

Newsletter of

# THE DEMOCRATIC LEFT

April 1977—Vol. V, No. 4



Edited by MICHAEL HARRINGTON

## DSOC convention: breakthroughs and continuity

by BONNIE POTTER

An assertion two years ago at DSOC's second convention that the next phase of our activity would lead us into the mainstream of American political life would have been met with skepticism and outright disbelief. But this year when National Chair Mike Harrington boldly proclaimed that we were readying "that long and difficult mark to the center of the most anti-socialist nation in the world," the 125 delegates accepted it as a perfectly reasonable proposition.

And why not? Listening to Michigan Congressman John Conyers speak about the need for "us" to make socialism acceptable to the majority of citizens, acknowledging greetings from major international unions like the Machinists, the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers, the United Auto Workers and AFSCME, the convention-goers could rightly feel, if not in the American political mainstream, at least not very far from it. And the delegates might have taken stock of the significant accomplishments already achieved; in that light, the new "breakthroughs" Harrington proposed were not so outrageous after all.

In three short years, we have managed to survive and to grow, in itself an accomplishment given the collapse of so many organizations and tendencies all over the political spectrum. We helped define the agenda for liberalism, for the entire democratic Left after the war in Vietnam. We've posed and worked for economic and structural alternatives for the 1970s and 1980s. We established the minimal socialist presence we sought and have gained credibility in the labor movement, the feminist and minority communities and within the Democratic party.

In fact, we've been so successful, that our success, as National Secretary Jack Clark and a stream of other convention speakers noted, poses new problems. We're becoming big enough to attract attention; we're starting to establish that critical mass we saw the need for from the start. With all the advantages, that may also bring attacks from our political opponents. Three years ago, one might have responded, "we should only have such problems." Now, as Irving Howe warned, "we finally have a socialist organization worth fighting over."

### **New situation, new strategies**

But as Mike Harrington and others made clear throughout the convention, the political climate in

which we work is changing. Most obviously, there's now a Democratic President, a President we helped elect. So, attacks on Administration policy are not so simple. We're not in opposition to Carter. Rather, with our allies in the broad democratic Left community, we seek to help the Administration carry out the progressive platform of 1976. And if Carter won't accept our helping hand in that effort, Harrington quipped, we'll push him into fulfilling his campaign promises.

There are deeper differences, though. The whole democratic Left community in which we function is in flux. Mike Harrington's speech (which was printed in last month's NEWSLETTER) focused on the emerging

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## *Ouch!, OWEC and limits of 'populism'*

by MICHAEL HARRINGTON

Two recent developments, OWEC and OUCH!, indicate how the Carter Administration's economic policy operates most carefully within the limits of corporate capitalism.

Forget the neo-Populist rhetoric of the campaign. We're now into the serious business of governing and keeping the rich happy. And since the rich were for Ford and his impeccably reactionary policies, a Carter Administration has to make special efforts. Not that Jimmy can catch up with Jerry as a coddler of the wealthy—that's nearly impossible—but since he can't he must try harder. So must we. Now more than ever we need a mobilization of the democratic Left to salvage the promises of the 1976 campaign.

OWEC should be the acronym of a new organization being established by Secretary of Agriculture, Bob Bergland: the Organization of Wheat Exporting Countries. The United States and Canada have effective oligopoly control of that commodity, with 75 percent of the world's production. So Bergland proposes that the two nations get together to rig prices to suit their purposes. One function of that move, he told the press, would be to "shave off the peaks and valleys" of wheat prices and thus to stabilize income and profits.

*(Continued on page 6)*

# The rule of the market and other city crisis myths

by JIM CHAPIN

In early March, New York City staggered through another round of the continuing fiscal crisis, and once again averted default at the eleventh hour. The activity was in some ways repetitious, and Russell Baker suggested in the *Times* that it was boring. My own reaction was different. In general, crises lay bare the structures of a society, the habits of thought and action. As bankers proposed solutions and labor leaders and politicians reacted, we saw roles played out as though they were assigned. In fact, the crisis of the cities illustrates only some of the larger structures exposed by the larger crises of capitalism. (Let me hedge the bet a little. Capitalism is in crisis according to everyone from the business community to the radical Left. I'll be able to tell you whether that perception is correct or not in ten years or so. Everyone has been wrong before.)

