

DEMOCRATIC LEFT

EDITED BY
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Third Party, First Choice?

By Jim Chapin

THIRD PARTIES AND INDEPENDENT movements have been as much a feature of American life as the "two-party system." They usually indicate trends in the greater society. For most of our history the larger and more successful movements have come from the left. But in the third quarter of the 20th century the more successful movements have been from the right; a significant indication of the unfortunate tendencies in the general society. In the last decade third party or independent candidates have made good showings in many elections, even winning at the level of governor, senator, and big-city mayor. In 1976, for the first time since 1952, the various candidacies of the "left" (if one includes Gene McCarthy) for president got more votes than those of the "right." This year, besides the usual splinter parties on both sides (the most significant and best financed of which will be the Libertarian party, which last time got on 29 ballots and received as much as 5.5 percent of the vote in its best state—Alaska), there are two important new entries in the sweepstakes: independent Republican John Anderson and Barry Commoner of the Citizens Party.

Both candidacies deserve serious examination, for historically political realignment comes not solely from the activities of those working within a major party or from those working outside of it, but from a combination of the two. The Republican party, which emerged as a major national force in 1856, had as its



“No middle class radical group in the last half century has ever gotten more than 3 percent of the vote.”

roots both a third party movement and components from the two earlier major parties. The original Abolitionist movement had been antipolitical, but one sector became political in 1840 when it ran the Liberty party ticket for the presidency and other offices in the years 1840-47. Although it received only about 1 percent of the national vote in 1840 and 1844, in 1848 it merged with dissident elements from the two major parties ("Barnburner" Democrats from New York led by Martin Van Buren and "Conscience" Whigs from Massachusetts and other states led by Charles Francis Adams) and

ran a "Free Soil" ticket that got 10 percent of the national vote. In the less polarized circumstances of 1852 and with a less well known ticket than Van Buren and Adams, the Free Soil party got only 5 percent of the vote. But as a result of the 1854 Kansas-Nebraska crisis, the existing party structure disintegrated. In some states the Republican party consisted of the old Free Soil elements mixed with elements of both parties, in some states, such as New York, the Whig party simply marched en masse over to the Republican party and *became* the party. (All this implies that the proper com-

parison of the Commoner candidacy is not to the Republican party of 1856 but to the Liberty party of 1840.)

Anticorporate Strategy

The new Citizens Party intends to build a movement around an anticorporate program (it seems now to have abandoned its initial praise of free enterprise) which is democratic socialism in all but name. It has recruited fairly successfully and now claims about 4,000 paid-up members around the country—which puts it close behind DSOC in size. Socially, the bulk of both memberships seem to be

LETTERS

To the Editor:

Despite Sölle's and Wallace's lamentation of the class-collaborationist qualities of the protagonist (April), *Breaking Away* was a great film. True, not an odds-on favorite for honors at the "Annual Feminist/Socialist Americana Film Festival," but how can we afford to slight a HOLLYWOOD film which examines class differences rather than upper-middle class neuroses?

Class consciousness was constantly and beautifully reinforced in the film: the love of the hero, Dave, for his friends; his riding the big race for the gang instead of only himself; even the minor scene where Mike's brother the cop forgets his role and cheers his brother and class in the race with, "Ride, you Cutter!" Finally, the most beautiful scene, the father sharing his class pride and anger at being used, giving his son an honest-to-God "alienated labor" speech in an American film.

Then the hero sells out and goes to college. Well, a lot of us sold out and went to college! I left friends and family on assembly and unemployment lines in Detroit, but not all of us forgot. Maybe the hero of *Breaking Away* forgets, forgets the love for his friends, the love for

his family, and renounces his class. Or maybe the hero remembers! Think of the sequel: the French student our hero falls for is a socialist, he finds theory, he joins DSOC. . . .

One of those "lost virtues of the Midwest" is our lack of cynicism. See you at the movies!

David J. Rathke
St. Louis, Mo.

■ ■ ■

To the Editor:

Ever since the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, DEMOCRATIC LEFT and DSOC have displayed understandable concern about the dangers of war. Not so understandable has been the emphasis on the perils and immorality of opposing aggression and war rather than on the dangers created by the actual wars now going on.

Mike Harrington condemned the invasion of Afghanistan but made it clear to friend and foe alike that such verbal admonition is the limit that aggressors should expect in the world today. He rejected the partial grain embargo, which at the least would remove the onus from our country of supplying combat rations for Soviet troops in Afghanistan. DSOC has failed to endorse the boycott of the

Moscow Olympics even though that has been the most practical proposal for letting the Soviet public know (what the vast majority does not know) that there are more than eight Soviet divisions fighting in Afghanistan.

Sanford Gottlieb doesn't bother with the ritual condemnation of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. He traces it all back to America and NATO whose policies "aggravate their [Soviet] fears and spur their counter-measures." At least in the pages of DEMOCRATIC LEFT the spirit of Munich is alive and well.

DSOC participated in a "March on Washington" endorsing three slogans: No Registration, No Draft, No War. Whatever my views on the issue of a mercenary army that exploits the plight of the poor and the minorities versus universal service, I can at least understand what the first two slogans mean. But the third one, NO WAR? That's the one I really agree with and I'd like to know what DEMOCRATIC LEFT and DSOC propose to do about the actual wars now going on?

Let's list the wars where people are fighting and dying. There's the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the Vietnam in-

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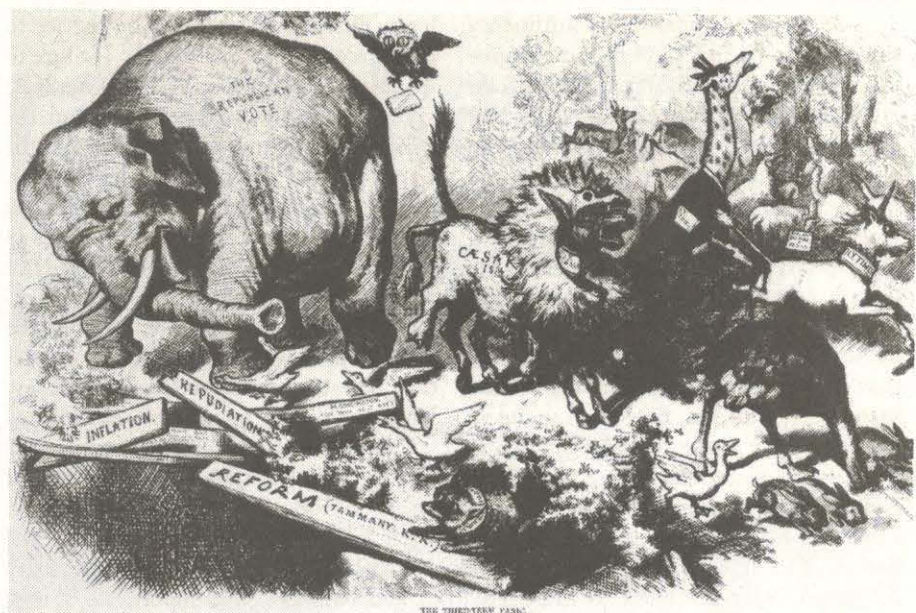
similar—relatively well-educated, largely white, heavily recruited from those in academic contexts (teachers and students), the social services, and community work. In fact, at least ten of the 280 delegates at its founding convention in April were DSOC members. There are differences: relatively few at their convention had had serious electoral experience; relatively few had serious labor connections; and a higher percentage of delegates (about 10 percent) were black than at our affairs (about half came from the Philadelphia Consumers' Party).

Sharp disagreements on strategy surfaced—disagreements that were partially muffled only to erupt at the end of the convention into charges of "racism" and "sectarianism." The dominant group in the party, led by presidential candidate Barry Commoner, sees the party building itself by way of a national presidential campaign. A minority faction, led by Arthur Kinoy, wants to build a coalition from the "grassroots." The grassroots are defined as the tiny grouplets on the left added together into a "critical mass." Such a "critical mass" is more likely to explode than to attract new forces.

