

Newsletter of

THE DEMOCRATIC LEFT

October 1976—Vol. IV, No. 8

217

Edited by MICHAEL HARRINGTON

Voting for Carter without illusions

by JACK CLARK

Twelve years ago, one faction within Students for a Democratic Society cleverly turned the Democratic campaign slogan to its own use. "Part of the way with LBJ" was the rallying cry for realignment SDS'ers; that spirit can serve the Left well in considering the Presidential campaign of Jimmy Carter.

As most readers of this NEWSLETTER are aware, anti-Carter comments appeared in our pages early and often. Jimmy Higgins began the barrage in November 1975; through the early primaries, Jim Chapin and I outlined what has by now become a familiar litany of criticisms. I'm not proposing for a single second that any of us are ready to retract the criticism. Nor am I ready to predict that Carter, if elected, will solve the problems confronting us. On the contrary, I am certain that he won't have ideas or political will or a movement requisite to the challenges of the late 1970's.

Carter's victory will be totally inadequate for the country and for the Left. But Carter's defeating Ford is an absolute precondition for social progress in the next four years.

Carter's apologists like to compare him to Franklin Roosevelt, and 1976 to 1932. Or to John Kennedy in 1960. But I return to Lyndon Johnson and 1964. Then, as now, the Republicans had turned sharply to the right. In 1964, Goldwater's views seemed an aberration in national politics; today, Barry Goldwater plays a moderating centrist role in his party. In 1964, another Southern Democrat sought national leadership in his own right. And in 1964, some elements of the New Left argued that liberal consensus was the real enemy and that the Left should be proud to share with Goldwater the epithet of "extremist." It was another twist of "the worse the better" argument. Since then, we've had eight years to test the hypothesis that the Left flourishes when everyone suffers. Far from witnessing the rise of mass movements, we've seen more splintering, an unhealthy dose of repression (luckily some of it bungled), an economic climate which has weakened the labor movement and atomized the poor, and a social climate which has pit blacks against whites, men against women, young against old, environmentalists against trade unionists, marginally employed against unemployed.

The movements which have survived or even managed to grow through these grim times are determined

to fight for a change in Washington. As Nancy Shier pointed out in these pages in June, feminists who have been wary of electoral involvement before have now seen too many defeats at the hands of the Supreme Court, the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission and the National Labor Relations Board to be indifferent as to who holds Presidential power. In that same issue, Julian Bond summed up for the minority and poor communities, "the government's policy toward the poor has changed from benign concern to

(Continued on page 4)

Thoughts on the death of Chairman Mao

by MICHAEL HARRINGTON

It is difficult to write about the death of Mao. I was an opponent of his claim to have created a socialist society in China, and I remain a principled opponent of his legacy now that he is gone. And yet there is a tension in my attitude. I am conscious of how narrow and desperate the choices for China were and are. The West strove mightily to perpetuate the suffering of this one-quarter of humanity for over a century. Attempts to abolish that mass misery cannot be dismissed lightly, even if the claims for those attempts are over-stated.

In reporting and commenting on Mao's death, the American media has side-stepped these ambiguities and difficulties. At the height of the Cold War, when John Foster Dulles was Secretary of State, Mao was simply the evil dictator who presided over a human anthill. So it was that Dulles refused to even shake hands with Chou En-lai at the Geneva peace conference. Had Mao died then, obituaries in the American press would have celebrated his passing.

But Nixon's normalization of relations with China cancelled Mao's devil status. What's more, China's opening to the West brought new attention and sympathy to the Chinese experiment in "socialism" and to the undeniably charismatic and romantic figure of Mao himself. So, the media had to improvise on how it handled Mao. The strategy adopted by most was the style of the Guinness Book of World Records: Mao, it

(Continued on page 6)

Socialist youth conference: toward a newer Left

by CYNTHIA WARD

Solidarity and comradeship, major themes of our conference prospectus and promotional activities, became real life experiences for the 65 people who attended the "New Generation of Socialism" youth conference on Labor Day weekend in Enon Valley, Pa.

