

Newsletter of

THE DEMOCRATIC LEFT

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217

Edited by MICHAEL HARRINGTON

Labor's top priority: NLRA reform

by JULES BERNSTEIN

In the course of its 42-year existence, the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) has been reduced from a bold charter of labor's rights, which helped bring unionization, collective bargaining and industrial democracy to millions of Americans, to a battlefield of dilatory maneuvering, procedural in-fighting, and legal stratagems, all designed to frustrate the statute's intended purposes.

The causes of this erosion have been many. They include the restrictive, anti-labor amendments to the law enacted in the 1947 Taft-Hartley Act and the 1959 Landrum-Griffin Act; the generally timid, when not openly hostile, federal bureaucracy assigned to administer and enforce the Act; an unsympathetic federal judiciary whose background, experience and inclinations continue to favor business and managerial, rather than worker interests; and, finally, employer hostility and resistance backed up by a management bar which substantially outnumbers its union counterparts, and which has made a career of frustrating the statute in the name of due process.

During the Nixon-Ford years, conventional labor wisdom counseled restraint in seeking amendments to the NLRA for fear that opening up the law would result in even more harsh and restrictive anti-labor provisions. Hence, with a few notable exceptions, such as the amendments which brought hospital workers under the statute's protections and made prepaid legal services a permissible subject of fringe benefit negotiations, labor sought to avoid any serious legislative tinkering with the Act.

But the 1976 election results, in which labor played a decisive role in President Carter's victory, and the advent of an Administration more receptive to labor issues than its Republican predecessors, have emboldened the labor movement to action.

Accordingly, plans for labor's legislative program for NLRA reform were laid shortly after the election, and later at the AFL-CIO Executive Council meetings in February 1977. High on the agenda were changes which would eliminate delays in representation elections, as well as impose stiffer penalties upon labor law violators.

Jules Bernstein is a Washington, D.C.-based union attorney and member of DSOC.

The critical phase of the legislative planning process came in June and July, when meetings were conducted with key Carter Administration representatives to seek Administration support, crucial to victory for labor law reform. Indeed, White House "neutrality" was a significant factor in the defeat of the building trades "common situs" picketing bill. A coalition of Republicans and 100 Democratic congressional defectors scuttled it early in the 1977 legislative session with the

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Brown-out dims hopes for Left in California

by HAROLD MEYERSON

LOS ANGELES—No one in California is waiting for Lefty. Despite considerable liberal discontent, Jerry Brown is expected to go unchallenged in next year's gubernatorial primary and, with his sophisticated blend of conservatism and populism, to handily defeat his Republican opponent, whoever that may be.

Chief among the causes of progressives' disaffection is Brown's conduct in the recent battles for tax reform and the death penalty. Earlier this year, the invaluable California Tax Reform Association (CTRA) produced a bill which would have rebated taxes and rents in accordance with personal income, in effect transforming the property tax from a relatively regressive to a decidedly progressive levy. Higher taxes on corporations, the wealthy, and non-residential property would have brought in the lost revenue. The Administration opposed the CTRA bill with a distinctly less progressive one of its own: "I don't see any point in gratuitously taking revenue from any particular class when there's no need for it," Brown told the *LA Times*. The result was a mildly redistributive compromise piece of legislation which drastically reduced both the rebates and the alternate sources of income, causing the CTRA to withdraw its support, others to fear that insufficient tax revenues would lead to a future tax increase, and the bill itself to fall six votes short of passage.

Brown began this year's legislative session with the announcement that he would veto any attempt to reinstate a death penalty, and for a while, he evoked mem-

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Theory, commitment stressed as socialist youth meet

More than fifty young socialists from ten states met at Jackson's Mill 4-H Camp near Weston, West Virginia last month to, in the words of the conference call, "confront the era of Carter, crises and complacency." The conference was sponsored by the Institute for Democratic Socialism and endorsed by the Youth Section of DSOC.

It was a diverse group of people that gathered at the camp, including high school students, college activists, young working people and several whose eligibility for youth expired some years ago. They came from as far away as Colorado, Texas, Ohio and Illinois.

During the next three and one half days they attended a long list of lectures, discussions and workshops. Between the scheduled events the conference participants still found the time and energy to work in an informal volleyball tournament and attend the mountain crafts and music fair which was in full swing at the other end of the camp.