Despite disagreements on such questions, members of the Citizens Party seem to agree that what has been missing in American life is the articulation of a clear left alternative, and that the articulation of such an alternative will bring numbers to its banner. They believe that the Democratic party must be opposed, and that work in the Democratic party is of necessity foredoomed.

Clearly they have differences with us. They believe that this is a period for party building rather than coalition building. From our point of view, they don't seem to have a strategy for attracting allies outside their existing social base. No middle-class radical group in the last half century has ever gotten more than 3 percent of the vote even when it was on the ballots of almost all the states. At the Citizens Party convention, more than 20 states sent no delegations at all, and probably 10 of 30 states that *were* represented have such restrictive ballot laws that Commoner will not be qualified.

It is possible that the Citizens Party could have as many as ten thousand members at the end of the campaign, but it seems unclear whether it has any strategy for what to do after the election. A combination of unrealistic expectations and internal disagreement might mean that a



TOM THAYER 1968

New York Public Library

national showing of one percent (which would actually be quite good) would be seen as a great disappointment and lead to a collapse of morale.

The Anderson Difference

John Anderson's campaign for the presidency will probably put the Citizens Party in the shade, even though the economic principles on which Commoner and Anderson stand are so different. The activists that Anderson will bring to his banner resemble those of the Citizens Party in only one respect—they are far better educated than even the average party activist. Anderson is an appealing figure: a good speaker, obviously cultured if sometimes arrogant, and clearly this year's toast of the suburban and campus liberals. Conservative on economic issues, liberal on social issues and foreign policy, he stands in the tradition of Adlai Stevenson and Eugene McCarthy as the "thinking man's or woman's alternative" to a Kennedy (one remembers Gene McCarthy's boast in 1968 that the "A" students favored him and "C" students favored Bobby Kennedy).

He argues that he speaks for a "new coalition" in American politics—drawing Democrats, Republicans, and Independents to his banner. But cross-partisan support alone does not a coalition make. Anderson's support is highly class- and education-based: supported by those who believe that the well-educated and better-off should withdraw from the grubbiness of "interest group politics" to decide the nation's future. This belief is not new in

American history. For fifty years the liberally minded upper-middle class of the North, who make up the heart of the Anderson constituency, has felt that the two major parties—one organized around a coalition of unions, liberals, city machines and the South, and the other increasingly around conservative religion, the Sunbelt suburbs, and the aerospace industry—don't have much place for them. It is perhaps no coincidence that, as some Anderson supporters point out, the states in which Anderson expects to do best (the old industrial quadrant of the country, from Illinois and Wisconsin eastward, and the Pacific Coast) are essentially the states that Abe Lincoln carried in 1860. In a very real sense Anderson represents what the Republican party stood for before the Goldwater revolution of 1964.

In some ways, of course, Anderson articulates the same themes as Carter in the 1976 primaries—liberal social issues, a dovish foreign policy, relatively conservative economics. But because he comes from a different party and a different socio-economic milieu, he attracts a different kind of support. For one thing, it is extremely sectional—particularly strong in those areas in which Carter was weakest in the 1976 primaries and is weakest now (the northeastern megalopolis and the West Coast). This is related not only to the complicated sectionalism that is still so much a part of American life, but also to such factors as the religion and the socio-economic base of the various sections.

At present, Anderson's constituency resembles in its size (and to some degree its composition) that of the English Liberal party. Most national polls show him attracting some 18-22 percent of the electorate in a three-way race. There is a hard core of perhaps 5-8 percent, a soft core of perhaps 15 percent, with potential expansion to another 15 percent. He brings more voters to the polls, but among those who would vote regardless, he draws somewhat more from Carter than from Reagan. Since both his hardest supporters and his potential swingers would vote for Carter over Reagan, while his softer core voters would switch to Reagan more than Carter, either a gain or a loss in Anderson's support will hurt Carter. This is even more true because Anderson's strongest states are more likely to be Carter states than Reagan states.

At the 20 percent level he is competitive in some ten states (a Hartford *Courant* poll at the end of April showed Anderson 32 percent, Carter 32 percent, Reagan 28 percent in Connecticut, for example). After all, his hero Lincoln won the electoral college with an absolute majority while getting 39 percent of the popular vote. But the most likely result of a strong Anderson candidacy—decision by the House of Representatives among the three strongest candidates—would not help him much.

Anderson has a number of prob-

lems. First, he must crack the barrier to ballot access in so many states (failure to do that reduces credibility and therefore votes even in states where he is on the ballot). Second, despite his claim that the Carter-Reagan choice is somehow unfair, the blunt fact is that Carter and Reagan have so far won the majority of votes in their respective parties. Anderson did not win a single primary. In independent-minded Wisconsin, where he attracted wide support and campaigned harder than the other candidates, and where any voter could vote for anyone, he finished fourth of five candidates. Apparently the unfairness of the system is that it did not result in the right choice (i.e., *him*). Even stranger is his position that the reason he is not running as a third party candidate is the great importance of preserving the two-party system, which by his own account has failed us.

It is quite possible that the Anderson campaign may give us Ronald Reagan as president. If that is so, why is Republican National Chairman Bill Brock so upset at the Anderson candidacy? Because he wants to build a Republican majority, and he knows that most of the Anderson voters (especially those who might have stayed home otherwise) will move to the Democratic line after voting for the Illinois Congressman. This election year was supposed to be the Republican winners' chance to redraw legislative lines

from the census and win control of the Senate. If lost, the Republican opportunity will not recur.

There are other good aspects of the Anderson campaign. First, a high visibility, high finance campaign will be bringing lawsuits that attack the two-party duopoly that so often restricts our choices; second, he will draw many people back into the electoral arena, and that in itself is a good thing even though many of them will not share our politics. The ever-smaller turnout has been one of the main sources of the increasing power of the far right minority. Third, insofar as the three-way struggle will involve complicated positioning struggles, it will keep the presumptive Carter-Reagan struggle from being fought over relative degrees of Sunbelt conservatism: Carter can't take the liberal states for granted. No matter the anti-labor, conservative economics of Anderson's past, he is going to have to go some distance on these questions if he is to have any chance at all.

Three-cornered struggles make the importance of polls far more important. If Anderson stays around 20 percent in the September polls, he will probably end up with less than 10 percent of the November vote. But if he cracks the 25-28 percent barrier, he could end up with 35 percent or more of the vote and even an outside chance of winning. So the credibility issue of the campaign in terms of ballot positioning, money-raising, vice-presidential candidate and campaign management (Dave Garth) is the key to Anderson's potential success. What Anderson has going for him most is the continued cult of novelty in the United States, mixed together with the general antipolitical, antipartisan opinion in the country, which, as usual, is being attracted (as in the case of Stevenson and McCarthy) to a lifelong professional politician.

For us, the best news is that American politics is in flux—and such a situation offers opportunities to all those who want to change the existing social order. The bad news is that most of the elements in motion are still the already involved and the better off elements in society. We have not yet found a way to bring in the "missing half" of the American electorate, our potential constituency.



"A LIVE JACKASS KICKING A DEAD LION."

And such a Lion! and such a Jackass!

New York Public Library

Administration Recycles Worn-out Economic Policy

By Michael Harrington

FOR SOME TIME NOW, THE CARTER administration has been fine tuning the American economy with a broken tuner. Last month this strange method yielded dramatic results: unemployment rose to 7 percent—or roughly seven million workers—while prices soared at an annual rate of 18 percent. And everyone agrees that there is more bad news to come. That is why it is critical that the democratic left understand how the nation got into this cruel mess and—if the political difficulties of the most uncertain, and probably miserable, year in memory could be overcome—how we might get out of it.

In 1978, the Carter Council of Economic Advisers confronted the obvious: that the standard (since Roosevelt) liberal strategy of "trading off" unemployment and inflation would no longer work since those two phenomena no longer moved in different directions but marched together. "In the traditional view," the Council said that year, "the cure for inflation is a dose of fiscal and monetary restraint designed to reduce aggregate demand and thereby eliminate the conditions generating inflation." It then went on to demolish that "traditional view"—which did not keep Carter and the Council from following it shortly thereafter.

