

## The jobless: their problem is ours

by MICHAEL HARRINGTON

The main fact of life today for the unions is the outrageously high rate of unemployment which is still (on the official understated scale) around 7 percent. The defenders of the status quo are trying to pretty up that ugly number by pointing out that there are more employed Americans than ever before. Unionists with jobs might buy that argument, thinking that the fate of the jobless is of no concern to them.

But the very existence of such a large reservoir of the unemployed tends to hold back the wages of the employed, to put the unions in a defensive position. Thus workers on the job have a self-interest in seeing that their brothers and sisters in the street are employed again.

During 1974 and 1975, workers lucky enough to escape the pink slip saw their average real weekly earnings decrease (by 4.3 percent in 1974 and 2.8 percent in 1975). Indeed, the Congressional Budget Office thinks that the "stagnation of real income in recent years" is a major reason why the recovery from the depths of 1974-75 has been so slow and accompanied by such persistently high rates of unemployment. It is not, the CBO said, that consumers are unwilling to spend; it is that they just don't have the wherewithal since the average worker is only now regaining real income levels reached in 1972 and 1973. Thus the employed worker is paying a price for the existence of a huge pool of the unemployed.

On this Labor Day there is reason to hope: eight years of openly conservative, Republican rule from the White House were brought to an end last November. The Carter Administration has at least recognized unemployment as a problem, something Nixon and Ford rarely did, and it has resulted in some public spending that has helped some workers. The Democratic victory in 1976 represents an advance for a labor movement which fought so hard to bring it about. But it has been a disappointing advance and if the unions are to get their rightful due, they are going to have to vigorously pressure Jimmy Carter.

The current Carter scenario hopes to get unemployment down to 4.75 percent—which is wrongly defined as "full employment"—by 1981. As the Joint Economic Committee said earlier this year, "the entire latter half of the 1970's seems destined to stand as a stark re-

minder of the immense difficulties of pulling out of a serious recession once it has been allowed to take hold." But even these rather dismal projections may turn out to be optimistic. The President and his advisors are counting on 5.25 percent real growth in GNP throughout the next four years to get to their badly defined goal of full employment. But since World War II, there has only been one four-year period (1962-66) in which such a pace was maintained, and in July, Charles Schultze, Carter's chief economic advisor, projected

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## Clerical Organizing: Where there's a will...

by ELIZABETH MCPIKE

I once offered some welcoming remarks to the annual convention of the Illinois AFL-CIO which was being held in the state's capital city. I reminded the delegates that in years past they had traveled to conventions in this city without the comfort of knowing they were coming to a union town, and I consoled them with the news that my union was doing all it could to change that; indeed the job was about half done. The employees in the major industry in Springfield—state government—had just voted union in a major collective bargaining election.

My remarks were very warmly received; I think they were comforting to this group of secondary union leaders who now could find signs of a familiar institution in this unfamiliar, political town.

With only 20 percent of the American non-farm work force organized, it is more and more difficult to find these comforting signs in any American city. Especially if you're a woman and happen to walk the halls or lobbies of any major bank or insurance company or other large office building where thousands of women clericals work. There are no announcements of local union meetings pinned to bulletin boards, no J.P. Stevens boycott notices, no fact sheets on national health insurance, no safety committees, no stewards, no contracts, no institution through which working class women are being

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**“You don’t have to be a genius . . .  
to figure out that something isn’t right.”**

**A Labor Day Interview with William Winpisinger  
President of the International Association  
of Machinists, AFL-CIO**

by RUTH JORDAN

The president of the million-member International Association of Machinists is a socialist. William Winpisinger (Wimpy) wasn’t raised as a socialist, he was raised as a trade unionist by a printer father who “never let us forget that we were eating during the Depression because of his union contract.”

He can’t remember socialist ideas being discussed in his home but he’ll tell you that as far as he’s concerned “you don’t have to be a genius to figure out the way we (unions) get turned around that something isn’t right.”

Wimpy believes changes are coming in the labor movement which will influence all of American society. “I see some encouraging signs that we can get moving and if it means changing the system . . . well, it’s about time!”

Since he took office July 1, Wimpy has made it clear that he’s not afraid to make waves. He has been openly critical of the present leadership of the AFL-CIO and his words have been picked up by major journals. He’s also joined the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee and invited other union leaders to do the same.

“People have been reluctant to speak up in the past as much out of fear as anything else . . . fear of the ability of the leadership to retaliate. A lot of guys who didn’t agree sat there quietly because they felt they would be compromising their unions. I don’t feel any intimidation . . .”

