

# DEMOCRATIC LEFT

EDITED BY  
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## Waiting for the Center to Jell

By Jim Chapin and Jack Clark

**F**EW POLITICAL COMMENTATORS this year welcome having their words of a few months ago read back to them. In this exceptional year, we are the exception. Our analysis (February DEMOCRATIC LEFT), written before the Iowa caucuses, has generally held up. We said that Reagan was far out in front with solid support from about 40 percent of the Republican voters. That left room for John Connally, Howard Baker or George Bush to fashion an anti-Reagan coalition which could take the nomination. Of the available stop-Reagan candidates, we saw Bush as being the most likely to win. He might have emerged as the Jimmy Carter of this year's Republican field: the underdog with money, Establishment connections, and a drive to win. Instead, of course, Bush repeated the performance of the last Yankee alternative to the GOP's western Right — Henry Cabot Lodge. In 1964 after a stunning win in New Hampshire, Lodge faded fast, leaving the path clear for Barry Goldwater. So it is with George Bush and Ronald Reagan today.

The final nail in Bush's coffin was the John Anderson candidacy. With no chance to win the nomination himself, Anderson siphoned off enough anti-Reagan and anti-Carter votes into a dead-end campaign to help ensure that these two men would win their nominations. Some of his supporters now argue that the Reagan-Carter race he did so much to cause justifies his running a third party campaign.



Larry Frank

*“Any competent incumbent would beat Reagan by the kind of landslide margin that Johnson racked up over Goldwater or Nixon over McGovern. Jimmy Carter may beat him 55-45.”*



In the Democratic race, we predicted Jerry Brown's weakness and attributed Kennedy's disasters to the lack of political direction in his campaign. Since then, we've seen the famous Georgetown speech where Kennedy laid out a clear and programmatic rationale for his campaign, with the resulting partial revival of his chances.

In our view, Kennedy acted too late and in some respects too little to salvage 1980. Jimmy Carter looks more and more like the Democratic nominee and, against Reagan, almost a sure bet for reelection. Kennedy still has a chance to beat Carter—about the same chance that Reagan has in the fall. However slim they are, he would have no prospects at all had he

not reversed gears and begun running an issue-oriented, ideological campaign. Whether 1980 ends in victory or defeat, Kennedy has emerged as the leader of the liberal wing of the Democratic party, a new role for him. From that position of advocacy, he's stronger for the future, and possibly so are we.

For all the vaunted conservatism of American politics in 1980, the broad democratic left backing Kennedy is about as strong as the hard right backing Reagan: we've got about one-third of the 60 percent party, they've got one-half of the 40 percent party.\* Moreover, Kennedy's vote bears a strong resemblance (in numbers, not necessarily in composition) to the 1968 Kennedy-McCarthy

vote, the 1972 McGovern vote (again: a divided field) and the 1976 Udall Bayh-Harris vote.

Since the January 28 Georgetown speech, Kennedy has rebounded. In recent weeks leaders of the liberal wing of the Democratic party such as AFSCME President Jerry Wurf, Cesar Chavez of the United Farm Workers, New York Representative Ben Rosenthal and New York City Council President Carol Bellamy, have rallied to his cause because it is increasingly identified as the cause of liberalism itself. Kennedy's move to the left fit in with our advice four months ago. But in important respects it was too little. Voter attitudes were already settling around the "character" issue (read Chappaquiddick), in large part because of Kennedy's early emphasis on "leadership" rather than substantive differences with Carter.

In other crucial respects Kennedy didn't move enough in late January. While he was heralding himself as the new tribune of the Democratic left, his day-to-day operations remained mired in old-school, play-it-safe politics. As we said in February, playing it safe equaled playing to lose. Nowhere did the Kennedy campaign illustrate that point better than in the crucial Illinois primary. After the announcement of his candidacy, Kennedy's operatives moved quickly to take the campaign out of the hands of the draft-Kennedy insurgents and place it in the control of the reliable and "experienced" pros (whose chief credential was coordinating previous Ted Kennedy reelection efforts in Massachusetts, a trying assignment indeed). In Chicago, the "pros" displaced experienced and savvy political operatives and leaders

## LETTERS

To the Editor:

I read with interest DSOC's Draft Resolution on 1980 Election Policy in the February issue. Though the case for supporting the Kennedy candidacy is a strong one, by now I think it is clear that he will not be the Democratic nominee in November. If this is true, we will be faced with a choice of two Republicans on election day.

In good conscience, as a socialist (and active DSOC member), I cannot bring myself to vote once again for Carter or for his Republican opponent. Perhaps it is time to consider putting our vote behind a principled third party candidate. My vote goes to the Citizens Party nominee.

Rik Smith  
Spokane, Wash.

To the Editor:

I have grown tired of reading your views of different events of the world. Please take me off your DEMOCRATIC LEFT newsletter to let someone who might be more interested read it.

James L. Moody, Jr.  
Louisville, Ky.

To the Editor:

Just a note to tell you I like the latest DEMOCRATIC LEFT. Good balance all the way around.

Frank Wallick  
Washington, D.C.

To the Editor:

Some words were inadvertently dropped in the right-hand column of page 2 of my article in the April issue, changing the meaning. The full sentence should read: "Therefore, NATO should *want to freeze and reverse the Soviet* build-up immediately, not in the indefinite future." (Underlined words were dropped.)

Sanford Gottlieb  
Acting Executive Director  
New Directions

*Ed. note: We regret the error and apologize for any misunderstanding it may have created.*

*Letters to the editor must be signed. We reserve the right to edit for brevity. Please limit letters to less than 250 words.*

\* (One often hears that the Republicans have only 18-22 percent of the electorate; what one doesn't hear is that this is a percentage of the total electorate—including the half that doesn't vote at all. Add in to both parties those independents who say that they primarily vote for one party or the other—and you get a rough 60/40 Democratic-Republican split.)

## DEMOCRATIC LEFT

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from the city's major liberal unions. To keep the left from taking over the campaign and embarrassing the senator, Kennedy's apparatchiks turned the entire effort over to Mayor Jane Byrne in November. That fit in with the overall national strategy at the time which looked toward an early Carter collapse and an ensuing Kennedy "coronation." After Georgetown and the shift in strategy, nothing changed organizationally in the crucial Illinois primary. Decisions were still cleared with the mayor. Unionists sympathetic to Kennedy would have held a major press conference with a broad array of labor leaders, including leaders of public employee unions in conflict with the city, endorsing Kennedy. "Playing it safe," the national campaign shot down that plan, lest the senator embarrass the mayor or be embarrassed himself by questions on public employee strikes. When March 18 rolled around, the "pros" had all the disadvantages of the Byrne endorsement and machine backing along with precinct captains who refused to pull for Kennedy.

The New York and Connecticut victories gave Kennedy renewed life. If he can win Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, New Jersey and California by impressive margins, he'll come close to Carter in the delegate count and he will raise questions of Carter's viability as the nominee.

The Democrats have some reason to worry about a Carter-Reagan race. Reagan has shown an ability to mobilize large numbers of voters. Obviously he's not drawing on the demobilized pool of former and potential voters at the bottom of the society but from disillusioned people in the middle or upper reaches. In addition, Carter's ineptness and repeated right turns have disillusioned a large part of the Democrats' ordinary base. So what makes us so certain that Reagan's a loser?

### Rocky Road for Ronnie

Reagan's dilemma can be seen in the results of the Illinois primary, one of his most significant triumphs. Carter won about 750,000 votes while Reagan won 500,000. Another three-quarters of a million votes were divided between Kennedy and Anderson. Presuming a voting population in November like the one in March, Reagan would have to beat Carter 2-1 among Kennedy and Anderson voters in Illinois to carry a state that went to Gerald Ford in 1976.

That kind of showing is unlikely.



Larry Frank

Reagan has been spared the harsh media scrutiny to which Kennedy, for example, has been subjected. Once the race focuses on him, that media glare will hit the former California Governor and he will come across as a right wing extremist. Any competent incumbent would beat him by the kind of landslide margin Johnson racked up over Goldwater or Nixon over McGovern. Jimmy Carter may beat him 55-45.