"The essence of the present inflation," the Council continued in the '78 Report, "is that the rate of wage increase and price increase reacts very slowly to idle resources and excess supply. Given this fact, an attempt to purge inflation from the system by sharp restrictions on demand would require a long period of very high unemployment and low utilization of capacity." The Report became specific. Assuming that there were no oil price increases or other inflationary shocks it would take six years of "the current level of economic slack" (7 per-



LNS/cpf

“This society has become callous to a 6 percent jobless rate, which it would have regarded as defining a recession only a decade ago.”

cent unemployment) and the loss of \$600 billion in output (at 1977 prices) to cut inflation from 6 percent to 3 percent.

In January, 1978, when those words were written, Carter was still sticking somewhat to his 1976 campaign perspective in which he pledged not to fight inflation with unemployment. By January of 1979, the Council had become more discreet, given the fact that the administration was now acting on the strategy which it had shredded a year before. But there was a passing reference to the fact that "reductions in output and major increases in unemployment are no longer as effective in slowing the rate of wage and price increase. The resulting loss of output, of jobs and of human dignity pays only modest dividends in lower inflation." In January of this year, the Council's job was intellectually demanding: it had to provide a rationale for policies which it had demonstrated would not work.

This was done by means of some delicate distinctions. A "sharp and imme-

diated" reduction in growth "would almost surely fail" as a weapon against inflation. But still Mr. Carter was going to follow a tactic which "will unfortunately means less output and employment in the immediate future than anyone would like." Moreover, workers had to be stopped from gaining wage increases which would compensate them for price increases, i.e., this "Democratic" administration favors a planned reduction in the real living standard of the mass of the American people. It was better, the Council said, to err on the side of restrictive policies which could be quickly corrected if needed—presumably the need would be signaled by the shouts of the unemployed—than to adopt job generating strategies. If any sense can be derived from all of this, the current Carter theory was, and is, that a finely orchestrated moderate recession will somehow do what six years of slack could not do in 1978.

In a time when every serious economic forecast has been significantly

wrong over a period of years, the White House assumes that it can somehow produce just the correct amount of joblessness and suffering to accomplish its purposes. That is why the Carter people were silent, but obviously very worried, about the May unemployment figures. The increase in unemployment reported for adult males (the so called "prime" workers widely regarded as the real index of economic health, a judgement which contains reactionary value judgements about the relative importance of women and minority youth) was the highest jump in more than 30 years. So it is that the experts, some of whom were debating whether there would be a recession, are now suggesting that we may see a repeat of the "Great Recession" of 1974-75.

What impact will this have upon stagflation?

Unemployment Costs

During the winter, Mr. Carter, with his new passion for the balanced budget, strove mightily to reduce federal spending at the expense of the more vulnerable sectors of the population. But now, the unemployment rise recorded at the beginning of May has increased the federal budget by *more* than all the monies so cruelly cut from it. In the *New York Times* Steven Rattner writes that a 1 percent hike in the jobless rate costs \$5 to \$7 billion in mandated benefits, e.g., unemployment compensation, food stamps, welfare, and causes the loss of \$20 billion in revenues. Thus, if we take the April jobless rate as a 1 percent increase, it will cost between \$25 and \$27 billion. If, as is now quite possible, the people forced into the street add up to 8 percent of the labor force, then the ineptitude of Carter's economic management would increase federal costs by more than \$50 billion.

Ironically, in 1976, candidate Carter constantly made this very point against President Ford. Over and over he insisted on the high cost of unemployment, and rightly argued that a recession is an intolerably expensive way of fighting inflation. Now *Business Week* reproaches Carter for the "shambles" of his "fiscal conservatism" and predicts that, if the recession is severe, "the budget deficit will reach an annual rate of \$100 billion sometime in the next three quarters."

Does this mean that the rising unemployment will have no effect at all? Not in the least. The prime rate has al-

ready declined slightly as a result of the good economic news that there are a million new unemployed. The recession of 1974-75 helped lower the annual rate of price increases from 12.2 percent in 1974 to 4.8 percent in 1976 by incrementing joblessness by three million. Or, to take the grisly, fascistic extreme, the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile made notable inroads upon the price problem by immiserating the working class, smashing its organizations and provoking hunger for the poorest of the people. It is not that the mechanisms have totally ceased to work, but that they no longer function within the political limits placed upon them. This society has become callous to a 6 percent jobless rate which it would have regarded as defining a recession only

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a decade ago. An unemployment rate of 4.9 percent cost Richard Nixon heavily in the congressional elections! But even though we have lowered our standards, 7 percent unemployment, as now, is cause for public alarm and everyone, left, right, and center agrees, that a continuation of the current trend will force Carter to adopt counter-measures.

Carter Turnaround

In short, sometime in 1980, the president will get around to affirming the position he took in 1978 and has contradicted ever since. At that point, he will jump back out of the fire and into the frying pan. It will be extremely important to watch carefully how Carter accomplishes that trick. There is abundant evidence that the administration has bought into the reactionary argument that corporations and the rich need special consideration if a tax cut is needed. In his economic message to Congress in January, Carter boasted that "... the Revenue Act of 1978 . . . provided a larger than normal share of tax reduction to investment incentive," a diplomatic reference to a \$5 billion annual, additional giveaway to the rich voted in that "austerity"

session of the Congress. And he added that, in the event of a new tax cut, "we must direct an important part . . . to the provision of further incentives for capital investment. . . ." So once again at a time of high joblessness the nation will be told that we need to give business the money to mechanize and, ultimately, reduce the number of needed workers.

Since Ronald Reagan, with Jack Kemp as his Svengali (and possible running mate) advocates an outrageously unfair version of John F. Kennedy tax cutting in a time when it no longer applies, there could well be a national chorus in favor of welfare for the wealthy. The corporations, as readers of DEMOCRATIC LEFT already know, have been campaigning for a multibillion dollar subsidy called the Capital Cost Recovery Act which will index machines but not, of course, workers' wages. In this extremely difficult year, the democratic left will have to argue and mobilize, not only against Carter's current, and unworkable, "solution," but to the new "solution" which the failure of the old solution will inspire.

But finally, isn't there a crackpot conspiracy thesis implicit in the argument of this article? Isn't it arrogant, or worse, to suggest that the president and his advisers don't know what they are doing and to predict that they are going to stumble from a cruel stupidity into a reactionary stupidity? I obviously think these charges unmerited. The key is this: the real solutions demand a relatively—but only relatively—radical break with the conventional wisdom, such as controlling monopoly prices, planning socially necessary, and publicly generated, jobs, instituting national health, checking out the statistics of our impartial energy researchers from the oil industry by creating a public energy corporation, and so on. The president, who is a moderate conservative, cannot possibly understand this point and he is therefore condemned to alternate between various unworkable policies.

In 1925, John Maynard Keynes wrote an essay entitled "The Economic Consequences of Mr. Churchill" in which he told how the British leader, with expert advice and a touching faith in the gold standard, helped to create a crisis. This sort of thing has happened before. It is happening again, as seven million unemployed Americans bitterly know. ■

Booth on Organizing

By Harry Boyte

SINCE ITS FOUNDING IN 1972, the Midwest Academy has been at the center of the community organizing-citizen action movement, training hundreds of organizers and leaders, serving such groups as Massachusetts Fair Share, Illinois Public Action Council, and Ohio Public Interest Campaign. It has helped to initiate new efforts like the Citizen/Labor Energy Coalition, bringing together unions and community organizations. And it has also played a unique role in its training sessions themselves, involving activists in community groups with others working in different progressive efforts. The Midwest Academy is now directed by Karen Thomas, with a training program headed by Steve Max. Its founder is Heather Booth, who remains president of the Academy's board. DEMOCRATIC LEFT talked with her about the Academy's history and the citizen movement in general.

D.L.: *Heather, you were a leader in the student, antiwar and women's movements of the 1960s. What led you to form the Academy?*

BOOTH: It was clear in the early seventies that the conditions that had produced the sixties movements were changing. Except for the women's movement, they were in decline. The sixties were dramatic, exciting, intense. Events overtook you, you felt victorious. There was a feeling of loss at the movement's decline.