Youth Section notes

Cynthia Ward is "retiring" after more than two years as Youth Coordinator to become a full time graduate student, but will continue as a consultant to the Youth Section Steering Committee.

If you'd like to get in touch with the Youth Section, find out about the next youth camp or correspond about the problems and opportunities for youth and community organizing, write or phone Youth Section Corresponding Secretary Mark Levinson, DSOC National Office, 853 Broadway, Room 617, New York, N.Y. 10003.

The Youth Section is also sponsoring a pamphlet series on organizing techniques edited by Gretchen Donart. The first in the series, "Organizing and producing a local newsletter," will be available from the National Office after November 1. Other upcoming topics will include tips on organizing meetings that make plans and organizing a film showing.

Transcripts of Michael Harrington's address to the youth conference will also be available for a slight charge. Write the National Office for details.

Cynthia Ward, conference co-ordinator, opened the conference speaking about her personal conversion to socialism. She stressed that "socialist principles of democracy and equality and cooperation are quickly convincing, but still you don't wake up every morning thinking 'Wow I'm a socialist,' when much of your life is taken up with other concerns." That theme was echoed throughout the conference—the effort to link socialism to everyday concerns.

Michael Harrington, president of the Institute for Democratic Socialism, spoke about the importance of socialist theory and methodology. "Socialism," he said,

"is the first movement in the history of humankind that argues the possibility of a conscious transformation of society. Therefore socialist theory has to be of the utmost importance. He went on to warn that "it is important for socialist theory to be rather chastened. We have to understand that there is no theory which makes you smart politically; that is, you can have an absolutely beautiful theory but if you have no political sense it will take you nowhere."

Michael Rivas spoke to the conference about his participation in the Cuban revolution. A dedicated democratic socialist, he insisted that he never broke with the revolution; rather the revolution took a non-democratic turn and broke with him.

Other workshops addressed issues of labor law reform, the J.P. Stevens boycott, the Democratic Party and Congressional politics, socialist history, and unemployment. There were also sessions on local organizing, where people from throughout the country shared their experiences (the successes as well as the failures) about organizing on the local level. Deborah Meier, a member of the board of the Institute, closed the conference with a moving speech on "The Meaning of Socialist Commitment."

In March, when the conference was still in its early planning stage, Cynthia Ward began to assemble a group of activists, mainly from the New York City area. Throughout the spring and early summer, they met with Secretary-Treasurer Jack Clark, and organizational consultant Bill Gellermann. *Dissent* editor Irving Howe, at a July meeting, challenged the group to develop the "intellectual fortitude" to become articulate spokeswomen and men for socialism. He urged them to develop critiques of and creative alternatives to capitalist society.

This was in part accomplished by the youth conference. The young socialists, after three and a half days of listening, discussing, and learning, left with a clearer vision of socialism and the part they can play in the movement. We seem ready to take that first step (that Mike Harrington is always talking about) in the journey of ten thousand miles. □

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THE DEMOCRATIC LEFT

Michael Harrington, Editor
Jack Clark, Managing Editor

Signed articles express the views of the author.

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There Is No Alternative To Full Employment

Conservatives understand that. Which is why they use the jobs issue to beat back the kinds of alternatives we've been fighting for: higher minimum wages, lifeline utility rates, tax reform, "ban the can" and other environmental initiatives. Conservatives are discovering a rightwing pseudo-populism that's winning. Because people are scared and with good reason.

For most of this decade, we've suffered through recession-level unemployment. Six, eight, even ten per cent of the work force unable to find a job (and that's the *official*, understated count). Behind those statistics are millions of individuals and tens of thousands of families deprived of even the possibility of economic security. They are forced into poverty and increasingly subjected to physical and emotional illnesses ranging from heart attacks to loss of self-worth to alcoholism to suicide.

Living under that cloud doesn't make people receptive

to wide-ranging discussions of alternatives. Rather it drives us all to protect what little we have. That's one reason we need full employment—a job for every man and woman willing and able to work.