Conference participants shared common experiences through four extremely full days at the Slovene National Benefit Society Camp. We heard stimulating speeches and panel discussions, discussed problems in organizing and engaged in the process of education needed both to strengthen ourselves as socialists and as a step toward the socialist society we all want. Finally, we formulated our own goals for DSOC work over the next few months. Through it all we managed to pack in time for friendships, recreation and common fun—including one marathon midnight volleyball game which involved over 30 people.

Predictably, the educational sessions were high-powered, stimulating and often controversial. Speaking on the importance of a close-knit core group even in an organization aimed toward a broad majority, Mike Harrington asked rhetorically: "How can you most effectively apply the ideals of socialism? By beginning where you have the greatest control—in your own life."

Bodgan Denitch traced the various strands of our democratic socialist heritage in an energetic, at times humorous, and very effective presentation. Ethnicity, women in the labor movement, and the problems of working-class violence were discussed at length in a panel on socialist views of the working class with Bill Kornblum (a sociologist who studied South Side Chicago Slavs in their neighborhoods and in the steel mills where they work), Ruth Jordan (who reviewed key organizing experiences in the South) and Mildred Jeffrey (a former organizer for the United Auto Workers). Jim Chapin, Harry Boyte, Millie Jeffrey and Pam Woywod exchanged views on the workings of American politics, bringing to bear a wide range of experiences and analytical viewpoints.

In other sessions we exchanged views on the problems of living every day as socialists in a society hostile to our ideals (an excellent article, "Making Revolution or Making Life" by Richard Flacks from *Working Papers* provided the background for the discussion), and we worked together on common problems which we face as socialist organizers and spokespeople. In small groups we confronted several topics from a specifically socialist viewpoint—education, feminism, how cultural values are formed and changed, the nature of the Soviet working class, recent trends in the labor movement.

Though the conference was geared to socialist youth, there was a healthy and exciting mix of generations. Millie Jeffrey talked about the struggles women have faced through the years in establishing themselves in the labor movement, and about the crucial importance

of the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW). Larry Rogin, an inspiring socialist veteran of the labor movement, spoke movingly of two radical unionist friends who had died in the week before the conference, Tom Flavell of the Clothing Workers, and Fritz Daniel, formerly of the Industrial Union Department, AFL-CIO. Max Kumer, of the Slovene National Benefit Society and another veteran socialist trade unionist, recalled struggles of the 1930's especially among recent emigrant Slovene workers as he reminded conferees that he was old enough to be "a grandfather to some of you." Bodgan Denitch, Mike Harrington, Debbie Meier and Dick Wilson recalled the difficult days of socialist organizing in the 1950's, and the "older youth" found themselves recounting radical life in the late 1960's.

The conference provided significant opportunities for growth and learning for those who organized it and for those who acted as resource people. The experience of carrying through a conference with ambitious goals of this length and with its variety of subject matter has strengthened the middle-level leadership of DSOC immeasurably. Women played an important part as leaders, speakers and participants. Many of those who attended emerged as significant leaders for the conference in their own right, offering organizational suggestions, chairing sessions and generally taking the initiative as the conference progressed.

This was a conference with consequences. Young people will be taking an important role within DSOC and in their communities—sparking activism, adding members and initiating intellectual debate and political discussion.

By the time the conference ended on Sunday, with the entire group linking arms and singing "We Shall Overcome," there was a consensus, reflected in written evaluations from conference participants, that it had been a long, exhausting weekend which none of us would have missed. In sharing our experiences, we strengthened our commitments. All of us—on different levels and in different life situations—departed more ready to resume the life-long struggle. □

Newsletter of

THE DEMOCRATIC LEFT

Michael Harrington, Editor
Jack Clark, Managing Editor

Signed articles express the views of the author.

Published ten times a year (monthly except July and August) by the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee, 853 Broadway, Room 617, New York, N.Y. 10003. Telephone (212) 260-3270

Subscription rates: Sustaining \$10 per year; Regular \$5 per year; Limited income \$2.50.

Application to mail at second class postage rates is pending at New York, New York.

Cynthia Ward is DSOC Youth Caucus Coordinator

LABOR DAY GREETINGS OF
UNITY AND SOLIDARITY

from the



**International Union,
United Automobile, Aerospace
and Agricultural Implement
Workers of America**

SOLIDARITY HOUSE
8000 EAST JEFERSON AVENUE
DETROIT, MICHIGAN 48214

Carter . . .