“You can’t push people around just for the purpose of dictating a point of view,” he adds, “I’d like to think that democracy has some meaning. . . .”

Winpisinger agrees that many union leaders don’t express their differences because of a strong code in the labor movement that dictates against public airing of disagreements.

“There’s probably a feeling,” he notes, “that any divisiveness at all weakens the whole thing. There was a time when I believed that myself, but I’m of the opposite view right now. It’s been carried so far that it now makes us vulnerable because people aren’t attracted to an institution that’s stultified . . . that’s monolithic. I think people have to see that an institution is worth belonging to and there’s the ability to discuss differing points of view and arrive at some rational conclusion . . . I think we’re past the time when we sacrifice everything on the altar of unity.”

Winpisinger has been outspoken about what he believes is the need for AFL-CIO President George Meany to retire. “It’s hard for an 82-year-old man—notwithstanding an illustrious career, despite the fact that in his own right he’s a very great man—it doesn’t stop him from going downhill like anyone else after you reach a certain peak.”

A leader of George Meany’s age, says the Machinist president, can’t relate to a work force “whose average age continues to go down and down, especially a younger generation whose rebellion against the old system of values has been chronicled for a couple of decades now.”

“After all,” he adds laughing, “nobody died and left my generation the custodian of everything.”

Winpisinger is changing the IAM’s organizing department to include activities he believes are directly related to success or failure at NLRB elections. He’s included jurisdictional disputes and coordinated bargaining. He also wants to put new emphasis on organizing minorities and women and is staffing the department to reflect that concern.

He’s strongly supportive of the Industrial Union Department’s coordinated bargaining efforts which unite a variety of unions representing workers for the same company for the purposes of collective bargaining.

“It has moved torturously slow though,” he adds and blames part of the problems on too many single industry, smaller unions. “Each one has a legitimate right to exist but these days small means weak.”

“Management can knock off the weak ones and that makes it just so much more difficult for the rest of us. We need diversified organizations. We don’t need any more single industry organizations. When you are no longer a single industry union you always have a major block of your membership that’s at work to support those who are not.”

Industry is organized to take in a variety of products and so should unions, he believes. “After all you deal with the same bird whether you’re making knitting needles or engine blades or hoola hoops.”

He’s concerned about rebuilding the labor-civil rights coalition which he think fell apart when Nixon won. “Labor as an institution has systematically failed its political constituencies,” he contends, “and caused us to be in the political mess we’re in because it refused to listen to their cries for help . . . We failed the blacks first and when they didn’t get any redress of the problems they went out and formed their own institutions and developed highly specialized solutions for highly specialized problems.”

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The politicians enjoyed the benefit of the split, says Wimpy. "All these groups formed institutions and very successfully built a 360 degree circle of countervailing pressures around the politicians. So they stood absolutely still and did absolutely nothing and got re-elected."

He thinks the AFL-CIO leadership, present and future, "ought to be rebuilding those bridges. There was a time when labor spoke for all those groups . . . Let's stop emphasizing the things we disagree about and let's start emphasizing the myriads of things on which we do and can agree."

Jobs are the key, believes the new Machinist president, and thinks many of the differences would be solved by full employment. In his own union he was openly opposed to the B-1 bomber. But because a convention decision pledged the union to support it, he maintained a low profile during the Presidential debate on the issue.

Now he looks ahead with great hope toward new developments in energy that will mean jobs for his members and give "taxpayers a return for their dollar for a change."

"We can generate energy right from the sun using the existing distribution network. It will need a lot of construction, a lot of other things and all that means a lot of jobs."

"It's technically feasible and we can hit just when we run into the real crunch in the mid-nineties . . ."

The former mechanic gets very excited when he talks about the technological possibilities because it means his members can be making machines for peace instead of war.

"Of course," he says, "there are a lot of members who don't want to build anything but aerospace vehicles as though it were a badge of honor—they wouldn't get nearly the belt out of building a subway car even though they're doing the same thing. . . . That's because of a fundamental experience and education, which they wouldn't feel if they knew the alternatives."

As for a socialist caucus in the Democratic Party, Winpinger believes the day will come when socialists get a respectful hearing from party leaders and have greater impact on policies. "It's not around the corner. We stand as a nation like the timid bather afraid to stick his toe in the water. One of these days we'll get nudged enough to go in and when we find out that our foot doesn't get bitten off by a shark, we'll go all the way. It's a while down the road, maybe, but to me it's a can't miss proposition. There's no way this country can continue with this blind allegiance to total capitalism. Too many people are awakening to the dangers and I'm encouraged by what I see among the young people." □

## DEMOCRATIC AGENDA project centers on jobs

A major conference planned for November 12 and 13 in Washington D.C. will be the public kick-off of an ambitious effort to "remind President Carter and the Democratic majority in Congress of the need to act on the central promise of the 1976 Presidential campaign: full employment."

