopefully more so in a socialist society. In such a society, I would expect to see a variation on the rites of passage
utilized by primitive societies to establish a life-long continuum of organically precise relationships designed to support and maintain the exercise of suffrage in a multitude of circumstances.

As to your other article, A PLAN FOR THE NEXT GENERATION'S FUTURE, it departs only slightly from the SLP's broadly indistinct presentation of how a socialist society might be administered. I find it equally interesting that, as is the case with the SLP, we are cautioned not to mistake "The Plan" for a "blueprint". Instead, we are here supposed to think "guideline". But what else is a 'plan' if not a 'blueprint'? And, oaf that I am, I always supposed that a blueprint was chock full of guidelines and, in fact, was constructed only of them. Why this fear of being accused of thinking something through deliberatively and in detail?

But apart from that mere quibble, it has in common with the first article an inability to recognize the work related continuum which socially mobile constituents of a classless society must necessarily generate. To set up "community" councils as counterpoints of "workplace" councils supposes that the conflict between work and home that we see everywhere played out today is something other than what Capitalism has wrought. There is also the same assumption, made explicit in the first article, that there will be a certain portion of the population who will be disenfranchised for lack of a "job", or who will in some other fashion fall beyond the "pale".

Both articles show commendable sensitivity to the need for consensus in a democratic society. I recommend, however, that their authors show more concern for the details of the SIU, which details they seem more interested in avoiding. Simply to state that "workers vote" and "councils serve" tells us nothing we didn't know before. To then maintain that the few details presented are merely "suggestions" and "not blueprints", tells us less than nothing. For instance, how exactly will the voting take place? And by that, I don't mean will it take place with a pencil or a push button. What limitations will be placed on the number and tenure of reps? On what basis will rotation of reps take place? What will be the relationships between the reps in the councils? Stating that "all voices are included" is tantamount to stating that no one will be heard! What we are left with is the sound of millions of push buttons clicking away day and night, mandating instant recall of reps here, there, everywhere. If so, how are replacement reps to be instantly chosen to take their place, especially if all we know of them is based on a purely push button acquaintance? Don't get me wrong! I made my living for many years pushing buttons on the assembly line and have no prejudice against them. But, they should not be used as gimmicks to foster an illusion that they provide the kind of democracy for which we've all been waiting. Push button democracy sounds no more desirable coming from the Industrial Union Party than when touted by Nevt.

There are time tested procedures for gaining our ends in regard to the above, and I will close with some observations about remarks I made earlier in reference to contributions gleaned from the study of primitive societies. Many doubters may think it odd that primitive societies form an area of research relevant to the shapes and practices of a future society. But, let these be reminded of the passionate research into classical Greece and Rome that occurred as nascent mercantile Capital emerged from feudalism. Nor let them forget that neither Marx, Engels or De Leon balked at incorporating into their own theories many of Lewis Morgan's insights respecting ancient societies. One day the rule may be proved that the
higher a civilization, the wider and the deeper are its roots.

Since the last century, anthropology has been a battle ground of contending social forces. Probably one of the greatest social scientists of this century has been Claude Levi-Strauss. Almost single handedly, with the addition of others such as Leslie White, he has successfully fended off attempts to denigrate contributions which Morgan and Marx made to social science. Having been honored with the chair of Anthropology at the University of Paris, he continued into his nineties to focus on revolutionary theories of social evolution. His development of an approach to anthropological research known as 'structural anthropology', is an achievement comparable with Noam Chomsky's contribution of 'transformational grammar' in linguistics. The works of both deserve careful attention by those who value a treatment of systems in structured terms.

Anthropological science has grown to encompass technologies borrowed from other sciences. Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Geology, Physiology, Sociology, Political Economy, Paleontology, Archeology, History, etc. are all accessed by anthropologists in the course of their research. Demographic and linguistic tools are constantly refined and vast archives of information are fed into libraries and computers. While much of the information may be presented in biased ways due to the presumptive attitudes of institutional sponsors, the data is still available for critical study by any one capable of viewing it dispassionately in search of higher orders of significance. For those interested in discovering forms indigenous to past and present, concretely existing classless societies, in contrast to the imperatives hawked in the market place of political options, I recommend more than just a little attention be paid to the science of Anthropology.

Sincerely Yours,

Irving Silvey

P.S. Enclosed for further consideration is a copy of Resolution 1-D and a copy of the Convention committee's rejection statement. The Resolution's parsimonious reliance on algebraic matrices is unfortunate. The relationships meant to be elucidated by them are anything but! A more graphically illustrative exposition would have helped avoid it's regrettably disjointed quality.