(Continued from page 1)

malignant neglect." The labor movement, badly split in 1972 between McGovern backers on the one side and neutralists and Nixon campaigners on the other, is once again politically united to elect Jimmy Carter. Ford's September sabre-rattling should settle the point for peace activists that there is a difference, not sufficient to be sure, but a difference between the candidates on defense and foreign policy.

So, Carter is the clear and active choice of the organized Left, of the mass democratic Left. Since the Convention, he has appealed more frequently to that Left, and Ford has campaigned consistently against the Left. But, some argue, isn't the problem really that Carter has simply tamed the Left? Didn't the Democratic Convention mark a turning away from all that the Kennedy, McCarthy, McGovern activists fought for and a return to the old-line Democratic Party? Hasn't everyone really surrendered to Carter's call for lowered expectations and less government?

On the contrary, Carter may favor the lowering of expectations, but his nomination caused expectations to rise among blacks, trade unionists, women and the liberals who were in a clear majority at that Convention. His choice of Mondale, the most liberal of the running mates considered, and Carter's acceptance speech (condemned by the *New York Times* for its populist attacks on the economic elite) were clearly directed to the Left. Since the Convention, Carter has resisted some pressure, to retreat back to the vague and supposedly safe center ground. Even more than in 1964, this election is shaping up as a clear test of liberal versus conservative ideologies.

Like Johnson, Carter is trying to blur the issues

FRATERNAL GREETINGS

dissent

505 Fifth Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10017

somewhat in seeking an overly broad consensus. As a candidate he has told every audience that our tax system is a "disgrace" and must be reformed. But he told one audience of sophisticated business leaders in New York not to worry. Tax reform will be carefully studied; there'll be at least a year's delay.

Similarly Carter has promised sweeping reorganization of the federal bureaucracy. He will make it more rational and more efficient. But rational and efficient in whose interests? Only a fool would oppose improving the performance of the federal government but it will take a political leader and a political movement with somewhat stronger principles and theory than Carter has thus far displayed to turn that federal bureaucracy into an institution genuinely at the service of the majority of the population. To be sure Carter shows a flair for planning and innovation. But again, that planning can be conducted on behalf of the myriad private corporations (whose profits *are* the public interest so long as their executives decide on transportation, employment and other policies for the entire society) or we can witness genuinely radical departures in planning

Support UAW strike

As we go to press, the United Auto Workers has just begun its strike against the Ford Motor Co.

It is, as *The Wall Street Journal* said on Sept. 16, the strike that "wasn't supposed to happen. With car sales finally rebounding and workers starting to shake off the effect of earlier layoffs, both sides had plenty of reason to settle peacefully."

Assuming, correctly, that there would be no enthusiasm for a strike in a union which had so recently suffered the "disciplining" effects of the recession, Ford never bargained seriously. Its initial proposal on wages would have led to an actual reduction in take-home pay. Another indication of Ford's lack of serious bargaining shows on the local level where the company has settled negotiations with only 20 of the 99 UAW locals it deals with. Local issues generally are settled before national negotiations begin.

Consistent with its tradition of social unionism, the UAW is stressing a measure to create more jobs by giving each worker more time off. The union also wants a readjustment of the Cost of Living Allowance, protection against inflation for retirees and improved health and safety guarantees. Given Ford's record profits in the last six months, these are reasonable, affordable demands.

But with a national election looming, another Ford may enter the picture with demagogic rhetoric about "big labor" threatening the shallow economic recovery. The entire democratic Left must stand up against such blatant nonsense, and we must be sure Jimmy Carter stands with us. Defeat for the UAW would spell disaster for all of us in the movements for social justice. □

for the good of all. To cite one example Robert Lekachman treated in these pages at length last month, the government could decide to seriously adopt the full employment policies which have been so long the subject of bipartisan pieties. To do that, though, would involve stepping on the toes of people who own or control a disproportionate share of this society. President Carter's innovations are more likely to resemble the sophisticated business thinking of Felix Rohatyn, the investment banker who has directed the "rescue" of New York City. Carter's innovation and planning will remain within the framework of corporate decision-making.