So says DSOC National Chair Michael Harrington, speaking on behalf of an impressive group of initiators of the DEMOCRATIC AGENDA project. A follow-up to last year's DEMOCRACY '76 project which centered on influencing the Democratic Platform, the DEMOCRATIC AGENDA effort seeks, in the words of Project Coordinator Marjorie Phye Gellermann, "to take the ideas and commitments of that platform, ideas and commitments the DEMOCRACY '76 coalition helped to shape, and translate them into hard public policy."

The focal point of this project is full employment planning. But "to get jobs for all without spiralling inflation," Harrington points out, "this society needs to address a fairly radical agenda of structural change." So the DEMOCRATIC AGENDA calls for a four-point full employment program: 1. democratic national planning for full employment; 2. fairer distribution of wealth and income; 3. social, instead of corporate, priorities in government policy; and 4. increased efforts to achieve conventional and nuclear disarmament.

To date, the project has been endorsed by leaders of a potentially powerful coalition of trade unionists, minority leaders, feminists and political and community activists. Among them:

WALLACE ALBERTSON, Democratic National Committee (California); JOSEPHINE BAER, Democratic National Committee (New York); MICHAEL N. BLEICHER, Chair Wisconsin Democratic Party; JULIAN BOND, Georgia State Senator; HEATHER BOOTH; REP. JOHN CONYERS; REP. RONALD V. DELLUMS; MURRAY H. FINLEY, President, Amalgamated Clothing & Textile Workers; DOUGLAS A. FRASER, President, United Auto Workers; MICHAEL HARRINGTON, Chair, Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee; IRVING HOWE; MILDRED JEFFREY; REP. ROBERT W. KASTENMEIER; ARTHUR B. KEYS, JR., National Council of Churches Full Employment Project; ROBERT LEKACHMAN, Distinguished Professor of Economics, City University of New York; JOYCE MILLER, Coalition of Labor Union Women; CLEVELAND ROBINSON, National President, Distributive Workers of America; ROSEMARY RUETHER, Professor, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary; RICK SCOTT, Chair, Minnesota Democratic Farmer-Labor Party; GLORIA STEINEM; PAUL SOGLIN, Mayor, Madison, Wisconsin; LESTER THUROW, Economist, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; WILLIAM W. WINPINGER, President, International Association of Machinists; JERRY WURF, President, American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees.



# A rising wind for social justice in the South

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Following are excerpts from the remarks of Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union Secretary-Treasurer Jacob Sheinkman at the June meeting of the Washington D.C. Labor Forum sponsored by the Washington Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee.*

by JACOB SHEINKMAN

I am reminded of what was said by a leader of the coal miners in Harlan County, Kentucky, many years ago. One of the miners' efforts to organize had just been defeated, and he said, "The coal operators think they got the union crushed, but just like in putting out a fire, you can go stomp on it and leave a few sparks, and here comes a wind and it's going to spread again."

That wind is now blowing in the South.

The South is no longer the land of sweeping plantations and magnolia blossoms. It has become industrialized. There was enormous industrial growth during the '60s; that process has continued into the '70s. In the first six years of this decade, the number of non-farm jobs in the Sun Belt grew at a much faster rate than in the rest of the country. Texas alone gained almost one million jobs. The rate of increase was 29 percent in Florida and 23 percent in South Carolina.

More jobs mean more opportunities for workers; they even mean competition for the available workers. They mean an easing of the fear many workers had that, if they lost the job they had, they and their families would starve. That fear, which once imprisoned them, is now vanishing, and the plantation mentality, which relied on that fear, has become vulnerable. That's why, in the South, the winds of unionism are rising. That's why J.P. Stevens and other Southern employers have become so frantic in their hostility to unions.

The spokesmen for the plantation mentality denounce us as "outsiders." We are not. Unions have been functioning in the South for decades, and the number of union members in the South has been increasing steadily. If being an "outsider" means refusing to bow before the plantation mentality, then, in that sense, we are "outsiders" and we are proud of it. But so then is most of the South.

The real "outsiders" in the South—the modern-day carpetbaggers—are the corporations which have relocated there to take advantage of what they saw as a supply of cheap and docile labor. I give you J.P. Stevens as an example. About 30 years ago, it shut its union plants in the North, leaving thousands unemployed, and moved to the South. It is now a power in the Carolinas where it has a concentration of its plants. It is said that Stevens owns those states.