Dear Comrades,

One of the advantages of producing the DB is that I get the last word for a couple of months. Here I would like to comment on the issues that began this inning of the ongoing dispute between two major libertarian socialist tendencies, DeLeonist and World Socialist. The irony is that these are the most closely related of the political tendencies that we can include under the rubric libertarian socialist. This time it all began with the reprinting in DB70 of articles from the De Leonist Review and the New System calling for an extension of the idea of the Socialist Industrial Union (SIU) to add community representation to the industrial representation of the traditional SIU plan for socialism. This renewed the old disputes between World Socialists (WSs) and DeLeonists (DLs) on matters of tactics and the nature of a socialist society.

It is difficult for me to see anything in this controversy except of party patriotism. Many of us
use the quarrel over SJUism to justify the separate existence of the two groupings. I'm willing to excuse my own occasional jabs at Ws on the grounds of generational regression. Even though I know better, the sectarian juices of my youth still run strong, and I have trouble resisting the urge to offend.

Both groups have their origins in the split around the turn of the century in many of the social democratic parties of the Second International over the question of whether the party should advocate a kind of evolutionary program based on the election of socialists to office. The socialist politicians would then enact reform measures which would gradually transform capitalism into socialism. The major theoretical work on this view was written by Eduard Bernstein, a prominent member of the German Party, whose *Evolutionary Socialism* was published in the Nineties.

In the U.S., the revolutionaries under the leadership of Daniel DeLeon, editor of the SLP's English language weekly, managed to defeat the reformers and retain control of the party organization, publishing house, and newspaper. The reformers and opponents of socialist unionism, also an issue in the American party, were excluded from the SLP and joined the followers of Gene Debs to organize the reformist Socialist Party, which soon dwarfed the SLP.

As I understand it, the SPGB was organized in Great Britain in 1904 only because the Scottish branch of the anti-reformists, who had agreed with their London-based counterparts to hold off leaving the reformist Social Democratic Federation (SDF) until they could gain more adherents, jumped the gun in 1903 and formed a British Socialist Labor Party. The Scots had been strongly influenced by the thinking of the DeLeon and the SLP--perhaps because of their membership base in industry. The London anti-reformists, less influence by the People and DeLeon, refused to join the SLP and instead organized their own revolutionary party, the Socialist Party of Great Britain (SPGB). When two groups are geographically separated and exist independently, as these did, they develop differently in terms of emphasis, organization, methods of agitation, etc. If reasons for mutual disdain for errors in each other's doctrinal stands didn't exist before, they will be found. And they will have all the importance and value for the movement of the different views on infant baptism and predestination we find among protestant religious sects.

Perhaps this is a good place to look at some of the theoretical luggage both DLs and WSs took with them when they left the social democracy of the Second International. I think that what I called in DB70 the electoral fixation of DeLeonists and World Socialists derives from this source. Parties of the Second International saw capitalism's nineteenth century decision to enfranchise the working class as a ticket out of the quandary of how to achieve a peaceful revolution. The World Socialist Movement (WSM) is still frozen in this mode. Like social democrats from Norway to Israel they believe that social revolution is synonymous with winning control of parliament. Of course, they aren't reformists; instead they expect a parliament controlled by revolutionary socialists to abolish private ownership of the means of production, the market, and eventually the state itself.

Perhaps because of my sectarian prejudices, I see the DeLeonists' position as a bit more advanced. To them the electoral victory is strictly pro forma. The revolution doesn't have to wait for an election; it will take place in the workplaces when our class is ready. Afterwards the working class must win an election but only to put socialists in Congress who can legalize the workers' victory in the workplaces and dismantle the state. DLs also argue that by advocating electoral activity the movement avoids the charge that it approves of physical force as the road to revolution. It seems to me, though, that by calling on workers to walk into the workplace, kick out the bosses, take over the means of production, and begin producing for use instead of for profit the movement is indeed advocating that workers use physical force.

Now that almost a century has passed since the electoral part of the DL and WS recipes for revolution were adopted, perhaps we should re-examine it in the light of developments in the field of
electoral politics. First consider the negative attitude of our class toward elections, political parties, and politicians. In the U.S., the only people who vote—less than half the eligible voters in the last national election—are those who either have a stake in the outcome or have been convinced by the media that they do. Doesn’t it make better sense for socialists to campaign against elections, to show what a fraud they are, to point out their role in what the Situationists called the spectacle: part of the vast array of diversions to keep our minds off society’s real problems. For one thing, abstaining drives the ruling class up the wall because low voter turnout indicates that their greatest fear is being realized: the slaves are catching on. Secondly, here in the U.S., enough Trotskyist/neo-stalinist/social democratic/Maoist parties get on the ballot to effectively frustrate any effort to provide a clearcut choice between capitalism and socialism. If there were any danger of revolutionaries winning an election, our rulers would finance vast transusions of the life blood of politics, money, into the veins of the Socialist Workers Party, the Socialist Party USA, and the like. In fact, I believe it is a great mistake to call our organizations parties simply because the word conjures up the idea that revolutionaries are politicians.