Does that mean Carter is really a business conservative we should oppose? No. He's a liberal, much like Johnson. And, for all the horrors of Vietnam, Johnson was preferable to Goldwater; so, too, is Carter preferable to Ford. His weaknesses are weaknesses which would be shared by the liberal candidates who ran to his left in the primaries. A President Humphrey or President Udall, even a President Fred Harris or a President Michael Harrington would be restricted by the limits corporate wealth and power imposes, just as Carter, if he's elected, will be. Welfare state capitalism; is still capitalism; the corporation is still the dominant institution of social welfare and no one has yet figured out how to transcend those limits. In Europe, strong and more conscious mass Left parties have created welfare states far more advanced than ours; some of the European social democrats are just beginning to debate the questions of a transition. Lacking a conscious, strong Left and operating in a much less advanced welfare society, we have somewhat further to go.

In that context Carter and the Democratic program offer us some modest possibilities. Following a Carter victory, the democratic Left could mobilize its resources for the debates over national health insurance and full employment and the whole range of issues the new Administration must deal with. In the wake of a Ford victory, the Left would face more struggles to simply survive the onslaught of reactionary social and economic policies. Carter, then, offers us the prospect of a fight for long-overdue, immediate reforms which could substantially improve the lives of a vast majority of Americans. With Ford lies the road to still more defeats and demoralizations, a course which will require struggles to avoid sliding backward. It should be easy enough to choose between the two.

But, for some curious reasons, it's not so easy for some people to choose. Just as one segment of the Left refused to choose in 1972 so there is Democratic even vaguely "progressive" opposition to Carter now. (One slight historical footnote, the younger Left was not alone in refusing to choose in 1964. Sidney Hook backed the Socialist Labor Party in the Goldwater-Johnson election, thus preserving his unbroken record of non-support for bourgeois candidates. He finally broke that record in 1972 when there was, to his mind, a significant difference between the bourgeois candidates; he actively supported and voted for Richard Nixon).

In 1964 one could disagree and polemicize with those

who would not go even part of the way with LBJ. It's hard to do the same this year with those who have totally abjured Carter. For if the analysis of the 1964 radicals was wrong-headed, it was at least an analysis. Only a strange amalgam remains anti-Carter as the election draws close. While many anti-Carter partisans prior to the Convention (including me) have pretty much come aboard, the non-Republican opposition rallies: Gene McCarthy loyalists who remain principled and pure even if they're not sure what their principles are; increasingly conservative Catholic intellectuals like Michael Novak and Andrew Greeley who are deeply offended that Carter has not consulted them on the aspirations of working-class Catholics; just plain bigots who can't accept a Southern Baptist as President; and old-fashioned sectarians still waiting for a new mass party to emerge.

As a candidate, Carter is asking for our trust. As President, he's sure to ask for it again. Trust, for the believers among us, is reserved for God. To Carter, the Left should be ready to offer active support and mobilization in behalf of his best efforts to eradicate poverty

Capital quotes

“ For some companies, in fact, the U.S. is now a cheap labor market. BASF [a West German chemical firm] says it spends \$10 an hour in total labor compensation at its German chemical plant and only \$8.63 at its U.S. facilities. Adds a top official of Hoechst: 'We can produce chemical fiber more cheaply in South Carolina than the lowest cost regions in all of Germany. . . .'

Foreign companies also like certain American labor practices: they can lay off workers during business slumps more easily than they can at home. And many firms are especially attracted to the American South, where right-to-work laws and weak union activity result in lower total labor costs. It is widely assumed in France, for instance, that François Michelin—who has managed to keep unions out of his tire plants at home—picked South Carolina for a new facility because he could run a non-union shop there, too.”

Newsweek, July 12, 1976

and racism, to restore the cities and to provide adequate health care and employment. We should oppose his efforts to innovate and rationalize on behalf of the haves. We almost certainly will need to mobilize opposition to conservative priorities, and we may need to do it early. Overall, though, this election still looks a lot like 1964. There's no burgeoning New Left, but neither is there a growing Right. Most of all, there is no war in Vietnam, and given the strong cadre of experienced peace activists in the Democratic Party, initial resistance to other foreign adventures could be prohibitively high. No delusions of a coming millenium, but we're entitled to some modest hope. □

Mao . . .