If Reagan could run solely on domestic issues, he might well beat Carter. But like the broad democratic left, the potential conservative majority is deeply split on America's role in the world. True believers backing Reagan strongly are half of a minority party: Reagan's state-by-state showing this year has been remarkably close to his 1976 showing. To win the nation rather than the Republican party, the Reaganites must enlist the sympathies of the suburban middle class. With 20 percent inflation, that vote might tend toward Reagan on domestic issues, but by the time November rolls around, he will be seen as a President capable of launching a thermonuclear war. On the issue of peace, such voters will, however reluctantly, back

### Third Party Fantasy

If John Anderson runs on a third party ticket, won't that guarantee Reagan's election? Such is the dream of far right commentators like William Safire and Patrick Buchanan. They hope that Anderson will drain enough liberal support away from Carter for Reagan to carry some major states. Possible, but unlikely. For one thing, Anderson's show-

ing in the primaries, particularly in Wisconsin's open primary (fourth of five candidates), has been too weak to justify a third party effort. Even if Anderson were to mount that effort, Reagan's backers rest their dream on an illusion: support among blue collar workers in key industrial states. In the primaries, Reagan has captured blue collar votes. But blue collar Republicans are, like white collar Democrats, more ideological than other members of their party. To act against normal class political leanings requires sharp ideological formation. When November rolls around, Reagan will fare as poorly in blue collar districts as McGovern did in wealthy areas.

To win, Reagan needs not only to reach beyond his hard core supporters, but beyond the dream of a New Right majority made up of hard hats. The natural base for a conservative majority rests with those Anderson voters. The divisions between them and the Reaganites is sharp on foreign policy and on a number of social issues (abortion, gun control, etc). But Anderson's social vision and economic policies reflect traditional middle class conservatism. To the degree he's drawing people away from the Democratic party, he's drawing away people who would have been moderate Republicans except for the GOP's hawkishness and Watergate. By bringing such people back into the GOP, Anderson might give the Republicans a chance at building a new majority in the future. He will also be doing us a favor; we will become a stronger component of a party shorn of its moderate Republicans.

Continued on page 14



# Flight of Industry Poses Challenge to Communities

By Bill Thomas

**P**LANT CLOSINGS AND SIMULTANEOUS social welfare cutbacks are arenas in which the left can challenge the prerogatives of the owners of capital to create unemployment, redefine the social responsibilities of corporations and change the balance between capital and labor. Recognizing the potential, *Business Week* (Jan. 28) noted that in the current squeeze of real incomes, the U.S. labor movement "is likely to move to the left toward 'a commitment to a program to significantly modify capitalism' and . . . toward what is called the democratization of capital in Europe."

## *Understanding the Problem*

The current wave of plant closings in steel, rubber, electronics and other basic industries is only the latest—though perhaps the worst—manifestation of the restructuring of America's economy, heralded by the industrialization of the South and the increasing concentration of economic power by giant corporations. According to some estimates, in the decade from 1967 to 1976, 1.5 million manufacturing jobs disappeared from the Northeast and Midwest. Yet it is not only Eastern industrial centers that have been hit hard. For example, last year alone, closings of lumber mills in the small towns that dot the Pacific Northwest cost nearly 10,000 jobs in the wood products industry. These were brought about by industry centralization and record levels of log exports.

Many of the jobs that have left the northern tier of the country have fled to the South and Southwest, feeding industrial development where new plants, new resources (such as timber), low taxes and few unions could be found. However, a growing number of these jobs have simply left the country altogether, partly as a result of the export of raw materials,

but primarily because of the export of capital needed for domestic rejuvenation and growth.

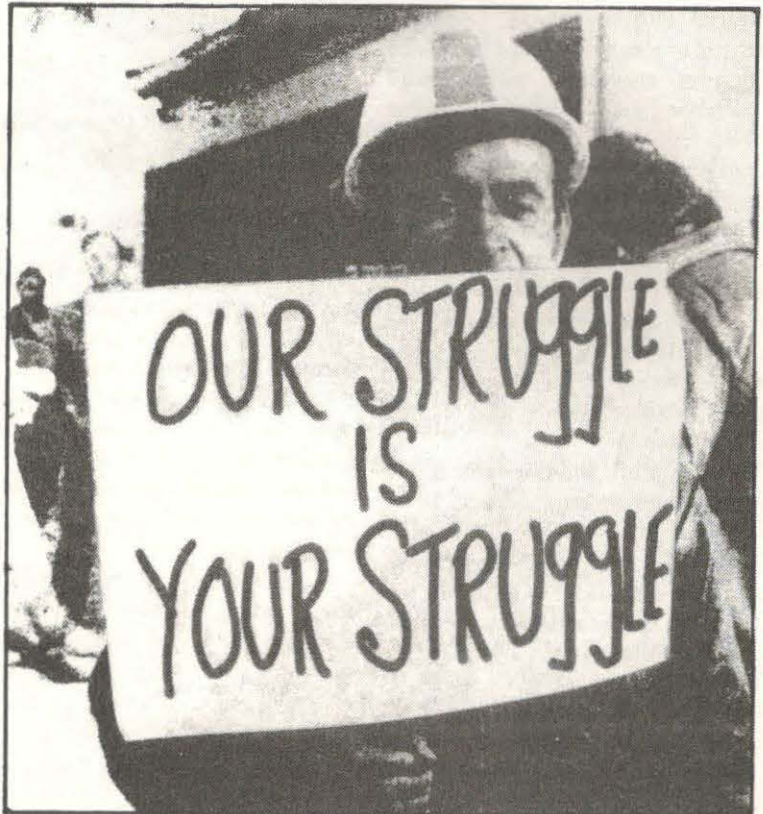
The industrial decline of the North has been characterized by slow strangulation. Steel, autos, wood products, mining, and other basic industries are facing the same fate as the railroads and intraurban transportation.

Like Britain's aging factories, a large part of our industrial plant has fallen victim to capital starvation, capital that is necessary for reinvestment in modernization, new technology and increased productivity. As a result, entire industries have been neglected and left to deteriorate. Increasingly, they have been shut down through sales, liquidations, profit milking and other results of "absentee ownership" and conglomerate mergers.

Nor have failing businesses been the major casualties of capital movement. All too often profitable enterprises that have not fit into corporate strategies or have not been profitable enough have been sacrificed.

Investment capital has not only gone South, but has gone overseas in vast quantities, some seven billion dollars in 1978. This capital outflow has been encouraged by the lure of growing consumer markets in Europe, of lucrative oil contracts in the Mideast, and of high profits in Third World countries, all subsidized by federal tax incentives.

What we are witnessing is not simply a geographical shift in the American economy but rather the de-industrialization of America—the permanent loss of jobs. These corporate strategies, in turn,



Common Ground/cpf



have reinforced a long term shift in our job structure, from higher paying, unionized manufacturing jobs to lower paying, nonorganized service sector jobs. The immediate and long term consequences of such decisions can be devastating, not only to working people most directly affected, but to the entire economic and social fabric of a community and region.

State governments have few tools or resources with which to respond. There is little public capital to create jobs or to invest in economic development; there are few retraining programs, no relocation assistance and minimal social services. All too frequently state and local governments take the easy road of tax abatements in the hope of attracting new jobs. At the same time, they choose to balance their budgets on the backs of the powerless—the poor and unemployed—through cutbacks in services and public assistance.

Today the reforms of the 1960s, which made it a little easier for some Americans to live and brought a small but concrete change in income distribution, are slowly but steadily being rolled back. Unemployment insurance and CETA are being limited; public assistance has fallen well behind inflation; welfare reform is taking the form of forced work in low wage jobs; and social security increase and indexing are being threatened by the Congress. In a time when people need real jobs they get unemployment, or at best work relief. In a time when they need income just to survive, they get higher prices.

### State Level Organizing

The need to organize at the state and community level around these basic issues of economic security—jobs first and income now—is great. Legislation has been introduced in a dozen states to offset the impact of plant closings on employees and communities. In Ohio, support for such legislation and opposition to tax abatements have resulted in strong community involvement, led by the Ohio Public Interest Campaign. In Illinois, New York, Michigan and other industrial states the same potential exists. Scattered organizing projects in the South as well as the North—among the unemployed, among CETA workers, and among welfare recipients—show great promise.