Consider the hidden assumptions which are exposed, and the new tendencies from the short-run crisis of the city and the longer-run crisis of the system:

The **New York bankers** submitted a plan for re-financing the city. The plan included a quasi-permanent review board that would in essence control all aspects of city life for an indefinite future—in effect, ending democratic government in the city. When queried as to the purpose of this plan, one banker responded, "It is not us that's imposing these conditions. It's the market."

Ancient kings used to say that they were enacting God's will, not their own; 20th century dictators have said that they were acting as the agents of History; now our rulers tell us that they are the living expressions of the invisible hand. All these rhetorical defenses have a common purpose: to separate human action from human will. If it is our belief that humans are the subjects and not the objects of history, we must dismiss such excuses.

Indeed, one crucial task for radicals in the recurring crises is to expose the personal and political power that determines so many of our choices. The people will suffer, if not gladly at least they'll suffer, at the hands of an impersonal and impervious market. We're all less likely to tolerate cutbacks and suffering imposed by the decisions of a few big investors or even by the necessity of the banks' recovering one of their many bad loans. Sure, there are choices to be made—that's what crises are all about. But the talk of the "market" mystifies what the choices are. It implies, like all the other rationalizations listed above, that the choices are limited by forces larger than ourselves, forces we can not begin to reckon with. In this case, they're simply not.

The bankers overreached, and were quickly reduced to explaining that the tough wording of their proposal was drafted by lawyers, not themselves, and that the entire proposal was subject to negotiation. (How could the principles of the invisible hand be negotiated? Well, no matter.) But the end of the story is yet to come—

one of the bankers was quoted as saying that in the end the federal government would impose the same condition. He was quite likely right.

But where were the **labor leaders**? They resisted the bankers' plan well enough (thus far following Christopher Jencks' suggestion "The Left program, for the most part, consists of stop! That is good advice, but like most four letter words, will only carry you so far.") but had little more to say. One labor leader said, "The unions have no plan. There is a city plan and a bankers' plan, but no union plan." Another said, "Our plan is survival." Is this the final end of "pragmatic unionism"? The irony is that short-sighted unionism leaves the unions unable even to carry out what are supposed to be the guiding purposes of bread-and-butter unionism—protection of members' jobs and working conditions. The definition of the problems is left to the bankers and the media; and so are the solutions. The labor leaders try to be respectable in the eyes of the "public" (ie. the editorial writers) and fail. And they have no plan.

Bishop Berkeley's expression seems apt here: "Whatever the world thinks, he who hath not much meditated upon God, the human mind, and the *sum-mum bonum* may possibly make a thriving earthworm, but will most indubitably make a sorry patriot and a sorry statesman." In secular terms, those who say that they are concerned only with "immediate practicality" rather than the larger philosophical questions of the proper organization of society will not now make even thriving earthworms—simply hungry ones.

So we turn to the politicians. Given that the bankers have plans and the unions do not, it is not surprising that our public officials lean toward the former, even allowing for their natural (in our society) desire to do so. The nature of politicians, after all, is that they must do something about a crisis, and they tend to follow the lead of those who advocate some program.

There are a number of conflicting tendencies in the air. But the dominant political style of the moment is what might be called **the Carter-Brown (or mystery)**

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Michael Harrington, *Editor*  
Jack Clark, *Managing Editor*

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**style.** Are these politicians like Mike Dukakis and Hugh Carey, President Carter and Jerry Brown, Left or Right? No one knows. The truth, of course, is that they are *both*.

To understand what these men are doing, it is worth looking back at the poll results of early 1976, cited in an article by Jack Clark in this NEWSLETTER just a year ago. The Democratic primary electorate was revealed to be "reasonably united on full employment, social services and government action against business" but deeply split over "foreign policy, race and the environment."