(Continued from page 1)

was said with some reverence, was a giant, a history-maker. That finesses the critical question: what kind of history did he make?

My outline of an answer begins with a look at the history that made Mao. I stress this material at some length because it will illustrate a point which the American obituaries understandably ignored: the cruel contribution of Western capitalism to the desperate situation which gave rise to Mao.

China had already begun to change when the British arrived, gun in hand, in the 19th century. Growing population was exerting pressures on the limited land area. The British further unsettled an already shaky traditional society. It is pertinent to remember the guise in which Western civilization first manifested itself to the mass of the Chinese: as dope pusher. The British needed a market for the opium they were growing in Bengal and fought two wars to "open up" China to a man-made plague. This, a contemporary said, was a way of breaking "the unrighteous walls of a monopoly which bar out four hundred millions of men from European civilization and God's truth."

From that time on, the European powers fought over the prostrate, and often drugged, body of China. When the United States came for its share, the territorial concessions had already been divided up, so our slogan was an "open door" for everyone, i.e. the right of a confident America to enter a competition which it knew it would win. The Chinese, however, did not passively accept the barbarities of their civilizers. They rose up against a Western Christian capitalism which put up signs in public parks, "No Dogs or Chinese." The T'ai-ping rising in the middle of the 19th century and the Boxer rebellion at its end were part of young Mao's heritage.

One would think, under such circumstances, the Chinese Revolution of 1910 would have been anti-Western. On the contrary, it was animated by Western democratic ideals which could not, however, survive the actions of the Western democracies. At the Versailles Peace Conference, the victorious allies, having fought under Wilsonian slogans about self-determination, sold out the Chinese to Japanese imperialism. On May 4, 1919, a vast popular movement under student leadership took place to protest this hypocrisy. Now the cynicism of Versailles turned many Chinese eyes from Western Europe to Moscow. In 1920 Mao helped organize the Chinese Communist Party.

Still another rude shock was in store. For complex reasons, Stalin ordered his Chinese followers into a suicidal alliance with Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang.

save the dates
Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee
Third Convention
February 19-21, 1977

In 1927, Chiang, with the full approval of the Western powers, turned savagely on his Communist allies and butchered them. It is an event to consider when one thinks about Mao's own use of violence. In any case, the Communists who survived were driven out of the cities into a peasant *maquis*.

Mao, then, was shaped by a poor and teeming country whose high civilization was treated contemptuously by arrogant Western capital and by a national experience in which Western democracy proved a sham and Soviet Communism a disastrous leader.

When the Communists were expelled from the cities, Mao made a virtue, and then a theory, Maoism, out of that brutal and bitter necessity. For twenty-two decisive years, the Chinese Communists were cut off from the urban workingclass, and when they reappeared in the cities, it was not at the head of a proletarian rising from within but as the leaders of a peasant army that came from outside. This was a profound shift in the Marxist scenario. To be sure, Mao retained ritualistic references to the Party's proletarian nature but in fact he led an uprooted urban cadre in charge of an agrarian army.

Mao's strategy worked in the pragmatic sense that it brought him to power. But profound consequences followed from shifting the class basis of the revolution. Modern governments are necessarily urban. If they arise out of a working-class movement in the city, there is at least the possibility that they will be responsive to their supporters, particularly if the workers are organized and politically conscious. That, indeed, was one of the reasons why Marx argued that socialism would be proletarian, not peasant. But a government which takes power on the basis of a dispersed peasantry may not find itself under any such democratic pressures.

One can see this distinction at work by comparing Mao with Stalin. The Russian Bolsheviks came to power through a revolutionary process which gave workers significant elements of control over the economy. In consolidating his rule, Stalin had to expropriate that working-class power and the result was a history of bloody purges. Mao's movement was less violent internally because it had never been under any kind of democratic control. That gave it another characteristic: it took abrupt and secret decisions from on high; its policy disputes and decision-making methods have been even more opaque than those of the Russians. Consider a few examples.

In 1949, when Mao took power, he told the peasants that they could keep their private plots for the indefinite future. Four years later, with little or no warning, the most far-reaching collectivization program in history was suddenly decreed. A few years after that, the collectives were themselves collectivized in the Great Leap. When these unplanned and top-down decisions proved to be economically disastrous, there was a retreat and perhaps—perhaps is as much as one can say about such things in China—an ascendance of the technocrats over the genuine Maoists.