But a number of us realized we were entering a new period. The Academy was formed as a place where we could try to understand the changes. Sixties movements were minority movements, movements of different sectors of society that often competed. Most of all, the Academy was formed to aid the growing new movement we perceived—the new organizing efforts that addressed bread and butter issues of concern to the majority, that gave people a sense of their own power, that linked working class groups up with other constituencies. There was



“The reasons people stay in a voluntary citizen group are much broader than narrow self-interest.”

a feeling of reality about the new organizing—that we were testing ideas in real life, in institutions where people lived. There was a new sense of rootedness and grounding in a mass democratic process. **D.L.:** *What do you think the Academy has accomplished over the years?*

BOOTH: Our main purpose has been to help service the new organizing—to pass on specific organizing skills, from how to do a leaflet or give a public speech to how to think about strategy and the broader context of our work. I believe we've become an institution capable of doing that.

We've also been a kind of community for many people. One of the most exciting things at the Academy is to see the process of personal transformation that people go through as they develop a commitment to social change and to each other. The Academy has been a place where people can gain perspective, get some sense of collegiality, form networks.

D.L.: *Neighborhood organizing is often criticized for being racially exclusive or even racist. What do you think of such a charge?*

BOOTH: Well, neighborhood organizations are by definition organizations of neighborhoods, which have certain boundaries. But the remarkable thing about the organizing of recent years is the ways in which different neighborhoods have made alliances. There has been a great decline in the conflicts of the past—personal conflicts, neighborhood versus neighborhood conflicts. And there has been more and more focus on the economic causes of problems. A white ethnic neighborhood will discover its problems come from redlining by banks, not from blacks.

Organizers in all the different “schools” of community organizing now have a coalition approach. They look for issues that can unite black, white, Latino communities.

D.L.: *Another criticism of community organizing is that the scope of issues is often local and immediate; what do you see as the connection between neighborhood organizing and efforts for broader change?*

BOOTH: The fact is that people come into a community group, normally, for a specific problem—a stop sign, city services, crime. That's what is called the self interest aspect of organizing, and self-interest remains a key part of organizing. But the reasons people *stay* in a voluntary citizen group are much broader than narrow self-interest. People remain involved because it's fun, because there is a sense of community. They develop skills and self-confidence. They see their neighbors develop self esteem, and feel that they are helping their neighbors. And they stay involved because they want to fight for broader justice. You can see the transformation people go through over and over, the excitement, the growing self confidence.

Continued on page 10

Reconsidering Political Reality

By William B. Hixon, Jr.

AS OF THIS WRITING IT APPEARS almost certain that Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan will be the major party presidential nominees in the fall; and as of this writing, it appears that the race between them will be close. The more likely the prospect of a Reagan presidency appears, the more likely that DSOC members—whatever happens to the candidacies of John Anderson or Barry Commoner—will end up voting for Carter and, I suspect, a surprising number will end up working for him.

The case for Carter against Reagan is, I think, overwhelming; but given DSOC's persistent criticism of both the conservatism of Carter's assumptions and the ineptitude of his tactics, it won't be easy for us to make such a shift in argument. Nevertheless, the anguish and confusion of the coming months will be worth it if they force us to reconsider our political analysis. We in the DSOC and on the left generally have, I believe, either ignored or misunderstood several of the most significant political developments of the recent past.

First of all, we on the left seriously misread the meaning of the 1976 presidential election. We deluded ourselves into believing that Carter was elected by some kind of resurgent New Deal coalition whose "mandate" he "betrayed." The base of that coalition was in the South, from which Carter received more electoral votes than any Democrat since Franklin Roosevelt. But since Carter did not do significantly better among Southern blacks than either McGovern or Humphrey, one must conclude that it was Carter's gain among Southern white voters that enabled him to win where they had lost. Outside the South, the Carter campaign seems to have operated on the assumption that, in Gerald Pomper's words, since "the large cities no longer

carry decisive impact in Presidential politics, . . ." the Democrats must "bring in new votes from suburbs, small towns and rural areas." The point of this little retrospective analysis is simply to suggest that—contrary to the assumptions many of us have carried for the past four years—the crucial segments which made Carter's coalition victorious were not of the Eastern-urban-labor-minority variety but rural-white-Protestant-middle-class Southerners and Midwesterners. If that is so, then the decisive question for 1980 becomes: in what ways has Carter "betrayed" those voters, whose priorities may be far removed from those of DSOC?

For all the much-touted "volatility" of this year's campaign, Reagan's nomination should hardly surprise us. Since his first election as governor of California in 1966, he has in some ways been the inevitable Republican candidate, blocked



“The recent breakthroughs we have made have been the result of mass action largely outside the electoral arena.”

by Nixon's resurrection from the dead in 1968 and Ford's last-minute maneuvers for delegates in 1976. I claim no special insight into Jimmy Carter's mind, but I would not be surprised if either he or Pat Caddell concluded shortly after the 1976 election that his most likely opponent would be Reagan. That being the case, why should he make sustained overtures to the liberal, labor, or minority elements in the party, given the need to placate the rural-suburban "swing" voters mentioned above? Where, after all, would the left wing of the party go?

That leads me to another conclusion: as long as we on the democratic left choose to participate in electoral politics, our strength is inversely correlated with that of the right. I am *not* advocating that at this point we all take to the streets, but the record of the recent past indicates to me that the recent breakthroughs we have made have been the result of mass action largely outside the electoral arena. The record of the civil rights movement certainly points in this direction. And so to some extent does the record of the antiwar movement which, while it helped create the conditions of Wallace, Nixon, and Agnew, also helped push Democratic politicians into eventually repudiating the war.

Why should this be so? I would argue that, given a two-party system, politicians in the dominant party take their cues from politicians in the opposing party. Voters may or may not think along ideological lines; politicians surely do. Thus every electoral gain by a Republican is perceived by Democratic officeholders as a call to become more "Republican." Since 1964 the Republican party has become an increasingly coherent right-wing party, so that Republican gains are signals (whatever the voters' actual motivation) to "move to the right." Conversely, Republican defeats (as in 1976) are taken as signs that the Democrats have in fact co-opted the Republican position. (The only way to disprove this hypothesis in the minds of politicians, of course, would be to elect scores of unambiguously progressive Democrats; but that has not happened for some time nor is it likely to happen in the near future.)

End to Whose Ideology?

The literature on American politics has not prepared us for the current situation. We certainly do not have—as, after Nixon's downfall, some thought we might—

two centrist coalitions: in that sense the "consensus" politics of the 1950s are gone forever. On the other hand, we do not have ideological polarization; or more precisely, we have polarization on one side only. An increasingly ideological Republican party confronts a persistently opportunistic Democratic party. And that situation in turn casts doubt on a number of currently fashionable theories that various long-range structural forces—for some, the rise of issue-oriented activists as a result of higher education; for others, intensified class conflict arising out of the current economic crisis—would propel both parties in an ideological direction. So far, anyway, that has not happened. The problem we as progressive activists in the Democratic party face is not that we have been abandoned by a Democratic president, but far worse, that we are being abandoned by Democratic officeholders at all levels in a search for voters they believe are "moving to the right."

Real Action in Congress

And that brings me to my final point. It is ironic that at a time when both the public and political scientists are increasingly skeptical as to what a president can actually do, the chief repository of faith in the president as wonderworker is on the democratic left.

In our preoccupation with Carter, I fear we are in danger of ignoring Congress completely, and a renewed focus there would help correct our perspective. Can anyone think of any issue, domestic or foreign, over the last four years on which Congress has been more progressive than the Carter administration? But, it will be said, Congress waits for leadership from the White House. Perhaps so; but then we are left with an explanation for the following curious fact. If one looks at congressional performance since 1969 and divides it into two halves (1969-75, 1975-present), one notices immediately that there was more progressive legislation—most notably in the area of civil rights for women and the protection of the environment, but also in other areas—between 1969 and 1975, much of it in the high tide of the Nixon era, than since 1975. White House leadership indeed! Something else is at work for which Carter alone cannot be held responsible.