Neighborhood organizations, com-

munity groups, progressive unions and political activists are building successful bridges and coalitions around these issues. In Massachusetts, Mass Fair Share and unions in the Progressive Alliance organized a conference on plant closings in January that drew twice as many participants as expected. In Ohio and Pennsylvania, the story has been much the same. Even less industrialized states in the West have responded to the crisis.

In Oregon, for example, DSOC members have been instrumental in pulling together a Plant Closing Organizing Committee (PCOC), composed of trade unionists, community organizers, Democratic party activists and democratic socialists. This effort has had strong support from industrial unions—particularly the Woodworkers—as well as from service sector unions. The Committee counts

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*“The challenge is how to make organizing for economic democracy and full employment more concrete and immediate.”*

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among its numbers Clothing Workers, Machinists, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, Steelworkers, Teachers, and Woodworkers, as well as Oregon Fair Share, New American Movement, Full Employment Action Council, Citizen/Labor Energy Coalition, and other community and political groups.

PCOC aims to build a statewide coalition that can press for comprehensive legislation limiting the effects of plant shutdowns and layoffs in Oregon. Such legislation would establish clear social responsibilities for employers and guarantee specific rights to employees and communities. Still in its draft stages, it contains provisions for prior notification, full financial disclosures, democratic planning to prevent unemployment, severance pay, compensation to communities for tax losses, retraining, relocation assistance, technical support for community, employee and/or government buy-outs of closing plants or relocating businesses, and a public investment fund from business revenues to support economic development in declining areas.

This legislative campaign received

unanimous endorsement from the State AFL-CIO Convention last year, and a strong labor plank is being prepared for the State Democratic Platform Convention. Strategies for community education and a grassroots campaign in support of the legislation are currently being developed. An unanticipated outgrowth of these efforts has been a commitment by Region III of the International Woodworkers of America (IWA) to introduce a “model bill” on shutdowns and layoffs in every Western legislature. Finally, in late June, a Northwest Conference on Plant Closings is being sponsored by the Progressive Alliance in cooperation with the IWA and the PCOC coalition. This will aid public visibility and political impact.

Oregon DSOC members have also been involved in assembling a community coalition in response to elimination of the ADC-Unemployed Parent program and the substitution of a punitive work relief program. Successful efforts have been made to link the plant closure and welfare cutback organizing.

### Where Next?

DSOC has made full employment its central issue, through work in support of the Humphrey-Hawkins Bill, in Democracy '76 and the DEMOCRATIC AGENDA, in the Full Employment Action Council, and in organized labor. Yet full employment can be too abstract an idea and federal targets too far away or ineffective for many of the people we seek to reach as potential constituencies. The challenge to DSOC chapters and supporters is how to make organizing for economic democracy and full employment more concrete and immediate.

There is tremendous potential for organizing at local and state levels in response to the growing number of plant shutdowns and layoffs. Attempts to roll back many if not all the social welfare gains of the 1960s and '70s are gaining strength at the same time that job losses are increasing. These issues dominate not only the lives of the people most affected by a closure or a cutback but can literally destroy whole communities.

We must raise the issues of jobs and income as the major links that can connect local campaigns to a democratic movement for social change.

*Bill Thomas has been active in PCOC. He serves on the DSOC national board.*



# Rally Against Registration

By Patrick Lacefield

**D**ESPITE A SCANT FIVE WEEKS lead time, more than 30,000 people defied blustery winds on March 22 to rally in Washington against draft registration, conscription and the threat of war. It was a turnout of high school and college students, of labor and peace groups, of feminists and democratic socialists. Busloads of protesters came from the large cities of New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, and Detroit, but they came also from Tallahassee, Florida and Bangor, Maine, French Lick, Indiana, and Birmingham, Alabama, Columbia, Missouri and Durham, North Carolina. Protests occurred the same day in San Francisco, where 5000 marched, and in Minneapolis, Dayton, St. Louis, San Diego, Eugene, Los Angeles, and Houston.

The action, the largest and most significant antiwar demonstration since Richard Nixon's second inaugural in January 1973, was initiated by the United States Student Association and the Youth Section of DSOC in response to President Carter's State of the Union call for draft registration. Soon other organizations signed on—the Americans for Democratic Action, Mobilization for Survival, the New American Movement, the War Resisters League, and several dozen others. Aside from the traditional peace and pacifist groups, a significant outreach to labor marked a striking difference between this effort and the antidraft movement of a dozen years past. District Council 37 of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees not only endorsed the action and sent buses but also helped with printing of project fliers and sent Director Victor Gotbaum to the rally to speak. District 65 of the United Auto Workers also sent members and supported the march as did the Machinists, who provided valuable material assistance. District 1199 Hospital Workers Union, long a stalwart in the movement against the Vietnam War, also supported the march as did the UAW, AFSCME and American Federation of Government Employees locals.

Key to the success of the action was the growing student movement against the draft in colleges and high schools across the country. Campuses quiescent since the end of the Vietnam War hummed with activity as students and faculty piled onto buses to Washington.

Another important factor in the turnout was the stand taken by the March 22 Mobilization steering committee in adopting a Call and politics that would assure outreach to the entire spectrum of political opinion against the draft and



ELFoto

the threat of war. The steering committee, much to the dismay of some on the sectarian left, explicitly included in the Call to the March a denunciation of the taking of hostages in Iran and the crimes of the Shah as well as a condemnation of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, events the Administration used to explain its change of heart on draft registration.

"We are here—in the words of Norman Thomas—to cleanse the American flag and not to burn it," DSOC Chair Michael Harrington told the 30,000 rallied on the west steps of the Capitol. "We are the real patriots."

Others speakers at the rally included

Representatives Ted Weiss of New York and Robert Kastenmeier of Wisconsin (only two of the nearly two dozen members of Congress who endorsed the demonstration), the Reverend Ben Chavis of the Wilmington 10, Bella Abzug, Judy Goldsmith, vice president of the National Organization for Women, Jennifer McGovern of the National Student YWCA (another endorsing group), Hilda Mason, D.C. City Council member and a DSOC member, and the Reverend Barry Lynn of the Committee Against Registration and the Draft.

Five weeks ago, when the March 22 project was kicked off with very little money, not enough staff and considerable doubts about its prospects for success, the draft registration issue was seen as unwinnable. Now, thanks to the coalition effort and in particular the efforts of DSOC, its chair Michael Harrington and DSOC activists around the country, the issue is definitely winnable. Doubts have cropped up in Congress over the efficacy of draft registration and the wisdom of the move in the face of growing popular opposition. Though the Carter Administration has pulled out all the stops in pressing individual members, at press time the vote on the Selective Service appropriations required for registration is stalled in the House Appropriations Committee as draft supporters seek to circumvent the budget ceiling by transferring funds to Selective Service from the Defense Department.

We may well be on the threshold of the antiwar movement of the 1980s, a nonsectarian movement dedicated to reclaiming the best of American ideals and democratic traditions. Just as the 1965 rally against the war sponsored by Students for a Democratic Society touched off that mass movement against American involvement in Vietnam, so March 22 has the same historical potential to curb militarism and an interventionist foreign policy. ■

*Patrick Lacefield was project coordinator for the March 22 national Mobilization Against the Draft.*



# SOCIALIST NOTES

By Nancy Kleniewski

**I**T'S PRIMARY SEASON, AND DSOC LOCALS THROUGHOUT the country are working on electoral campaigns, for both candidates and reform initiatives. The DC/MD local has made the May 6 Democratic Committee elections its top priority, endorsing three members who are running for committee: Steve Ramirez, Bob Gaw, and Stocky Everts. Their campaigns are being run through the ward organizations developed by the local. DC/MD has endorsed three candidates for delegates to the Democratic National Convention: DSOC Vice-Chair Ruth Jordan and members Kristine Blackwood and Phil Goldrick. Members from Washington also helped collect signatures in the successful petition drive to get a statehood initiative on the ballot.