While they are at it, DLS might consider the negative connotations contained in the three words _socialist_, _industrial_, and _union_. Whether we like it or not, the operative meaning of the word _socialist_ is government ownership or control. _Industrial_ conjures up visions of environmentally unfriendly production in factories. As for _union_, here in the U.S., most of the 17 percent of working people who belong to unions and pay the yearly dues of around $300 a year are the aristocrats of labor. The factory workers among these are the lucky ones whose plant didn’t move to Ecuador or Sri Lanka—yet. Unless they belong to a sellout union like the United Food and Commercial Workers, they can actually make a living on the job. Millions of workers in the U.S. are among the 80 percent with jobs which pay less than enough to support a family of four. Many of them belonged to unions which either stood helplessly by or actively connived with management during plant closings, downsizing, and restructuring that ended in their taking jobs at $6.50 an hour.

Next I’d like to answer Steve Szalai regarding the “revolutions” I cited as examples of the downfall of ruling classes—or perhaps Steve would prefer _cliques_—when the mass of people simply resolve to disobey their commands. It is true, as Steve points out, that in none of these cases I mentioned did the workers take power from their state capitalist or private capitalist masters. Nonetheless, I think that he too should be encouraged to realize that the revolutionary act is nothing more than the refusal of our class to obey.

To assert, as he does, that we can’t draw conclusions about the revolutionary potential of mass protests because the Iranians simply traded the Shah for Khomeini or the East Germans traded soviet-style state capitalism for the West German private variant is to underestimate that strength. In every case I mentioned, the people—in what might be called a mass strike against the government—faced down their rulers’ armies, secret police, and other coercive forces.

Could a more determined set of rulers have resisted successfully? We have only to look at Tianamen Square for the alternative scenario. But extenuating factors account, at least in part, for that defeat. The demonstrators, I understand, were mostly the educated children of the ruling elite, workers were largely excluded, and the mass of Chinese regarded the demonstration as a conflict within the ruling class. Probably any ruling class in a pinch like this can find loyal military and police units to go in with tanks. The question is whether it wants to try governing after a mass slaughter. The CPC leadership in Peiping was willing to take a chance.

It to Them?" Smith, who has ties with the SPGB, writes as follows:

No government can survive in the developed world without the cooperation of its subjects. Recalcitrant minorities can be dealt with. But if most of the people cease active participation, the regime crumbles and no tanks or machine guns can make them.

Passive non-cooperation is a much more powerful weapon, much more difficult for governments to deal with than revolt. Active resistance can be dealt with easily. A few figureheads are jailed or shot and the rest slink back. But to sullen, or better, dissembled passive resistance, there is no reply other than appeals for an end to it in the name of God or Country or Motherhood.

*We hope to have a review of this book in an upcoming issue. It continues the ideas in his earlier book, Free Is Cheaper reviewed in DB34. American readers who would like a copy can obtain it for $20 postpaid from The John Ball Press, Sheepeat, Folly Lane, May Hill Gloucester, G17 0NP, England.

---

(from p. 2)

effort to amend the Socialist Industrial Union program by some members of the SLP at their national convention a couple of years ago and comments on the changes advocated by the New System and the De Leonist Review.

Next we have Wildcat's high intensity effort to set the historical record straight, as they see it, on fascism and democracy. In "Armed Anarchists" Laurens Otter questions Christopher Day's advocacy in DB71 of armed struggle to achieve revolutionary ends. We have lifted another article from issue number 7 of Flux, this one a review of a book theorizing on recent developments in capitalist organization. We end by remembering two libertarian friends of the Discussion Bulletin.

BULLETIN MATTERS

For the articles and letters relating to the World Socialist /DeLeonist discussion in this issue I have reverted to an earlier format. Instead of beginning each article or letter at the top of a new page, I have begun them directly under the preceding article so that sometimes only a few lines appear at the bottom of the page. I believed this would save space, bunch articles on this subject together, and spare readers the distraction of the "Bulletin Matters" material that I use to complete such pages. Although The Nation uses this format, I am less than happy with it and in the next issue will return to beginning articles at the top of the page when possible.