I have focused to the extent that I have upon the Democratic party simply because that is one of the major arenas

in which DSOC has chosen to work and our analysis of Democratic politics in recent years has, I think, been especially weak. But there are other, broader problems with much of our analysis, problems, I suspect, stemming in large part from our rebellion against the rosy picture of American "exceptionalism" we were given in the 1950s and early '60s. Yes, America shares many structural features with the advanced capitalist societies of Western Europe; but European examples do not always cover American phenomena. One reason we have ignored the current right-wing resurgence is that our insistence on the inevitability of "secularization" has blinded us to its religious roots. Yes, American history is rich with the struggles of those put down and left out; but too often we have tended to treat passing events, however dramatic, as catalysts for long-term change. Our libraries are full of unread books predicting black and student militancy in the 1970s; are the predictions of increased white working class militancy so many on the left now make somehow more valid? And yes, public policy is often determined by small influential elites; but too often we fail to make a

“Can anyone think of any issue over the last four years on which Congress has been more progressive than the Carter administration?”

sustained effort at analysis and simply fall back upon conspiracy theories. One hopes that Reagan's demagoguery on the issue would give those of us on the left pause in talking about the "insidious" influence of the Trilateral Commission.

So while we sort out where we are going, and try to maintain an even keel between torpor and hysteria in this very strange campaign year, let us try to subject the current political situation to the most careful analysis of which we are capable. It is important but not sufficient, I would maintain, to talk about the larger "capitalist crisis"; we must also make a serious attempt to relate public policies to immediate political actors. ■

William Hixon is an associate professor of history at Michigan State University, East Lansing.

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.

I'd like to join the DSOC. Enclosed find my dues. (\$50 sustaining; \$20 regular; \$10 limited income. Dues include \$5 for DEMOCRATIC LEFT.) Send to: Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee, 853 Broadway, Suite 801, New York, N.Y. 10003. Tel.: (212) 260-3270.

I want to subscribe to DEMOCRATIC LEFT. Enclosed is \$10 for a sustaining subscription; \$5 for a regular subscription; \$2.50 for a limited income subscription.)

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DEMOCRATIC AGENDA

By Cynthia Ward

BUILDING ON MORE THAN FIVE YEARS OF SUCCESS as the programmatic coalition effort organizing around issues in the Democratic party, DEMOCRATIC AGENDA in 1980 is closely involved in the platform drafting process leading up to the adoption of the 1980 Democratic party platform at the national convention in New York City, August 11 through 14.

DEMOCRATIC AGENDA spokespeople testified at the Platform Committee hearings, arguing that a full employment economy with price stability can be achieved by planned social investment in the development and support of such sectors of the economy as mass transportation, alternative energy sources, housing, health care, and agriculture. Even more importantly, corporate power must be controlled, because corporate domination and monopoly pricing in these areas have proved excessively costly in human terms.

Skip Roberts, a long time Democratic party activist, testified at the western regional hearing in Seattle, Washington, and pointed out that in two areas, mass transportation and development of alternative energy sources, the administration had made important commitments that are now being reversed. Roberts urged that additional capital be provided to the railroad system for development and expansion which could provide a half million jobs in the 1980s just on the passenger side. On energy he said that, while all alternatives should be systematically explored, solar power was currently the most promising and beneficial. He also stated DEMOCRATIC AGENDA's support for a publicly owned, democratically managed energy corporation to restore competition and rip aside the veil of secrecy from the corporate sector's domination of the energy industry. Professor Harrell Rodgers of the University of Houston (Texas) testified at the southern regional hearing there, telling the committee that although there are flaws in the Keynesian management of the economy to prevent recession

and depression, the solutions lie not in conservative measures, but in progressive ones.

To underscore the programmatic issues, Michael Harrington, in testimony prepared for the national Platform Committee hearings, states: "without the enthusiastic participation of the constituencies for social change that DEMOCRATIC AGENDA represents, the Democratic party courts disaster in February. Our country is at a crossroad, and what is at stake is not just the election of 1980, but the direction of our society in the 1980s. If the Democratic party does not move boldly toward solutions as decisive and courageous for our times as the New Deal was for Franklin Delano Roosevelt's, we will be dragged back to Herbert Hoover. The Convention cannot be business as usual. The debates and votes on the platform will tell people where the mind and heart of the Democratic party are in this critical time."

The Democratic party platform will be drafted during June for presentation to the Convention in August. The report of the Platform Committee will include minority reports, if 25 percent of the members of the standing committee urge inclusion of an alternative plank. The issues can then be debated and voted on the floor of the Convention. On August 12, the day that the platform will be presented to the Convention, DEMOCRATIC AGENDA will hold a rally and public meeting at Town Hall Theater in midtown New York City. At that meeting initiators and spokespeople for DEMOCRATIC AGENDA and allied groups will present their report on the outcome of the platform process and urge support for the issues of concern to the coalition efforts. Plan to attend, if you are a delegate or will be in New York on that date. The meeting will send the message to the leadership and candidates of the Democratic party that there is strong support for a progressive platform. ■

Cynthia Ward is coordinator for DEMOCRATIC AGENDA.

BOOTH, from page 7

DL: Where is community organizing headed?

BOOTH: The movement faces a number of serious problems. It costs a great deal to sustain the large groups, and there is a continuing problem of finances. Staff tend to burn out after a few years—there is great turnover. But the movement has made remarkable improvements.

The breadth and depth of organizations has increased. Organizing sinks deeper roots in communities now and reaches out to broader constituencies. The focus on issues has widened to basic ques-

tions of social priorities, corporate profits.

There is also an increased understanding of the need for alliances, seen in the effort to create citywide and statewide groups, and to form confederations of statewide groups. There is more and more consciousness of the need for community groups to link up with other institutions of American life such as trade unions and churches. This is an exciting time, a new stage. ■

Harry Boyte is the author of The Backyard Revolution: Understanding the New Citizen Movement to be published by Temple University Press in September.

CORRECTION

The line missing from Jim Chapin's and Jack Clark's article in the last issue was: *will, however reluctantly, back Carter.*

■ ■ ■

SEE YOU IN SEPTEMBER

This will be the last issue of DEMOCRATIC LEFT until Labor Day. Plan now to send Labor Day Greetings and to talk to your local union about doing so. The September issue will be the biggest ever, with articles about Swedish and American labor strategies, undocumented aliens, equal pay for equal worth, labor and the media, and much more.

Higher Hopes, Lowered Sights

By William Spinrad

WHILE POLITICIANS AND commentators concentrate their attention on the hot items—Iran, Afghanistan, inflation, the primary election sweepstakes—those who hope to alter the public agenda should note the relevance of less publicized, latent popular concerns. According to conventional wisdom, what the public wants as a solution to personal and collective economic woes is, above all, decreased government spending and reduced taxes.

Shunted aside are the pertinent public opinion poll findings. People do want to pay less in taxes, but they also want most government programs, not only to help the very deprived but to satisfy the felt needs of *most of the population*. The array of evidence is overwhelming. Most interestingly, although a majority is in favor of less government spending as an *abstract policy*, it also wants to maintain the current level of expenditures on most *specific programs*, and, in many cases, wants them increased. For instance, in one 1978 national survey, the majority felt we were "spending too much" only on foreign aid, space exploration, and welfare. Even the last may only represent a conventional symbolic reaction. When another query broke "welfare" down into specific constituent elements, such as aid to dependent children, a majority did not feel too much was being spent.

The common interpretation of such apparently conflicting attitudes refers to a "trade off"—yes, government programs are favored, but reduced spending and tax cuts are considered important by most Americans. Such facile explanations miss the underlying popular orientation. Both opinions are part of the same vista—the desire for and expectations of the material foundations for the good life, the

American promise, to which most believe they are entitled. Some of the necessary conditions come from one's own pocket-book, some have to be supplied by government. Not many opt for any belt tightening, even in the midst of inflation pressures and energy shortages.