The Carter-Brown strategy is "Left" on issues that split the Democrats — in appointments, in foreign policy, on the environment, even on race, "Right" (and from our point of view wrong) on issues that unite the Democrats. These newer politicians take a Republican position on budget cutting, health insurance, social welfare and full employment, while favoring McGovernites over Jacksonites within the Democratic Party.

This style buys off the leadership of the most active and most Left elements in the Democratic Party—the people who can beat you in a primary. (If 1972 and 1976 demonstrated anything, it was that the Coalition for a Democratic Majority/Scoop Jackson forces in the party are ineffectual in what they themselves proclaim as the "real America" — the electoral arena.) The liberal activists can feel that they have influence on the administration and their intra-party enemies do not (e.g. Henry Jackson already has clearly become the leading opponent of the Carter Administration) and since the activist core of the McGovernite wing of the party is "upper-middle-class" (like all other activist corps in this very class-bound society)—the economic issues do not strike them very deep.

In fact, of course, even those who attack the "new class" and its domination of the scene are as much (or more) a part of the class they attack—they are ensconced in leading universities, in foundations, and in the editorial rooms of the leading journals. Daniel Patrick Moynihan won his primary and general elections with the support of both the *New York Times* and the *Daily News*, ran up his highest percentage in Manhattan on the East Side, and ran farthest ahead of Carter anywhere in the city in the same "silk-stocking" district—the 66th A.D. He has spent his life commuting between the Harvard payroll and the top echelon of government. I don't think we have to take his self-identification with the working masses any more seriously than the similar identification of the "radical chic" element in the sixties. If Meany depends upon "conservative chic" allies like this, he's in for trouble.

A second key aspect of what we might call the "newer politics" movement of the seventies is **anti-politics**. Some on the Left mistakenly welcome this mood. They are misled: an anti-politics mood is a conservative mood. Cynicism leads to the Right, not to the Left. After all, we stand for the belief that allocation of resources through a democratic (read *political*) method is better than allocation through the market mechanism. The logical result of anti-politics is the dictator or the "hero" who rules through stylistic

media-oriented gestures rather than as a representative. Particularly for the lower classes of society, the political party remains the only mechanism yet invented by which great numbers of people can exert control on their leaders. An individualistic politics, oriented to the personalities of the candidates rather than their principles *prevents* any sustained popular movement for social change, and substitutes an *economic* (selling the candidate) for a *political* model.

Another aspect of the politics of the seventies is the **New Sectionalism**. This goes hand in hand with a great deal of talk of "returning power to the local community." The combination is deadly. States and localities compete for business, and the judges of the competition are the great corporations. One can already see a politics of almost infinite social regress developing from this. (And the multinationals don't have to limit themselves to choosing South Carolina over California—they can, and do, choose South Korea or even East Germany. After all, the working class understands its place better there.) A politics of "localism" and reducing federal power that does not limit the corporations simply leaves each local unit at the mercy of the great institutions that can give or withhold prosperity at their will (but we are back at the start here—*there is no will*, it is the *market* and not the corporate leaders who choose. The corporate leaders tell us so. Ah! What sins are committed in the name of the mobility of capital. The Invisible Hand requires even more human sacrifice than the ancient gods did. But the economists

Take militant liberalism and democratic socialism—shake well—and what do you get?

### **Socialism and Liberalism: Articles of Conciliation?**

by Irving Howe

Every reflective liberal (and undogmatic socialist) will want to read this comprehensive and provocative essay, featured in the Winter/1977 issue of:

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—our modern-day priests of Mammon—persevere. A few more sacrifices of once-thriving economies and the people who worked in them will surely be rewarded with prosperity. Won't they?)

The Left should not be trapped into playing this new game. Sectionalism is, like ethnic politics, a *substitute* for class politics. Capitalism can buy off leaders, but not masses; so individual women, blacks, Italian-Americans, or even gays can be promoted. But making more Italian-Americans, blacks, females, and gays, in any combination, corporate presidents should not be our goal. We want to abolish corporate power, not make it more representative. Similarly we should not identify ourselves as the last defenders of a decaying liberal infra-structure in one part of the country. The Socialism of Debs found its greatest strength in the "colonial" areas of the pre-1920 economy—the Pacific Northwest, the Mountain States, Oklahoma, etc. Since then, however, the Left's greatest strength has been in the Northern urban areas. But defending these areas should not become our purpose in life.

