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

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## DISCUSSION BULLETIN

**NUMBER 21**  
**JANUARY 1987**

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along with several letters in recent months pointing out that the publication of the latter installments has been hanging fire long enough prompted the decision. We hope to conclude the series in an early issue.

Although a couple of letters are pending publication in DB22, we want to emphasize that the Discussion Bulletin needs letters and articles of interest to third force socialist. At the same time we want to point out that because the DB is reduced in size for printing in this format, we must ask you to please make your margins narrow to avoid those wide and empty margins on the finished product. 3/4 inch margins and seven-inch (18 cm.) typed lines are ideal. And finally we want to urge readers who are enjoying a sample copy to subscribe--$3 for six issues.

Frank Girard
for the DB Committee

NEW PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED


CAPITALISM AND ITS REVOLUTIONARY DESTRUCTION by Wildcat; no price, from Wildcat, c/o Raven Press, 75 Piccadilly, Manchester M1 2EG, England. "Produced as the first draft" and "tool for dialogue" on the ideas of the Wildcat group. We suggest that you send a dollar with your request.

ANGRY WORKERS' BULLETIN (No. 3, Summer 1968) from 2000 Center Street, #1200, Berkeley, CA 94704. No price, 28 pages, "produced by a small group of mostly ex-anarchists" who see virtue in Marx's writings and want to analyze past revolutions and understand workers' struggles today. This issue contains an article by Adam Buick critical of London Solidarity Group.

KOMUNIST KRANTI; "An attempt to participate in the constitution of the world communist party." $1 from 679, Jawahar Colony N.I.T., Faridabad-121001, India. This is the publication of a former Leninist group, which was influenced to rethink its positions by reading publications of the International Communist Current.

(Cont'd from p. 32)

at the national convention having worn off. The resulting correspondence would be laid before the next NEC Session or National Convention (the latter had also become annual in 1977). Under pressure including scarcely veiled threats that the whole national Office staff and editorial department would have to resign if the NEC or Convention repudiated the positions they had taken, the NEC would be overwhelmingly endorsed.

(To be continued)
My Journey to the Independent Socialist Republic of New Bologna

The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living. And just when they seem engaged in revolutionising themselves and things, in creating something that has never yet existed, precisely in such periods of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service...

Karl Marx, THE 18th BRUMAIRE OF LOUIS BONAPARTE

I am beginning to question the belief I have always held in the past that society as a whole would determine its total needs and that we would all pitch in and produce what was necessary.

Frank Girard, DISCUSSION BULLETIN No. 18, p. 15

There was going to be a big anti-imperialist demonstration the next morning. So, when I finally fell into bed Friday night, I was hoping to get some good rest. Maybe that's why I let myself keep dreaming about the smoke in the room. But, I couldn't sleep through the doorbell that rang and rang and rang. Zipped my pants while edging groggily down the steps. The guy I made out through the peephole seemed real uptight. I was barely awake enough to ask, "Whatcha want?"

"I'm real sorry about this, but my car is burning up on your front lawn..." I had to open the door to see what he was pointing at. "...and if that car is yours, it might catch if mine explodes."

Sure enough, between the curb and sidewalk was a green Chevy with flames leaping from under the hood. About six feet from my car. "Yeah. Thanks for letting me know. Got to get my keys." I was half-way up the stairs before realizing the truth of the matter. I spun around. Outside, I shared my thoughts. "You know, it just hit me that I got insurance. So, I mean, I'd rather not get blown up or burned if Liberty Mutual's gonna cover the whole thing anyway and I think I'll just sit here and watch the glow."

Not much to watch. Fire engine screamed up. Then another. And another. "Stand back, folks," the raincoated dignitary motioned to the pajama-clad audience. He deftly waved his fire-can and the spectacle was over.

It seemed like the poor guy contemplating his smoldering Chevy needed some company. "So, how did your car catch on fire?"

"I dunno. Little red light came on like it does all the time. Then it smelled funny and I saw some flames. It wouldn't steer and went right up on your lawn; so, I jumped out. Don't know how I'm gonna get there now."

"Going somewhere nearby?" I wondered.

"Not hardly. I wanted to see the revolution."

"Jeez," I sighed. "You must have been going a long way from St. Louis. Seriously, what revolution? I try to keep up on that stuff."

"You really haven't heard? They've taken over factories, demilitarized the local army, sealed off the area, and they do what they wanna do."

I was getting more excited as he talked. "Look, my car's okay; so, why don't we take it?" It was late and I couldn't remember if we drove down Missouri 40, I-70, or I-55. To keep from falling asleep, I let Karl (he had introduced himself) drive. Confident that Karl knew the correct road to the revolution, I dozed off in the back seat.

When I woke up, we were surrounded by soldiers, machine guns, and tanks. "We're here!" Karl shouted. "...the borders of the Independent Socialist Republic of New Bologna! I got an I.D. that will get us through. Call me 'Dan' if any of those guys come up."
Bullets and shells were pouring into the air. It seemed like they bounced off some invisible barrier. "How does that happen..." my jaw opened in amazement. Seeing a boy bedecked in khaki brown approaching, I quickly added my comrade's name, "...Dan?"

"It's socialist consciousness," he whispered. "As soon as there was a revolution, every worker in every factory reached the exact level of socialist consciousness at precisely the same instant. The convergence of their identical brain waves initiated a time-space-anti-matter force-field that repels hostile projectiles while allowing compatible particles to penetrate."

"Unbelievable," was all I could mutter.

"It's what makes defense of the Republic unnecessary," he revved up the engine; the car lurched forward; and, as I clutched my seat, we zoomed through the barrier. "Well, now you can call me 'Karl' again. Maybe we can get some information at that little cafe."

We started to walk around a pile of windshields and then we saw him. Thick orange hair and an open shirt. He put down his guitar case and held out his hand. "Michael's the name. Welcome to a totally free society."

"It's an honor to be greeted by an artist, comrade," Karl responded. "What kind of music do you play?"

"Well, I don't really know," Michael rubbed his chin. "Got tired of that damned nursing home and I always wanted to play the guitar. So, I just grabbed the first one I saw. But it's my contribution to the Free Society and that's what I'm gonna do."

"Tell me this - how do you decide who should be a musician and who should...make windshields?" I couldn't help but notice the stacks on each side of us.

"Everyone follows their natural urges," Michael held out his hand in a magnanimous gesture. "Once we removed oppression, the pure purity of human nature emerged and everyone's instinctive desires perfectly matched what we need to consume. There's no need to vote or decide or coordinate. All do exactly as they please. Our True Human Nature determines our perfect society."

"That's odd," I puzzled out loud. "I thought that there was no such thing as 'human nature' and that socialism would mean building new ways to work and live."

"So you think people are naturally lazy," Michael glowered at me.

"What I said was that there's no such thing as 'human nature'," I replied.

"Same thing. And you want an elite to discipline people with a whip," he sneered.

"I think that people can discipline themselves when they put their minds to it."

"You are an authoritarian!" Michael bellowed. "You want your elite to enslave people with discipline and..."

"Excuse me," I couldn't help but interrupt. "What I said was 'self-discipline',"

"Self-discipline is the worst discipline of all." By now he was waving his head back and forth in a frenzy. "You want people to put ruling class work values inside of their own heads..." He was yanking at his shirt furiously. "...you want people to commit the atrocity of performing labor they don't like. Oh my godlessness! Don't you realize that no one should ever do anything that doesn't bring immediate transcendental fulfillment?"

"What an unusual theory you have my friend," I responded. "In all of the repeated attempts of the working class to abolish exploitation, I've never heard of anyone saying people should only do what pleases them."

Michael glanced askance. "If you didn't want to set up a controlling elite, you wouldn't be talking about the 'Failed attempts' of the working class."
"Well, attempts haven't exactly lasted forever. But, don't you think your arguments would be better if you quoted people accurately? It seems like you changed my 'repeated attempts' to 'failed attempts' to make it seem like I was implying all upsurges have been miserable failures. If you refuse to study what people did during those attempts, how do you ever expect to discover ways for people to work together?"

His hair was almost standing on end as he stomped his left foot and threw his head back. "That's your problem... I could barely hear him as his neck and back arched, turning his head 180 degrees opposite me. "...you want people to work together." He was becoming more audible as his head bent back toward his knees. "Socialism has nothing to do with people working together. If you do that, you need rules. Rules are authoritarian and despotic." His right foot was stomping now. "Under socialism, everyone does as they please." As his head popped up between his legs, his arms began flailing to the screech, "Socialism has no rules and no one has to obey anyone."

"Is that a rule?" I wanted to know.

"It's an absolute rule..." He stomped his left foot furiously. "...and you must obey it if you want to stay here." His right foot stomped twice. "Everyone does as they please." Seeing two fellows strolling by with guitar cases, Michael shoved his guitar through the loop made by his arched back and waddled off, stomping first his left foot, then his right one. He danced in little circles as he made his way down the road, his arms flailing and his head bobbing between his knees, shrieking, "Do as you please! Do as you please! Do as you please!!"

"New Bologna certainly is an active place," Karl commented as we stepped over a fallen stack of windshields. There was a group of 10 or 12 people carrying guitar cases in one direction as pairs carried stretchers the opposite way. Several men unloaded a crate of windshields beside us. "Where are those bodies from?" my comrade wondered. "I thought none of the shells were getting through."

"I would have taken my turn mining coal." Our heads turned to see the voice on our left. She was trying to swallow a lump in her throat while desperately clutching something wrapped in a blanket.