In other words, few are selecting any ascetic option. As described by Daniel Bell, with considerable lamentation, in *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*, it is the contemporary capitalist ideology that persuaded everyone of the immediate feasibility of satisfying all needs and aspirations. Sometimes, the outcome is one of the prevalent forms of narcissistic indulgence, from consumer showiness to instant therapy. But, the more likely goal is to provide, for a considerable part of the population, such things as satisfying jobs, adequate consumer goods and leisure facilities, security in every sense, complete education for all who can achieve it, a wholesome physical environment, etc. Despite the shrill propaganda of neoconservatives, most seem to know that they can not achieve these individually.

Although the budget-reduction and tax-cutting formulas are the current ac-

DUNAGIN'S PEOPLE



"There's only one thing we can do... give up the basic necessities."

cepted mechanism for solving economic difficulties, another type of political agenda immediately suggests itself. The popular claims and hopes run counter to the economic game plan of the powerful. Rarely explicit in propaganda statements, this is inherent in the propounded policies. Federal Reserve Board Chairman Volcker's prediction of declining living standards best exemplifies this. Increased interest rates and the accompanying planned recession, as well as the intensified anti-union strategies, are part of this design.

Return to 19th Century

These are not presented as temporary measures until business expands sufficiently for everyone's betterment. They are contemplated for the indefinite future. In essence, what is then proposed for the most advanced capitalism in the world is a latter day version of primitive accumulation, an expansion of capital resources at the expense of citizen wants, including those satisfied by government. Bell's clamor for a return to a Puritan perspective, classically seen as an appropriate orientation for early capitalism, is a fitting ideological expression.

Few Americans are prepared for such relics of earlier economic strains, supposedly now characteristic of the developing world. The reasons for their return are many—energy crunches, decreased productivity, international competition, perhaps long-term cyclical trends, etc. In any case, the old capitalist contradictions are with us again, but with new complications. For one thing, mature capitalism cannot long flourish with ascetic vistas; it needs intense consumer spending, facilitated by easy credit, as well as welfare state programs. For another, enhancing the economic position of American companies means limiting returns from their multinational subsidiaries.

By now, we have all learned to be cautious about precise predictions in both politics and economics. But, it is important to be alert to coming possibilities to emphasize the conflict between popular aspirations and official policy, obviously further exacerbated with a likely severe economic downturn. The defense of the welfare state concept, with all its limitations, is a crucial part of such an effort. ■

Bill Spinrad is professor of sociology at Adelphi University.

WHAT'S LEFT TO READ

By Ronald Radosh

Random Notes and Short Takes for Summer Reading

THERE ARE VIVID LESSONS TO BE DRAWN FOR ALL activists in Todd Gitlin's new book, *The Whole World Is Watching: Mass Media in the Making and Unmaking of the New Left* (Univ. of California Press, 1980). Preliminary articles in the *Socialist Review* No. 48 and the March-April *Columbia Journalism Review* warn that the price of dependence on the media for definitions of success is not only high, but includes acceptance of corporate capitalist hegemony.

Also in that same issue of *CJR* is Andrew Kopkind's dissection of the problems created for democratic socialism in Jamaica by that nation's major paper, *The Gleaner*. In "Jamaica: Trouble in Paradise," Kopkind accurately shows the paper's role in escalating internal opposition to the Manley government. But he extends his argument to claim that the opposition of the *Gleaner* "can not only bring down a government but wreck its entire program of social reform." Hence, Kopkind implies, it would be appropriate for the government to suppress or close down the paper. Clearly favoring what he calls a path of "moving decisively to the left" for Jamaica, Kopkind quotes approvingly Minister of Culture Arnold Bertram's statement that men of property "simply own the press and from this position dictate what is to be put in it." Cautioning Americans not to invoke First Amendment principles, Kopkind writes: "But in Jamaica such concepts as freedom of the press or loyal opposition no longer have an absolute definition." This writer prefers what Kopkind himself cites as a "restraining factor" against implementing press curbs: Manley's "ideological commitment to democratic freedoms." Does journalist Kopkind prefer the Cuban-style free press, where *Granma* alone—modeled on *Pravda*—exists to give the Cuban populace the current line on all events? The men of property don't own that press—does it really make a difference when the ownership is in the hands of the party and government?

Kopkind, we note, as an employee of the most notorious capitalist publisher in America, Rupert Murdoch, enjoys the freedom to write a glowing defense of the Soviet Union's world role in the pages of Murdoch's *The Village Voice*.

THE MAY ISSUE OF MOTHER JONES CONTAINS MORE TOUGH talk from David Horowitz. In yet another piece on the left and foreign policy, Horowitz points to a new feature in international affairs—Moscow's "assertive international strategy," which, he argues, poses an actual threat to America's national interest. Challenging the old double standard of protesters against U.S. Cold War policies, Horowitz insists that "Soviet aggression [in Afghanistan] does upset the international balance and also threatens strategic U.S. interests." Lying behind the failure to criticize the Russians are what he calls "older and more durable illusions about 'revolution' and so-called progressive development in the Third World." Reform, he says, either by Washington in Vietnam or Moscow in Afghanistan, "is nothing more than an instrument of imperial control."

DESPITE A POSSIBLY EXPECTED BAD REVIEW IN THE *NEW York Times Book Review*, Lawrence H. Shoup's *The Carter Presidency and Beyond* (Ramparts Press, 1980) does contain many sharp arguments and material that have convinced this reader *not* to vote for Jimmy Carter, even if he gets the nomination and the other choice is Reagan. Shoup's study comes with laudatory blurbs from Ron Dellums and William Winpisinger. But Shoup's reference to DSOC as "mildly socialist" and his unabashed praise for the Citizens Party as the *only* real alternative reflect an either-or dogmatism that mars an otherwise valuable analysis.

ONE OF THE MOST INSIGHTFUL AND BRILLIANT DISCUSSIONS of the literary left of the 1930s is contained in Christopher Lasch's essay, "Modernism, Politics and Philip Rahv," which appears in the spring 1980 *Partisan Review*/2. Lasch offers a theory to explain what has seemed to date inexplicable: how Rahv could assert both modernism in the arts and Leninism in politics at the same time. Lasch shows that "Rahv's commitment to modernism thus grew out of his unexamined commitment to Leninism"; he saw the vanguard artist rather than the Party leading the masses to the promised land.

For those who want a good read about the thirties and the left, look no further than Malcolm Cowley's refreshing, critical, and beautifully written memoir, *The Dream of the Golden Mountains: Remembering the 1930s* (The Viking Press, 1980). Cowley reflects on what led him and fellow writers to join what he calls the "daydream of revolutionary brotherhood," and to suppress their private doubts and criticisms. The book offers incidents previously unrecorded, reflections on fierce literary political debates, and good humor.

IF YOU PREFER TOUGH POLITICAL ANALYSIS, ECONOMIST William Tabb offers "Zapping Labor" in *Marxist Perspectives* /9 (Spring 1980). Tabb puts the assault on labor in the context of the new business-oriented corporatist planning advocated by participants in the Trilateral Commission. Tabb argues convincingly that the left should put forth its own alternative of democratic planning, with a stress on "social control over the investment decision and the capture of the social surplus currently appropriated by the global corporations: an end to disinvestment in older regions; a reduction of environmental pollution . . . and depletion of nonreplenishable resources." In Europe, he concludes, a left alliance is spelling out a common program. "Here, the immediate task is more primitive: to put the possibility of democratic socialism on the agenda for discussion." DSOC shares Tabb's hopes . . . and, finally, we can all profit from a summer read of our national chair's new book—dedicated by Mike to all of us—*Decade of Decision: The Crisis of the American System* (Simon and Schuster, 1980), which gives his own observations about the "struggle for democratic alternatives to corporate domination."