Let's look at some of the consequences of this carpet-bag operation. North Carolina pays the lowest industrial wages in the country—\$55 a week less than the average for the country. Education and health care are inadequate. The rate of illiteracy is high. So is the in-

fant mortality rate. A professor at the University of North Carolina, who conducted a study of the state, said that Stevens has "milked our towns dry." So it has been with other carpetbag corporations. Who then are the "outsiders?"

We have worked hard in the South—the ACTWU and many other unions—to enable workers there to gain the benefits of union membership. We have worked hard to enable Southern workers to escape the ignominy of being "hands," and to gain the dignity and self-respect that is their right as American citizens.

But progress would have been very much greater except that employers have been allowed to violate the labor laws with impunity. No one in this room needs to be told that the National Labor Relations Act has been turned into a cruel farce in the South and in other areas where non-union employers have entrenched themselves:

- Representation elections under the law can be delayed almost indefinitely by unscrupulous employers;
- It takes years sometimes to get the NLRB to act on unfair labor practice charges. And here, clearly, justice delayed is justice denied;
- Once an election has been held and a union chosen as a bargaining agent, there is nothing to compel an employer to bargain with the union in good faith.

Frank W. McCulloch served as chairman of the NLRB for 10 years. He now teaches labor law at the University of Virginia and at the School of Industrial and Labor Relations at Cornell. Certainly, he qualifies

## *Socialist Institute formed*

The Institute for Democratic Socialism, a non-profit educational corporation has announced that it has been granted tax-exempt status under section 501 (C) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

The Institute was formed earlier this year by socialist leader Michael Harrington to encourage public understanding of the achievements and potential of democratic socialism and to further democratic socialist analysis of American society.

According to Harrington the Institute's first activities will center around a series of youth conferences. He also announced that the Institute's first publication—on problems of achieving full employment—will be issued in October. The Institute plans to begin fund raising mailings this fall.

Harrington is the president of the Institute and John Clark is its secretary/treasurer. Also on the Board of Directors are: Julius Bernstein, Harry Fleischman, Ralph Helstein, Ruth Jordan, Deborah Meier, Victor Reuther, and Carl Shier. Frank Llewellyn is the Executive Director of the Institute. The Institute offices are located at 853 Broadway in New York City. □

as a disinterested expert. He told a seminar early this year that the National Labor Relations Act is "resisted and opposed" by management and that "in substantial measure, the law's purpose is defeated."

Consider the experience of the ACTWU with J.P. Stevens. In 1974, we won a representation election at seven of its plants in Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina. We won that election despite enormous pressure brought to bear by the corporation. The corporation did its best to stir up racial antagonisms—the plantation mentality again. It placed active union members under surveillance, not only in the plants but outside. It fired many of them. There was constant harassment. A Federal Court of Appeals said: "J.P. Stevens has interfered with, restrained, and coerced its employees flagrantly, cynically, and unlawfully." Nevertheless, we won.

That was in 1974. But the workers in those Roanoke Rapids plants still don't have the benefits or protection of a union agreement. J.P. Stevens, that billion-dollar, multi-national corporation has turned negotiations into an ugly, frustrating charade.

And what has the government done about this flouting of the law? In 1975, it awarded J.P. Stevens some \$16 million in textile contracts. In effect, it condoned the corporation's violations of federal law. Even worse, it rewarded those violations.

We're asking for basic reform of the NLRA. We think that reform is essential if the purpose of the law is to be fulfilled. We think that it's essential if workers are to achieve their democratic rights. We don't expect the government to do our organizing for us. But we do want equity for workers.

President Carter and other Administration leaders

have been pressing the Soviet Union to implement the Helsinki accords, especially the human rights clauses. We concur. But we have a question for President Carter: "If you, President Carter, are genuinely concerned about human rights . . . and we think you are . . . how about some leadership in getting Congress to implement the purpose of the National Labor Relations Act?" Help us get labor law reform. That, too, is a matter of human rights. And one that we're not going to allow either President Carter or Congress to ignore.

The President told reporters last week that his campaign for human rights had embarrassed the Soviet Union and other totalitarian governments. He was obviously pleased. He said, "It dramatizes the issue and has aroused the awareness of the human rights question among all the national leaders."

That's a useful technique. Unless we see some reasonable prospect for the implementation of the NLRA, we may do some dramatizing of our own. In that case, some people in this city may find themselves among the embarrassed. The human rights issue is going to be with us for a long time, especially in the South.