"Go on. Get out of here." From our right came up a fellow carrying a guitar case in one hand and waving the other one menacingly toward the woman. As he approached us, a smile spread across his face and he held out his hand. "Name's Peter. You guys look new to New Bologna." Glancing scornfully to the side, he added, "Not everyone appreciates our coal mining policy."

"What's that?" Karl was intently curious.

"We decided that mining coal was oppressive. Too dirty. Too dangerous. So, we proclaimed that no one who didn't find it immediately fulfilling should mine coal. So, of course, when the people who felt it was necessary showed up at the mines, they were too few for a shift and the mines shut down."

"That must have had an economic consequence or two," Karl mused.

"You can say that again," Peter confirmed. "No coal, no steel. No steel, no needles. No needles, no injections."

"You got from coal to needles in two weeks?" Karl was amazed.


"But, couldn't you take turns rather than eliminating necessary production?" Karl was disturbed.

"How can you mine coal for three months? It takes longer than that to get the hang of it."
"What I meant was..." Karl was twitching his full white beard. "...there's lots of work that's unpleasant or dangerous. Couldn't it be shared, with everyone doing some distasteful job for part of the year?"

"That's what she was saying," Peter glanced to his side.

"Who?" I wondered.

"The woman with the dead kid."

"What dead kid?" I still thought he wasn't coming across.

"Kid in a blanket. Needed injections for some sort of disease. She's been wandering all through town with that dead kid whining that she would have taken her turn mining coal. Must be a counterrevolutionary. She just don't appreciate freedom from control. You see, that's what's wrong with rotating work. You would need someone to coordinate it. A central directing authority to tell people when it was their turn."

"And that would be discipline," I was converted.

"Damned right it would be discipline," he shook his guitar case.

"And discipline has no place in New Bologna!" I exclaimed.

Delighted that I had gotten the point, Peter yelled, "Death before discipline!"

"Theory and practice united!" was my echo.

Our chain of thought was broken by several more pairs of people carrying stretchers between us. "Never did find out where those bodies are coming from," Karl mumbled.

"Probably the nursing home I used to work at," Peter let on.

"Oh, did you know Michael?" I asked.

"Of course. Great guy. A whole bunch of us left together when the revolution broke out."

"What happened to the patients when people left?" Karl was back to twitching his beard.

"Can't you see for yourself 'what happened'?" he motioned toward the new stream of body-laddened stretchers while swinging the guitar to his other shoulder.

"You mean you walked off and left them?" I was surprised.

"So, what's the difference between abandoning a coal mine and abandoning a nursing home?" Peter was indignant.

"For one thing, people die when you walk out of a nursing home." The words had barely come out of my mouth before I remerbered the woman with the lump in a blanket. "Okay, forget that one. But, coal mining is dirty and dangerous and people die from black lung and it's obvious that no one should order anyone else to mine coal."

Peter snorted. "You think changing bed pans isn't dirty? You think no one picks up diseases in hospitals and nursing homes?"

"Can't you rotate it?" Karl asked.

"Back to the same old authoritarianism," Peter shook his head in disgust. "From rotation to coordination to control to subordination. Listen folks, I get horribly depressed working with sick people. I may be weird; but, I tell you, if I had a choice, I would choose a coal mine over a nursing home any day. Now that they're closed, I would be MORE oppressed if I had to take my turn in a nursing home."

"Peter..." We turned around to see an old woman in a wheel chair pushing herself toward us. "Peter, is that you? Peter, everyone's gone. Could you change my I.V. for me?" A little bag connected by a long tube to her arm dangled above her head as she turned the wheels.
"Sorry, Mrs. Smith..." he folded his arms resolutely. "I am a totally free human being now."

"Peter, I think I have gangrene. Please help me."

Staring intently into her eyes, words he had secretly rehearsed a thousand times suddenly sprang forth, "Let no human being ask another to perform labor which he finds odious. Human freedom streams from labor that is its own reward. A person who submits to work that brings not instant fulfillment is tolerating exploitation."

"But, Peter..."

He shook his finger in her face. "When you tell me that I must help you, you are speaking the language of authoritarianism." With his arms slowly lifting and his face gazing to the heavens, he pontificated, "Let not one person's freedom be constrained by another's commandments. As I liberate myself from your requits, I strike a blow against the despotism of labor discipline."

"I don't think she's gonna discipline you, Peter," I said while pressing her eyelids shut. "I think she's dead."

He winked and threw his guitar on his shoulder. As he skipped down the road, we could hear him chanting, "Death before discipline! Unity of theory and practice!"

A crowd of people carrying guitars seemed to swallow him up and we jumped to a loud crash behind us. "More windshields?" Karl asked incredulously.

"Sorry guy; but, we gotta put 'em somewhere." One of the workmen stepped back. A red bandana went to his forehead.

"You know, you're the first people we've seen in New Bologna doing industrial work," I thought out loud.

"Oh, there's a lot of us. I just couldn't imagine sittin' 'round the house all day. Got to get out and do something with the guys before I can feel good. Some people can play guitars. But, the folks at this plant like to see what we've done at the end of the day."

"No doubt that you're accomplishing a lot," I let him know my feelings. "But, why don't you store these somewhere?"

"No place else to put 'em." His bandana went into a hip pocket. "Filled up the warehouse last week. You know, the revolution unleashed a tremendous creative energy within everyone at this plant. Right off, we started producing the most we could. Had always been making window panes. But, we felt like making windshields. So, the day after the revolution, we got some new machine tools and made windshields. Wanted to make as many as we could. We had half the warehouse filled up when they gave us the bad news."

"What was that?" Karl asked.

"Too thin. They would crack when you put 'em in. Their fault, though."

"Whose fault?" I didn't think our friend was perfectly clear.

"The Council of Councils. They asked us to make as many as we could. We did them the way we had done window panes. We didn't want any new bosses telling us how to do things, you see. Til we got word they were all breakin'. Anyway, they started using a different measurement. They wanted us to produce as many tons of windshields as soon as we could. No problem. We made 'em thicker. Lots thicker. Filled up the other half of the warehouse. Til we got the bad news."

"More bad news?" Karl was twitching his beard again.

"Too thick."

"Politics or windshields?" Karl couldn't help himself.
"Windshields, my friend. Windshields. So thick that the molding wouldn't fit. Screws wouldn't hold."

That seemed very odd to me. "Didn't you folks have anything like quality control?"

His right lower leg jerked forward spasmodically. "Control? Whaddaya mean, 'control'? You trying to discipline us with a whip?"

"I meant, didn't you get together with other councils to decide how to do things?"

"At that time, those windshields went to 12 different assembly plants, friend. And we have 15 different suppliers. Now, just when would we get our work done if we were holding meetings with those people all the time?"

"Well, then, what about the Council of Councils?" Karl was perplexed. "Can't they decide how thick the windshields should be?"

"We got real tired of them tellin' us what to do. It wasn't too long ago that they tried to tell us they had voted to produce glass for buses and trains. But, you see, the folks at this plant have an independent spirit. No one's gonna enslave us with the tyranny of inter-council discipline. We produce what we damned well please. And, we're damned proud of it."

What he said rung a chord somewhere deep inside. But, one little detail bothered me. "What about these windshields piled outside the warehouse? Are they the right thickness?"

"Of course they are. I told you that we make the best windshields anywhere."

I was still puzzled. "Then, why are they sitting here?"

"Oh, yeah. It's cause you can't fit auto windshields on buses and trains. Other plants are making buses and we're making windshields for cars. You see, it's the New Bolognian Way. If you want to make something, you do it. And, if you don't, you don't do it. But, if someone tries to tell you how you should or shouldn't do something, well, that's authoritarianism."


As they went off for another stack of windshields, Michael showed up, munching on a yogurt and soybean burger. "That looks like something," I said. "Where'd you pick it up?"

"Common storehouse," Michael replied through gulping mouthfuls.

"Somewhere nearby?" I wondered.

"Sure, there's some nearby. Of course, every place is a common storehouse. If you want something, you just take it. That's the New Bolognian Way. Say, you fellows look tired. Wanna come over to my place to rest a little?"

A few blocks later, we reached a two story frame house with toys cluttering the front porch. "How many kids you got?" I asked him.

"None that I know of." Michael was preoccupied with the door. "Seems locked. Let's go around back."

"Nice place," I felt I should compliment him. "How long you lived here?"

"Not long at all." He was still lost in thought. "H-m-m. Back door locked, too. Oh, let's try here." Michael reached over and pulled open a screen.

I tried to broaden my economic understanding as he slid through the window. "You don't keep records of what people consume?"

"Of course not," he shouted from inside. "That would be authoritarian." The back door swung open and our host continued, "Socialism means that everyone gets whatever they see. If something exists, you have as much right to it as anyone else."
No sooner had we draped ourselves across the couches than we heard the sound of keys in the front door lock. A man with two small children popped in. We stared at each other in amazement. "If you folks need a place to stay," he broke the silence, "you're welcome to share our house with us."

"It's my house, now!!" Michael roared.

"I'm sorry," the man stood firm, "but we've lived here for years."

A frown spread across Michael's face. "According to the New Bolognian Way, people are free to consume what they see. I see this house."

"Couldn't you settle this with a Neighborhood Coordinating Committee?" I stepped in between them.

"Absolutely not!" Michael clinched his fists in rage. "To coordinate is to control. No committee can enforce its decisions on me - that would be discipline and I believe in freedom." He calmed down without warning and put his arm around his antagonist. "Let's go in here and hash it out ourselves." As they walked into the next room, Michael reached behind and grabbed a monkey wrench.