I must also note a mistake in DB71 called to my attention by Curtis Price. I ascribed the review of The Jobless Future to his authorship. The author is a D. Shnaid.

Finances

We are still in the black but continue to lose ground from the good old days when I was wondering where to invest the surplus. Most of our financial problems relate to the copier. It gets a hard workout here. As I was printing DB71, it went haywire again. Although the repair cost only $20, part of that issue had to be printed commercially. Since then the copier has required extensive repair for which I have not yet received the bill. It may turn out that having it printed commercially by offset is cheaper

(to p. 27)
In Other Losses\textsuperscript{1}, Braque describes the deliberate murder of German POWs by the Allies during and after World War II. The terror imposed on German POWs and civilians by the Russian Army is better known. This book is a rare example of research into the suppressed story of mass murder on the Western Front:

"It is beyond doubt that enormous numbers of men of all ages, plus some women and children, died of exposure, unsanitary conditions, disease and starvation in the American and French camps in Germany and France starting in April 1945, just before the end of the war in Europe. The victims undoubtedly number over 800,000, almost certainly over 900,000, and quite likely over a million. Their deaths were knowingly caused by army officers who had sufficient resources to keep the prisoners alive".

In the British zone, German civilians had it relatively easy, receiving 1550 calories per day. The minimum needed is around 2250. In the American zone, the civilians received about 1275, and in the French, 950 per day. In some French camps, it was as low as 800; the same as in Belsen, whose inmates had been deliberately starved to death. The French worked people to death as well. This was at a time when Europe was awash with food, home-grown and imported, as well as tents, medicines, and all the other materiel necessary to treat civilians and POWs according to the Geneva Convention. The Red Cross and German civilians were prevented from feeding the prisoners in the camps. Apart from the mass murder of civilians by the British and American Air Forces, a large proportion of surrendering German soldiers were murdered by the Allies on the battlefields, according to the research of Paul Fussell\textsuperscript{2}.\textsuperscript{1}
Anti-fascist propaganda today, continuously put out by Zionists and the left, and by the mass media on important celebrations such as VE Day, emphasizes German atrocities and fails to mention Allied ones. It was easy to find a picture of victims of the Nazis to illustrate this flyer, and difficult to find an equivalent from the Allied holocaust. Even within the Nazi holocaust, they are selective; the murder of six million Jews is harped on, and the numerous other groups of victims largely ignored. The fact that it was poor Jews who were murdered, whilst rich ones could escape by bribing the government to change their racial classification, is unmentioned. Nazi policies are presented as a pathologically irrational outburst of hate, rather than a calculated attack on the working class, though at the time, according to government documents recently released in Britain, Allied Intelligence thought the SS were doing a good job in getting rid of future troublemakers.

Anti-fascism not only justified Dresden and the murder of POWs, it is a crucial underpinning for the New World Order, with the Western democracies at the helm, with their journalist friends justifying and covering up their war crimes, reporting only those of their enemies. Selective reporting of war crimes continued into the Gulf War. Only Serbs are being charged in the War Crimes Tribunal for Yugoslavia, though atrocities have been committed by all sides. Human Rights is the major equivalent of Anti-fascism today, but Anti-fascism is still dusted off from time to time and used to reinforce the self-righteous esteem of the West, preparing the public for future Dredens. Undermining the Allied version of what WWII was about is still a priority. Exposing this central political myth of today's capitalist world is many times more important than fighting fascism, and in any case does not exclude it. The version of WWII taught in school prepares kids today to die for the New World Order tomorrow. American university anthropology classes still teach that Japanese soldiers committed suicide en masse rather than lose face by surrendering. This is a lie invented by the Americans to cover up the murder of POWs.

The attempts by some conservative historians to minimize Nazi crimes is scarcely significant compared with Anti-fascism, which has the media pigs on its side in its one-sided account of the massacres of 1939-45. Not that they are completely uncritical of their own side. For example, there was recently a discussion about whether the bombing of Hiroshima helped bring the war to an end. It didn't - it was the Russian attack which convinced the Japanese High Command to surrender to the Americans, keeping the country and the monarchy intact - but the point is that it would be inconceivable to argue whether or not German or Japanese massacres were justified, whereas under the warped logic of Anti-fascism, Allied ones are debatable.