We consider poverty wages, and the destructive effect they have on Southern workers and Southern communities, a human rights issue. We consider "brown lung," widely prevalent in the plants of J.P. Stevens and other textile corporations, a human rights issue.

And we're going to help translate that rhetoric into reality for Southern workers and the communities in which they live. We don't have a "Southern strategy." But we do have a mission in the South.

It is our belief that the labor movement, supported by the rising forces of social and economic justice in the South, will fulfill that mission. □

## Challenge to make America's democracy real

by DOUGLAS A. FRASER

The labor movement's finest moments have been those when it became the conscience of the nation.

In 1977, we are proud of the tremendous gain workers have made at the bargaining table, and we acknowledge the serious problems of unemployment, inflation, and unfair tax and labor laws. Perhaps even more serious is our failure, in this country, to achieve in fact a truly democratic society.

On Labor Day it is appropriate for the labor movement to sound the call to make the promise of America's democracy real. The way to do that is to make the words of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution a way of life. Such a commitment for those who really believe in democracy would make mass participation by the people in the political system a moral and practical imperative.

We must enhance the self esteem of workers, minorities, the disadvantaged and, indeed, all "ordinary" people by giving them a sense of genuine involvement and responsibility—and capability—to participate and

to count—to make a difference in the political life of this nation. We dedicate ourselves to these difficult but necessary goals on Labor Day 1977.

There are many reasons people do not vote. Some are structural and can be remedied by law. Others are more basic and involve problems of apathy, cynicism and disillusionment. But whatever the reasons for non-participation, it is clear that it is time to do something about it.

As a first step, we must take the lead in securing the passage of the Administration's "Universal Voter Registration Bill," which would provide for election day registration.

But that is only the beginning. We must remove every impediment to voting and eliminate every vestige of fraud in elections. We must control, even more, big money in politics. But all that is not enough. We must find ways to get our people to play their rightful role in the political system. It is a shame that the percentage of voters in the United States has fallen—again and again—below every other civilized country. Spain's recent election produce a 90 percent turnout and Germany, Sweden and Denmark have turned out similarly

Douglas A. Fraser is president of the UAW.

high percentages. Should not this country do as well?

Structure and law cannot do the job. Of course, we must make it easier to vote, but we must also provide a climate in which people will insist on voting.

There must be sound and valid reasons for people to participate in the political system. Voting must be a meaningful act with meaningful consequences. Politicians and parties must speak the truth—honor commitments—and live by issues, not manipulations.

It is very simple. We want to see power—real power—in the people. This is what our tradition has promised us.

Those of us fighting for a redistribution of economic power must devote new efforts to end the vast inequalities in political power which still exists. Without mass participation by those who are denied a real stake in our society, how can we hope to achieve full employment, tax reform, labor law reform or a redistribution of wealth?

On Labor Day 1977 I call on labor and its friends to launch a new drive for democratic political participation for America's third century. We must write a charter, a people's democratic charter, to extend and realize the ideals we have been taught to cherish, so we can make America's third century one in which people—all people—will take their places as the real base of democracy. They will do so, if we do our job and make their doing so count. □

## Jobless . . .

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only a 5 percent rate of real growth in the next year and the Congressional Budget Office was even more cautious.

The fact is that Carter's program is difficult to attain

because of unnecessary limitations the President has placed upon his Administration. He has committed himself to balancing the budget, reducing the federal percentage of GNP to 21 percent, and bringing inflation down to a 4 percent rate. He treats these as co-equal priorities along with full employment. He then finds that it is difficult, or impossible, to achieve liberal ends under conservative restraints.

There is a method in Carter's curious mix of liberal and conservative goals. The President has assumed that he will fulfill his liberal promise of full employment by demonstrating to business that he is a sound conservative (a budget balancer and spending cutter). This stance, the thinks, will motivate them to make the private investments which will create the new jobs. So long as a Democratic Administration, elected by working people and minorities and city dwellers, is thus the captive of Republican ideology, small wonder that its proposals are so timid and self-contradictory.

The trade unions must say that real full employment is much more important than a balanced budget or a 5 percent inflation rate, or than reducing federal spending to some arbitrary number. This obviously does not mean that labor should propose to solve the current crisis by simply printing money. It should insist, for example, that we finance new public sector jobs in part by cutting tax handouts for the corporate rich.