But the Carter Administration, which was elected on a full employment platform, now says we have to live with unemployment of six percent or more for the rest of this decade. We say the discussion of alternative policies begins with reversing that cruel decision. But we cannot end there. To achieve jobs for all, we need to keep up and broaden the fight for a wide range of alternative policies, for a truly DEMOCRATIC AGENDA! That is what we'll be discussing in Washington on November 11, 12 and 13. The DEMOCRATIC AGENDA includes demands for full employment planning, a fairer distribution of wealth and income, social instead of corporate priorities in government policies, and a foreign and defense policy genuinely oriented toward peace. Won't you join us?

The Democratic Agenda Conference

NOVEMBER 11-13, 1977

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- Full employment, democratic planning and the political process;
- Conversion from arms spending to human needs;
- A survival program for our cities;
- What unemployment does to people and movements;
- Possibilities for the middle range: prospects and policies toward the 21st century.

Among the speakers:

Michael Harrington; Machinists President William Winpisinger; Gar Alperovitz, Jeff Faux and Leslie Nulty from the Exploratory Project on Economic Alternatives; Hazel Henderson and Richard Grossman from Environmentalists for Full Employment; Rep. Ron Dellums; economists Robert Lekachman, Anne Carter, Nat Weinberg and Bob Browne.

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Labor law reform . . .

(Continued from page 1)

help of a massive lobbying and letter-writing campaign generated by right-wing and business forces and the aid of fiscal conservatives within the Administration. Hence, labor proceeded to negotiate its labor reform proposals with the White House in the hope of arriving at a consensus and a positive White House endorsement. During this process, the labor movement was forced to put aside its drive for repeal of Section 14(b) of the Act, which authorizes states to enact the misnamed "right-to-work" laws which prohibit the union shop (20 states have such laws on the books), in order to ensure Administration sponsorship of the package and avoid the ever-present threat of a Senate filibuster.

Within the Administration, sponsorship of labor law reform was bitterly opposed by such powerful forces as Office of Management and Budget Director Bert Lance, who is reported to have told top corporate executives "I offered my advice and it was disregarded." Indeed, it is understood that almost all principal Administration advisors—with the exception of Secretary of Labor Ray Marshall—urged the President to remain neutral. And the powerful Business Roundtable, the top corporate executives of the 160 largest American corporations, made a major effort to dissuade the President from supporting the package.

Presidential support

Nevertheless, on July 18, 1977, President Carter sent his message on labor law reform to Congress. Couched in terms of regulatory improvements designed to make the National Labor Relations Board a more efficient and effective instrument for protecting employee rights, the President's proposals would achieve the following:

- Establish graduated timetables in which the NLRB must conduct representation elections based upon the complexity of each case. Simple bargaining unit elections would require a vote within 15 days of the filing of a petition; cases involving more complex issues concerning appropriateness of the bargaining unit or voter eligibility would be held within 45 days of the filing of a petition. In cases of "exceptional novelty or complexity," a maximum of 75 days could elapse before a vote was taken. The intent of these provisions would be to eliminate delays during which employers have frequently engaged in unfair campaign tactics to undermine union majorities.

- Provide unions with an opportunity equal to employers to communicate with employees during representation election campaigns. This would eliminate the existing employer advantage to exhort workers to vote "No" through so-called "captive audience" speeches.

- Require the NLRB to seek an immediate injunction to obtain reinstatement of workers illegally fired for union activity during an organizing campaign. Currently, while the Board has discretion to obtain such injunctions, it has seldom sought to do so.

- Enlarge the National Labor Relations Board from 5 to 7 members. This would allow speedier decisions in

unfair labor practice cases, which currently take the Board more than a year to adjudicate.

- Provide more effective sanctions against employers found guilty of violating the law. These would include a procedure for barring such violators from obtaining federal contracts for three years; the award of double damages in cases of discharge for union activity during an organizing campaign; and the right to compensate workers where an employer illegally refuses to bargain in good faith for an initial contract after a union has won an election.

- Authorize unions which represent non-guards to represent guards of another employer. Present law bars plant guards from being represented by any union which "admits to membership or is affiliated directly or indirectly with an organization which admits to membership employees other than guards."

As AFL-CIO President George Meany pointed out at a major gathering of organizing directors, lawyers and lobbyists of AFL-CIO affiliates early in July, the thrust of the package is aimed toward facilitating initial organizing of the unorganized, rather than dealing with the more complex problems of the already organized.