Anarchists et al. sometimes say they agree with much of this. They have read Jean Barrot's *Fascism/Anti-fascism*, but... well, its a bit abstract, and, er, we want to do something. So they go to every Anti-fascist demonstration, never distinguishing themselves politically from the Social Workers and students, arguing that being more
violent is sufficient. Fighting fascists gives them a chance to confront the police, they say. But this is no excuse for supporting the Anti-fascist left. Fascists and other right-wingers have also come into conflict with the police, and often with other parts of the state, such as local councils, even defending people against evictions, but our anarchist friends don't take their side against the police on these occasions, as they would if they were consistent in their approach. This is because they don't mean what they say. What they really mean is that fascists are much more wicked than all the other parties.

The British Anti-Nazi League supports local councils, and demands the state prosecutes alleged racists. Going on their demos without criticizing the ANL for this means complicity with it. Anti-Fascist Action tries to exclude the extreme right from the annual Remembrance Sunday parade, supporting the right of the major parties to celebrate the Allied holocaust, untainted by the presence of unpatriotic elements like the BNP. Fighting the police at a demo under the banners of the ANL can only reinforce the democratic message. Not that this message is ineffective; if beating fascists is an overwhelming priority, one should consider that the ANL's patriotic populism works; in the late seventies, the ANL's graphic posters and flyers equating the National Front with the Third Reich was more effective in convincing the mass of patriotic citizens not to vote for them than the street battles.

None of the foregoing implies that we shouldn't oppose fascists. It goes without saying that fascists are anti-working class. Blaming immigrants for our problems is of course class-divisive. But fascists are by no means the most effective proponents of this tactic. Proposition 187, which aims to persecute poor Latino immigrants in California, making them more insecure, and thus easier to exploit in the labor market, was implemented by ordinary politicians by means of the democratic process. When and how to fight fascists is a tactical question. In situations where a class perspective can prevail, fighting fascism and so on has to be weighed up alongside other activities, and carried out on the basis of resources, effectiveness, etc., just like any other activity. Clearly, where fascist parties are a major part of the democratic spectrum, as they are in Italy, for example, then they have to be taken more seriously than in Britain or the USA.

In the USA, even the Coalition for Human Dignity denies that it has ever claimed that "hate groups" account for the majority of racially motivated attacks. Racial minorities, when asked, point to the government as their main enemy.

"...for all intents and purposes, black people in this country live in a police state and it is the flight of middle-class, leftist fancy to harp on... fascist danger... when 60% of women prisoners in US jails are black and 1 in every 4 black males is in prison." - Love and Rage, Dec. 93; the statistics may be questionable, but the basic point is sound.

At the end of 1994, the proportion of black prisoners exceeded 50% for the first time. The African American population is 12% of the total.
It was not until June 1992, in the famous Mabo decision, that the High Court decided that Australian aborigines had land rights, reversing the position that Australia had been Terra Nullius - empty land - before the white invasion of the 1780's onward. Hitler did not claim that Eastern Europe was uninhabited. The Nazis probably killed a smaller proportion of the populations they enslaved than the Brits did in Australia - and the murder of aborigines by the police goes on. Leftists ignore this, but get irate about attacks on Jewish cemeteries, as if dead Jews were more valuable than live aborigines.

Perhaps there is something unique about the Nazis. Western Civilization, particularly its Anglo-Saxon branch in North America, had wiped out numerous entire cultures before, but the Final Solution was an unprecedentedly calculating, scientific attempt at genocide. The experiments on human subjects, the efficiency of the gas chambers, the calculations of the value of each dead body, represented the apogee of instrumental reason, not a deviation from the upward march of history. Racism, which was one of the most powerful ingredients of Nazism, was formulated on the basis of the flamboyant rationalism of social Darwinism. And science still serves racist ends whenever necessary. Germany is an advanced industrial democracy. The Nazi regime came to power in a democratic election.

It is insane to argue that the German war crimes were morally worse than the Allies' firestorms. But this is implicitly what we are being told every day. There is a statue of Bomber Harris of the RAF in London. Yet if Luftwaffe supremo Goering, a butcher's apprentice by comparison, were similarly honored in Berlin, there would be outrage. But such comparisons are odious. Our point is not to quibble about whether it is worse to gas several million people, burn them, or starve them to death. The point is not whether it is worse to live under fascism or democracy. Fascism is in any case part of democracy, and has historically come to power in particular acute crises where an extreme version of the New Deal, pulling the nation together, was required. The working class had already been seriously defeated by the social democrats before 1933, so resistance was ineffective. The Nazis did not proceed to destroy the "organizations of the working class", they integrated much of the trade union movement into their own Labor Front. The only way to have prevented this particular form of capitalist politics would have been to flush the swamp of democracy which spawned it, and replace it with the dictatorship of organizations of proletarian power. Supporting Anti-fascism means supporting democracy, which gives birth to fascism and to all the other equally warmongering, Earth- raping political systems.