This is where the hopeful aspect of Labor Day, 1977 comes in. The unions have now recovered from the defeat on situs picketing—a mistaken priority which was compounded by an ineffective political effort on its behalf. They are rightly focusing on the issue of NLRB reform which could well be a boon to the most important labor organizing effort of recent years, the J.P. Stevens campaign. If the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers could win that bitter battle, it would not sim-

## Looters, straw men and cities' decay

High rates of unemployment tend to split working people, to pit them against one another, rather than to unite them against corporate power. The jobless, and particularly those who suffer from systemic discrimination, like the minorities, women, and the young, fight over scarce resources with the employed. When that situation becomes explosive, as it did during the New York City blackout in July, the eruption of a violent, hopeless frustration gives rise to a backlash.

In general this reaction is felt first of all by public sector unionists who have been bearing the brunt of a neo-conservative mood among some liberals. But the entire labor movement will suffer if the New York events are dismissed as the work of "animals" and this becomes one more argument against social change in general.

What the backslashers do is to tear one straw man apart—and then replace it by another straw man

of their own invention. Poverty, joblessness, slums and the like do not, we are told, cause everyone subjected to these indignities to loot when the opportunity arises. True enough, but I wonder if there ever was anyone so stupid as to hold the thesis that is thereby disproved. Having disposed of an empty simplification, the backslashers come up with a vicious counter-simplification: that poverty, joblessness, and slums have nothing to do with causing riots.

The fact is that the urban deterioration which exploded in New York exists in Detroit and St. Louis and Chicago and will eventually move into the now relatively prosperous areas of the "Sun Belt," like Houston. If America turns its back on these lacerating problems, the poor and the unemployed will be the primary victims, of course, but here again the employed will suffer as the entire society moves to the right.

—MICHAEL HARRINGTON



ply be a victory for one union. It would open up the way for the organization of Southern and low-wage workers throughout the nation; it could stop corporations from playing off the industrial Northeast and Midwest against an anti-union Sun Belt.

At the same time that these crucial issues are joined in the shops and the Congress, there is a renewal at the top of the American labor movement. Two of the most progressive unions, the Auto Workers and the Machinists, elected vigorous, activist presidents this year and they will join established leaders of the labor Left, like Jerry Wurf, in making the progressive unions even more effective in the future. This is precisely the tendency in the American labor movement which has articulated the kind of analysis presented here. Moreover, it is encouraging that unions which took conservative (and wrong) positions on questions like Viet Nam are becoming more outspoken in their demands that Carter live up to his campaign promises.

It is significant that THE DEMOCRATIC AGENDA conference in Washington, D.C. on November 12 and 13, will take up these issues and that it has already won the support of several progressive unions as well as of a growing number of Democratic reformers, minority activists, feminists, environmentalists and the like. There is, in short, reason to prepare for tough and difficult battles and to pressure Jimmy Carter to deliver on the central promise of his 1976 campaign, the achievement of full employment. But there is reason to hope, as the unions' inspiration once more stirs in the South and as the leadership of American labor renews itself in a progressive fashion. From its first issue, this NEWSLETTER has insisted that organized workers must play a central role in any serious transformation of American society. On Labor Day, 1977, we feel that this is true more than ever before. □

### ***N.E. DSOC plans***

New England DSOC is organizing regionally, and two big events are already scheduled up there for the fall.

On the weekend of September 30 through October 2, there will be the first regional conference for members and friends of New England DSOC. It will be held at the Ferry Beach conference center, Saco Beach, Maine. Among the topics for discussion will be history of American socialism, socialism and feminism and socialism in Western Europe. A \$35 registration fee covers room and board for the weekend.

The following weekend, on Saturday night October 8, Earl Bourdon, long-time leader in the socialist and labor movements in northern New England, will be honored at a testimonial dinner in Claremont, N.H. Mike Harrington will be the keynote speaker at the dinner. Tickets for the dinner are available for \$6.50 from Bill Kemsley, Missing Link Road, Bellows Falls, Vermont 05101, telephone (802) 463-3681.

## ***Clerical Organizing...***

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trained and developed into leaders, no organization through which they are learning of their importance and dignity, no meeting ground for their hopes and fears.

There are approximately 15 million clerical workers in this country, almost 80 percent of whom are women. Less than 10 percent of these women are union members, and it will without question be very difficult to organize the remaining 11 million into unions.

These women clerical workers might even be as difficult as the auto workers, who in their critical battle for recognition in the 1937 Flint sit-down strike, could count only 1500 member out of 42,000 workers in the GM plants where the strike took place.

They might even be as difficult to organize as steelworkers, who had to bury ten of their dead after the police mowed them down in the 1937 Memorial Day Massacre before public opinion would even begin to focus on employer violence.

They might even be as difficult as coalminers who had to organize not only the workers but also an industry of hundreds of separate operators who conducted their fierce competition chiefly by cutting wages.