The door closed and we heard a dull thud followed by a scream. Another dull thud. The man ran back with blood gushing from his face, got hold of the kids, and fled through the front door. "Guess you two disagreed," I said to Michael as he came back.

"Not at all. People never disagree in New Bologna. We smile and get along perfectly. You should have seen the beautiful smile on that man's face before he slipped and fell."

"Oh..." I was reassured. "Where's he off to now?"

"To find a house, I guess. I dunno. I don't control him. We're too free to know what each other are doing in New Bologna."

Karl left, but soon returned with soda for us all and a raw steak, which he gave to Michael. I noticed Michael's black eye for the first time and fell back on the couch. Then, the soda caught my attention. "Yech. I can't stand Root Beer. Pour it out!"

"Hey, that's wasteful," Karl objected.

"Whaddaya mean, 'wasteful'?" I retorted. "It's only soda."

"But it's the principle that's important," Michael peeked out from the steak. "No free person can tolerate the bigotry and narrowmindedness of enforcing a standard of consumption upon a person who does not accept that standard."

"Yeah," I chimmed in. "For one person to tell another what or how to consume is the most arrogant act of authoritarianism."

"Far beyond authoritarianism. It's despotism." Michael took the steak off his eye and flung it into the trash.

I looked up. "Mighty expensive piece of animal flesh to dump."

Michael pointed his finger straight at my nose. "Consumption exists in the eye of the consumer. I chose to consume that steak by placing it on my eye. In my judgement, I have completed its consumption. You have no right to enforce your judgement upon me..."

I think he could have gone on forever, but a brick smashed through the window and barely missed his head. The three of us dashed outside. No telling how those six motorcycles got there without our hearing them. A guy in front of each with a chain. She stood in front of the guys. Leather bra and G string. Spiked heels. A brick in one hand and a whip in the other. Her voice rang clear and crisp, "My name's Sweetweena and I consume houses."

"What kind of a nut..." Karl's voice was broken by Michael's hand over his mouth.
"Let me handle this one," Michael whispered. "Ahem. Now, do you comrades need this house to live in?"

"No, fool." She cracked her whip. "I said I CONSUME houses."

"Ah...ah, yes," Michael stammered. "Consumption is certainly an interesting word. Now, most of us think of 'consuming' a house as living in it. Just how do you 'consume' houses?"

"I put bricks through the windows. I use axes on the floors. Sledgehammers on the walls. And my friends help me with the grenades."

"Certainly. We were just leaving," Michael announced. "We wouldn't want to be authoritarian by imposing our definition of 'consumption' on you." He whispered to us, "Be pleasant. Disagreements are discipline and discipline is forbidden in New Bologna."

Karl was beside himself as we passed by Sweetweas. "But why in the world would you want to do anything like that?"

"It's prescribed by my psychiatrist," she smiled while remaining motionless. "He says that I have repressed urges that need existential realization."

Karl looked at me in bewilderment. I nodded, "Oh, yes. I work with psychiatrists all the time and that's no more bizarre than a lot of the things they recommend."

Leaving the smashing of glass behind us, Karl twitched his beard. "People never disagree in New Bologna? Why, that's quite unbelievable."

"It might seem that way. Realizing our trauma, Michael was being unusually sympathetic. "And, it might seem that people should figure out how to settle disagreements. But, that's just not the New Bolognian Way." He shook his head compassionately. "If we settled disagreements, some people would have to give in. But, going along with a decision you don't like would be discipline."

"Just like the horror of doing work you don't like," I added.

"Exactly." An aura of concentration permeated Michael's face as he unveiled his most profound social theory. "No minority should ever suffer the indignity or endure the humiliation of accepting something it disagrees with. So, we decided that we wouldn't disagree. Everyone always smiles at everyone else and we live each day in perfect socialist bliss."

Karl had been thinking to himself, but suddenly blurted, "So, no one can impose anything on anyone and if I did not accept your imposing that idea on me, then I would be an authoritarian?"

"You understand perfectly!" Michael leapt into the air. "It's the basic rule: YOU MUST AGREE THAT THERE IS NO DISCIPLINE IN NEW BOLOGNIA. And, you must smile as you accept the discipline of saying it." At that point, three buses stopped a few hundred yards away and 50 or so guitarists hopped out of each. As Michael rushed to join them, he yelled his final insight to us, "Disciplining people to have total agreement is the only way for a society to exist without discipline!"

Having seen more in one day than in the entire rest of my life, I had to sit down to absorb it. "Where am I? Exactly where is New Bologna?" These thoughts suddenly preoccupied me. I had almost forgotten that I never knew where Karl had driven us last night.

I said out loud, "Where is this place where people live without rules? With no self-discipline? Where there is no conflict and no disagreement? Where everyone does exactly as they please? Where they obtain instant gratification of every desire? Where people's desires perfectly match social needs so that no one ever coordinates production?"

My hands went to my head as I started to feel something inside my brain. It was there. Right there. Suddenly, it was as clear as crystal. New Bologna is not a particular place. New
Bologna is a state of consciousness so profound that it utterly transcends the limitations of time and space. Having left behind the vulgar revolution of social relationships on this planet, New Bologna has transmogrified its existence into the essence of the human mind, the only praxis of revolution.

New Bologna is whatever you want it to be. It can be a weapon to break the chains of the Twin Authoritarian Mind-enslavers called Common Sense and Logic. It can be taken as a pill to make the troubling world go away. It can be sliced and served on bread with relish and mustard. The Independent Socialist Republic of New Bologna can be anything to anyone at any time in any place.

Don Fitz / St. Louis MO / August, 1986

AND ANTI-UTOPIANISM

The written dialog between Comrades Don Fitz and Frank Girard ("Neo-Utopianism as a Flight from Responsibility" (D.B. 17 - D.F.) and "Neo-utopianism and Anti Neo-utopianism" (D.B. 18 - F.G.) has brought some very interesting analogies about topics such as "human nature"; "romantic and utopian notion held by Marx, De Leon," etc.; "armed conflict with the ruling class"; "failed attempts of the working class to abolish class exploitation"; "the nature of social convulsions"; "romantic to-the-barricades thinking"; "great mass social upheavals, when they come, are almost always accomplished with little violence"; "there is nothing ideal or inherently good in human nature or, for that matter, in the working class"; "It is at least possible that our society will simply abandon this industrial civilization"; "Com. Quirk--a fellow neo-utopian"; and "anti-neo-utopianism seem(s) to carry with it so many of the arguments...from reformists".

I would like to start by saying that theory cannot be separated from practice. Theory without being placed into practice is only the work of "arm-chair" revolutionaries who find themselves debating about abstract concepts, removed from concrete reality and objective analysis. However, on the other side, practice without concrete theory can only develop into a subjective, emotional series of responses which cause reliance on "spontaneity" and makes the individual(s)/movement subject to the elitist/vanguardist "leadership" which would arise to "provide guidance and direction to the struggle". The need for the integration of theory with practice provides one of the main challenges to the revolutionist socialist internationalist movement. Accordingly, clarification of our basic goals must serve as a starting point.

Our politics must be revolutionist, striving for a complete change and transformation in our political and social class relationships, a social(ist) revolution. Our economics must be socialist, realizing that we are social creatures, surviving only because of our ability as human beings to work together and therefore providing to us an understanding that the only
economic form which offers hope for the present and the future is socialism; based on people working together within the working class, those of us (the vast majority) who must sell ourselves and our labor power to the capitalists as slaves for the wages we are given as a partial compensation for the work which we do. Our perspectives must be internationalist, for as Daniel De Leon wrote, "as capitalism is international, so must socialism be".

Although we could discuss any of the areas brought up in the dialog about "utopianism", I would like to concentrate on three major points in the written debate which I view as especially important.

First, on page 14 of D.K., paragraph two, Com. F. Girard states "...great mass social upheavals, when they come, are almost always accomplished with very little violence." Examples given are "the Iranian Revolution and the overthrow of Marcos in the Philippines and Duvalier in Haiti. In all cases mass support was so overwhelming that military action by the ruling class was unthinkable."

As socialists, we seek to bring about the true development of civilization, based on cooperation and social harmony. We oppose the barbaric behavior found within capitalism and the rising militarism it advocates, which revolve around death and destruction. We are the true advocates of peace and social tranquility.

The examples given by Com. F. Girard of "mass social upheavals" "accomplished with very little violence" did not happen that way. A dominant social power in history has ever released power voluntarily. Individuals might be removed from specific positions of control within the system, but in the examples given (as with all others since its takeover of the world's economy) the capitalist system continues to function, and in fact, many of the same people continue to work within the "new" social order as they did in the old.

Specifically, after the Iranian "Revolution" (as now) most of the leaders of the military were the same people as employed by the Shah. The main Shi'a "religious" leaders (ayatollahs, mullahs, etc.) are the same as during the era of the Shah, although many (those not killed) have more control and "authority" than before. Following the takeover of the forces which placed the Ayatollah Khomeini in power, mass social purges/executions/murders were carried out against social dissidents, gays, minorities, and women's rights were suppressed. The "Revolutionary" Guards under the "Islamic Constitution" created and maintain a reign of terror. There was and is little peaceful action involved in the process, and the wealthy still remain wealthy, and the poor poorer. Violence was and is the course of the Iranian "Revolution".
In the Philippines, where the capitalist mass media hypes up the downfall of Ferdinand Marcos and speaks of the "democratic" administration of Corazon Aquino, there was no real change in the social situation. The rich, now "led" by Aquino are continuing to grow wealthier, the poor become poorer. The only reason that there was a change of faces within the "leadership" was because a "general Ramos, head of defense" and the military under Marcos switched support to Aquino, and now fulfills the same role in the "new" regime. There were no real "mass social upheavals" for changing the existing social relationships.