The legislation was introduced in the House by Congressman Frank Thompson (D-N.J.), Chairman of the Labor-Management Relations Subcommittee; and on the Senate side by Harrison "Pete" Williams (D-N.J.)

Capital quotes

“To admit the possibility that we are now at full employment requires that we exorcise some ideas we have had from infancy. Most important, it requires getting rid of the idea that 7 percent unemployment cannot be full employment”

Herbert Stein, chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors under Presidents Nixon and Ford, writing in the September 14 *Wall Street Journal*

and Jacob K. Javits (R-N.Y.), the Chairman and ranking minority member of the Senate Human Resources Committee. Thompson is predicting a "tough, tight" battle in the House, but anticipates House passage by late September. Williams intends to conduct Senate hearings in the fall prior to putting the bill before the Senate early in 1978.

At a Capitol Hill news conference which launched the bill, one of the most persistent and flagrant violators of the law was described by two former textile workers who came from Darlington, South Carolina, 77-year-old Thelma Swan and her son, Raymond.

They told the news conference of how their former employer, Deering-Millikan, responded to an employee vote in favor of unionization in 1956 by closing the plant and firing 556 employees. The plant closing and discharges were followed by 21 years of NLRB hearings, interspersed with court battles. After 21 years, the

litigation continues without back wages having been paid, and approximately 100 of the former employees of Deering-Millikan have since died.

On August 9, 1977, the House Labor Subcommittee travelled by bus from Washington, D.C., to Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina, to conduct a hearing on the reform bill. The labor movement has been involved for years in a bitter struggle there with J.P. Stevens, the nation's second-largest, and most militantly anti-union, textile producer. Three years ago, after a decade of struggle, the Textile Workers Union, which recently merged with the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, won a representation election at seven Stevens plants at Roanoke Rapids, but has as yet been unable to negotiate a contract for the Stevens workers. The ability of Stevens, which grosses over a billion dollars a year, to continue production at its 85 other plants, all in the South, is a major reason why the union has not taken Stevens on in a strike at Roanoke Rapids. In addition, Stevens has been willing to pay out over \$1.3 million in fines and back pay, which has not deterred it in the least from continuing its campaign of unfair labor practices. Instead, with the assistance of the AFL-CIO, the UAW and the Teamsters, the Clothing Workers has mounted a nationwide boycott of all Stevens products, and has initiated organizing at other Stevens plants.

The labor reform package is seen as an aid to this effort. Union representatives generally agree that if Stevens can be organized, this will represent an important opening for organizing in the South. As put by Jim Sala, Southern Regional Director of the AFL-CIO, "as long as we've got J.P. Stevens, we'll never really succeed in organizing the South. It sets an example for this kind of resistance."

For its part, the AFL-CIO has mounted a major public information and lobbying effort in support of the package. Anticipating a massively financed right-wing campaign against the bill, such as was successfully mounted against the earlier situs picketing proposal, the AFL-CIO has established a Task Force on Labor Law Reform under the directorship of Vic Kamber, former research director of the AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades Department. A 22-minute color film entitled "Reform At Last," and accompanying materials are available from the Task Force, 815 16th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006, at no rental fee to interested groups. Speakers are also being dispatched to discuss the reform proposals at union and other group meetings.

Along with the efforts of the AFL-CIO itself, a broad

coalition of labor, civil and equal rights, religious, ethnic, student and senior citizen organizations have come together in support of the measure.

In an obvious employer effort to defeat the labor reform package, a bill labeled the "Employee Bill of Rights" has been introduced by Congressman John N. Erlenborn (R-Ill.).

Employers strike back

Labeled the "bosses' bill" by AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Lane Kirkland, the Erlenborn measure would 1. delete the preamble of the National Labor Relations Act, which declares the public policy of the United States to be the encouragement of collective bargaining; 2. prohibit the NLRB from ordering an employer from ever recognizing a union without a secret ballot election—a course which the Board resorts to only in the face of the most flagrant and pervasive unfair labor practices which have destroyed any possible union majority; 3. prohibit a union from fining or imposing economic sanctions on members—as, for example, in the case of spying or strikebreaking; 4. require a secret-ballot strike vote and authorize employers, or 10 percent of the work force, to obtain an employee vote on whether a strike should be continued or terminated; 5. compel the NLRB to dismiss unfair labor charges involving any disputes which might arguably be subject to arbitration; and 6. exempt religious objectors from union shop provisions.

