

Words clash with deeds in Administration arms policy

by PATRICK LACEFIELD

The Carter Administration seems to have taken to heart the sage wisdom that "good words are worth much and cost little." The Administration, after a year in office, has compiled a spotty and disappointing record on disarmament and military spending. Though candidate Carter's commitment to disarmament initiatives and reduced military spending won considerable support from the Democratic Left during the primaries and general election, we have been treated to the spectacle of President Carter: cancelling the pork-barrel B-1 bomber project while approving the more destabilizing cruise missile, of advocating an end to the U.S. role as the "arms merchant" of the world while pushing arms sales abroad to an all-time high, and of waxing eloquently before the United Nations about the dangers of an escalating nuclear arms race even while giving the go-ahead for advanced development of the new MX intercontinental missile. Despite the obvious improvements in rhetoric and good intentions, it remains to be seen whether the Carter Administration holds a genuine commitment and understanding of the kinds of initiatives necessary to reorder national priorities from military spending to human needs and make substantive progress towards arms control and disarmament.

Military spending

Although his testimony before the Democratic Party platform committee asserted that "without endangering the defense of our nation or commitments to our allies, we can reduce present defense expenditures by about \$5-7 billion annually," President Carter has obviously renounced this pledge. The Administration this past year rammed through a somewhat reluctant and surprised Congress a Defense budget of \$122.3 billion—over \$12 billion more than the previous year under Gerald Ford. In addition, early in January President Carter reiterated his commitment to increase NATO's conventional forces in Western Europe and extracted a pledge from other NATO members to raise their military expenditures by 30 percent.

Even more incredible was the release, on July 1, by the Carter Administration of its long-range economic assumptions and budget projections. These projections

indicate that Carter seeks to increase the military budget by 48 percent between 1978-82 while reducing federal assistance to state and local governments, restraining other forms of domestic spending, and providing no funding for the new initiatives needed for such programs as national health insurance, aid to the cities, welfare reform and more. Even with an expansive budget by 48 percent between 1978-82 while reducing Fed-Carter's pledge to balance the budget and the current sluggish rate of economic growth), these projections are extremely restrictive and will serve, if implemented, to exacerbate the continuing dilemma of "guns versus

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Democratic Agenda: next steps in movement-building

With the death of Hubert Humphrey, the full employment movement has lost its most renowned champion and spokesperson. Because of his death, there has been pressure to move up the legislative time table and get votes in both Houses next month on the Humphrey-Hawkins bill.

With united business and conservative opposition to the bill, only lukewarm support from a number of liberals and wavering by rightward-drifting "new liberals" in Congress, passage of the bill is by no means assured.

And a defeat would be disastrous. As Michael Harrington said at a January 6 meeting with DEMOCRATIC AGENDA initiators, "Defeat of Humphrey-Hawkins would give Carter a permanent excuse not to act on full employment."

In order to pass the Humphrey-Hawkins bill and to move on to win the battles for implementing legislation, the broad full employment movement is mapping out plans for immediate action.

Post cards and pressure

The Full Employment Action Council held a workshop to train local full employment activists in lobbying and coalition-building at the end of January. The

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Carter, damn statistics and reactionaries; or did unemployment really dip in December?

by MICHAEL HARRINGTON

The political portents of 1978 are mixed. On the one hand, the spontaneous outpouring of sentiment on the death of Senator Hubert Humphrey makes the passage of the Humphrey-Hawkins bill more likely (and indeed, our information is that it will come up quite early in the Congressional season).

On the other hand, there is disturbing evidence that the White House has accepted the essentials of the conservative argument on economic policy.

Even more problematic, there is a tendency among the statisticians to design measurements and indices which disguise the magnitude of our social problems. That seemingly academic exercise could well victimize real-world minorities and women.

Sadly, it must be noted that the conservative trends are the ones which have figured most prominently in the news and will occupy the center of this brief report. Widespread participation in DEMOCRATIC AGENDA projects thus is quite critical.

The big economic story of last month was the spectacular drop in the unemployment rate, which fell to 6.4 percent in December. It is crucial that we put this figure into context. First, and foremost, it is the third *highest* level in the period from 1948 to 1975, when the current recession began. Only 1958 (6.8 percent) and 1961 (6.7 percent) were a bit above this rate. Jubilation should be restrained.

Suspect numbers

Secondly, there are a number of facts which make the numbers suspect. Here the profound—and largely reactionary—consequences of statistical manipulation surface. Between October and November the labor force grew, on a seasonally adjusted basis, by 806,000 new entrants. In December, that figure declined to 42,000 newcomers.

Part of that decrease might be expected: bad weather and the holidays could discourage job seekers. But what makes one wonder is that every right winger in the country—and even some certified liberals—are trying to blame our abysmal unemployment record on the women and youth who have been entering the labor market. The tendency has been to discount their joblessness, to argue that it has less weight than the plight of adult white males. At NBC John Chancellor did a veritable fugue on this vicious theme.