The situation in Haiti, one of the poorest countries in the world, is very similar to that of the Philippines. "Baby Doc" Duvalier (like Marcos) lost his position as President for life, but they both live in luxury wherever they are at. The generals and "civilians" who now run the show in Haiti are holdovers from the Duvalier regime. There were no "mass social upheavals" which led to social and economic change. Capitalism continues to function freely under the "protection" of the U.S. government and military.

It will only be under socialism that there will be the option of a peaceful and civilized transformation. As long as capitalism continues to exist, there can be no peaceful transformation, and even with the advent of socialism we have no guarantee of a peaceful transition, but only the ability to enforce the will of the working-class majority over the small capitalist minority and their military/police "enforcers". I question the need for Comrade Frank G. to ridicule what he calls "...the romantic to-the-barricades thinking". Maybe we will have "to organize a defense strong enough to defeat the bourgeoisie without laying the foundation for militarized socialism."

The second point that I would like to address is the concept of "human nature". This concept has been dealt with extensively in the Discussion Bulletin and by many revolutionary socialists (such as the excellent writing on the topic found in the literature of the World Socialist Movement - Socialist Party of Great Britain, Socialist Party of Canada, World Socialist Party (U.S.), and their international companion parties). I would, however, like to call into question the whole concept of "human nature" as being invalid. After spending over 10 years organizing and agitating among the social elements called by Karl Marx as the " Lumpen proletariat" (the declassed social element which is either perpetually unemployed or working only on short term, low-paying jobs), I have failed to find anything remotely resembling a "human nature". All I have found is learned social behavior. Whether in the U.S., Canada, Mexico, or any other place where I have been active in the social struggle between the workers and our oppressors, I have found no "human nature". Only learned social behavior.

The third and final area which I want to confront at this time is the concept of "neo-utopianism". Although Comrade
rank Girard speaks of "Marx, De Leon, and the rest of us neo-utopians" (including Comrade Adam Buick) in D.B. #18, I can find no usage by Marx, De Leon, Buick, etc. of the term "neo-utopian" in the "Manifesto of the Communist Party" Marx and Engels spoke of the "purely utopian character" of Utopian Socialists (Charles Fourier, Robert Owen, Etienne Cabet, etc.). The significance of Critical-Utopian Socialism and Communism bears an inverse relation to historical development in proportion as the modern class struggle develops and takes definite shape, this fantastic standing apart from the contest, these fantastic attacks on it, lose all practical value and all theoretical justification. Therefore, although the originators of these systems were, in many respects, revolutionary, their disciples have, in ever case, formed mere reactionary sects." "They still dream of experimental realisation of their social Utopias, of founding isolated 'Home Colonies'..." (pg. 3).

In "Socialism: From Utopia to Science" (from the "Anti-Duchringer") Frederick Engels traced the development of Socialism from the utopian planning of the predecessors of Marx and Engels to the scientific analysis of the founders of modern Socialism. He wrote of the "three great Utopians: (Henri) Saint-Simon, Fourier, and Owen" as being significant to "the middle-class movement" and reserving a place in the "ideal" society for capitalist entrepreneurs (pgs. 1, 4, and 5) and on page 10 that "[T]hese new social systems were foredoomed and literally the more completely they were worked out in detail, the more they could not avoid drifting off into pure phantasies."

As I state previously, I find no inference in the writings of either Daniel De Leon or Adam Buick/orld Socialist Movement that they considered (or consider) themselves as either "utopians" or "neo-utopians".

For a definition of "utopia" I would like to quote the two definitions cited in "The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language": (1) Any condition, place, or situation of social or political perfection. (2) Any idealistic goal or concept for social and political reform.

As Comrade V. Girard has historically established himself as an anti-reformist, I think we can rule out definition number two, which leads us to the "social or political perfection" of definition number one. As a Marxian-De Leonist, I base my perspectives on the dialectic materialism and historical materialism they (Marx, De Leon, etc.) advocated. Dialectical materialism is based on the conflict between the universal law of change and the forces which attempt to prevent change. Historical materialism is established within an objective analysis of the given social forces in any given historical period. Real history will not begin until Socialism has been established; human beings are not behaving as human beings so long as we are controlled by blind historical and economic
forces, ultimately of our own (i.e. of the working class) creation but unrecognized as such.

"Social or political perfection", as describing "utopia" above, are not obtainable within human capacity at the present time. To advocate "neo-utopianism" in this day and age, i.e. a "new utopianism", will, I think, place us on dangerous political ground and appears to be an abstract concept as described at the beginning of this article.

It is of my opinion that the politics of "utopianism" and perhaps "neo-utopianism" places us within a dangerous line of thought, and if carried very far into the abstract, could represent a great danger to the socialist movement as the traditional dangers like "opportunism", "reformism", "elitist vanguardism", and other politics which seek to compromise and/or deviate from the struggle for the self-emancipation of the working class.

Following the line of logic presented in the definition of "utopianism", we would make ourselves susceptible to the possible dangers outlined herein. The dangers of "standing apart from the contest", the degeneration into "mere reactionary sects", the dreaming of experimental realisation of the social Utopians" in "isolated Home Colonies," of becoming part of "the middle class movement" and abandoning our fellow members of the working class to their own fate, and of "drifting off into pure fantasies" as outlined by Comrades Marx and Engels are ever present when we begin involving "utopianism" of any variety in our planning. We must not separate our theory from the practice. We cannot not permit our isolation from the working class nor develop an attitude of having more knowledge and understanding than our fellow members of the working class.

We must strive for an understanding of what "utopianism" represents, and anti-utopianism.

Com. Tom Johncock
Workers' Democracy
Allendale, Michigan

Wildcat N°8

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C/o Raven Press, 75 Piccadilly, Manchester M1 2BU, England
Dear Comrades:

In the early days of DB, I contributed an article in which I expressed
the hope that fellow bulleted people would realize that experience has
shown that none of us are the sole possessors of Absolute Truth and
that we ought to consider actually evaluating the arguments of others.
Only a few, especially our editor Frank Girard, have shown evidence in
print that they actually do do this. Many others may well be, but a
considerable number have acted as embattled guardians of Holy Writ,
defending it against heretics and little concerned that historic
experience is daily laying waste to most of the Writ. For example,
contributions from Charlotte Benson of the SLP and almost everybody
from the SPGB/WSP reflect a weary "once again, I have to straighten
you people out" attitude. ("I see I'm going to have to go into more
details about the impracticability of the labour voucher system!":
Buick, DB 19.)

So when Don Fitz came along with his "Neo-Utopianism as a Flight from
Responsibility", pointing to the revolutionary emperors' nudity, and
actually exploring real-life problems in implementing socialism, I
stood up and cheered. Two issues later, I read Frank Girard's reply
and realized that not everyone was there cheering with me. In fact,
on reading his reply, I felt that I must have myopically overlooked a
sinister Leninist attack on third force socialism. Rereading Don has
convinced me that he is generally on target.

Frank too often applies a guilt-by-association technique: The problem
inherited from capitalism of dishonesty and selfishness in workers
is tarred as "capitalism's conventional...wisdom about human
nature..."; Frank asks why Don's arguments sound like those he hears
from reformers. And elsewhere, language used by Don is rewritten by
Frank to create instant abhorrence. E.g., the problem of developing
self-discipline is converted by Frank into a claim that Don calls for
whip-wielders; Don's criticism of the refusal to even think about
socialist militias becomes in Frank's eyes 'romantic to-the-barricades
thinking' and 'insurrections by elite/vanguardists'. Anti-neo-utopi-
ians aren't people who believe that real socialism is impossible. On
the contrary, it's worth working for. The question is, how do we get
there? Certainly not by ignoring history. Let's look at some of
Frank's objections.

1. How are insurrections/revolutions to be defended? I suspect that
every DB reader beyond the SPGB contingent recognizes the need for
some kind of force. I also suspect that most of us, including Don,
consider the idea of armed proletarian take-over absurd, in fact,
dangerous because of the need for secret elites. But Frank avoids
dealing with Don's examples of Spain, Poland and Chile among others
except to make the strange remark that they were convulsions "until a
self-appointed elite...placed itself at the head of the masses...".
Obviously, Frank has forgotten Don's examples and is thinking about
the so-called national liberation struggles, a total red herring here.
He would be hard put to identify the self-appointed elite that trans-
formed the Spanish and Polish "convulsions" into insurrections. Nor
in the Chilean for that matter; the brief councilist movement occurred
after Allende's murder. The examples that Frank and pacifists give
DISCUSSION BULLETIN
P.O. Box 1564, Grand Rapids, MI 49501

Report #21

January 1, 1987

Members of the DB Committee

Dear Comrades,

The extra eight pages in this issue costing about $30 and the annual non-profit mailing fee of $50 ate up a significant part of our surplus. It looks as if we have the resources to publish the next issue unless something else untoward happens. Since this large issue has eliminated most of the large bank of unpublished material we had after DB20 was published, we can probably avoid exceeding our 24-page format in the near future, especially since there seems to be little sentiment for publishing comparative platforms and statements of principles broached in Report #20. If possible, though, I would like to publish an annotated list of third-force periodicals, perhaps in installments.