In a speech to the recent convention of the Retail Clerks, Kirkland strongly denounced the Erlenborn proposals as an employer move to derail true reform:

"The bosses' bill—introduced by Rep. John N. Erlenborn (R-Ill.)—is a perversion of its title. It mocks the Congress and the American people by seeking to camouflage the division and suppression of workers as a defense of employee rights. Fully half of the Erlenborn proposals have absolutely nothing whatsoever to do with 'employee rights'—no matter how he twists that phrase. Half of the proposals—even his own summary admits—would create new rights and powers for the bosses—new devices to frustrate and subvert the law."

Proposals similar to those introduced by Congressman Erlenborn, have been introduced in the Senate by Senators Hatch (R-Utah), and Griffin (R-Mich.).

The struggle over labor law reform will unquestionably be one of the most bitterly fought during the 95th Congress. Both its supporters and detractors recognize that its outcome will significantly influence the future of union organizing in the Sunbelt and elsewhere for years to come. □

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Brown . . .

(Continued from page 1)

ories of the young seminarian who had implored his then-Governor father to spare the life of Caryl Chessman. But faced with the prospect of a death penalty initiative on the same November '78 ballot as the gubernatorial vote, Brown made it ostentatiously clear he would make no effort to affect the legislature's attempted override, which, thus sanctioned, passed each house with exactly the required two-thirds margin—it being, after all, one thing to ask one's father to risk his political career, and quite another to ask it of oneself.

Nonetheless, in matters which do not involve greater public responsibility for social welfare, Brown has generally been a progressive governor. He is responsible for the enactment of legislation establishing collective bargaining for teachers and farmworkers. His appointees, among whom minorities and women are well represented, have been responsive to a range of worker, consumer, ecological, and minority concerns; the quality, if not the quantity, of his judicial appointments has won praise from liberal and civil libertarian attorneys.

Whether these appointees can use their office to mitigate social meanness, as many of them doubtless wish to do, is another matter. The chief stumbling block, for instance, to ecological or workplace advances remains the state's unemployment rate, which until recently was 1 percent higher than the national average. Brown has suggested that some tax breaks for corporations could generate some jobs; he also supports the Hawkins-Humphrey bill, though nothing about his conduct as Governor could lead one to think that President Brown would support it any more vigorously than President Carter has. The notion that any of California's huge budget surplus could be used to put some people to work is a thought unthunk in Brownsville.

For Brown is still trumpeter of the era of limits, and he has by now made it clear that neither redistribution nor increased public responsibility for the social whole will be used to help those whose resources are most limited. Instead, he advocates "volunteerism." Brown's opening toot in this campaign was to call for volunteers to help end the typically disgraceful conditions of state mental hospitals, thus obviating the need for any increase in state expenditures. The first respondents to the call were members of Hare Krishna and similar sects—professional volunteers.

In an era of limits with neither redistribution nor public assumption of responsibility, the thing most certain to be limited is social decency. □

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Human rights & global socialist strategy

by ERNEST ERBER

With regard to human rights, what do American socialists want the President to say, or do, if anything? One view, expressed in these pages, wants the President to shut up about the issue. This view holds that it is "inappropriate for the U.S. to unilaterally wage a campaign" for human rights because Carter's use of the issue has a Cold War confrontationist aspect, while, according to this view, the most and worst violations of human rights take place in the West and not in the Soviet sphere. It would follow from this view, that, in addition to keeping quiet, Carter should not have responded to Sakharov's letter or invited Bukovsky to the White House which constitute, to the best of my knowledge, the sum total of *actions* by the President on human rights vis-a-vis the Soviet Union.

This view would vitiate whatever influence socialists might be able to bring to bear on our government on behalf of human rights abroad. In the last analysis, it would not differ much from the stance of apologists for Communist regimes (of both the Russian and Chinese persuasions) who hold that because of American violations against human rights, the United States government has forfeited the right to point a finger at others, especially not at Communist countries.