Yes, we support New York City, but not *against* the Sun Belt. Too often, sectional analyses end up preaching that everyone south of the Mason-Dixon line is some sort of corporate Fascist (common themes of fantasy — Kevin Phillips, Kirkpatrick Sale, Stanley Kramer — intersect here). The Left must argue that class, not location, is our concern. Texas oil millionaires are no worse than the Rockefellers, just different. (St. Jerome is supposed to have said, "Not all rich men are thieves. Some are the *grandsons* of thieves.")

The "Sun Belt" mythology somehow obscures not only the class nature of the politics of the South, but also lumps together wildly different social orders—for example Texas, California, and Georgia. The Southeast is *not* oversubsidized by the federal government and remains the poorest area of the country; California, which *is* oversubsidized and is one of the richest areas of the country, now suffers problems of a mature economy making it more like the Northeast, and so on.

It seems to be the nature of a media-dominated capitalist society that we have to combat new falsehoods every year. It has been suggested that we democratic socialists are the true conservatives of the age—we want to conserve what is best in the past, and not subject every action to the all-devouring principle of the market. There may be some truth in this. It may, after all, be the age of Old Realities and New Myths. □

## DSOC convention . . .

(Continued from page 1)

split; on the one side there are the liberals in retreat. They tell us that we have to aspire less, trust the market more and look toward traditional conservative budget-slashing. But within the liberal community, especially in the trade unions, among minorities and feminists, there is a counter-tendency. Increasing numbers of social and political activists and intellectuals are willing to discuss structural changes. Charles Schultze may be convincing many liberals that full employment can not be achieved within the current

limits of American welfare state capitalism. For some, that's a reason to call retreat; for others it's a reason to think about the ways we can transcend those limits.

The theme came up again and again. Vic Gotbaum, the leader of the largest municipal employees' union in New York City, told the convention that he expected money-grubbing, reactionary bankers to act like money-grubbing, reactionary bankers. "My problem," Gotbaum said, "is with our friends." And he ticked off the names of the alleged liberals who not only failed to help New York but actually joined the attack on union workers, the public health system and welfare recipients. Governor Carey slashed taxes and state spending while the city and the state were in dire need of new revenue; Senators Stevenson and Proxmire issued blasts reminiscent of William Simon condemning the city. Conyers condemned the liberals' retreat on full employment and called for a nation-wide mobilization to force members of Congress back to supporting jobs.

And when the convention debated and adopted the DSOC agenda for the coming period, we again addressed ourselves to the divisions in the democratic Left. The omnibus resolution on DSOC activities submitted by Jack Clark reaffirmed the tone of Mike Harrington's keynote address. "As socialists, we believe that our society must begin to overcome domination by the corporate rich. As political activists and thinkers,

### ***DSOC makes the news***

One thing that most socialist organizations rarely get enough of is press coverage. Fortunately, the press was out in force at our national convention.

The Chicago *Sun-Times* ran two articles about us. A story which appeared over the United Press International wires was picked up by the New York *Times* for its Around the Nation section. In New Orleans, the *Times Picayune* printed a similar article on February 25, 1977.

The pencil press was not the only media there. Radio stations throughout the country broadcast short items about our gathering. A friend from Mississippi reports that he heard a news story about the convention on his car radio. What he might have heard were interviews from Chicago with Mike Harrington, Ralph Helstein, Irving Howe, and Jack Clark. The people in Chicago were able to watch a report of the convention proceedings on the PBS-TV station there or the NBC affiliate.