CONTRIBUTIONS

From September 29 through December 31 we received the following donations: Glen Johnson $2; Ralph Goldstein $7; Ben Perry $2; R. Winslow $5; Harry Wade $20; Margaret Begovich $12; Monroe Prussack $10; Walter Petrovich $4; Charles C. Collins $2. Total $62. Also, Com. Chailinor's gift brought us $14 in book sales. Thank you, comrades.

FINANCES

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Fraternally submitted,

Frank Girard
for the DB Committee
are definitely worthy of consideration. Corrupt regimes were toppled in Iran, the Phillipines and Haiti rather peacefully while popular military activity was a minor factor in Iran, ineffectual in Phillipines and didn’t exist in Haiti. But these were class societies whose basic exploitative nature didn’t change. What if they had been attempts to establish socialism? Even De Leon admitted that the revolution might bring a few bloody noses. Can’t we even talk about the possibility that the workers councils while holding the means of production might need to use something more forceful than banners?

2. Human nature. All right, class society brings out the dark side of people (and not just the capitalists). Socialism lacks the forces that cause these anti-social inclinations which will be (eventually) eliminated. Most of us reject the “proletarian dictatorship” to make the transition and argue that socialism will not occur until a large number understand what needs to be done and act in their own interests. That’s fine except that a) less than the ideal number, provoked beyond endurance, may revolt before the theoretically ideal critical revolutionary mass has been generated, or b) any revolution created outside of a literate paradise will include lots of damaged people who will continue to act in an anti-social way, unconcerned with the harm this will cause what may be for a while an unstable situation. This is more of a problem in the late 20th century when modern technology puts enormous destruction in the hands of a few. Don gets trashed because we suggest we think about the problem. He does not say that “there is anything about human nature that renders us unfit for socialism.”

3. Leadership. Here we have a new field for semantic wrangling like “state/government”, “money/vouchers”, “exchange of goods/commodity nexus”, etc. Nowhere does Don imply the need for “labor discipline taught by revolutionary cadre during...the dictatorship of the proletariat” as Frank unfairly suggests. Don clearly is pointing out the obvious fact that some individuals are more articulate, have (apparently) a better understanding and may be better motivators. Such people may or may not be “leaders” in the sense that we usually use (and dislike) the term. To me, the effect that these people have on a movement looks like leading, but if the term cannot be used without confusion with manipulation then let’s find a better one. Don’s reference to the problem of the unequal distribution of such skills as writing is profound. I would also bring up the problem of working class illiteracy which may be as high as one third in this country. For years, we in the SLP distributed millions of leaflets written in inaccessible, polysyllabic jargon. Studies now show that huge numbers of workers wouldn’t have been able to read them even if they had been in Basic English. To be fair, the SLP did experiment with comic-type leaflets. Philadelphia Solidarity, at one time, and the Grand Rapids Discussion Group, more recently, have experimented with plainly written leaflets. But realistically, are leaflets the answer to address a substantially functionally illiterate working class? If the answer isn’t talking and writing to them, is it involving ourselves in some of their interests and activities. If so, how? If not, what?

And now a more positive note on those whom I have been trashing. The position that Frank and the SPGB are taking, that we should rethink
the nature and goal of modern production, while not new, is certainly positive. By reducing the scale of production as well as the nature of a lot of the junk presently turned out, we make more realistic the possibility that our necessary work time can both be reduced and converted to more pleasurable activity. Of course, if you want to reach the very outer limits of Neo-Utopianism, you need only consider the neo-Situationists whose program for the total elimination of work is carried out by exchanging manifestos in academese among themselves...  

Ben Perry

Dear Comrades,

The satire and two letters preceding this take me to task for an article, "Neo-Utopianism and Anti Neo-Utopianism," which appeared in DB18. In it I took Don Fitz to task for an article, "Neo-Utopianism as a Flight from Responsibility," which struck me as deviating from such tenants of the true faith of third force socialism as anti-reformism, rejection of the idea of leadership, and others. My criticism of Don's article came from a strongly held conviction that we must emphasize the differences that separate us from the social democrats and vanguardists, whom most of our fellow workers identify with socialism and revolution. Don's article, I thought, blurred the line that divides us from those who, in the name of socialism, would fasten on us a potentially more authoritarian form of capitalism.

However, I agree with critics that the article was seriously flawed. One flaw was the go-for-the-jugular polemical style I used. Readers who have come to associate me with sweetness, light, and the cream of ecumenism were properly shocked and disappointed. I could plead provocation -- but I think I'll just plead guilty instead.

The other serious flaw involved Don's point about "failed attempts by the working class to abolish class exploitation." I read his first two examples, the Paris Commune and the Russian Soviets of 1905 and then skinned the rest rather thoughtlessly. My point, based on the first two examples, was that Don's examples weren't valid. Certainly the Paris Commune and the 1905 Soviets were not efforts by class conscious workers to establish socialism; nor was the Polish Solidarity movement nor the Seattle General Strike or the Hungarian Revolution of 1956. These were uprisings ignited not by workers consciously wanting to destroy capitalism and build socialism but by other causes, although other examples he used may have involved aspirations to establish socialism. My mistake was in raising the irrelevant matter of leadership, a blunder that led Ben Perry to conclude that I had national liberation movements in mind.

All this, however, does not change the fact that these premature, isolated, and doomed insurrections can not be analyzed for object lessons on how a class conscious majority should go about building socialism in a world in which capitalist decay has become obvious to all.

In his letter Ben Perry suggests that Don was merely raising
questions designed to make us third force revolutionaries reexamine
the preconceptions, canned opinions, and untested assumptions we have
picked up in this movement and that accordingly my strong reaction was
uncalled for. I would argue that the tone of the article was that of
a person rejecting the old verities, not calling for a re-examination
of them.

Consider the matter of reform. Don condemns traditional third
forces (neo-utopians, as he calls us) for using our belief in "a
totally unreachable goal" as an excuse to avoid involvement in
"imperfect struggles." While Don and other supporters of such
imperfect struggles "have the difficulty of proposing real solutions
that some part of the working class might actually listen to." Perhaps
Ben is right, and for me to suggest that Don is calling for reforms is
presumptuous. But it would be interesting to know exactly what Don
means by "real solutions" and what problems these real solutions
solve. I have always believed that finding real solutions to the
system's problems within the framework of capitalism is the real
"unreachable goal."

I agree that Don's comment on leadership does create a semantic
problem. If Marx and DeLeon were leaders as Don says, then so were
Einstein and Freud. And just where do Gorbachev, Castro, and Daniel
Ortega fit in? As a third force socialist I have always identified
leadership with decision making and enforcing and have rejected the
concept as incompatible with socialism. But no socialist has ever
rejected the idea that some people are more talented writers or more
knowledgeable about politics than others and deserved to have their
ideas listened to and respected, just as talented piano players are
more likely to have their music listened to. But what has leadership
to do with that? Leadership as it is used in this movement implies
the power to direct.

My objection to Don Fitz's remarks on human nature centered on
his assertion that third forces accept the idea of "natural
goodness" in humankind as, he says, did Karl Marx. While this
assessment of Karl Marx is fashionable in academic circles, I think a
more accurate statement would be that Marxists reject the opposite
idea: that humans are inherently evil, the Christian theological view
that does unfit us for socialism. Don's belief that a socialist
society will have to struggle with "vestiges of domination" raises the
questions of just who will decide what behavior is anti-social, with
whom would the struggle be carried on, and how would it be carried on.
At the risk of being accused of using guilt by association techniques,
I'd like to point out that vanguardists, when pushed to the wall on
the matter of the need for a dictatorship of the proletariat, will
cite the after-effects of capitalist mores on the human mind as a
reason.

I don't think that socialists of our persuasion have ever said
that the socialist revolution will usher in a paradise in which we
would all behave as angels, as Don implied in his article. What we do
believe is that much if not all anti-social behavior is either caused
by or exacerbated by the psychological stresses created by life in a
competitive, class divided society. In another connection, Ben should
read the final comment on human nature in my article. I neither stated nor implied that Don said human nature unfitted our species for socialism. But no offense taken; I can speak from personal experience on how easy it is to read something into an opponent's argument.

The use of force by our class in a period of revolutionary change has been debated among Third force socialists for generations. It was the question of organizing armed contingents in the late 1870s that precipitated the first major split in the Socialist Labor Party: the late 1870s when Parsons, Spies, Schwab, and others left the SLP on their way to martyrdom for the Haymarket Affair. The question of force is, of course; no one can predict the amount of force needed to oust the ruling class from their positions of power as owners of social wealth.

Certain groups like the SLP and the Socialist Party of Great Britain (SPGB), committed to the idea of a majority revolution complete with a count at the polls, have traditionally downplayed the idea of force, "the midwife of revolution." While not rejecting the idea entirely, the SLP saw little need for force beyond that workers might use in their industrial unions when occupying the industries. Other groups, those with a strong anarchist influence, assumed that force would be necessary and at times in their history seemed to welcome it, using violence as an agitational tactic.

I don't think that any of us believes that a revolution is likely to be non-violent, but many of us would agree with the SLP/De Leonist view that to advocate violence, to organize militias, and to raise the possibility of violence now is to invite repression. De Leon argued that for a revolutionary party to advocate force was to turn it into a conspiracy and forever at the mercy of the provocateur and the police. I've never seen anything that would lead me to believe that our class needs any advice from us on when to use force. To this we might add that a working class capable of effecting a revolution doesn't need our advice on how to protect it.

While flattered to be right up there with Marx at the head of Don Fitz's satire, I find answering it impossible. Satires depend on distortion and exaggeration to create their effect. The only effective answer is another satire, something I lack the talent to write.