Contrary to this view, socialists should ask our government to speak up for human rights everywhere—in the first instance, of course, within the United States. But wherever it does speak up, it should be cheered on, especially when its pressure is applied to situations that are critically important to an international strategy for socialism. The fact that the Carter Administration has its own political objectives in emphasizing human rights should no more deter us than Soviet demands for American withdrawal from Vietnam should have deterred American socialists from making the same demand. To "cheer on" our government's efforts on behalf of human rights does not mean, of course, that we give blanket, *a priori* endorsement to a governmental campaign over which we have no authority as to objectives or means of achieving them. In this instance, as in all others involving support of Administration measures, socialists reserve the right to make independent judgments and voice critical evaluations.

As a movement dedicated to social change through political action, socialists must subject every issue, including human rights, to measurement within the calculus of power. Political strategy requires identification of objectives by order of importance and concentration of necessarily limited resources as leverage for breakthroughs at these points.

Viewed in terms of an international strategy in the fight for democracy and socialism, and weighed in the light of a half-century of history since the issue was first joined, where are the critical break-through points in the *struggle for human rights* that can open up new perspectives for democratic socialism? Within the capi-

talist West? Or within the totalitarian collectivist East? How one sees the answer to this question is not only critical for the human rights issue, but across the entire range of strategic questions that compose a program for democratic socialism in this period of history.

Those socialists who criticize Carter for having highlighted oppression in the Soviet Union with his letter to Sakharov and his welcome to Bukovsky, while not rigorously applying a human rights yardstick to Great Britain's actions in Northern Ireland, Israel's actions on the West Bank, West Germany's hysterical repressions of civil rights in response to bombings and kidnappings, etc., either see human rights as solely a moral issue without implications for political strategy in the fight for socialism, or see the struggle for human rights in the West as more important than in the Soviet sphere. This position, in the opinion of this writer, flies in the face of fifty years of history, from which one might extract the Spanish experience as an example to be considered.

As we socialists rejoice in the emergence of Spain from the dark and bloody decades of Franco, and especially as we rejoice in the strong position assumed by an *independent* Spanish Socialist Party, we should reflect on the grim fact that this democratic rebirth and this socialist revival is not likely to have occurred had the Loyalist government under Negrin triumphed over Franco in 1938, or even in the latter part of 1937, when such a military victory would have put Spain under the control of the Communist Party, then entirely a puppet of Moscow.

By the middle of 1938, the G.P.U. controlled all the Republican police and intelligence forces; Red Army officers and specialists controlled the military; the Spanish Communist Party, staffed at the upper echelons by German and French functionaries, dominated economic and political affairs in Republican-controlled territory. (For insight on the earlier stages of Communist take-over, see *Homage to Catalonia*, by George Orwell, perhaps the most painstakingly honest eyewitness account of the Spanish Civil War.)

What I conclude from the foregoing account of the Spanish experience, is that where regimes such as Franco's (even Hitler's and Mussolini's) take power, human rights go into temporary eclipse; where Stalinist (i.e., post-Lenin Communist) regimes take and consolidate power, the long dark night of totalitarian collectivism descends.

Almost daily one reads in an editorial or column that by angering the Russians with talk about human rights, Carter is foolishly and irresponsibly hurting the chances for disarmament and peace. The portrait of the Soviet leadership which emerges from that view is that of madmen who in effect paraphrase Goebbel's remark, "When I hear the world 'culture,' I reach for a gun," by saying "When we hear the words 'human rights' we reach for the button." This is absurd. The Soviet leadership is cold, calculating and brutally realistic—not mad. They will neither decide to arm nor to disarm in response to Carter's speaking out or keeping quiet about human rights.

Of course, the Soviet leadership wants Carter to keep

quiet about human rights. They prefer that no one speak about ropes in the house of the hangman. It is more agreeable to toast with vodka and arrange cultural exchanges. The Russians recognize their extreme vulnerability on human rights. Unlike Hitler and Mussolini, they do care how the world sees them, especially the workingclasses of the West and the peoples of the Third World (in the first place, the Communists of those countries who, as demonstrated by Eurocommunism, are likely to become critical of Soviet suppression of human rights.) It is most naive, however, to believe that considerations of friendship cause any nation—including the United States—to disarm. This step is dictated by military and economic considerations.