Some mainstream economists like Otto Eckstein also note that the December statistics sharply contradict past experience. (That experience is distilled in "Okun's Law," a mathematical correlation between growth in the Gross National Product and growth in employment.)

During the last quarter of 1977, real GNP increased by 4 percent. From past experience economists would expect that employment would grow by .2 percent—not the .6 percent reported by the government.

Other dark shadows were cast on December's opti-

mistic unemployment figures—government survey interviews with the unemployed showed a drop in those seeking work, but payroll data did not confirm that they actually found work. A more likely explanation is that the unemployed were too discouraged to look for work.

Why this attention to the minutiae of numbers? Because there are strong tendencies in motion in America to define the problem of unemployment out of existence rather than to solve it.

This move is quite visible in the "population-employment" measurement being touted by various conservatives and used by President Carter in his State of the Union message.

Presidents Nixon and Ford used similar devices to ward off criticism of their economic performance. As we were plunging into the 1974 recession, Nixon bragged that more Americans were working than ever before. So, too, in the 1976 debates did Ford claim that the numbers of people on payrolls was higher than ever. What they conveniently ignored—and what the population-employment measurement generally ignores—is the changed character of our labor force. Minority group members and women, who were for various reasons—most of them having to do with race and sex discrimination—defined outside the labor market, have decisively entered the job market. To employ the population-employment figures under these circumstances is to argue in a sophisticated manner that unemployment does not count so long as blacks, Hispanics and women are its victims.

One last factor is at work in the statistics and it too is being treated as if it were invisible. As Secretary of Labor Ray Marshall pointed out, Federal programs are now providing jobs and training slots for 1.5 million workers, and there are plans to increase that number to 3.5 million. (Those plans, which include welfare reform, are ambiguous and even dangerous in other respects.)

Why has the governmental contribution reducing

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unemployment been systematically slighted? It is, I would suggest, because there is an offensive, now unfortunately led by the President, to demonstrate that the private sector is the only key to full employment.

In December, the Committee for Economic Development, an organization which refracts the views of major corporations, came up with a plan for a public-private partnership to increase employment for those who are victims of the very structure of the labor market, most notably the minorities.

In his economic message to Congress, Carter endorsed this theme. And in an editorial celebrating the idea the *New York Times* has the bad taste to recall the last time it was tried out: Lyndon Johnson's Job Opportunities in the Business Sector (JOBS) program under the National Alliance of Businessmen (which was then led by Henry Ford, the world traveller who just discovered that South African blacks want more multinational investment in their racist country). Even the *Times* editorialists had to hint at the reality of the JOBS effort: outright lying as to fulfillment of targets; Federal subsidies to hire workers who would have been hired anyway; and quick dismissal as soon as the economy turned down.

Democratic Agenda . . .

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FEAC's aim in bringing scores of labor, church and other full employment organizers to Washington last month was to build for the most successful possible activities this month. February 10-21 has been designated Full Employment Education week; the people to be educated are members of Congress who will be home on recess.

The FEAC hopes that members of the House and Senate from every section of the country return to Washington in March having heard plenty from their constituents about full employment. Organizing for the meetings with members of Congress has been going on since mid-January. To find out what's going on in your area and how you can help, call or write the Full Employment Action Council, 815 15th St. N.W., Rm. 516, Washington, D.C. 20005, (202) 628-0224.

Another major effort to let Congress know that there is a full employment constituency is a post-card campaign coordinated by THE DEMOCRATIC AGENDA. In the fight to pass labor law reform legislation in the House last fall, the Machinists' union alone delivered 255,724 individually signed postcards to members of Congress. That display of support from back home convinced a lot of fence sitters in Congress.

To order post cards for your area, write to THE DEMOCRATIC AGENDA, Room 617, 853 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10003. To cover printing costs, we're charging \$1/100 cards.

See you in Memphis?

We need to pour as much energy as possible right now into passing the bill. But we may (it's still not assured) soon enter the post-Humphrey-Hawkins pe-

It is bad enough if the President were eyeing such a model. Worse, it is leading him to make make decisions that could hurt blacks, other minorities and women. It would have a particularly devastating impact in the deteriorating regions of the Northeast and industrial Midwest. In his Economic Message, Carter said that he will propose extending the investment tax credit to "industrial and utility structures" (it currently applies to machinery). Government would subsidize relocation of plants—and jobs.

In December, *Business Week* had this to say about the idea: "Carter's 1978 tax proposals on the investment tax credit could actually do far more damage to the economic viability of the city than all of the special tax credits, grants and loans proposed by [HUD's] Urban and Regional Policy Group can undo." Thus, sophisticated corporate journalists are aware of the disasters that could befall the nation as Carter pursues corporate "confidence."

So while Humphrey-Hawkins is now possible, the statisticians are trying to define unemployment out of existence and the President is off on a conservative tack. An informed, militant full employment movement is more necessary than ever. □

riod. What does the full employment movement do then to assure that the bill's promise is attained?