Frank Girard

COMING SOON

Although not strictly speaking a Discussion Bulletin matter, the impending visit to the U.S. of one of our British DB subscribers seems worthy of mention. Steve Coleman, a third-force socialist, active member of the Socialist Party Of Great Britain, and one of the authors of NON-MARKET SOCIALISM IN THE NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURIES, reviewed in DB17, will be attending an academic diversion here in late March and will tour the country during the first three weeks in April taking part in forums, lectures, and debates. Persons interested in arranging meetings for him in their localities should contact Aaron Feldman, Rt. 4, Box 169, Louisa, VA 23093.
Dear Comrades,

Bill Shalalis of the "Socialist Party has sent me the copies of the Bulletin taking up the "Third Way / Third Camp" issue. I am fascinated.

At Mute's invitation I had gone from Los Angeles to Chicago in 1953, drafting the statement that came out of that conference, and holding to a Third Camp position then - and now. Your history seems (I've not read it with necessary care yet) to not include the founding of the International Confederation for Disarmament and Peace in 1961, in which I was active from 1966 on - which dissolved into the International Peace Bureau (of which at the moment I'm one of a number of Vice Presidents).

The ID lacks the clarity of Mute's vision - but it covers a wide range of groups, including Yugoslavia and Japan and I think A.J. would be happy with it.

I'd looked for the uncut version of a long piece I'd done - "Closer to Midnight" - but only find a somewhat cut one (I doubt if you are born a thing except my excess of words) and an earlier piece, now fading but again with a third camp position.

Fraternally

[Signature]

David McNaney
(Chair, War Resisters International)

Dear friends,

I am sure that all of us have followed the "Iran-gate" scandal. Let us not sit back in self-satisfied smugness, and say, "That's capitalist government, 'business as usual.'" Reagan and his cronies in the National Security Council and the CIA have shown fascist enthusiasm to trample upon the Constitution and democratic process.

Daniel DeLeon was quick to acknowledge that the first American Revolution was a progressive step away from monarchy. I believe that he would be an active opponent of modern day fascism and war.

If Ronald Reagan, Ed Meese, et al have their way, they will make no fine distinctions between socialists, communists, anarchists, social democrats, etc. Neither will nuclear wipe-out. World War III will mean the end of the human race.

Let each of us speak out for peace. We know that the working class loses in every war. Let's speak for democracy. Better still, let's tell how fellow workers that socialism opens the door to peace and democracy.

For the common good,

TIM MILLS
1221 Whitney Blvd.
Belvidere, IL 61008
COMMUNISM IS NOT A POLITICAL PROGRAMME

Many articles in the IB look like propositions of better ways to manage the capitalist world we live in. For us, communism (we don’t like to much the word “socialism”) is not a programme of a series of measures which one opposes in a competitive way to others programmes which exist in society, and which one tries to make victorious either by persuasion or by force of arms or... by parliamentary methods!

Therefore, to be in favor of communism cannot mean aspiring to capture the State and to substitute a new power which would be a just, fair power, the reasonable rational power of the communists (or socialists) — or of those using the name of communism — in contrast to the unjust power of the bourgeoisie. We do not work for the triumph of a new programme, that is for the triumph of politics, because the triumph of politics and with it the triumph of the State have already been realised before our very eyes — by the capitalism. If a communist revolution takes place, it will be the reverse and not the result of this tendency which has taken place under the domination of the capitalist class.

For this reason, we cannot use, when describing communism, the terms democracy and dictatorship, which we think are judicial, legal forms, legal definitions which have been associated with different forms of state power and which we do not think are adequate for describing communism. In fact, in the societies which we have known, democracy, like dictatorship, has suited the need to maintain a certain social cohesion where this cohesion could not exist by itself, either by coercion, ie dictatorship, or by the idealisation of representation where there is a certain harmony between the classes, as in democracy. These forms of dictatorial or democratic organisation have suited societies which, through their own development, have broken the traditional and personal bonds which had existed previously between groups and individuals.

Compared to that, communism does not represent the outcome of one of these tendencies, but the manifestation of other relations between people, generally called the human community. Therefore, the communist revolution cannot be from the outset, the imposition of false relations between people, whether by democratic or dictatorial measures, but can only be the founding act of this human community. To believe that it is necessary, to arrive at this human community, to reconstitute in a democratic or despotic fashion a fictitious human community, even temporarily, which would replace the fictitious communities which we have already known, would be to establish from the outset this communist movement on the negation of its dynamic: the constitution of new human relationships.

In comradeship

M. Emo

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Comrades and Fellow-workers

In re James M'Nal's charge of distortion against me (D8#20)
I can only suggest that he calms down sufficiently to re-read my words (D4#19). He should pay more than his usual attention to the 4th paragraph, beginning on p.29, and the 5th paragraph, beginning on p.30. He may possibly come to the realization that his accusation is baseless. At least I hope so.

What to me is significant, however, is the fact that he apparently knows better than to challenge me—as I pleaded with him to do—"to put up or shut up" in regard to my own charge that the SLP, during all but all of the existence of the USSR, defended class-divided society. In fact, I have thus far received but two responses to that challenge, one of which asked for copies of articles without specifically challenging my accusation and the other merely re-asserting his DeLeonist faith aided, as he claimed, by the gist of my letter! But how can anybody question my allegation—anyone, that is, who has even a minimum knowledge of the history of the SLP since 1917? The "smoking gun" has been apparent throughout the bulk of that period of time; and, in fact, even prior to the Bolshevik Revolution DeLeonism showed disregard for the need to concentrate on class consciousness rather than sectional recognition in its message to the working class.

Since the re-making of the SLP philosophy by Daniel DeLeon and his adherents, around 1905, the basic position has been that no "pure and simple" political socialist party can effectuate the Revolution; that there must exist, along with the party, an industrial union organization to back up the ballot with economic force (because the ballot is, after all, "as weak as a woman's tears"—a sentiment attributed to DeLeon) and to organize and carry on the business of the new society.

Just how far from new this SLP-envisioned order would be becomes evident when one notes that the DeLeonists always seemed to regard the parties of Social Democracy as "pure and simple" political socialist parties rather than pure and simple parties of capitalist reform. In the Socialist Standard for March, 1915, for example, there is a lengthy editorial-article examining and dissecting an official SLP of America letter addressed to "the Affiliated Parties of the International Socialist Bureau." Although the SLP had never been a member of that organization (the British Labour Party was its representative in Great Britain), the SLPA had sent them a copy of the letter.

The crux of the SLPA argument was that had the "Socialist" parties of Europe paid heed to the DeLeonist message on the need for industrial union organization the continent would not have been in the mess that existed in 1915, with the various member parties supporting their national governments in the slaughter of World War I. (!)

The gist of the SLPA response was simple. The SLPA did not seem to realize (as DeLeonists do not comprehend today either) that organizing workers on the basis of individual industries is really dividing rather than uniting them; that an ec-
onomic organization is, to be sure, important and even essential but it should be based upon class rather than on sectional-industrial interests. It ought to be apparent that when workers in the millions are ripe for socialism that the labor union membership will be top-heavy with such socialist-minded workers.

In any case, the SLP was always wrong (as are the various DeLeonic splinter groups) in regarding parties such as the (now defunct) Socialist Party of America, the British Labour Party, and the rest of Social Democracy as "pure and simple" socialist political parties rather than parties of capitalist reform. In fact, the SLP went so far as to attempt the consummation of unity with the S.P. of A., participating in a conference with that organization in N.Y. City on Jan. 6 & 7, 1917. The delegates for the S.P.A. were Louis B. Boudin, Geo. H. Coebel, Chas. W. Maurer, James O'Neal and Samuel Beardsley. The SLP delegates: Arthur E. Reimer, Rudolph Katz, Boris Reinstein, Caleb Harrison and Arnold Petersen. (This information is gained from The Socialist Standard (SFGB) of March 1917 in an article written by Adolph Kohn, an SFGB member, in the U.S. at that time, on the IWW from the British military as were many of his comrades. Kohn got his facts for the article from The Weekly People of Jan. 13, 1917).

At the unity conference there was an agreement on the question of aims and reform policies but the attempt at unification failed because of the refusal of the S.P.A. delegates to accept the SLP's economic program. In The Weekly People editorial referred to above, the SLP claimed that the rock upon which the Unity Conference went to pieces was industrial unionism. There can be no more conclusive evidence than that to prove that the SLP's concept of a socialist society was (and still is) not fundamentally different from that of the parties of social democracy. Were the governments of Britain (under Labour), present day Greece, France (prior to the last election in that country) etc. made up of representatives from SLP-approved industrial unions rather than from geographical areas, those nations would be regarded by the SLP as socialist.

Poppypock? A fabrication of Harmo's? I seem to anticipate reaction from some loyal DeLeonists. Well, let us go to the Soviet Union for an illustration of that sort of "thinking" by the SLP. During the period of World War II the SLP berated Stalin for "betraying" the Revolution. Would this not seem to indicate (1) that the SLP regards the Bolshevik Revolution as a genuine socialist upheaval and (2) that the SLP really believes that a socialist revolution can be brought about without a majority of class conscious workers in the population understanding and approving the basics of socialism? In other words, does this not underscore the fact that the SLP (and the splinter groups) are believers in "vanguardism" as are the Bolsheviks in all of their varied factions? Otherwise, how could they declare the Revolution as "betrayed"?