In *Michigan*, the Democratic Socialist Caucus, which includes many active DSOC members, endorsed caucus member Phil Ballbach for Ingham County (Lansing area) Commissioner. Phil, who was treasurer for Zoltan Ferency's gubernatorial campaign, easily won the Commission seat. The DSC also backed three democratic socialists running for Ypsilanti City Council. The two incumbents, Pete Murdock and Harold Baize, won, while the third, Eric Jackson, who had previously served on the council, lost his bid for reelection after two years off the council. In addition to victories at the polls, the DSC also enrolled over 1,000 voters in the Democratic Party to vote for Kennedy in the April caucuses.

In Chicago, DSOC supported several candidates who won or retained seats in the State Assembly, including labor and consumer advocate Miriam Balanoff and progressive assembly members Woody Bowman, Carol Braun, and Barbara Currie. Two other DSOC-endorsed Assembly candidates, labor attorney Barbara Hillman and civil rights activist Tim Black, were unsuccessful in their bids. DSOC also supported State Senator Harold Washington, who won the primary for U.S. Representative in the First Congressional District. DSOC Vice-Chair Carl Shier from Chicago reports that because of the folding of the Daley machine, more independents won in the primaries, "... although Byrne herself has been a disaster. ..."

In *Boston*, the Jamaica Plain branch of the DSOC local tackled two machine-controlled ward committees that were hindering grassroots political activity. The progressive slates, organized under the name "Jamaica Plain '80 Committee," swept one ward and obtained several seats in the other, capturing 16 of the total of 30 contested seats. DSOC members John McDonough and Mike Schippiani were among those selected on the committee slates.

In the *Bay Area* and in *Sacramento*, DSOC locals are collecting signatures to put a "simple" tax relief measure on the ballot in November. Called the "Tax Simplicity Act," the initiative would close tax loopholes and increase corporate taxes while giving tax relief to low- and middle-income people. DSOC has joined numerous labor unions and community groups in the California Tax Reform Association, sponsor of the initiative. In recent months, Bay Area DSOC has also succeeded in getting several progressive planks adopted by the California Democratic party at its platform hearings.

An initiative demanding that the federal government "cease spending our tax money for wasteful military purposes and instead use it to provide the services that our people so desperately need, thereby creating jobs with peace by cutting the military budget" was approved by 61 percent of San Francisco voters in the November 1978 election. Now the Jobs With Peace campaign is spreading and supporters hope to get it on the ballots of many more cities for the November elections. DSOCers Harry Britt and Bob Shepard are active in the campaign. Contact The Committee to Implement the Jobs With Peace Initiative, 2990 22nd St., San Francisco, Calif. 94110.

In *Johnson County, Iowa*, DSOC members persuaded the County Convention to endorse several progressive positions, including the Dellums National Health Service Bill, the Corporate Democracy Act, the Ford-Riegle Runaway Plants Act, and the creation of a publicly-owned oil and gas corporation. Jeffrey Cox of Iowa City DSOC reports that the convention supported these and other socialist-inspired measures, despite the fact that it was dominated by Carter delegates.

In *Champaign-Urbana, Ill.*, DSOC member Bill McGrath is running for chair of the country Democratic party.

*Alaska* was the only state besides New York, Connecticut, and Massachusetts to support Ted Kennedy (as of this writing) and DSOC member Niilo Koponen is co-chair of the state Kennedy for President Committee.

Not to be outdone by their "elders," DSOC youth and student chapters are also working in electoral campaigns. In *Columbia, Mo.*, the DSOC group at the U. of Missouri has been active in the campaigns for two City Council members.

At *Oregon State U.*, DSOC member Tim Davenport has begun the formation of a regional liberal-socialist political organization, the Northwest Alliance of Progressive Youth, which will link left-leaning Young Democrats of Washington and Oregon with the Young New Democrats of British Columbia.

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THE NORTHWEST DSOC REGIONAL CONFERENCE WAS HELD April 26-27 in conjunction with the meetings of the Pacific Northwest Labor History Association and Workers Education Local 189. National Advisory Committee Co-Chair Victor Reuther spoke at several workshops and plenary sessions. National Executive Committee member Trudy Robideau spoke about DSOC and the 1980 elections.

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THE FIRST STATEWIDE CONFERENCE OF HISPANIC TRADE union leaders, backed by several unions, was held in Michigan this March. DSOCer Jose LaLuz, one of the conference organizers, noted that UAW President Doug Fraser called for a total and unconditional amnesty for undocumented workers and emphasized the important role that Hispanics will play in promoting progressive social change.



# A SPECIAL REPORT

## Unmasking "Prodscam"

By Michael Harrington

**P**RODUCTIVITY. TO MANY, PERHAPS most, on the democratic left that term defines an abstract concept in economic theory or else it simply measures how hard people work. Either way, it would seem to have little or nothing to do with the woes of the majority of Americans who now watch their living standards decline in a stagflationist America. In fact, a confused, and sometimes phony notion of "productivity" is a weapon in the hands of corporations, used, precisely, to make sure that working people and the middle class as well as the poor pay the costs of our structural crisis while the rich receive a government license to profit from it.

Let us call this phenomenon Prodscam and examine it more closely.

All societies have an "ideology," a web of half-truths that makes injustice seem just. In the Middle Ages, for instance, the serf believed that God wanted him or her to obey the feudal lord. It was thus an act of religious piety to submit to exploitation.

Under capitalism there is a perennial rationale for the maldistribution of income and wealth which is an essential of the system. And there are changing, "fashionable" justifications of the inequities of a particular period. That is where "productivity" comes in.

All dynamic societies require deductions from current production in order to provide for those who can't work (the very young and very old, the severely handicapped) and to pay for future investment. That is true in the capitalist democracies, in totalitarian Communist nations and it would be true in the best of all democratic socialist societies. But where an elite is in charge of that critical decision, it must justify itself on the grounds that it is acting on behalf of the common good.

If, the corporate ideology tells us in the United States, our distribution of income and wealth became much more fair, then the entire nation would become less efficient and although we would be more egalitarian it would be an egalitarianism that shares dwindling resources. So it is that trade unionists are often told by the company that management would really like to meet the workers' demands but, to do so would mean cutting back on production, increasing un-

middle and the bottom. During the last decade, however, the proponents of this thesis have become more militant than earlier and their argument is particularly vicious since it justifies increasing the maldistribution of income and wealth at a time when the real living standards of the majority are going down.

"Productivity" is a key word in this outrageous theory. Real wages, one is told, are not rising because output per person hour is stagnating or declining

❖ *Another 14 percent of the 'decline' in productivity is the result of the end of the transfer of workers from agriculture to industry.* ❖

employment, requiring that plants be shut down, and so on. The board room therefore courageously accepts the responsibility for disciplining the society—and, not so incidentally, receiving larger and larger profits, since those are necessary if business is to promote the common good.

After all, capitalism has always believed in "trickle down"—giving monies to the people at the top so that they can invest for the benefit of those at the

and noninflationary raises can only take place when they are financed by growing production. In fact, of course, the living standards of the people in the middle and at the bottom could be raised without inflation even when productivity was declining if the shares of income and wealth were redistributed from the top down. But that is exactly what Prodscam is designed to forestall. It rationalizes increasing that maldistribution.

### 1. WHO DOES WHAT, BY CENSUS CATEGORIES (percentage of total employed)

	1972	1978	1985 (projected)
<b>White collar</b>	47.8%	50.1%	51.2%
Professional & technical	14.0	15.1	15.1
Managers & administrators	9.8	10.7	10.8
Sales workers	6.6	6.3	6.1
Clerical workers	17.4	17.9	19.2
<b>Blue collar</b>	35.0	33.3	32.8
Craft & kindred	13.2	13.1	13.2
Operatives	16.6	15.3	15.0
Laborers	5.2	5.0	4.6
<b>Service workers</b>	13.4	13.6	14.2
<b>Farmers &amp; farm laborers</b>	3.8	3.0	1.8

SOURCE: 1972 & 1978, *Employment & Earnings*; 1985, *Employment & Training Report of the President, 1978.*

Dollars and Sense



In this fantasy the corporate board room is pictured as the neutral, disinterested place where decisions on behalf of the people are made. In order to fulfill this function the executives must have growing profit. They will not—God forbid!—consume those profits as luxuries but invest them in new jobs, high productivity and making the United States more competitive with West Germany and Japan. Therefore, this truly ingenious argument concludes, it is in the interest of the poor to cut back social spending in the public sector, which does not generate wealth, and to shift those savings into private profits; it is in the interest of workers to agree to wage deals that lag behind inflation because that sacrifice will prepare the way for a more productive tomorrow when living standards will once again rise; and it is in the interest of the entire society to legislate a higher profit rate, i.e. to provide business with a subsidy that it will then use to make everyone happier.