No more Belsen - no more Dardens
Down with Fascism - down with Anti-fascism
Against Democracy - for a world without politicians, nations and wars.

WILDCAT, April 1995.

3. Fascism/Anti-fascism, Barrot J, from our London address, Write only as follows:

BM CAT, London WC1N 3XX, Britain or PO Box 14549, Portland OR 97214, USA.
"Armed anarchists"

A fairly commonly accepted definition of a state is "a body of men under arms or an organization whose authority such a body (or bodies) of men under arms accept(s)."

An anarchist is a socialist who does not accept that it is possible to achieve socialism by the use of the state & its constituent organizations; therefore insists that only direct action, carried through, so that the workers reorganize society without recourse to state, forms can lead to socialism.

Pace Christopher Day, any "armed struggle tendency of anarchism" in attempting to use state forms in its effort to change society; is therefore - by definition - not "the most militant wing of the anarchist movement." but a grouping which has either failed to understand what anarchism is about; or understanding it has abandoned anarchism.

The sort of military machine that would be needed "actually" to "defeat" (using military means rather than the methods of subversion of the loyalty of the state's own forces.) the armed forces of a modern state would need to be enormous, extremely hierarchical & bureaucratic.

It would be an insane delusion to imagine that such a body could attain anarchism, or indeed to believe that its leadership would still desire so to do, if it attained sufficient military power.

L. O.
Call. Fm. Ho., Wellington.
Salop., IFI-PE, U.K.

(from p. 22)


BALANCE April 19, 1995 $83.85

RECEIPTS
Contributions $25.00
Subs and sales 115.55
Pamphlets 21.60
Total $162.15

(to p. 30)
Going by the back cover of this book, it's presumably aimed at sociology undergraduates looking for some supplemental reading to impress their tutors. But don't let this put you off, for it makes an important contribution to the 'post-Fordism' debate currently exercising the left.

Ritzer's thesis is that the fast food restaurant encapsulates the economic and social organisation of work and leisure throughout the US since the 1950s. Take health care as one example. North American health provision is moving away from generic, towards particular, individualised services. So you have clinics which only do hip replacement surgery, for example. Surgeons' skills are narrowed, and the effect on patients is that they are treated like objects on a conveyor belt, who are whisked in, operated on in a completely routine manner, and whisked out afterwards. Time and costs are minimised, profits are maximised, and after-care is virtually eliminated. Such systems, or so Ritzer argues, are being replicated throughout society.

In the nineteenth century, Max Weber wrote extensively on what he called the 'rationalisation of society'. Weber argued that Western society was becoming organised like a bureaucracy, characterised by endless rules and regulations with the aim of discovering the most rational (efficient in capitalist terms) means to achieve a given end. Kafka's nightmarish novel, *The Trial*, is a strong fictional description of this world.

Ritzer contends that this rationalisation process is still continuing, but is now best epitomised by the fast-food restaurant - of which the McDonalds franchise is a prime example. So he names this form of late twentieth century rationalisation, "McDonaldization".

A crucial pre-cursor to McDonaldization was Taylorism. F W Taylor is famous for his time-and-motion studies of various workplaces, which aimed to maximise productivity. His strategy was simple: find workers who did a particular task well, and analyze their movements minutely. Break down the activity into its smallest components so that it can be taught to less efficient workers. The result is that each worker is assigned a simple and repetitive task as their only work. This extreme specialisation de-skills workers, depriving them of initiative or the need to communicate with colleagues.

Taylorism is not a new phenomenon. However, the widespread use of computer technology is, and it is this that provided a key impetus to McDonaldization. Computers are very good at performing repetitive tasks. This makes them attractive to capitalists, who can replace humans and further control those humans left in work.

There are similarities here to the analysis provided by *Marxism Today*, particularly the technological determinism of New Times. However, Ritzer explicitly rejects the claim that we are living in either a post-Fordist or post-modernist society. On the contrary, McDonaldization is an extension of Fordist and Taylorist principles in the service sector, which is gradually replacing manufacturing as the major occupation in advanced capitalist countries. And rather than being something to be welcomed, it is clearly a deeply exploitative system which relies on permanent unemployment to replenish the enormous staff turnover characteristic of the temporary contract, low-paid, non-unionised workplaces of the fast food restaurants.