Or as difficult as garment workers, who had to overcome major language and ethnic differences.

Or public employees, who had to conquer the fears and attitudes of servitude ingrained by decades of patronage.

### **Narrow, fragile victories**

My point is this: the labor organizing campaigns of the past were extraordinarily difficult, the victories fragile and narrow. Is it really possible, in light of this history, to accept the current thinking of some top labor leaders that says employers have become too sophisticated in their anti-union campaigns, or that "the easy workers have been organized?" The truth must lie elsewhere, just as it did when skilled workers once argued that the unskilled could never be organized, or when others claimed that black workers were basically anti-union.

The AFL-CIO has placed labor law reform at the top of its legislative agenda. This desperately needed reform would remove many of the employers' stalling devices now standing in the way of successful organizing. With this legislative priority set, the American labor movement must decide that it has the will to organize the unorganized. When unions show such a determination, as the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union recently did with regard to the J.P. Stevens workers in the South, the work can begin. Exaggerating the difficulty or the ease of this enormous organizing task serves no purpose. The unions need instead to assess the problems, amass the resources, plan the organizing campaigns and stay with it.

A successful campaign for the clerical workers of the country will basically depend upon five conditions:

- The placement of sufficient resources in the hands

of competent organizers who are able to relate to women office workers with sensitivity and respect, and who can represent to these workers an institution in which they see reflected the best of their own image;

- The capacity of the campaign to overcome the tendency toward individual solutions (which almost always means no solutions) to problems which is so fostered in office settings. Women have had little experience in collective action or victories accomplished by working together. Individual, yearly salary reviews, "merit" raises, and imprecise job descriptions are used by management in office settings to encourage feelings of separateness, difference, and private aspiration;

- The ability of the campaign to focus and direct the immense resentment clerical workers harbor against a world which slights their work and demeans their skills. "I'm just a clerical" is a sentiment that almost every office worker has felt, and at different times accepted, hated, fought against, humbled before. A brief recollection: I was recently involved in negotiating the first contract for a unit of 12,000 clerical employees. After nine months of difficult bargaining, we had reached agreement on all the language provisions of the contract, which included a long list of substantial improvements in almost every area of work life. Yet when the sixty members of the negotiating committee celebrated that last night, they toasted more frequently than any other provision the preamble of the contract which proclaimed that their work was "vital and necessary."

- The general political climate of the country. The labor law reforms mentioned above are vital. So is a decline in unemployment, aggressive government enforcement of affirmative action laws, the passage of the equal rights amendment, increased funding for child care: a sense that the political forces are moving to the side of working women, that group interest and national interest are merging.

- The continued growth and acceptance of the women's movement. All the issues of the women's movement are found in the office: the secretary as office housewife, the "girl" who makes coffee and runs errands, waiting on her boss so he can do the "real work," standing back with no space of her own, unsure of her opinions. The underpaid, undervalued clerical, with a salary less than that of men she has trained, half that of an unskilled laborer. The women's movement, begun by the middle class, is leaving an indelible mark on the working class woman. She, too, is experiencing a growing sense of identification with other women. She, too, can think enough of herself to make demands for time, room, and respect, and a paycheck she can live on.

None of these conditions will come easily. All of these needs can be met by bringing to bear that same tenacity already recorded in labor history. The future vitality and influence of the labor movement, the strength of the women's movement, and the lives of millions of working women may very well be at stake. Surely it is worth a hard-headed try. □

*Warmest Fraternal Greetings*

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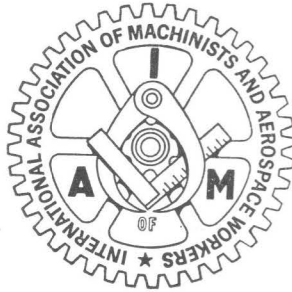


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*Greetings*

**UAW-CAP Councils**

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Stanley K. Sheinbaum

## **“Some budget slashers are missing the point.”**

“Budget cutting in state and local governments is politically popular. Unfortunately, it’s not always financially smart.

Take New York for example. Without much thought, the state proposed to shut down 135 day care centers, serving 7,500 working families, in hopes of saving \$20 million.

In fact, a Columbia School of Public Health study calculated that this ‘saving’ would have created \$18.8 million in spending by other government agencies, both state and federal.

As the union representing state and local government workers, we see these kinds of blind budget decisions being made in every state, every day.

We know legitimate budget cuts are hard enough to live with. But false cuts are intolerable.”

**“The business of government is people.”**

—Jerry Wurf, President



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Labor Day greetings to our friends in the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee.