Every proposition in this theory is built on sand. Let us look at the prejudiced "facts" that support Prodsam; then at the reactionary proposals the corporate rich derive from those "facts"; and finally, at some of the democratic left ideas to deal with the actual crisis.

### "Facts" Make Myths

"Facts," it is well known, are hard, real, indisputable. Therefore when the 1980 Report of the Council of Economic Advisors provides us with the following information, there can be no dispute over what is happening: productivity in the mines went down by 6.1 percent between 1973 and 1977, by .8 percent in wholesale trade and by .3 percent in services. And in the same period, the gains were small by comparison to the post-war period: a 2.2 percent increase in non-durable manufacturing compared to 3.2 percent in 1950-1965 and 3.3 percent in 1965-1973; 1.2 percent in durable manufacturing as against 2.5 percent and 2.2 percent in those earlier periods. The depressing, inescapable conclusion? For all industries productivity went up by 2.7 percent between 1950 and 1965, by 2.0 percent in 1964-1973 and by only 1.1 percent in 1973-1977. (Average annual rates.)

Indeed, if one looks at international comparisons, the numbers are even gloomier. Between 1967 and 1978, the Committee for Economic Development

(CED) (a big business front) tells us, Japan, Germany, France, Britain and Canada all increased the Gross Domestic Product per employed person faster than this country. "Over the past two decades," the CED reports, "U.S. manufacturing productivity growth has ranged between one third and one half of the rate for Japan, Germany and France." One need not look any further, it would seem, for an explanation of the weakness of the dollar.

Now let us look more closely at the "facts."

● The "facts" are designed to prove that occupational safety and health are a bad thing. One reason for the productivity decline, the CED claims, is that "a large share of industry's resources has been diverted away from investment in innovative activities toward compliance with government regulations." But the incredible reality is that the statisticians

“The lives thus saved (by tighter safety requirements) have, from a statistical point of view, no value.”

do not count any of the gains from environmental and occupational safety as gains, i.e. the installation of antipollution equipment in a factory which reduces lung cancer, and respiratory diseases and cuts down rust on cars and the peeling of paint on houses has no statistical value. But the investment of money into the manufacture of carcinogenic cigarettes or of a plant that will pollute a community is "productive." As the Council of Economic Advisors admitted in this year's report, "The gains from social regulation—in such forms as reduced pollution and greater safety—are generally not included in measured output."

● That 6 percent decline in mining "productivity" between 1973 and 1977 just happens to coincide with tighter safety requirements. The lives thus saved have, from a statistical point of view, no value. The costs involved in saving them, however, are counted as a drag on "productivity."

● In *Accounting For Slower Economic Growth* (Brookings, 1979), Edward Denison, the leading expert in the field, estimates that those unmeasured environmental and safety gains cause about 14 percent of the "decline" in productivity. Another 14 percent is the result of an irreversible historic fact: the end of the transfer of workers from agriculture to industry. In the "old" days, which in this case lasted until 1973, the society gained in productivity when underemployed rural workers became fully employed manufacturing workers. But now that a mechanized, capital intensive agriculture has driven most of that "surplus" population to the cities—in a process subsidized by the federal government and discriminatorily benefiting agribusiness—that automatic and painless gain disappears. None of the multibillion dollar handouts to the corporations that are supposed to help us increase "productivity" can change that fact.

● Similarly, the international comparisons reflect a certain inevitable historic shift. In hearings before the Joint Economic Committee last June, its chair, Senator Lloyd Bentsen—the leading congressional proponent of "supply side economics," i.e. more corporate giveaways—noted ominously, "In 1950, it took seven Japanese to produce what one American produced. By 1977, it took less than two to match one American. In 1950 it took three German workers to match the production of one American worker. Now it's down to 1.3 Germans." But it is obvious on a moment's reflection that, if one compares German and Japanese productivity with America's right after a war in which their industrial plant was devastated, and then contrasts that with the situation thirty years later, they had to gain if they survived at all. Moreover, it should at least be noted that French and German productivity, according to the CED, is 15 percent less than that in the United States and Japanese productivity about 35 percent less. That does not mean that everything is fine in the United States: a greedy, unimaginative steel management has indeed allowed the Japanese to make major relative gains. It is to say that the "facts" are much more complex than the "productivity" champions admit.

● Women are part of the problem—a major part, if you believe the "facts." For some time now theorists at Brook-



ings and elsewhere have been explaining our troubles by citing the influx of women into the labor market in the past two decades. This, they argue, raises the "normal" ("full employment," or, now, "high employment") unemployment rate because it expands the size of the labor force. There is, of course, a value judgment in this "fact": that women's employment is less important than men's; that the contribution of women to both output and income could be dispensed with. Not so incidentally, this "fact" also overlooks a social revolution transforming women's position in society.

Now women are being scapegoated for inflation as well as unemployment. Here is the incredible argument: wages measure productivity. But women receive 59 percent of the male wage; therefore women are less productive than men and an increase in the female portion of the work force automatically lowers its overall productivity. In fact, as Lester Thurow has pointed out, an "untrained" worker who is hired at a Mississippi plantation has one level of productivity; that very same "untrained" worker put on at an automobile plant has a much higher productivity. That is, contrary to most accepted theory, the job determines the productivity of the worker, and not the other way around. To say that women are "less productive" than men is a "scientific" way of stating that women are pushed into low-wage jobs in an institutionally sexist economy.

• There is another measurement problem when one turns to the service sector. As John P. White, the deputy director of the Office of Management and Budget, told the Joint Economic Committee, in this area one measures output by input, i.e. the value which the workers produce is estimated on the basis of how much they are paid. As White says, this means "productivity measures that are little more than tautological."

### Whose Definitions?

It is now time to turn to the second phase of Prodsam: the way in which rigged definitions are used against working people and the public sector.

Here is the corporate front, CED, again: "There is strong evidence that since 1973, a low rate of capital formation has contributed substantially to lower productivity growth. . . . The rising effective tax rate on business has in-



Laurie Leifer/LNS/CPF

**“Women receive 59 percent of the male wage; therefore women are less productive than men. . . . To say that women are ‘less productive’ than men is a ‘scientific’ way of stating that women are pushed into low-wage jobs in an institutionally sexist economy.”**

hibited capital formation.” Therefore, the CED concludes in a boldface sentence: “We believe it is essential that the government quickly adopt tax policies which increase the return on investment and stimulate future economic progress.” In short, Washington should *legislate* a higher profit rate. One of the serious proposals to do exactly that is the Capital Cost Recovery Act, (sometimes called the “10-5-3” bill) which would mean a multibillion dollar loss in federal revenues and a corresponding increase in corporate profits.

The December 24th, 1979 issue of *Business Week* was admirably candid in telling what such proposals mean. “It has become acceptable to fashion tax cuts heavily skewed to business and high income owners of capital and to play down the use of the tax code to redistribute income to the poor.” And then, the bottom line: “With the U.S. economy facing several sluggish years, the swing of tax benefits to capital can only be achieved at the expense of wages.” And, one should add, at the expense of the public sector, its employees and beneficiaries. To get an idea of how bold the right has become on this issue, consider the fact that Alan Greenspan testified before Congress in 1978 that a \$5 billion giveaway to the corporate rich did not have sufficient “emphasis on corporate tax cuts and cuts in the upper and middle income tax brackets.”