More in-depth reporting came from Henry Fairlie's report for the *New Republic* in the March 5 issue. The Dow Jones publication, *The National Observer*, ran a feature article about the organization in its March 5 issue. Also, the new independent socialist weekly, *In These Times*, carried a two-page spread on the convention in its March 2-8 issue.

we know that the mass response to the corporations' power is unlikely to assume an explicitly socialist character. We continue as partisans of the democratic Left fully aware of the need for that Left to embrace our socialist politics." In Harrington's earlier words, "we must frankly say that we believe that the democratic Left must sooner or later—the sooner the better—move to a full socialist position." And the applause barometer jumped when Harrington called for a "new deck" instead of a "new deal."

The content of the new action program calls for continuing many of DSOC's past activities but with some significant changes:

- We will continue activity along the lines of our successful Democracy '76 project, and our demands will remain full employment planning, redistribution of wealth and income and increasing democratic control over investment decisions. As with the Democracy '76 project, we'll begin with a major Washington conference (in late October or early November). But this time, we'll be asking more participation from friendly groups and organizations on both the local and the national levels. From the conference will emerge a specific program centered around our demands.

- Full employment (and the related Democracy '76 issues) will become *the* focus of DSOC activities this year. The National Board will produce materials, set up coordinating committees of active feminists, minority group members, trade unionists, students and community organizers interested in full employment. Locals are being asked to relate their day-to-day work to the demands of the full employment agenda.

- There will be increased attention to problems of socialist education both through the task force on educational policy that the convention directed the Board to establish and through two membership conferences devoted to thorough discussion of socialist ideas.

- The organization reconfirmed its commitment to work within the Socialist International to which we recently won admission. On that point, it's significant to note that greetings from sister parties were carried to our convention in person by delegates from the Canadian New Democratic Party, the Socialist Party of Japan and the Social Democratic Party of Finland. In addition, greetings were read from the Portuguese, French, British and Swedish parties as well as a telegram signed by Bernt Carlsson and Willy Brandt, secretary and president of the Socialist International.

It was the first time DSOC had debated and adopted a program of activities. In itself that was a major step forward. As Clark put it, we knew two years ago and three years ago that the organization was too fragile to withstand such a debate; at that time the organizational agenda was just survival. Now we've moved to the point of discussing and debating what we can accomplish working together.

There were other firsts at this convention, too. The beginning of our international affairs and foreign policy discussions was a Sunday night panel jointly led by Bogdan Denitch, Nancy Lieber and Mike Harrington. That discussion, too, will be continued and deepened,

and the convention again directed the Board to establish committees to work on different aspects of foreign policy and report to the next convention.

Perhaps the most significant first was picked up by a British-born observer. "The good nature was remarkable," wrote Henry Fairlie in the March 5 *New Republic*, "and anyone who has ever known the sectarianism of Socialist groups, in Europe or America, must be a little amazed by it."

The "good nature" began Friday night with Liz McPike analyzing the new situation under Carter: "We're not where we should be or where we will be, but thankfully we're not where we used to be." And Jim Farmer telling us that now there are new chances

## Resources for organizing

During workshop and caucus sessions of the convention a number of projects were launched. Here are a few of the developments:

**SOCIALIST WOMAN**—an occasional newsletter has resumed publication under the editorship of Jone Johnson.

For more details write: SOCIALIST WOMAN  
P.O. Box 59422  
Chicago, Illinois 60659

**GRASS ROOTS**—a new newsletter aimed at exactly what the title implies. This quarterly is priced at \$1 per year for DSOC members and \$5 for all others.

For more details write: Greg Schirm  
402 West Union Street  
W. Chester, Pa. 19380

**REGIONAL NEWSLETTERS**—Many sections of the country are fortunate to have their own newsletter in addition to this publication. Below is a list of the socialist newsletters available:

**ILLINOIS SOCIALIST**

P.O. Box 59422

Chicago, Illinois 60659

**THE YANKEE RADICAL**

27 School Street

Boston, Massachusetts 02108

**THE CALIFORNIA DEMOCRATIC  
SOCIALIST**

332 Monte Vista

Oakland, California 94611

**THE TEXAS DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST**

Houston DSOC

P.O. Box 7296

Houston, Texas 77008

**YOUTH CAUCUS**—Under Cynthia Ward the caucus is engaged in youth organizing and campus work. A summer youth conference is being planned. For more information write:

Cynthia Ward

DSOC

853 Broadway

Room 617

New York, New York 10003

to forge a progressive alliance including blacks and whites. Most of all that Friday night we were moved deeply by Irving Howe's reflection on the socialist vision—a vision of human action and possibility. On Saturday and Sunday we moved through the business sessions and the workshops and the organization debate, finishing up with elections for the new National Board, in which several people withdrew with the result that the Board, with a strong affirmative action slate, was elected unanimously.