**International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement  
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President

Emil Mazey  
Secretary-Treasurer

**ILLINOIS DSOC**

sends greetings to the

*Newsletter of the Democratic Left*

Keep the pressure on to make Carter live up to the  
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**DISTRICT 31**

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the *Newsletter of the Democratic Left*  
and DSOC for continuing the ideas and  
ideals of two giants!

*In memory of*

**ROBERT CRITES**

He worked bravely for Justice, Socialism, Understanding  
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to advance the cause of the labor movement.*

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*Greetings*  
Los Angeles DSOC



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Top of the Age to you! OREGON DSOC	Greetings from Two Dubuque Leftists Mark Thomsen/Eva Leo
The struggle continues in Central Illinois Champaign-Urbana DSOC	<i>Many thanks to my many DSOC friends for helping my campaign—Burt Wilson</i>
Best Wishes Martin Greenberg UAW Region 9A	Socialist Greetings From Kathy & Paul Rowe of Houston
Greetings from the In-Between Town Bill & Jim & Jesse	If Humanity has a future, It will be Socialist. Sylvia & Ernie Erber

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William H. McIntyre	Gratitude for the Newsletter
John M. Mecartney	Exonerate the Molly Maguires
Deborah Meier	Socialists do it better!
Estelle Meyerson	DSOC of Western Massachusets

# Jimmy Higgins reports . . .

**SOLIDARITY ON THE OTHER SIDE**—The Chamber of Commerce in Person County, N.C. takes attracting new businesses seriously. But only the right kind of businesses need apply. The local Chamber certainly does not want companies like Brockaway Glass, which wants to locate a bottle-making plant employing 250 people in Person County. Why not? Brockaway is a unionized company with a pay scale higher than that prevailing in Person County (where there are exactly 12 organized workers). So the Chamber told Brockaway to come in only if the bottle-making plant were non-union and the wages it paid “competitive” with local employers. Ah, the benefits of the free market!

**WHAT DID GEORGE MEANY SAY** at the press conference in conjunction with the most recent AFL-CIO Executive Council? Can you read a full transcript of Doug Fraser’s first nationally televised press conference as UAW president? What’s the status of insurgents’ petitions to the Labor Department for re-runs of the elections in the Steelworkers and the Mine Workers? What are the issues in the current dispute over the ILO and who is on which side? The quickest way to find out any or all of the above is to read *John Herling’s Labor Letter* every week. In four pages Herling gets in the necessary documents and information to keep his subscribers up-to-date on what’s happening in the labor movement. In addition to the facts, the *Labor Letter* conveys something of Jack Herling’s own deep convictions about the labor movement. In the press interviews with Meany and other labor leaders, Herling is always there with the toughest questioning. In the reporting on the recent divisions in the United Mine Workers, Herling tied the current confusion and factionalism to the long-standing dictatorial rule of John L. Lewis. In 1972, Herling, who worked closely with Norman Thomas, took Meany to task for his regret that Thomas wasn’t around to run against McGovern and Nixon. Meany, as Herling noted, was around when Norman Thomas did run for the

Presidency, and Meany’s support was never forthcoming. Combining the talents of a skilled journalist and an experienced activist who has known the leading figures in the labor movement for years, Jack Herling regularly produces a publication which informs and does much more. It’s available for \$40/year from *John Herling’s Labor Letter*, Suite 1234, 1411 K Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005.

**WHAT FUELS INFLATION?**—According to some recent research by Leslie Nulty of the Exploratory Project on Economic Alternatives, the sharply rising prices of recent years have little to do with the push of wages on prices. The most severe inflation, according to Nulty’s study, comes in four basic necessities: food, housing, health and energy. These four areas constitute 70 percent of the average family budget, and inflation in these basics outstripped the general inflation rate by 44 percent in the first six years of this decade. In none of the four areas is labor costs a major inflationary factor. More information about the study is available from the Exploratory Project on Economic Alternatives, 1519 Connecticut Avenue N.W., Washington D.C. 20036.

**SUBSIDIZING AN OUTLAW**—For those not already familiar with J.P. Stevens’ regular, long-standing and flagrant abuse of the rights of its employees and the national labor law, Jack Sheinkman’s article in this issue supplies some choice details. After reading it, ask yourself why you’re supporting Stevens. You’re not? Guess again. Our tax dollars provide some lucrative profits for the union-busting textile maker. In fact, the United States government contracts for an average of \$13 million in annual business with Stevens. Most recently, the Defense Department signed a \$3.4 million contract. Stevens is also reportedly in line for a very lucrative sub-contract from General Motors on a Transportation Department study of air bags.

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