But what about the corporate argu-

ment that business needs these monies to invest on our behalf, to increase jobs and productivity? A *New York Times* editorial last November, entitled “American Myopia, Incorporated,” helps clear up that point. The Comptroller General’s office, the *Times* reported, had analyzed why the Japanese are so successful in comparison to the United States. “There is no single reason,” the *Times* said in summarizing the report, “but one big factor is a greater Japanese willingness to look five to ten years into the future and sacrifice current profits to future gains. They have been willing to invest in good service, quality control and design that will result in market penetration and profits some day but that until then must be considered as a loss.” Japanese businessmen, the Comptroller found, think “that American firms are too preoccupied with maximizing short-term profits.” And that, the *Times* notes, means that firms in this country are apt to slight precisely those activities which would provide retained profits for the future.

The problem, then, is not, as the CED suggests, a function of the federal tax code but is rooted in American corporate structures. And this is true of American money markets, too. The December 31, 1979 issue of *Business Week* reported, “After more than a decade of fevered speculation that has dangerously skewed the flow of capital through the U.S. economy, 1980 is supposed to be the year when investors come back to ba-



sics—stocks and bonds—and turn away from options, commodity futures, precious gems and works of art." In other words, the rich have been putting their money into those inflation hedges which do *nothing* to increase productivity and much to bid up inflationary, speculative prices.

Let us generalize. Under conditions of pervasive uncertainty, emergent recession and soaring prices, the corporations and the rich would have to be particularly stupid to hazard the "risk capital" provided free of charge by the federal government on risky investments in jobs and productivity. Therefore, the subsidies to the affluent rationalized by Prodsam will most certainly increase the maldistribution of wealth, will probably increase inflation by providing new funds for speculative games, and will have a minimal impact upon productivity.

### *What's the Problem?*

Does this mean that there is no problem in this area? Not at all. In the worldwide crisis of advanced capitalism, basic industries which were once the very core of the system, like steel, are in the process of rapid structural change. There are two ways of handling this unprecedented situation. The government can allow market forces to punish workers, destroy communities and impoverish entire regions—such as it is now doing to steel towns in the Mahoning Valley—while at the same time providing capital with subsidies that protect it from those same market forces and underwrite profit-grubbing and inefficiency.

Or it would be possible to have a democratically planned transition focused on working people and their communities. Ironically, Japanese superiority on precisely this count is, as the Joint Economic Committee hearings on productivity shamefacedly acknowledged last year, in part a function of the fact that the United States government *required* the Japanese (and the Marshall Plan recipients) to engage in planning but would not use this eminently sensible procedure here. As a democratic socialist, I do not advocate such a planned transition in order to help corporations. But knowing that the mixed economy will be with us for the foreseeable future, the fact is that such planned full employment policies would call forth more private sector investments in productivity than the tax giveaways. Under condi-

tions of full employment, business would voluntarily scramble to invest money in wealth production rather than in speculation for a rather simple reason: they would make more money that way.

Secondly, there are some radical—and practical—ideas now being developed by European socialists that bear very much on the productivity issue. In Sweden, Holland, and Denmark socialists are urging "collective profit sharing." In essence, the workers in an industry, along with public representatives, would receive and collectively vote shares of stock from the companies paid as a tax obligation. This is totally unlike the Employee Stock Ownership Plans (ESOPs) in the United States which provide workers *as individuals* with shares of stock and thus guarantee that this atomized form of "ownership" will have no effect on company policy. In the European socialist proposals the workers would get a growing share in the control of corporate wealth. Under those circumstances of partial socialization of industry, the producers could well be open to deferring present consumption in the name of a future investment which would benefit them.

The critical point is that Prodsam

is an attempt to define and deal with a structural crisis of the American capitalist system by means of reactionary, rigged "facts" that rationalize policies which have little to do with productivity and much to do with having government protect the rich at the expense of the working people, the middle class, and the poor. And the democratic left has to come up with planned, full employment structural policies which, if they do not basically transform the nature of American society, will increase the area of public investment in useful goods and services (solar energy, an efficient rail system) as a key to full employment and *real* productivity gains. Under capitalism, the national product is always "gross" in every sense of the word: it values carcinogenic products and polluting investments but not miners' lives or the people's lungs. Prodsam manipulates these vicious, partisan "facts" to justify the newest installment of socialism for the rich and free enterprise for the rest of us. The real solution is vice versa. ■

*Michael Harrington is the national chair of the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee.*

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## Discover Democratic Socialism

Do you think of yourself as a socialist? Do you belong to a socialist organization? If you answered yes to the first question and no to the second, then you should join the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee (DSOC). DSOCers are active in unions, minority, community and feminist organizations, the anti-nuclear movement and the left wing of the Democratic party. We do not separate our vision from practical politics. It is because we are socialists that we have a unique contribution to make to the democratic left, showing how incremental reforms must be extended toward a structural transformation of society. By joining thousands of DSOC members in 40 locals and every state you can be part of the resurgence of the American left.

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# Power Down But Not Out in Fort Wayne

By William Mosley

**W**HILE A CONCRETE TOWER bedecked by construction derricks begins to rise above the Fort Wayne, Indiana skyline, a group of citizen activists battles the corporate power the structure represents. The tower is the future headquarters of Indiana and Michigan Electric Company, the privately owned utility that supplies power to this city of 180,000. The activist group is the Association for Municipal Power (AMP), a coalition of consumer advocates, union members, and other citizens who for more than a year and a half have campaigned to create a municipally-owned utility.

"I & M is an example of a utility that cannot be regulated," says Allan Classen, AMP chair and executive director of Fort Wayne's Consumer Center.

The AMP-I & M battle is an example of a local business elite mobilizing its financial power against the interests of the community.

Twice within the past year I & M has been ruled against for overcharging its customers, once by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and once by the Indiana Court of Appeals, but thanks to legal maneuvers it has avoided refunding a dime. Total overcharges as assessed by the two bodies exceed \$100 million.

AMP grew out of the Consumer Center when a number of its members began researching the possibility of re-establishing a municipal electric system through the citizen initiative process. (Fort Wayne had maintained a city-owned electric utility until 1974). In September 1978 a group of 28 citizens, including representatives of the local United Auto Workers and AFL-CIO chapters, met and decided to form an organization to put the question of municipalizing I & M's system to a citywide vote. The subsequent petition drive, conducted in the spring and summer of 1979,

collected over 7,000 signatures, 4,000 more than needed to put the question on the ballot. The city then agreed to undertake a study to determine the legal and economic feasibility of a takeover, and to hold the referendum on May 6\*, the day of the Indiana primary.

Before the referendum campaign got underway, however, I & M and its corporate allies took the offensive. They mobilized support in the Indiana General Assembly for Senate Bill 76, a seemingly innocuous initiative to stabilize the service boundaries of rural electrical cooperatives, which contained an added provision—that city governments would be prohibited from acquiring the property of private utilities by condemnation.

With others conceding defeat, AMP, through vigorous lobbying, managed to have an amendment introduced to preserve cities' rights to condemn utility property for the establishment of municipally-owned systems (sponsored, ironically, by a representative from Gary, not Fort Wayne). The amendment was defeated on the House floor by a 63-27

\* As we went to press word came that an injunction had been obtained forbidding city officials to place the utility takeover question on the ballot. AMP has vowed to place it on the ballot in November.



vote, far short of the 51 votes needed but more than anyone had expected. S.B. 76 then passed by an 86-8 vote.

Classen believes his group's defeat was engineered not by I & M alone but by a coalition of bankers, investors, and self-appointed "civic improvement" groups in Fort Wayne that worked arm-in-arm with the utility to squelch consumer activism.

The Fort Wayne story is only the latest chapter in an ongoing, nationwide movement by citizens to establish ownership and control over their own localities' power sources. Today more than 2,000 municipalities own their electric utilities, although privates produce 80 percent of the total kilowatt hours.

One of the more recent citizen victories occurred in 1974 in Massena, N.Y., when voters overwhelmingly elected to acquire the facilities of Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation after the utility attempted a 23.5 percent rate hike. Niagara Mohawk spent over \$100,000 in the final month of its losing campaign to preserve less than one-fourth of one percent of its electric sales.

And in Cleveland this past year, private interests mercilessly exploited the city's financial crisis in an attempt to regain control of its electric system, only to be fought off by determined citizen activists backed by then mayor Dennis Kucinich.