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was launched in the mid-1960s. Liu Chao-ch'i, Mao's designated successor, was excoriated as a "capitalist

roader." Students were used as strike breakers against the workers, all in the name of the "proletariat." The workers themselves were accused of the heinous crime of "economism," i.e. of wanting more of what they produced. All this was justified in the name of the "spontaneity" of the masses. But then Mao took the free train rides away from the Red Guard, began to denounce Liu as an anarchist, and called in the Army to settle accounts. That brought Lin Piao to prominence and he was constitutionally mandated to be Mao's successor—until he, like Liu, turned out to have been an agent of capitalism all along.

This Byzantine secrecy is the defining fact about Mao's China. I stress this point because there is a romantic, legendary Mao who is pictured as the champion of participatory democracy. While there is no doubt that Mao and his comrades retained a certain egalitarianism from their Yunan experience, they are caught in a contradiction of their own making. They try to fight bureaucrats bureaucratically; they tell the people when and where to be "spontaneous." So the structures that Mao created, for all of the very real national differences refracted in them, are basically similar to those found in the Soviet Union: the state owns the means of production and the Communist bureaucracy owns the state through a totalitarian monopoly of political power. The bureaucracy, then, owns the means of production.

All this is, I think, rather straightforward. Now let me reintroduce the complexities. Mao's system is not socialist since it denies and represses the one means that the propertyless masses possess for imposing their will on the publicly owned means of production: the democratic right to change their policies and personnel. But Mao did unify the nation as the Kuomintang never did; he provided a minimum standard of living for all; over a quarter of a century, he banished famine. Those are historic accomplishments, even if they were achieved by totalitarian rather than by democratic means. In a country of agonizing poverty, they are not to be casually dismissed.

Even here, though, a word of warning is in order. Mao and his associates overcame centrifugal forces in China which Chiang's Western-supported capitalism could never master. But it is not at all clear that the disintegrative forces are forever exiled from this vast mass of humanity. There were local power bases and armed struggles during the Cultural Revolution; the press indicates that there might have been similar eruptions quite recently. So one possibility during the coming succession crisis is the reappearance, in Communist form, of the centrifugal tendencies of traditional Chinese society.

This point relates to the matter of bureaucratic secrecy in Mao's supposedly participatory China. The mass of people do not know what will happen next and they will not participate in choosing a new leader unless rival factions among the leadership go into the streets. The U.S. State Department does not know; neither do the Maoist cheerleaders in the West, who, if Premier Hua Kuo-fen were declared to be a fascist plotter tomorrow morning, would simply grin and bear

it. This secret rule from on high is a strength in that it enables one to mobilize the people in a single direction; it is a weakness because it can lead to unchallenged stupidities, like the super-collectivization of the Great Leap.

Mao, then, unleashed the peasant masses against a stagnant dictatorship, compromised by its bloody alliance with Western imperialism—and he then leashed those same masses behind his own dynamic dictatorship. He helped liberate Chinese workers and peasants from famine by yoking them to his own bureaucratic power. A sincere egalitarian, he socialized poverty by means of structures which will most certainly lead to inequality. Was more possible? Perhaps not, particularly since the West fought valiantly against its own professed ideals in China.

More broadly, Western policy has everywhere pushed colonial revolutions in anti-democratic directions of one kind or another—fascist, Communist and all the variants in between—by effectively working in the international market to subvert the economic preconditions of democracy. In many cases, most notably China and Indochina, we have thus become the recruiting agents for our enemies. Many of Mao's guns when he came to Peking in 1949 were made in America and delivered to him by the troops which understandably deserted our chosen and unconscionable allies. After the eulogies are over, will we learn anything from this history, not so much about China as about ourselves? □

WORKERS DEFENSE LEAGUE

40 years of service to workers,
to the unemployed, to veterans,
to victims of discrimination

84 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10011

Norman Thomas
Founder

Rowland Watts
President

In Memory of
Mike Kumer

Max and Grace Kumer

Demand Freedom for all Native Americans,
Four centuries of genocide is enough.
Tom Nowel and Lynne Stankey

LABOR DAY GREETINGS

Bill Hagan
Mary B. Allen
Bernard Rifkin
Bruce R. Reed
Philip & Mary Booth
The Levisions of Colorado
John Mecartney
Greg Goldasich
Paul F. Haas
Cynthia Fuchs Epstein
Goldy D. Kleinman
Brendan and Patricia Cayo Sexton

Jimmy Higgins reports...