With the convention over, it's appropriate to recall the deadline suggested by National Vice Chair Ruth Jordan. "When I was a child," she told the convention, "my grandfather predicted there would be a socialist America in the year 2000. Time is running out. What are we waiting for?" □

## OUCH! . . .

(Continued from page 1)

That is, of course, one of the central demands of the Group of 77, the caucus of Third World countries which are fighting for a "new international economic order." The problem is that, even as the United States asserts that such a policy is right for its own wheat producers, it rejects the idea of a Common Fund to establish buffer stocks which would protect the poor nations from the "peaks and valleys" of their commodity prices. C. Fred Bergsten, the State Department's expert on such matters, rejected the idea when it came from Gamani Corya, the Secretary General of UNCTAD. So did Treasury Secretary Michael Blumenthal.

All this took place as Carter named Robert Strauss to be his trade negotiator. This wheeler-dealer politician, an intimate of Texas oil, will be in charge of a critical aspect of north-south relations.

And just in case you might think that Bergland's OWEC—which is being floated with the knowledge, but without the direct endorsement, of the President—is a device for helping poor farmers in this country, it is well to reflect upon the structure of our export market in wheat. It is dominated by five huge firms which control 85 percent of grain shipments. Cargill, which has 25 percent of the total all for itself, would be the twenty-seventh largest corporation in the United States if it were listed on the Big Board, outranking Bethlehem Steel and Lockheed. Cargill, not so incidentally, is currently under attack in the courts where it is charged that it did, among other things, "embezzle, steal, take away and conceal by fraud with intent to convert to their own use" grains bought by India.

In addition to OWEC, we now have OUCH!

OUCH!, readers of the NEWSLETTER will remember, was the headline on one of those Chase Manhattan Bank ads of more than a year ago which sought to prove that, since the very future of the nation was menaced by a capital shortage, there should be new tax expenditures on behalf of the corporations and the corporate rich. The "capital shortage" was discovered by the New York Stock Exchange in 1974, and then pushed by Chase and General Electric. Among other functions, it helped to rationalize the outrageous profits which the

oil companies made out of the OPEC embargo of 1973-1974. It turned out that Exxon *et al.* did not want all that treasure in order to get richer—heaven forbid—but only to serve the interests of the consumers.

There were a number of problems with this theory, the most notable being that none of its predictions

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## Capital quotes

Letter to *Nation's Business*, January 1977

James J. Kilpatrick's article, "Dishonesty: A National Sickness" (November), reflects a serious problem that we face.

There are two aspects to the problem. One is the increase in such violent crimes as murder, assault, rape and robbery. The other is an increase in laws that make alleged criminals out of individuals who are trying to retain what is rightfully theirs.

Mr. Kilpatrick mistakenly combines those two categories when he talks about dishonesty.

It is dishonest when someone deprives another of what is rightfully his. It is not dishonest when one tries to keep what he has earned.

The real criminals are those in government who file a claim on others' earnings and extract money from them through taxation and with the threat of punishment for nonpayment.

Also real criminals are those who go on welfare, those who take food stamps, and government workers who do not earn their salaries.