There have been defeats for municipal power, however. Westchester County, N.Y. lost in its attempt to take over its share of Con Ed's facilities, and Berkeley, Calif. consumers failed twice in the early seventies to establish a city-owned utility.

Studies show clearly that public systems provide consumers with lower cost power. In 1975, according to *Public Power* (September-October 1977) the average annual electric bill to residential customers of private electrics was \$275.17, compared to \$236.19 for customers of public electrics, even though the average annual kwh consumption of public utility customers was 23 percent higher.

"If we do have a successful referendum, we give our legislators a mandate," says Classen. "The politics will be different next time." ■

Bill Mosley is a DSOC member in Fort Wayne.



# BOOK REVIEW

By Fred Siegel

*The Life and Soul of a Legendary Jewish Socialist: The Memoirs of Vladimir Medem*, translated and edited by Samuel A. Portnoy, New York: KTAV Publishing House Inc., 75 Varick St., N.Y.C. 10014, 1979.

**T**HE ANTI-SEMITISM OF THE NEW LEFT WAS LIKE A powerful wave: the froth dissolved as the water receded, but the hurt it inflicted lingered on. In the wake of that hurt and all the agonies that preceded it, from the Bolshevik destruction of the Jewish Bund to the Nazi-Stalin pact to Slansky cum Scharansky, the attitude of even leftwing Jews towards socialism has become increasingly problematic. Jews, it seems, set the table of the great revolutionary banquet but are never around to eat the meal.

It is not surprising, then, that there has been an unraveling of the socialist tradition. In Russia, for instance, Scharansky's brother-in-law began by criticizing Stalinism, moved on to repudiate Lenin and then the entire socialist tradition, including the Bund. In the process of repudiating the Bund, the fount of so much of Jewish radicalism, he came to embrace Vladimir Jabotinsky, arch critic of the Bund and mentor to Menachim Begin.

The attempts of increasingly conservative Jewish journals such as *Commentary* and *Midstream* to similarly write socialism out of the Jewish past are well known. In the past

few years a number of new leftist journals like *Jewish Socialist Critique* and the *New International Review* as well as refurbished magazines like *Jewish Frontiers* and *Jewish Currents* have tried to revive and reconsider the Jewish identification with socialism.

*The Life and Soul of a Legendary Jewish Socialist: The Memoirs of Vladimir Medem* will be essential reading for the revivalists. In his superbly edited translation of Medem's memoirs, Samuel Portnoy makes available for the first time in English the forgotten life of one of the most lionized of Jewish socialists. Medem, the chief spokesman for the Bund on theoretical matters, was intimately concerned with the two souls of Jewish radicalism, one ethnic and the other supposedly supra-national. Medem was revered by Jewish socialists in both Europe and America because though raised as a Christian by wholly assimilated Jewish parents, he chose to identify himself with the Jewish people and devote himself to the Jewish labor movement. Like the Bundists he served, Medem was a dyed-in-the-wool democrat. His principled critique of Leninism was once part of an authentically pluralist and Marxist alternative to centralized Bolshevik authoritarianism. Today Medem, a loser in the tragic struggles of 1917, is unknown even to experts in Russian history. For the revivalists of the Jewish left, however, Medem is too important to be ignored. ■

*Fred Siegel is a labor historian.*

## North-South Socialists

By Nancy Lieber

**W**HEN MORE THAN 100 delegates and observers from four continents gathered in Santo Domingo March 26-28 for the Socialist International's (SI) "Regional Conference on Latin America and the Caribbean," the participants met under circumstances markedly different from those of the previous SI journey to the Dominican Republic. Two years ago, a small SI mission headed by then Prime Minister of Portugal Mario Soares arrived in the midst of a tumultuous presidential campaign only to be ordered out of the country the next day.

Now, two years later, SI leaders Willy Brandt, François Mitterrand, and Mario Soares were greeted at the airport by large friendly crowds, enthusiastic TV, radio, and newspaper coverage, and official welcoming ceremonies in the air-

port reception lounge. In fact, as guests of the ruling democratic socialist party, the PRD (Partido Revolucionario Dominicano), we delegates and observers enjoyed similar VIP treatment.

The PRD, headed by the extremely popular and dynamic José Francisco Peña-Gomez, joined the SI in 1976, the same year that Willy Brandt became president and Bernt Carlsson general secretary. After PRD candidate Antonio Guzman won the presidential election in 1978, his actual inauguration was by no means assured until the Carter Administration intervened to guarantee the results of the free election. *That crucial intervention was due in good part to pressure from individual European socialist leaders.* So it was appropriate that the Santo Domingo Conference open with an international solidarity rally for PRD militants and supporters.

The actual conference began the

next day under the cloud of two very recent events—the assassination of Archbishop Romero in El Salvador, and the weekend decision by the Manley government in Jamaica to suspend negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

### *Faces of Imperialism*

Guillermo Ungo, head of the SI-affiliated National Revolutionary Movement, reported on the situation in El Salvador. The Military-Christian Democratic Junta has intensified its policy of "reforms with repression." The aim is to destroy the trade union and mass political organizations so as to eliminate the threat of a Sandinista outcome in El Salvador. Moreover, Ungo continued, the Junta, the U.S. Government, and the Venezuelan Government are preparing a military invasion of the country using

Continued on page 14



**SANTO DOMINGO**, from page 13  
Puerto Rican and Venezuelan soldiers and U.S. counterinsurgency advisers. Later, as we talked privately, he deplored the fact that the earlier, more progressive positions of the Carter Administration seem to have given way in El Salvador to the familiar "Yankee imperialist" positions of yesterday. Was the U.S. going to repeat the Vietnam mistake, he wondered?

In Jamaica, on the other hand, "Yankee imperialism" is perceived not in the military, but in the economic sphere. Prime Minister Manley's acceptance of an IMF loan did not cure Jamaica's economic woes. As Canadian Socialist leader Ed Broadbent saw it, the Jamaicans in effect had been told by the IMF to "accept Friedmanism or face economic ruin." The irony is that if the Manley government, in refusing such unacceptable choices, goes with another option—aid from Iraq and Libya, for example—the U.S. government no doubt will decry such moves toward Castroism.

IMF or Arab oil money—shouldn't nations of dependent economies have a few other choices open to them? Speakers frequently referred to the recently-released Brandt Commission Report on

North-South relations, with its call for a New International Economic Order (NIEO).

Nonmember parties of the SI also spoke of their problems, their struggles. If the Sandinista representative's report on developments in Nicaragua provided a model of hope, the case as presented by the Haitian and Guatemalan socialists was bleak. And what of the possibilities in Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Brazil? The list, the speeches go on.

The mere existence of an international/regional forum for often isolated Latin American and Caribbean socialists was an important accomplishment in itself. The fact that it was the Socialist International which was providing the speakers with a platform was equally important. For a decade ago the SI was not considered to be on the side of progressive forces in the battle against entrenched political and economic oligarchies. Rather, its almost totally European membership did not want to antagonize its American ally, and therefore did not speak out against direct or indirect U.S. support of the dictators. With the 1976 leadership change, the SI made a conscious decision to expand its membership beyond its European borders; there are

now seven full and three consultative parties from these regions.

### *Expanding Activities*

As possibilities for democratization have opened in the area, it has been only natural that the Caribbean and Latin America have become a new focus of activity for the SI. This conference was, in fact, the first regional conference of the SI to be held outside of Europe (where the Confederation of Socialist Parties of the European Community meets annually).

It should be noted that the SI's expanding global activity (this conference, recent missions to southern Africa, a regional conference projected for next year in Asia) has also brought a certain radicalization of the organization. Broad coalitions of popular forces and anti-imperialist analyses were advocated by most (but not all) of the conference participants. The conference marked the first step by the SI to open its debates and deliberations to the Nonaligned Movement as a whole. A telegram was sent to its head, Fidel Castro, inviting the Movement to send an official observer delegation. Similarly, a message was also sent to Marshall Tito, filling him in on the purpose and intent of the conference.