Socialists, to be sure, seem to be aware that something is rotten in the state of the Soviet Union and are beginning to regard that land as an example of DeLeon's "Industrial Feudalism" (see letter by Monroe Prussack in DB #20) rather than to decide that it is long past high time to begin calling a spade a spade. The problem here is that there is a disregard for the important,
basic features that serve to define a society—features such as the predominant social relationships among the members of the population. In the USSR, the preponderant relationships are those of wage labor and capital which can signify but one intelligent conclusion—the USSR is capitalist. But there is something almost ludicrous about DeLeon and many of his disciples making use of the phrase "industrial feudalism." That is a perfect example of an oxymoron—a conjunction of contradictory terms. It is as incongruous to label the USSR "Industrial Feudalism" as it would be to call it "Capitalist Socialism." To link the term feudalism with industrial—a word denoting the very antithesis of feudalism—makes utterly no sense unless, of course, one can change—by fiat—the meaning of the word feudalism as the Bolsheviks of the USSR did in the case of the word socialism.

Finally, allow me to point out that in my opinion the contributors to DB are, for the most part, taking themselves too seriously. The working class today, whether in America, western capitalism generally, or wherever one looks, are not even aware of the existence of "third force socialism." For those who write in DB to be arguing over the proper way to organize production, etc., after the Revolution is more than a little premature. All that we can predict, with any degree of probability, is that once that there is a solid majority of class conscious socialists in the population, and that the awareness of its existence has been made manifest to the capitalist class, the era of class societies will come to an end in short order. Naturally, those who have operated the industries will continue to do so but in the interests of the entire population rather than the benefit of private, corporate, or state owners and/or state bureaucrats. Even the need for labor unions—of any variety or designation—will vanish. The only worthwhile task for socialists today is to make more socialists—and good ones. The capitalist system should prove, in the long run, to be a powerful ally if Marx's Materialist conception of History makes sense. 

Harry Morrison ("Harmo")

**Some Perceptions**

Although there has been times when I, too, have sensed "frittering away writings in the LB, the stimulation of my thought-process by the contents and organization of our media's collage of news, discussions, arguments, debates and innuendos, has challenged my brain to a keener analysis of the social question and seek to more effective means to it's resolution and the revolution. So long as we constantly are critical of our efforts in this forum, so long shall it "serve" it's "limited purpose".

Because so many workers are religion-oriented, I think that the use of "right" and "left" to identify political and economic arenas is non-productive of socialist comprehension. "Christian" scripture relegates the "left" to hell-fire and the "right" to might. Since "democracy" has perpetuated it's Greek ruling class tradition, can't we delete it from socialist vocabulary? Even "socialism" has been corrupted enough to preclude it's use; everybody-ism, everyone-incorporation, control and management, our-inc.,...... could evolve into other terminologies.

"Building the new society within the shell of the old" can mean educating workers to
think about the contradictions in politics and business which appear in the daily media. Other terminologies for "surplus value" (differentiating wealth, loot), "class struggle" (we vs. They, Us or Them), 'top o' the mornin' to you and the rest of the day to meself', what would we do without good lawyers? them that can't shafting them that can, one or few of us is as wise as all of us).

The qualitative and quantitative agitational-educational work of scientific socialists could condition spontaneous worker reactions to revolutionary provocation: repressions by the economic royalists; hence, 'keeping the faith' means (for me) coping with the doubts about the effectiveness of my efforts to 'enlighten' my co-workers (my family, especially) and their capability of comprehension- in other words, hang in there!

Since theory and practice are complementary in the context of persistent dialectics scientific socialists can build on the experiences of prior comrades and use the maps they bequested to us as reference points.

The "legality" of the Constitution of the U.S.A. is ruling-class-oriented and protected; so, I think that amendment clause of that dictatorial document precludes capitalist tolerance of socialist revolution. Madison's 'concurrence' about latter-day concentration of wealth could be construed as a warning (F.D.R.'s "Reform or . . .") to the elite few to monitor "legality" to better deceive the working class about "democracy". Although the Reagagte illegality is front-burner-1986 socialist-workers can remind non-socialist workers of the rape of the native Americans and the coup d'etat at the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia in 1787.

While I think that the S.I.U. concept of the logical procedure for the creation of an industrial Republic doesn't have much running room anymore, I, also, see enough space for us to work for it (I'm in one of my pacific moods at this writing...and probably most rational.) Incidentally, early in my experience as a scientific socialist I was warned by an oldie not to indulge in "hero worship" or fetishism. He, oldie, observed that the idea of the S.I.U. plan grew out of the experiences and debates of many comrades and thar it's communication and preservation for us was the result of the collective work of many. Like other scientific socialists, then and now, I think that the political vote is a dead-end for socialism and that the industrial ballot-vote by the industrial working class at the workplaces is the most logical reorganizational procedure. I think, that if we flat-out reject that premise for any reason, we have been coopted by the crafty ruling class. They want us to be as violent as they are so that they justify brutalizing us and the scientific socialist movement.

Voting where you work does register with some workers, not necessarily with socialist definition. When I was on the active labor rank, my co-workers lamented their lack of vote or voice in the decision-making at their workplaces, legible, at times, to clue them about that discrimination and how they could junk that dictatorship. Because history confirms the unilateral control of and the manipulation by the super-rich and their captive politicians, socialists should consider the educational tactic of informing working people of that history and urging them to vote for socialism by NOT voting for capitalist politicians. I can recall being labeled, "another politician" by another worker from whom I was soliciting his signature for ballot qualification. I think that the energy and long greenness at the political hustings at this late date, for socialist education, is illogical and non-productive of working class enlightenment.

There is the aspect in the "central directing authority"for base image of #O designates or appoints that individual(s), in the context of the few-rule society the U.S.A.'s
are mandated by the capitalists. Conversely, in the social milieu of the Socialist Industrial Republic the O.L.A. concept must necessarily be controlled by and responsive to discipline and direction of everyone involved. Supervisors become coordinators.

I agree with Comrade Girard that the teachers in our schools "could run things" better, academically, than the school board-hired administrator management formula. I hope that he would concur that such a boon for the educational industry could only happen in the collective of all of the other educational workers, the students and their working class parents. Again I invite Ed participants to seriously debate the desirability of expending more of our educational and agitational energies on the educational industry. Worthy of mention is the unusual working class ownership of much of the physical properties in this industry. Comrade Orange's "Economic Basis of Education" and the SLP leaflet, "Capitalist Crisis in the Schools" could be resource material for the arguments.

Glen Johnson

Dear Comrades,

Richard Aubach (BS 49) is quite mistaken in concluding that the answer to the question "if society abolishes money, and people simply take goods from the available stock, how to decide what to produce?" is that "the only way anything could be produced in a communist society would be if the whole of society makes a collective decision to produce it".

Anybody who argues that what is to be produced in communist (or socialist, the same thing) society will be decided "by majority vote of the society" just hasn't thought seriously about the problem. When this issue was discussed in the SGB in Britain a few years ago, the Guildford SGB branch made the following points:

"Let us see what is meant by this, that in socialism there will be deliberate conscious direction of world production as a whole by the democratically organised world population as a whole. It means, quite literally, that if the citizens of socialist Guildford wished to build an extra public convenience in the town, the citizens of socialist Singapore may object. Indeed they may persuade the citizens of socialist Sydney that this was a scandalous waste of resources, that the existing provision of 7.3 loo per capita was entirely adequate for our needs. But it hardly stops here. What if Singapore wanted to build another public convenience or a new car park or to revitalise its flailing bus service. Would the Guildford delegates at the World Conference, in league with ours, rise up to vote against the inclusion of such items in the next 5 year plan? Even if they didn't, even if all was sweetness and harmony, how could such a centralised decision-making body remotely find the time to consider, let alone adequately, such detailed proposals in such enormous numbers necessary to the running of a complex modern world? We may chuckle at such nonsense, comrades, but we cannot afford the luxury of complacently dismissing it from our mind, for it is precisely in this bluntly literal fashion that some of our opponents interpret our objective".

Keith Sorel is no doubt quite capable of defending his self but this also seems to be how Richard Aubach has interpreted his ideas. The Guildford SGB branch went on to conclude:
"...we maintain that the concept of 'central planning' as outlined would be utterly incompatable with socialism. If socialist society is to be a democratic society then the implementation of a world plan must involve the democratic participation of the world's population. No individual can possibly acquaint herself with anything more than the tiniest fraction of the huge volume of information upon which decisions have to be based in drafting the plan. Consequently the vast bulk of the decisions would be made by the 'central administrative body'. The existence of a 'single organising will' would inevitably mean a 'command economy', if not by choice then by necessity. The rigid implementation of a 'world plan', since it cannot 'break variation', is either authoritarian or impossible. It cannot be made compatible with the socialist proposal that needs should be self-determined and labour freely offered. In the name of democratic control, it would destroy democratic control. Here it to be insisted upon it would make a mockery of free access and voluntary co-operation; the former would be perverted into an insidious rationing, the latter into a form of administrative coercion'.

So what then is the alternative? Another contribution to this debate within the SGB, submitted as a draft for a pamphlet on socialism as a practical alternative, argued for "a self-adjusting system of production for use" which "would operate with the communication of needs, expressed as required quantities of materials and goods":

"Socialism will remove every value/cost/price factor which is involved in production, and will therefore do away with the use of money... socialism will relate productive activity directly to needs. Production for use will begin with direct co-operation between producers and end with the direct supply of the goods produced to the members of the community for whose needs they have been produced...