The only way the problem of dishonesty will be solved is to establish the correct concept of property rights by drastically reducing government interference in the lives of individuals. ” ”

George A. Chapman  
President, Chapman Company  
Salt Lake City, Utah

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worked out. For a time the *Wall Street Journal* was leaning on the panic button, crying that huge federal deficits and borrowing by states and cities would "crowd out" private investors in financial markets. This scenario imagined the very doom of capitalism coming from private borrowers using up all the available and future credit and leaving the private entrepreneurs high and dry. It simply did not happen that way. In fact, private companies refused to swim in the ocean of liquidity available to them. Capital and credit were not short; they were and are in embarrassing abundance. The private borrowers simply did not use the credit markets. Moreover, serious studies—from the Department of Commerce, the Council of Economic Advisors and the Brookings Institution, among others—documented that this capital shortage crisis did not exist.

But then the argument never really did turn on whether there was a real capital shortage. For the OUCH! program was quite specific and practical: a legislated increase in subsidies for big business through

## Sometimes, the record is wrong

In late February, the newspapers were filled with reports of foreign leaders having taken money from the CIA. One of those named prominently was Willy Brandt, now president of the Socialist International. The accusation spread widely and was included in the pages of the *New York Times*.

The retraction to that story never received quite as much attention. On February 25, both the *Washington Post* and the *New York Daily News* revealed that President Carter had sent a telegram to Brandt apologizing for what he called "groundless accusations."

In part, Carter's telegram stated, "I, too, am deeply disturbed and deplore the reckless allegations concerning you that are appearing in our press. I can well understand your outrage that this canard continues to appear. . . . I am comforted by the fact that your outstanding reputation as a statesman and a leader cannot be affected by unsubstantiated rumors."

The *New York Times* never ran Carter's apology.

A generally accurate report in the March 6 *Times* on a rally of more than 1500 people in honor of recently-released Soviet dissident Vladimir Bukovsky

contained one factual error. That error, corrected a week later, attributed remarks about Lenin as an advocate of human rights to Michael Harrington when in fact Trotskyist Ralph Schoenman raised that point.

The story accurately reported that Harrington was jeered for the pro-socialist content of his remarks. Fine, that is news and should be reported. But the incidents at the rally can feed an unfortunate, and at times malevolent, bias that all this concern for human rights under Communist regimes is really reactionary. As a general proposition, that's not true (indeed, Bill Buckley is now getting uncomfortable with Carter's human rights offensive; why, if the dissidents win their civil liberties that might soften opposition to Communism!) In this specific case the disruption came from a very small section of the audience, and in fact, Harrington's pro-socialist remarks and his condemnation of human rights violations in Chile and Iran won prolonged applause. More assent than disruption greeted his remark that the struggle for democracy in the Soviet Union is the struggle for socialism. □

investment tax credits, the end of "double taxation" of dividends in the corporate and individual income tax, accelerated depreciation, and so on. The advocates of this giveaway never lingered over the fact that capital is *already* the recipient of tens of billions of tax privileges which are denied working people. They talked with moral fervor which ignored the fact that they were already stealing the Treasury blind.

During the first week of March, the OUCH! school got significant support from the Carter Administration. Michael Blumenthal's appearance at a New York forum set up by executives of Coca Cola, Dupont, Peabody and Lehman Brothers was heralded by advance stories promising that he would give businessmen everything they wanted. He lived up to the leaks. He asked for the "counsel" of the corporate elite. He came out strongly in favor of an investment tax credit and promised to take a friendly look at the rest of the package of legalized larceny pushed by the corporations. Even the traders on the floor of the Stock Exchange—often among the more obtuse citizens of the society—got the message: the Dow Jones average went up by more than 6½ points in response.

Later on Blumenthal and Schultze went over to Capitol Hill to lobby the Congress. The investment tax credit, they said, was crucial to reviving business confidence. Blumenthal remarked, "When you take this element out, what you seem to be saying is that you don't want the investment, and that is not a desirable thing."

All of this should not surprise anyone who understands that control of the investment process gives private corporations the effective power to blackmail government into observing their priorities. That has

been going on at least since the railroads got the lion's share of the benefits of the Homestead Act of 1860. But there is some room for maneuver within that general rule even if an Administration does not attack the very structure of injustice which it codifies. And what is significant in this development is that a Jimmy Carter, who talked of tax outrages during the campaign, seems to be getting ready to perpetrate a new one. That does not call for some ultra-Left idiocy to the effect that Carter is "no better than Ford," which is patently absurd. It does demand a democratic Left mobilization. Our slogan might be, OUCH! □

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# Jimmy Higgins reports . . .