NOT SO CLEAN GENE—Ah, remember the days when Eugene McCarthy, with his diffident charm and rapier wit, led the anti-war forces to oust an incumbent President. Even if you don't remember, McCarthy and a miniscule band of his loyalists do. They're living off those salad days in McCarthy's current, quixotic bid for the Presidency. And the wit, ever acerbic, remains. On Carter's penchant for government efficiency: "Hitler or Mussolini could have reorganized one of our state governments here, made it very efficient." Funny? Feminists find his sneering promise to appoint a "Goddess of Agriculture" even less amusing. And all those principled liberals who can't compromise themselves by voting for Carter should find McCarthy's dismissal of tax reform as "nonsense" hilarious. The *Nation* in a September 4 editorial got him down pat: "The truth is McCarthy is an eccentrically conservative politician posing as a non-politician."

BAD COMPANY—The United States has an income distribution only slightly more equitable than Spain. Shocking? Yes, but consider France. Income distribution there is slightly worse than in Spain. All three countries have income distributions considerably more skewed towards the rich than in other Western industrial societies, according to a study released last month by the Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation. In France, the poorest 20 percent of the population receives 4.3 percent of the income; in the United States they get 4.5 percent. The richest 10 percent receive 30.5 percent of French national income; their wealthy counterparts here pocket 26.1 percent. By contrast the top tenth of Swedish society gets 18.6 percent. The study has caused quite a stir in France where the Left is seizing upon the figures to attack the government and force the issue of redistribution. No comparable push in the United States has yet been noticed.



WAGES AREN'T RISING as fast here as in other Western industrial nations. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reveals that total compensation per hour (including fringe benefits and leave time) is now actually higher in Sweden than in the United States (\$7.12 compared with \$6.22). Over the last five years wages in Sweden, West Germany, France, Great Britain and Japan have risen at a faster rate than wages here; in all those nations except Britain, the actual dollar increase in hourly compensation since 1970 has also been greater than in the U.S.

THE SOUTH, THE NEW SOUTH, THE SUNBELT, the journalistic cliché-makers are calling it the key to our future. All too often we're getting superficial, one-dimensional treatments. Either America is threatened by the power of a resurgent Dixie reactionary clique in alliance with Goldwaterites and Reaganites in the Southwest, or there is some mystical South that guilty, jaded Northerners just wouldn't understand. If you want to get past the nonsense and learn quite a bit about a fascinating region with a complex history, a magazine named *Southern Exposure* is the place to turn. Ten issues have appeared so far, each concentrating on a special theme like the "Military and the South," "The Energy Colony," or most recently "Labor on the Move." Superb oral histories and articles dealing with the ordinary people who struggled and made (and sometimes failed to make) Southern history are featured prominently. To learn more about virtually any subject the magazine deals with, you need only turn to the extensive and highly useful bibliographies which appear regularly. Subscriptions are available for \$8 from *Southern Exposure*, P.O. Box 230, Chapel Hill, N.C. 27514.

UPDATING THE MESSAGE—Felix Rohatyn, famed for his role in New York City's Municipal Assistance Corporation, wants to send a different message to the world. "We ought to hang a new sign on the Statue of Liberty," Rohatyn says, "'reading Send Me Your Rich'. We are ready to make them welcome in New York."

The Newsletter of the Democratic Left is published ten times a year by the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee. It is available by subscription or by membership in the DSOC.

I want to subscribe. Enclosed find my check or money order. (\$10 for a sustaining subscription; \$5 for a regular subscription; \$2.50 for a limited income subscription.)

I'd like to join the DSOC. Enclosed find my dues. (\$50 sustaining; \$15 regular; \$8 limited income. Dues include \$5 for Newsletter.)

Send to: Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee, 853 Broadway, Room 617, New York, N.Y. 10003.

Name

Address

City/State Zip