LETTERS, from page 2

vasion of Cambodia, the Vietnam invasion of Laos. There's the occupation of South Yemen by Cuban troops, Soviet military advisers and East German military technicians; the invasion and occupation of Ethiopia by Soviet equipped Cuban troops, and the war in Lebanon in which the Palestine Liberation Organization played an important part and in which more than 40,000 lives have been lost. More recently there was the invasion of an Israeli kibbutz by PLO commandos coming from Lebanon, in which the terrorists managed to capture a kindergarten using Kalashnikov rifles and other Soviet weapons. Some of the training for this kind of warfare against children has been provided by the Soviets and Cubans for the PLO,

Since DEMOCRATIC LEFT and DSOC direct most of their fire against the United States I look around to see where we are making war. In Iran? But after the invasion of the U.S. embassy and kidnapping of the U.S. diplomatic personnel, we let six months go by without an embargo, let alone a "war" on our part.* In Indochina? But the only Americans I know of there are seeking to get food to people being starved by a war between contending communist factions. In China? American imperialism had a record of gunboat diplomacy. I learn from Gottlieb, however, that now we cause trouble in a most unusual way, by fostering "closer relations with China." That ranks as an all-time record for bellicose behavior, since we refuse to this day to sell China any arms despite the million troops the Soviets stationed along China's borders with the same peaceful intent they had on the Hungarian, Czech and Afghan borders.

But the slogan is excellent — NO WAR.

I think we can do something about the DSOC slogan, "No War." I would support the proposals of Soviet dissident Andrei D. Sakharov, who urged:

On Afghanistan—"The Soviet Union has long followed a policy embodying a threatening increase of military power and gradual expansion in the key regions of the world. In response, the United States, Western Europe and Japan must adopt a firm, united position."

On the 1980 Olympics—"To take part in Olympic games in a country that is conducting military actions condemned

by 104 members of the United Nations is inadmissible. The problems that may arise for athletes can be resolved by convening other international games."

On economic and cultural sanctions against the Soviet Union—"These sanctions, initiated by the President of the United States, serve the interests of the entire world and ought to be decisively supported by other countries. The weakness and uncertainty of certain Western countries in the present situation have the effect of stimulating those forces in this country that make for foreign expansion, supermilitarization and tough domestic policy, including repression of the human-rights movement."

On dissidents—"The dissident movement has had a profound effect on people in the Soviet Union. This effect has not been political but moral in character. People who dare to say loudly what they think and feel, to raise their voices against injustice, break the conspiracy of silence, fear and apathy and prepare the ground for the necessary democratic and pluralistic reforms in this great, inert, corrupted country."

Joseph Clark
New York, N.Y.

*This was written before the aborted rescue mission, which had to be carried out by military means, but like Entebbe was just that, a rescue effort.

■ ■ ■

To the Editor:

As DSOC members and as socialist-feminists we are concerned about the impact of Jan Rosenberg's essay "New Shift in Family Focus" (January 1980). We are disappointed that DEMOCRATIC LEFT would print an essay which is neither socialist nor feminist, which contains many inaccuracies about radical feminist theory, and which is unrepresentative of most DSOC members' views. It is not true that virtually every radical feminist theorist called for the destruction of the family. Most radical feminists have seen that the nuclear patriarchal family is dying and being replaced by some new "family" form, and they make suggestions about what new social arrangement might serve women's liberation rather than women's oppression. Very few contemporary feminists re-evaluate the family "romantically," as Rosenberg suggests; none call for a return to the nuclear patriarchal family.

The "romantic" return to the family

is a simplistic answer to current problems which is being promoted by the far right in this country—by the same people who are supporting "right-to-work" laws, "single-income" families, a woman's death amendment, and the abolition of contraception. Returning to the family can only mean placing the problems of contemporary American society upon the shoulders of those who can least bear the burden—women, the poor, and working people.

DSOC should investigate and discuss the changes in American families, and offer leadership by suggesting ways in which these transformations can offer freedom, security, and happiness, rather than poverty and oppression.

Karen Beckwith
University of Michigan-Dearborn
Norma Phegley
Champaign-Urbana, Ill.

Jan Rosenberg replies:

Beckwith and Phegley misrepresent my views. Their failure to recognize or criticize the upper middle class bias inherent in feminists' radically individualist opposition to the family is troubling. I heartily agree, however, that the current transformations in family forms and behavior cry out for further exploration, by DSOC, the left, and the feminist movement.

■ ■ ■

To the Editor:

Fort Wayne's struggle to form a municipal electric utility is over (DEMOCRATIC LEFT, May 1980), and the story's ending is not a happy one. After the court ruling forbidding the May 6 referendum to take place, mentioned in my article, R. W. Beck, the consulting firm studying the feasibility of the takeover of the Indiana and Michigan Electric Company, released its report. Beck concluded that it would be inadvisable for the city to assume control of the electrical system, since the costs would be too great. It would cost the city, the study said, \$15 million out of the treasury to enact the takeover.

Naturally, the mayor and other political figures who had supported a takeover said that there was no possibility of one in the near future. Several days later, the board of AMP (Association for Municipal Power) met, and a decision was made to disband the organization.

Bill Mosley
Fort Wayne, Ind.

ON THE LEFT

By Harry Fleischman

A CONTRIVED MEDIA EVENT" IS HOW GRUMMAN CORPORATION'S public relations veep, Sandy Jones, described Big Business Day, April 17th. A timely reply came from Elizabeth, N.J. There, just five days after being picketed on BBD by unionists, environmentalists, consumers, and others, the condemned Chemical Control Corporation warehouse containing 24,000 barrels of illegally stored toxic chemicals exploded into flames as 55-gallon drums rocketed 200 feet into the air.

Citizens rallied, held teach-ins, and conducted mock trials to mark Big Business Day in more than 150 towns and cities across the nation.

Almost every DSOC local in the country was deeply involved in Big Business Day activities, including more than 35 university teach-ins. This was probably the first time that all DSOC locals participated in a major activity on the same day.

Long Islanders took giant swipes at big business in a series of meetings and teach-ins, highlighted by an evening mock trial of big business, sponsored by the Long Island Progressive Coalition. At the trial, Jack Maisel, legislative director of the New York State Machinists, excoriated Grumman as a "government operation for private profit," a union buster in Milledgeville, Ga., and a briber of Iranian officials in connection with sales of the F-14 plane.

In *Chicago*, rallies were held at the University of Chicago and Northwestern University. A teach-in was held by senior citizens at Old St. Mary's Church, and municipal and state legislators joined teachers and parents in blasting the role of big business and banks in the Chicago school crisis.

Hundreds of delegates in *Washington, D.C.*, gathered in a House caucus room to back the Corporate Democracy Act of 1980, sponsored by Representative Benjamin Rosenthal and 13 others; to set up "shadow boards" of citizens to monitor corporate activities; to listen to victims of corporate abuse; and later to view a "Corporate Hall of Shame" exhibit at the National Visitors Center.

In *Detroit*, Auto Workers and other unionists sponsored a carnival, Corporate Hall of Shame, and People's Court which "tried" the Hooker Chemical Company. The company is accused of dumping toxic chemicals in the 1940s which later contaminated the community around Love Canal in upstate New York.

In *Lansing, Mich.*, 700 attended a BBD rally at the Plumbers Hall. Among the speakers were Bill Marshall, president of the Michigan AFL-CIO; Martin Gerber, UAW vice president; Stan Arnold, secretary-treasurer of the Michigan Building Trades; and Richard Greenwood, assistant to IAM president William Winpisinger. Teach-ins were also held at Michigan State and the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor.

In *California*, the Oil, Chemical & Atomic Workers joined in setting up a "Public Board of Directors" for Standard Oil of California, and held its first meeting at the Standard Oil Plaza. Campus teach-ins took place at the University of California-Berkeley, Davis and Santa Cruz, as well as at San

Francisco State, San Jose State and Stanford. A community teach-in was held at the Women's Building in San Francisco on "Alternatives to Corporate Control."

In *Los Angeles*, home of the Academy Awards, DSOcer Harold Meyerson's picture was on page 3 of the *L.A. Times*, handing "Golden Pig" Awards to regional corporations. The awards were accepted by "victims" of the corporations.