It is now up to the regional Latin America Committee to determine what kind of action program will come out of the Conference in the form of recommendations to the SI Bureau. As Brandt insisted, the SI is not the International Executive of Democratic Socialism. The SI can and does provide growing interest, moral solidarity and material aid to the extent possible. (And what other international political organization is doing even that?) But it is for the Latin Americans themselves to chart their course. As Brandt concluded, "This conference is an expression of the political will of the parties affiliated to our International to make their contribution, to the best of their abilities, towards bringing ultimate success to the independence and self-determination of the Latin American and Caribbean nations, to a democratic revival, social progress and social justice in these countries." ■

*Nancy Lieber represented DSOC at the recent Santo Domingo conference. She is project director for the Institute for Democratic Socialism.*

### **ELECTION**, from page 3

Anderson-type voters were Jimmy Carter's initial base in winning the 1976 nomination. He needed the traditional Democratic liberal base to win the general election. Reagan will give him lots of room in the center to pick his own constituency for reelection.

Does that mean Carter has worked the political system effectively? In our view, not at all. Tactically, he's been adept, particularly at using White House resources to guarantee his own renomination and reelection. Strategically, he's had no idea of what he wants other than to win. His agenda as President is constantly defined and redefined by others. He has left and will leave no enduring mark on American politics or the party system. Early in his Administration, he had the possibility of moving left, defining an agenda, solidifying his constituency, and moving the country. That advice was offered him in these pages by Jim Chapin in December 1976. Carter chose instead to drift to the right; in his second term, the drift may be even more pronounced.

For us, that leaves 1984 wide open.

Kennedy has succeeded McGovern and the early Humphrey as the tribune of the left wing of the Democrats, and he may run again. Whether he does or not, he will not be the towering presence keeping others away that he was in 1979. Kennedy's resurgence has given some Democrats pause in their budget-cutting craze. Strong liberal showings in a few primaries, some challenges to the neo-conservative Democrats in office, the emergence of some new leaders and spokespeople from the broad coalition involved in such formulations as DEMOCRATIC AGENDA, the Progressive Alliance, the Citizen/Labor Energy Coalition and Big Business Day will give such budget-cutters further pause. The next four years will not be good for the left; neither will they be disastrous. Politically, we are still between realignments as the system drifts with Carter. Under his weak leadership, we must build our own forces for another day. In doing so, we should particularly focus on the important races and referenda below the Presidential level. That is our task for the next four years. ■



# ON THE LEFT

By Harry Fleischman

**I**N 1968, WHEN NORMAN THOMAS WAS IN A LONG Island nursing home, Allard Lowenstein had just succeeded in "dumping" President Johnson and was running for Congress. His supporters were legion and prominent personalities joined in campaigning for him. Frenetic as was Al's campaigning, he nevertheless made time regularly to bring his celebrities—Paul Newman, Robert Vaughn and the grandchildren of two of Norman's opponents, Franklin D. Roosevelt III and Wendell Willkie Jr. among them — to Norman's bedside. When I told Al it was a kind thing he was doing, he agreed—with a twist. "I couldn't possibly pay these campaigners for all their help. What better symbol of my gratitude than to bring them face to face with one of the greatest Americans of all time." And Norman was delighted when Al won. Al was a pied piper of peace and justice. His warm smile, witty and incisive comments and moral indignation challenged and won thousands of youngsters and oldsters to put their bodies on the line, to work with him for peace, civil rights and social justice. The *New York Times* editorialized that "like his hero, Norman Thomas, he was an agent of ferment. His death by violence is the more scaring because the only weapon he ever used was the sharp language of debate." We echo *Newsday's* plea, "Many members of the House knew Lowenstein as a fighter for lost causes and a foe of violence. . . . Action on the

Kennedy-Rodino gun bill would be the best eulogy they could offer."

UNIONS RIGHTFULLY HAVE HAILED THE U.S. SUPREME Court decision barring the Whirlpool Company from retaliating against employees who refused to perform extremely dangerous work. The justices concluded that the Labor Department's regulation on that subject was consistent with what Congress had intended in passing the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) in 1970. But I wonder if the unions aren't being too easily satisfied.

When two workers refused to work on an old wire-mesh guard screen 20 feet above the plant floor (10 days after another Whirlpool employee was killed when he fell through the guard screen) Whirlpool put written reprimands into their employment files, and refused to pay the workers for the shift in which they refused to work. Whirlpool argued that the "right of refusal" constituted a right to "strike with pay," receiving wages for work not performed. The Supreme Court did not deal with that. Its ruling puts no obligation on a company to pay a worker for work not done. It simply protects the worker against retaliation, such as reprimands.

Since work-related accidents cause some 13,000 deaths and 26,000 amputations a year in the U.S., American workers might well look at the example of socialistic Sweden. There, when a union safety steward shuts down an unsafe plant, all workers receive full pay until the company makes the workplace safe—a real incentive for the company to act quickly. ■

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### DEBS-THOMAS DINNER

May 9, 1980, NYC

Honoring Ray Majerus  
Director, Region 10, UAW  
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# JIMMY HIGGINS REPORTS

**WE STAND CORRECTED**—In February this column took a swipe at ILGWU President Sol C. Chaikin for a statement *Business Week* erroneously quoted him on. Chaikin supposedly said, "I'll be damned if I know a way to get the women more money. The value of their work isn't set by theoretical principles but on the value of the work in the marketplace." In a letter to the labor editor of *Business Week*, Chaikin clarifies: "Women who are sewing machine operators in the ILGWU work harder than people on the assembly lines organized by the United Auto Workers. I told you that in our contractor shops no work is performed without the total involvement of the human personality and skill and that the workers' coordination between hand, mind and eye and the physical effort required is equal to or superior to that found in so-called male jobs. Consequently in terms of skill or effort our Union's members are easily worth as much as workers in most crafts covered by contracts negotiated by the UAW or the Steel Workers, but I'll be damned if I know of a way to get these women that much more money." *Business Week* apologized. We do, too, for spreading the misimpression. And two marks against journalism—one for *Business Week* and one for us.

**THOUGHTS WHILE WALKING** Across the Brooklyn Bridge—A subway strike hit just before deadline. It's all part of the great struggle against inflation. New York State's Metropolitan Transit Authority is fighting inflation by resisting the wage demands of employees whose wages have fallen about 30 percent in real terms over the last six years. At the same time, President Carter and his bipartisan conservative coalition are fighting inflation by cutting federal expenditures to balance the budget. And of course, we're all expected to fight inflation by relying less on the automobile and reducing our dependence on imported oil. As a result of all these struggles, transit aid is being cut as part of the effort

to balance the budget. More New York commuters are relying on cars, more oil is being used, and the city's economy is losing an estimated \$140 million daily in revenues and sales, and the fare will probably end by going up 50 percent. The press portrays the striking workers as the villains of the piece; what about this crazy quilt system?

**THE STRUGGLE IS LONG**, but, says the International Chemical Workers Union, victory may be near in the effort to win a union contract and human decency for workers at Sanderson Farms in Laurel, Miss. On May 17, a broad national coalition organized as the Committee for Justice In Mississippi will hold a major rally in Laurel. The strike has been going on since February 27, 1979, and the basic issue is dignity. As one worker said of Sanderson's attitude toward employees, "They just didn't treat us like human beings. They treated us worse than they treated the chickens." Laurel is in a corner of the South the civil rights movement did not really reach, and the Ku Klux Klan has been historically strong there, particularly as a counterweight to CIO efforts in the 1940s. But there is another history in Laurel, and the union and its supporters have been stressing it. That other history includes the effort of poor farmers in the 1860s to stay out of the Confederacy and their successful resistance to conscription in the pro-slavery army. It includes successes by socialists in the Debsian era, and some efforts at militant unionism and interracial solidarity. The Chemical Workers will remind Laurel of its proud history on May 17. If you can join the march or would like to support the organizing efforts of workers at Sanderson Farms, contact the Committee for Justice in Mississippi, c/o Local 882, 226-D Ellisville Blvd., Laurel, Miss. 394440 phone 601 649-8836. Or contact the International Chemical Workers, 1655 W. Market Street, Akron, Ohio 44313, telephone (216) 867-2444.

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