Ritzer also describes how the customer unwittingly contributes to this system by becoming part of its assembly line. In McDonalds, for example, people queue for their meals, pay for them and take them to a table, and clear up their litter afterwards. We do not merely collude in the role of consuming the endless stream of disposable goods capitalism offers to us, but we also collude in the production process which make it profitable enough to be viable.
exists in a thoroughly exploited condition. Having said this, there are a number of weaknesses to the book worth pointing out.

First, the title is misleading. The book is not about capitalist imperialism intervention throughout the southern hemisphere. A crucial factor forcing the present upheavals of capitalist organisation of work, is that today we have a global market of competing multinationals. The book does not deal, for example, with the colonisation of McDonalds throughout capitalist countries, or its penetration of developing countries such as Brazil for raw materials, cheap, exploited labour and new markets. (For a thorough analysis of the complex political and economic pressures brought to bear on Newly Industrialised Countries (NICs), see Richard Holbrook, 'Mistranslations', Science as Culture, Vol. 8, 1991). The effects are environmental destruction, huge financial burdens and appalling social conditions.

Because Ritzer does not fully appreciate the economic drive of this emerging form of developed capitalism, he is too impressed by its ideological effects. He assumes that most people swallow whole the McDonalds ideology, without ever really questioning it. He does not acknowledge the tight economic constraints most people are forced to live with, or the contradictory reasons why people might welcome another McDonalds - that it's easy, predictable, comforting, and saves them from organising their leisure time when they are exhausted from the effects of alienated work (or demoralised by the humiliation of unemployment).

Consequently, Ritzer has a very superficial understanding of what constitutes resistance to the McDonaldized society. He approves of the 'caring capitalist' franchises and co-ops, oblivious to the contradictions (for example, the need for co-ops to get bank loans). There is also a bizarre chapter entitled "Coping with the McDonaldized Society". These "tips" are highly individualised and allow no room for any collective responses. For example, he considers that he has escaped the regimentation of modern life by becoming a professor, so that he can walk his dog during the afternoon if he likes! No connection is made with his earlier critique of the higher education system, which has incorporated the McDonaldized obsessions with quantifiable exam results rather than freedom to learn. And of course, such a career move is only open to a tiny fraction of well-educated, privileged people. He should instead have considered how this latest mode of capitalist economic organisation throws a few crumbs to the middle classes.

He also fails to question why this form of capitalism was necessary in the first place. If he had, he could have started a more critical account of the ways in which working class resistance to a previous form of capitalist exploitation helped to create the conditions for change in the mode of capitalist domination. For example, the success of workplace struggle in the 60's and 70's (wildcat strikes, work to rules, sit-ins and so on) prevented a wholesale incorporation of the working class into a uniform work ethic. McDonaldization is an attempt to deal with this by breaking class solidarity and make each individual feel responsible for the success of their product. The trade-off is increased (albeit regulated) leisure time and greater opportunities for community struggle and class struggle in a different arena.

And this is why we have the right to remain optimistic about the possibilities of resistance. Invariably, structural changes in capital do not solve the fundamental conflicts that exist in an alienated society. People's resistance simply takes new forms, hopefully learning from the successes and failures of the past. By ignoring this possibility of collective struggle (as witnessed in the LA riots in the US), Ritzer capitulates to the individualism it promotes.

In many ways this is a disappointing book, which missed a good opportunity to provide an incisive, historical account of the development of late capitalism. Nevertheless, it is a thought-provoking read with a useful perspective on the often sterile and polarised debates about whether the working class exists. Clearly the working class does exist, though not in a neat, compartmentalised form. But just as clearly, we need new tools to understand what is going on so that we can find effective ways of opposing it.

Simon Scott

(From Flux Number 7, Box A, The Rainbow Centre, 180 Mansfield Rd, Nottingham, England)
DIOXIN:
THE ORANGE RESOURCE BOOK

Over 40 authors cover the health sciences of dioxin, personal histories of its victims, and battles over toxins. Original artwork used in local struggles.

Selections on: Times Beach, War, Herbicides, Pesticides, Military Incinerators, Medical Incinerators, Hazardous Waste Incinerators, Municipal Incinerators, Government Cover-ups. Emphasis on the need to remove chlorine from production, and on organizing tactics.

96 pp. $7/paper, from Gateway Green Alliance, PO Box 8094, St. Louis MO 63156 or your local progressive bookstore call 314-727-8554 for bulk orders.