**EVERYTHING'S RIGHT AT THE TIMES**—Last fall, "Punch" Sulzberger set out to prove A. J. Liebling's famous expression, "Freedom of the press is guaranteed only to those who own a press." When the editorial board of the *Times*, headed by his cousin John Oakes, refused to endorse a candidate in the New York Senatorial primary, Sulzberger took matters into his own hands, and himself wrote an editorial endorsing Daniel Moynihan. Oakes protested, and after some dispute, readers of the *Times* were treated to the unusual spectacle of a letter to the editor from the editor, disagreeing with his own paper's endorsement (Sulzberger apparently refused to publish Oakes' full letter, which endorsed Bella Abzug and attacked Moynihan).

Sulzberger abruptly replaced Oakes with Max Frankel, known as "Attila the Hun." At the same time, almost all the members of the old board were forcibly replaced. The new recruits were so far to the right that several liberals invited to serve on the board declined because of their prospective company. To give one example: the editor formerly in charge of the paper's local endorsements was James Brown, a decent liberal who had resigned his previous position because of his opposition to the Vietnam War. Now seekers after local endorsement have to go to Roger Starr, who became notorious during an undistinguished stint as Housing Commissioner under Mayor Beame by advocating "planned shrinkage" of services in the ghettos. For a sample of Starr's views one may see his recent violent attack on Norman Thomas in the book review section of *Commentary*. Most of the new members of the board seem to be associated with *Commentary* or the *New Leader* and include some leading defenders of our presumably imperiled capitalist system, such as the author who writes under the pseudonym "Adam Smith." There will be no problem in the future for Moynihan in getting endorsements; one may suspect that he will be the left wing rather than the right wing of *Times* pets. And those who want to read a left-wing paper in NYC may turn to the improving and ever more moderate *Daily News*.

**REAL SECURITY**—While conservative and hawkish forces on Capitol Hill rallied loudly against President Carter's nomination of Paul Warnke as the nation's top arms negotiator, the appointment of Samuel Hun-

tington as consultant to the National Security Council went through almost unnoticed. Huntington is noted for his formulation of the "forced draft urbanization" thesis which the Pentagon used to justify the bombings of North Vietnam and for his more recent controversial writings on the viability of democracy. Harvey Mansfield, who chairs the Government Department at Harvard, expressed his regret over the appointment, but Mansfield is ready to sacrifice for the higher good. "We're going to miss him sorely in the Government Department," Mansfield said, "but I think the U.S. needs him more to defend this country against the left wing of the Democratic Party."

**MISSISSIPPI IS DECRIMINALIZING MARIJUANA** and "with amnesty given and abortions legal, McGovern's platform is now nearly complete." Both the information and the quote are from Alan Baron's biweekly newsletter, *The Baron Report*. Like other Washington insider newsletter writers, Baron tries to probe behind the headlines and into the office infighting in the Carter Administration, in the labor movement and (his specialty) around the Democratic National Committee. Unlike too many of the other news sheets, *The Baron Report* is well-written, witty and genuinely well-informed. Baron has a network of political contacts and friends built up over many years of activity in reform Democratic circles. Through his work as a one-person clearinghouse for reformers fighting to maintain the liberal delegate selection rules up to and through the 1974 Mid-Term Convention, Baron solidified contacts with feminists, minority activists and reformers in a number of states. So his insider and little-known news extends far beyond the banks of the Potomac. And in the work leading up to that 1974 convention, Baron established relations with the leaders and political operatives of liberal unions siding with the reformers. So his reporting on labor movement intrigue is far better-informed than that of, say, A. H. Raskin. Baron reads and researches well and writes short insightful essays (his piece on Samuel Huntington was probably his best yet). *The Baron Report* is available for \$37.50/year from 1156 15th Street, N.W., Washington D.C. 20005.

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