What most critics of Carter's human rights stance vis-a-vis the Soviet Union are advocating is a return to Kissinger's *détente*, to the policy of Ford's snub to Solzhenitsyn, to a message to the dissidents in the Soviet sphere that they need not look for support from the West, not even moral support. In contrast to this, socialists should view the rise of the dissident movement in the Soviet sphere as a flaming meteor of hope flashing across the Eastern European sky. Never has the ultimate fate of so many rested on the courage of so few. Whether they are subjected to greater brutality than are equally heroic oppositionists in non-Communist dictatorships is not the issue. The dissidents in the Soviet sphere wage their struggle at the very fountainhead of the global poison that contaminates the cause of socialism, that replaces the human exploitation of capitalism with that of totalitarian collectivism.

Regardless of disparateness in purpose and objectives, Carter's human rights confrontation with the Soviet leadership coincides in practice with the global strategy for democracy and socialism indicated by the experience of history. □

Editor's note—Like Bogdan Denitch's piece in the June issue, Ernest Erber's article is part of a continuing socialist dialogue on world affairs. A discussion bulletin probing these issues further will soon be issued by DSOC and will be available at slight cost to all NEWSLETTER readers.

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Jimmy Higgins reports . . .

AMALGAMATED CLOTHING AND TEXTILE Workers Union Vice-President Joyce Miller was elected President of the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) last month at the group's second constitutional convention. Miller, a DSOC member, pledged to organize and develop programs for membership growth and local chapters. The slow growth of the organization has disappointed many observers of the standing room only crowd at the organization's founding convention three years ago. These union activists say that CLUW's growth was hampered by lack of funds. Many potential CLUW members were turned off both by the influx of left wing purists and by the CLUW leadership's confused reaction. Observers are hoping that Miller can rekindle the feminist/union solidarity that characterized that first convention.

CLOSET FEMINIST: That's how George Meany characterized himself in an address to the CLUW Legislative Conference immediately preceding the convention. An economist for a House committee commented that the minimum wage was so weighted toward women that George Meany must be a closet feminist for pushing hard for an increase. (AFL-CIO figures show that two-thirds of the workers within a nickel of the minimum wage are women.) "If being for the minimum wage means that I'm a feminist, move over sisters," Meany told the conference. CLUW leaders were delighted at Meany's appearance which gives CLUW moral—and they hope—financial blessing from the AFL-CIO. . . . Labor Law Reform Task Force chief Vic Kamber also gave an efusively feminist speech to a CLUW luncheon with sentiments rarely heard from the building on Sixteenth Street.

CONSUMER COOPERATIVES MAY FLOURISH if the U.S. Senate acts favorably on a bill which passed the House by a single vote. The National Consumer Cooperative Bank proposal would provide up to \$5 million in federally sponsored loans to consumer coops.

If passed, the legislation is expected to lead to a rapid expansion of consumer coops. But the bill faces stiff opposition from banking and business lobbyists who anticipate killing it in the Senate after it squeaked by on a 199-198 vote in the House. Supporters of the bill include the AFL-CIO, the UAW and a range of senior citizen and consumer organizations. To help insure passage, write your Senator expressing support for Senate bill 1010.

CIRCULAR REASONING DEPT.—"Texas Instruments does not exist to make a profit—TI exists to serve society. The measure of whether it is serving society is determined by its profitability because society will pay for the products it wants."

IS CARTER ULTRA-LEFT?—According to Jack Anderson's September 22 column, the Carter Administration is considering backing the Humphrey-Hawkins bill as a sort of final tribute to a terminally ill Minnesota Sen. Hubert Humphrey. Carter and his aides object to some sections of the bill, most importantly to the provisions to create last-resort, temporary public sector jobs for those unable to find work in the private sector. Anderson quotes an unidentified Carter advisor: "you can't legislate full employment." The statement, however, carries echoes of other recent denunciations of the Full Employment Action Council and, for that matter, THE DEMOCRATIC AGENDA. According to the sectarian leftists who have attacked "misleadership" in the labor movement, in the black community and among muddle-headed "social democrats," we can't legislate full employment because capitalism can never be reformed. Variations on that theme have been raised in Europe, Latin America and elsewhere by sections of the extra-parliamentary Left over the last century. Does Carter agree with such views? Well, he can at least join with Brezhnev and Hua in condemning revisionism and reformism.

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