Dioxin: The Orange Resource Book is a monograph double issue of Synthesis/Regeneration, published for members of the Greens/Green Party USA

(from p. 27)

DISBURSEMENTS
Additional for printing 71 $ 22.95
Half of copier repair 10.00
Account maintenance fees 14.60
Postage 117.00
Printing DB72 37.78
Postage due 2.50
Total $204.83

BALANCE June 24, 1995 $41.17

Fraternally submitted,

Frank Girard
for the DB
IN MEMORIAM

The Discussion Bulletin lost two long time friends during the past few months:

Margaret Begovich died in Pontiac, Michigan, in February. She was 78 years old. She was born into a Hungarian SLP family in the Delray section of Detroit near Ford’s River Rouge plant where many members of the Hungarian Federation lived and had their hall. In the 1930s she married John Begovich, a member of the SLP’s South Slav Federation and also became a member of Section Wayne County (Detroit) of the SLP. During the 1947 rebellion against the national secretary, Arnold Petersen, she was expelled from the party but remained on sufficiently good terms with the membership in the Detroit area to be welcomed at party affairs. Twenty years later when another disruption occurred in the SLP, she helped to organize Socialist Reconstruction, the shortlived dissident DeLeonist group that emerged. She was a subscriber and supporter of the DB from the first issue. After I was expelled from the party in 1981, her contacts made it possible for me to inherit Section Wayne County’s bound volumes of the Weekly People dating back to January 1914, for which I will always bless her memory. She was a kind, sensible, intelligent woman who retained to the last, according to her daughter, her socialist views and confidence that our class would emancipate itself.

Ben Perry died peacefully in his home on June 9 of the brain tumor that was discovered last September. He was 66 years old. His wife Louise and three children survive him. Ben, too, was friend of the DB from the first issue, contributing articles, letters, and money to support it. He was also a personal friend and comrade. We first met in the fall of 1951 near Muskegon, Michigan, at the home of Tony Teuling, a pattern maker by trade who had been a member of the Socialist Labor Party since the mid-thirties. Ben, apparently while he was a student at the University of New Hampshire, had gotten a Socialist Labor Party leaflet at a Boston election rally for Henry A. Wallace, the 1948 Progressive Party candidate for President. Like so many of us for whom our first contact with socialist ideas was an SLP talk or leaflet, he wrote to the national office in New York for literature. When he graduated, the job market for math majors was rather slim, and he ended up taking a job with Capitol Airlines at Muskegon on Michigan’s west coast. Ben joined the party a couple of months later.

After a year and a half Capitol Airlines transferred him to the Willow Run Airport near Ann Arbor, and after that to New York. We didn’t see much of each other for a good many years although we both continued our activity in the SLP and corresponded irregularly. Then in 1968 when the dissatisfaction of many of the younger members with the party’s activity in connection with the anti-war movement—or rather the lack thereof—caused an upheaval in the party, Ben resigned and joined the dissidents. He too helped to organize the dissident group Socialist Reconstruction (SR). He and other members of the Philadelphia section of SR became interested in libertarian socialist ideas and launched a magazine, Synthesis and a bookstore, which still exists, Wooden Shoe Books. When SR dissolved, he became interested in the libertarian group, London Solidarity, helped to organize a Philadelphia Solidarity, and became involved in publishing and selling Solidarity literature in the U.S. We continued to stay in contact although our political views began to diverge. Then in 1982 the idea of writing a history of the Socialist Labor Party struck us. The realization that we would have to research the party’s history led to our first one-week pilgrimage to the SLP’s archives at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin on the Madison campus of the University of Wisconsin. These excursions became annual. I came East a couple of times, but usually Ben would fly out and stay with us. Then we would drive to Madison, stopping in Chicago on the way to visit another defrocked DeLeonist, Rado
Besides the work in the archives room in Madison, we spent hours talking, checking the used book stores, eating ethnic food, playing chess, and just enjoying ourselves. We even wrote the book and published it in 1991. We continue our excursions and research for another—and longer—SLP history and for various other projects. The last was almost exactly a year ago.

Before ending this I want to comment on Ben as a revolutionary socialist. Although he became an even less orthodox DeLeonist than I, he never stopped believing that we humans would free ourselves from the slavery to which capitalism has condemned us. In the “Afterword” of our book, a mutual effort like the rest, we wrote, speaking of the uncompromising program of the SLP, “Some people are attracted by a millenarian goal, religious or secular, (And we plead guilty to a belief that the latter is possible).” and on the next page—in his words, as I recall—he reaffirmed his political position: “If a revitalized revolutionary movement ever recurs, and we believe it will, it should combine the SLP’s call for social ownership and control of the economy and the abolition of the state with a democratic, decentralized program for organizing production and communities. It certainly will not succeed unless it steps beyond the hierarchical patterns of the modern state.”

--Frank Girard