With production solely for need the cost/price factors will be completely removed from production and this will leave only one factor being communicated between the various arts of production, which will then deal solely with the ordering and supplying of materials and goods as a direct response to needs. Needs would arise in local communities, expressed as required quantities of machinery, equipment, building materials, and the whole range of foods and consumption goods. These gramme, kilos, tonnes, litres, metres, cubic metres, etc, of required materials and goods would then be communicated throughout the distributive and productive network.
Throughout the structure of production and distribution each art could adjust to the communication of these required quantities. The position of each work unit would be indicated. A low demand in relation to accumulated stocks would indicate a reduction of production, and conversely a high demand in relation to low stocks would indicate increased production".

In view of the complexity of the existing productive network which has regional and world as well as local ramifications, in broad terms this is the only way that production for use could operate. The idea of drawing up a binding production plan, even if
this was accepted by "majority vote", is quite impractical. Individuals and local communities must be left to decide their own needs to which the productive and distributive network must be allowed to respond in a flexible way. As such a system would function more or less automatically, the sort of "collective decision" by "the whole of society" as to what to produce which Richard Aubach mentions, would only be necessary when major policy decisions were required.

--Adam Buick, 71 rue Gambetta, 77480 Torigny, France, ureau.

[Earlier installments of the following informal historical sketch of the Socialist Labor Party were published in DBs 2, 4, 7, and 9. A related study, "The 1969-70 Split" by Ben Perry appeared in DBs 10, 11, 13, and 14. For the benefit of more recent readers not familiar with American third force politics, the SLP was and is the largest U.S. political party advocating non-market, third force socialism. Founded in 1873, it rejected the revisionism of the Second International, splitting with reformists and pure and simple unionists in its ranks around the turn of the century. Under the aegis of Daniel De Leon it developed a program of political syndicalism which it carried into the Industrial Workers of the World, in whose founding it took a major part. Its revolutionary socialist industrial union program has always differentiated it sharply from the various social democratic and Leninist denominations. Its major flaw has been the destabilizing effect of a tradition of authoritarian leadership, very much at odds with its democratic pretensions.]

THE SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY REVISITED (cont'd)

From 1969 to 1970 a rapid sequence of events shook the party. The Bulgarian and South Slav Federations folded, National Secretary Arnold Petersen retired after 55 years in office and the National Editor of nearly 30 years, Eric Hass, refused to seek office again. He was a casualty of the 1967-70 split/disruption, to whom must be added another 50 or so members, most of them young and enthusiastic, the members who would have been the next generation of SLP DeLeonists.

Nathan Karp, groomed by Petersen, succeeded him in office as planned. John Timm, Hass's assistant for many years, was elected National Editor, and the party continued on its traditional course, producing the Weekly People, distributing leaflets, gathering signatures to get on the ballot, carrying on as before, its internal organizational and social life, not visibly affected by the ferment created by the Vietnam War.

By 1972 the National Secretary could report to the Twenty-Eighth National Convention that the disruption of 1967-70 had had no lasting effect on the party and even take some comfort in the internal problems plaguing the disruptors, some of whom had complained in their publications about the lack of democracy in their new organization, Socialist Reconstruction. He also took the occasion to fire a couple
of barbs at Eric Hass, who had gotten a job editing a periodical for the famed Trinity Church in Manhattan.

The repercussions had indeed ended by 1972, except for the sour taste in many mouths. The more vocal and visible dissidents had resigned, dropped out, or been expelled. The disaffected, having watched the dissenting groups unravel, remained in the SLP resolved to make the best of it. But the best was not very good. Membership continued to dwindle, as it had for years. By splitting with its own youth/activist element and turning its back on the anti-war protests and demonstrations, the SLP ensured that it would not gain the increment of members that multiplied the numbers of the Socialist Workers Party and created the Marxist-Leninist sects. Nor could the party take comfort in the quality and amount of its own work. In his report to the 1972 Convention Karp complained that in the four years since 1968 (when Eric Hass had left) the party had not published a single new pamphlet or leaflet.

But the real problem was the Weekly People. John Timm, editorial assistant for most of the thirty years of Hass's editorship, suffered from two serious handicaps. One was a lack of help—the endemic national office "help problem" became even more acute at this time. In fact, for five years, 1968-73, Timm almost singlehandedly wrote and edited a weekly socialist newspaper almost twice the size of the current People. The second handicap was his inadequacy as writer when compared to Hass. At best he was a plodder who manufactured socialist news articles from the events of the day. They were sufficient unto the moment but nothing more. He was also partial to long tendentious headlines, rather like the titles of Maoist pamphlets.

The problem came to a head two weeks before the 1973 National Executive Committee Session was to convene in May. National Secretary Nathan Karp in his usual warm humane way and with no previous warning, handed National Editor John Timm a 67-page report attacking Timm's competency both as a writer and a Marxist. This he would be presenting to the NEC and the party at the forthcoming session. The attack, complete with multiple examples and profuse documentation, utterly destroyed any possibility of Timm's continuing as National Editor and was so perceived by him. He wrote a short report defending himself but did not attend the session. Then, like Eric Hass, he "deserted his post," leaving under a cloud, as had all his predecessors since DeLeon. He was the Socialist Labor Party's last National Editor.

The incident exemplifies perfectly the extent of Karp's sensitivity to the feelings of others. Although he was warned by the Section New York organizer, he apparently never really expected Timm to leave. Later he would describe his panic when he realized that he would have to get out the next issue of the Weekly People instead of sitting in his office leisurely writing a 67-page brief for the prosecution of Timm. Pressing Mary Jane Grohs and Robert Bills, his two NO assistants into service, he managed to produce the next issue, at the same time—one would gather from the 1976 Convention Proceedings—gaining some insight into the conditions under which Timm had labored. The emergency became a continuing nightmare in which all
Finally forced to do some high-pressure recruiting, he went outside the party for his younger son, Stanley, a newly hatched English teacher and a non-member of the party at the time. Dick Bell, a member and also a school teacher came from Denver to work in the editorial office. They became the nucleus of the "editorial staff," a sort of collective, which replaced the elected National Editor called for by the party's constitution.

The New Dispensation

At this point a transformation took place in the mind and soul of Nathan Karp comparable to the conversion of St. Paul on the road to Damascus. Perhaps some day the details will be revealed, but circumstantial evidence would suggest that it was rooted in the dark days shortly after the departure of Timm. Whatever the cause, it had enormous consequences for the party and its traditional positions, tactics, and procedures. Basic to this transformation was the conclusion Karp had come to about the condition of the party. He presented it at the 1976 Convention as the alternative reasons a revolutionary party goes into a sustained decline as the SLP clearly had:

"A revolutionary party, such as ours can experience a profound decline for several reasons:
1) It is viciously repressed and damaged by its class enemies, 2) It passes through a non-revolutionary period when the class whose interests it represents cannot be expected to respond sufficiently to ensure its survival. 3) It adopts, and fails to correct, methods of theoretical and practical work which destroy its effectiveness.

"We believe the third reason comes closest to explaining our current situation. It is also our conviction that the sole method by which a revolutionary party corrects its mistakes is to engage in self criticism and collective correction of errors."

This report, delivered to the convention in the strongest, most emphatic language and tones possible, went on to castigate both the membership and the NEC for their failure to respond to NO initiatives to re-examine their and the party's tactics in the light of contemporary conditions and events. Essentially Karp was demanding that this party of old timers—median age over 65—repudiate not just the tactics of the past, but—by implication—the leaders of the past including Arnold Petersen and the second exclusion, the George Taylors, Aaron Oranges, Herb Steiners, and Joseph Pirincich along with many of the doctrinal points they had come to regard as revealed truth.

The Move to Palo Alto

Another result of the crisis of 1973 was the decision to scrap the idea of a party press in the physical sense of the term and to move the National Office. The former decision was forced on the party by economic considerations. It could no longer support the cost of its outdated printing plant. As to the latter decision, the belief
persistence in the party that Karp and his staff proposed the move to
escape the New York stronghold of the Petersen loyalists, who manned
the NEC Subcommittee and would always be in a tactical position to
pull the plug on the revitalization of the party. But actually the
proposal to move away from New York—although not to Palo Alto—was
prepared for the 1973 NEC Session before the Timm had left.

Rumblings of Revolt

Karp dealt with rebellion, when it appeared, with an iron hand.
It came first from Section St. Louis in May 1975 in the form of a
complaint that in an editorial, "Vietnam Victory," the Weekly People
had supported the Vietnam national liberation movement in
contravention of the Party's position that such movements were
inherently non-progressive.

Using his personal prestige as the inheritor of Petersen's mantle
and his undeniable gifts in verbal combat along with some plausible
arguments, Karp defended the editorial staff at the May 1975 NEC
Session against these allegations by Section St. Louis; first, that
the editorial misrepresented the party's position that third world
liberation movements were not progressive since world domination by
the two super powers ensured that a third world nation's liberation
from one imperialist master must be followed by its capture by--or
voluntary economic submission to--the other, and secondly that by
speaking of the victory of the Vietnamese people, the Weekly People
was blurring class lines. Asserting that the editorial did not change
the party's position, the NEC unanimously endorsed it, opening the
gate to vastly increased coverage of--and unfortunately, rather
non-critical support for--such movements worldwide with special
emphasis on Africa.

In a far-reaching act the 1978 National Convention resolved that
the "convention acknowledges that a significant change in the party's
analysis of present conditions has indeed occurred;" and that this
results from "an improved application of Marxist analysis;" The
resolution made possible a high speed development in the positions
and tactics the party had held for generations. Usually these were
signaled by changes in editorial positions which brought predictably
negative reactions from the membership, the spell of Karpite arguments
(Cont'd on p. 2)