The AFL-CIO Central Labor Council and the Building Trades in *Boston* were key sponsors of a march by more than 10,000 from Copley Square to Prudential Center. Some carried signs saying, "Swap Big Business for Iranian Hostages."

In *Concord, N.H.*, the New Hampshire People's Alliance rallied near the State Capitol to protest unemployment, high electricity rates and threats to consumer protection.

A rally at the *University of Alaska* in Fairbanks, sponsored by Common Ground and DSOC, discussed "Big Business and Alaska: Two Views." It showed two films, *Boom Times*, on the old Kennicott Copper mine in Alaska, and *Controlling Interest*, a look at multinationals.

In *New Haven, Conn.*, 300 attended a BBD rally on the Green. A fair was held featuring labor, Congress Watch and others. Exxon, United Technologies and Hartford National Bank were put on "trial" for corporate crimes.

In *Madison, Wis.*, 700 attended a rally, sponsored by the Democratic Socialist Alliance, supporting the teachers' assistants' strike at the University of Wisconsin. Evening workshops were held on unionbusting, health and energy.

At *Harvard*, a weekend conference on students against corporate power brought together 300 students from 10 states to hear Mike Harrington, Stanley Aronowitz, Noam Chomsky and other speakers.

In *Austin, Texas*, BBD rallies on April 17 at St. Edward's University and April 18 at the AFL-CIO Auditorium heard Jim Hightower, Railroad Commission candidate and others blast the energy ripoff and the big business offensive.

Pickets rallied outside *New York City's* Citibank headquarters. A Big Business Day conference, postponed to April 30, due to the transit strike, drew 200 people.

Amusingly, the *New York Times*, which "distinguished" itself by failing to report on any Big Business Day activities outside of Washington, D.C., editorially attacked BBD as "tame and misdirected." The *Times* concedes that "by any measure, the economy is not working well," and that the nation "seems to require a severe recession to cool off severe inflation—but even that result can no longer be certain."

Yet the *Times* claims that only the conservatives are dealing with the question of how the economy can be altered in major ways to "produce a rising standard of living for the great majority of Americans." True, the *Times* does not quite endorse a return to Hooverism and its alms for the rich and attacks on the poor. But it can only "justify" its brief for the conservatives by completely ignoring the Big Business Day push for such alternatives to corporate control as worker and community participation in businesses, consumer cooperatives, worker and community control over \$45 billion in pension investment funds, the drive for a federal energy corporation, and public power. ■

Clamp Down on Big Oil

By Steve Singer

IN ITS FIRST MAJOR CAMPAIGN, THE Connecticut Citizen/Labor Energy Coalition (Conn. C/LEC) spearheaded the enactment of a 2 percent gross revenues tax on integrated oil companies operating in the state. The tax, passed in April, is the first such in the nation and is already sparking similar initiatives by other state legislatures and citizen action groups.

The new levy applies to all sales in Connecticut by companies that refine and distribute petroleum products. It is designed to tax the majors, and will not affect independent wholesalers and retailers. The state expects to collect \$60 million a year, largely from 13 firms. Conn. C/LEC originally proposed the tax to fund the comprehensive energy assistance and conservation program it presented to the legislature in August.

Conn. C/LEC, an affiliate of the national Citizen/Labor Energy Coalition headed by William Winpisinger, is an alliance of the state's major public interest and labor groups. Its most promi-

nent members include the Connecticut Citizen Action Group (CCAG), the International Association of Machinists, and the United Auto Workers. CCAG provides full staff for the Coalition.

Conn. C/LEC's campaign to "Tax Big Oil" successfully integrated community organizing and public advocacy approaches, two models that conflict at times. Member groups organized consistent grassroots pressure in legislative districts and at the Capitol. Meanwhile, CCAG's research department worked to investigate legal precedents for the tax, and to provide ammunition for a fulltime lobbyist.

The oil companies threatened to pass the cost of the tax on to consumers, to leave the state due to "declining profitability," and to create a budget deficit by withholding payment while challenging the levy in court.

Strict amendments were attached to the tax to preclude these possibilities. Taxed companies may not raise their prices more than the average price increase along the East Coast, and they must

pay before going to court. A clause was added to protect the validity of the tax should any single part be found unconstitutional. An amendment to require one year's prior notification of reduction of operations in the state was dropped in a last minute legislative compromise.

"Conn. C/LEC's gross revenues tax on Big Oil signals the beginning of a national trend of citizens and state governments to pick up the slack in federal policy, and to require the oil industry to meet its fiscal responsibility to the American people," said Al Driscoll, Conn. C/LEC co-chair. At least four state legislatures are considering similar oil company taxes, and voters in California will decide this June on a 10 percent excess profits tax. However, it is expected that many states will wait for the results of the forthcoming constitutional challenge to Connecticut's tax. ■

Steve Singer is a freelance writer from New Haven, currently working with the Connecticut Citizen Action Group.

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JIMMY HIGGINS REPORTS

JUST WHAT WE DON'T NEED—On May 7, the House of Representatives adopted a \$611.8 billion budget with a \$2 billion surplus for fiscal year 1981. The final vote was 225-193. Speaking of the vote later, Rep. Robert Giamo of the Budget Committee said, "We have the beginnings of a real bi-partisanship."

rites of spring or fights of August?—Governor Hugh Carey of New York has taken the lead in expressing what many Democrats feel: an uneasiness with the idea of renominating Jimmy Carter. The president almost certainly will have enough votes for a first-ballot victory by convention time. So Carey is suggesting that Carter and Kennedy release their delegates to allow for an open convention and an alternative to both candidates. Carter campaign chief and former Democratic National Committee Chair Bob Strauss attacked Carey for splitting the party, aiding Reagan, and acting on behalf of his friend David Garth, now a media consultant to independent candidate John Anderson. Colorado Senator Gary Hart, formerly manager of George McGovern's presidential campaign, said that Carey's dissatisfaction represented "rites of spring" among Democrats, recalling the Anybody but McGovern and Anybody But Carter efforts of 1972 and 1976 respectively. Incidentally, the convention floor leader of the 1972 effort was an obscure Southern governor named Jimmy Carter. Perhaps the discontent will fail to build sufficient momentum again this year, and the convention will, in that case, ratify the nomination of Jimmy Carter for a second term. Kennedy's campaign has attracted about 40 percent of the party and almost all of the party's left. With centrist Democrats like Carey hesitating about Carter and the "no preference" option piling up big votes in Southern and Southwestern primaries, Carter's backers may face a tougher convention fight than they expect. Or they may win on the technicalities with DEMOCRATIC AGENDA thick in the middle of the brawling.

A NEW CAR AND A NEW HOME come as standard items in the classic American Dream. New homes have been too expensive for all but the very rich for years now. And the *Wall Street Journal* reveals that new cars are bought primarily by business. Only 43 percent of the 8.1 million domestic cars sold in 1979 were purchased by individuals for private use. Of the 18.2 million total cars sold for personal use in 1979 (domestic and foreign makes) 75 percent were used.

PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSIONS always reflect Establishment views, and the Presidential Commission on World Hunger is no exception. Chaired by former Xerox chief exec Sol Linowitz, the panel was heavily weighted toward respectability. That's why its recently released report is interesting. Among other things, it calls for making the end of world hunger the central objective of U.S. relations with the rest of the world. And while the message is mixed, its recommendations include steps toward each nation's food self-sufficiency through programs like land reform. On the domestic side, the report recognizes that hunger exists here, too, and calls for: a nutrition survey to determine how severe the problem is; full and adequate funding for existing programs; and national economic planning with specific sectoral approaches to guarantee that enough food is produced and that everyone has enough income to get it. Early on, President Carter gave his full endorsement to the Commission's work. Little publicity attended the release of the final report, though. Presumably, such expensive recommendations fit in poorly with an administration intent on balancing the budget on the backs of the poor and hungry.

WHERE EXCESS PROFITS DON'T GO—On April 22, the American Petroleum Institute sent out a press release revealing that "U.S. petroleum companies have invested more than \$94 million in solar energy research and development." Also on April 22, Texaco reported a \$1 billion profit for the first quarter of 1980.

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