Some plans have already been laid. THE DEMOCRATIC AGENDA is aiming for a visible presence at the Democratic National Party Conference, which will be held in Memphis this December.

In the preliminary Call to the Conference, the Democratic National Committee states that the purpose of the meeting is ". . . addressing issues embraced in the 1976 Democratic Party Platform . . ."

For Democrats who voted Jimmy Carter and the Congressional majority into office, this Conference could be an opportunity to push for full employment action. That will only happen, though, if strong full employment advocates are counted heavily in the delegation to the Conference. Although December seems a long way off, delegate selection processes have already begun in some states. In others, they begin soon. DEMOCRATIC AGENDA backers should consider running for delegate positions; at a minimum, we can use the selection processes to raise the issue of the Democratic Party's accountability to its full employment promise.

To run for delegate, simply write or call your Democratic state committee headquarters. Find out what the delegate selection process is (primary, caucuses, etc.) and when it is being held. If you don't have the address and phone number of your Democratic state committee, write or call the Democratic National Committee, 1625 Mass. Ave. NW, Washington, D.C. 20036, (202) 797-5900 to find out where your state party is located.

If your state party is vague or unsure about the delegate selection process and you're interested in pursuing it and possibly running (or helping another delegate candidate), get in touch with Libby Moroff at the DEMOCRATIC AGENDA office. □

Response . . .

To the editor:

Since my position on the Humphrey-Hawkins bill was misstated in the December issue of the NEWSLETTER—with direct use of my name in Jack Clark's piece and by clear implication in Mike Harrington's—I think I am entitled to space to set the record straight.

At the Democratic Agenda Conference, I quoted an Administration official who said the present, watered-down version of the bill is "symbolic, not embodying a specific set of programs" and a *New York Times* editorial that called the bill a "hollow promise." I noted that it is "the responsibility of Socialists to go at least as far as the *Times* in pointing out that the emperor has no clothes." The fact is undeniable that Humphrey-Hawkins does not mandate the creation of as much as a single job.

I reminded the audience that, "We have had hollow promises and symbols for more than 30 years in the Employment Act of 1946. We should know by now that symbolic legislation writes no paychecks. As Santayana said, 'Those who refuse to learn from history are condemned to repeat it.'"

It is pointless, however, to waste energy in fighting symbols—and worse than pointless when what is symbolized would be desirable if it were given substance.

It is at least equally pointless to dissipate time, energy and money that could be used effectively to fight for the substance of full employment in fighting for a mere symbol. As Mike's article put it, "If the full employment forces settle for [Humphrey-Hawkins], then it will turn into a defeat." Those enlisted in fighting for it would then inevitably be disillusioned and turned off on future action. We would have lost not only a slogan but, as in 1946, the possibility of building a movement around full employment that ultimately could make it a reality.

I therefore proposed neither to oppose Humphrey-Hawkins nor to settle for it. The words I used at the Conference in stating my conclusions were: "Those genuinely concerned with full employment can support [the bill] only as a framework on which to hang some flesh and into which to insert some teeth—even if the teeth bite the President."

The point is to devote such forces as DSOC can mobilize to support substance rather than symbol.

That means, in the first instance, drafting and enlisting support for amendments to Humphrey-Hawkins that would make it a mandate rather than a Carter gesture.

If that effort should not succeed—and the odds are greatly against it—it would at least lay the groundwork for the next steps. As George Meany said in commenting on Humphrey-Hawkins, "a goal, without follow-up action, would be meaningless." By telling it like it is about Humphrey-Hawkins now, we can help avoid disillusionment that could dissipate the forces needed for the "follow-up action."

—NAT WEINBERG

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butter" and may well sound the death-knell for programs of full employment, public investment, and the redistribution of wealth and power. The Administration projections reveal, contrary to protestations by Carter himself, that these dramatic increases in military spending outstrip even the excessive Defense budgets projected by President Ford shortly before he left office.

Weapons system procurement

President Carter entered office at a time when a whole host of new weapons systems—a new generation, as it were—stood at a point of decision. He must decide exactly which systems to promote for advanced development and deployment. These decisions, on which hinge the choice of either further escalation of the arms race or genuine initiatives towards arms control with the Soviets, are only beginning to be addressed; extensive confusion exists as the Administration seeks to determine how they will bind together pragmatic decision-making and the lofty rhetoric and goals espoused by President Carter.

A case in point is the Administration decision to cancel the B-1 bomber program. That decision resulted from an intensive four year battle waged by the Stop the B-1 Bomber Campaign, a coalition of peace, environmental, church and labor groups against the weapons system. Over the past four years, public resistance had grown against the B-1, which came to symbolize the distorted national priorities of the Nixon-Ford Administration; in January, a Harris poll showed 44 percent of the American people opposed to production of the B-1 as compared to 27 percent in favor, and demonstrations against the B-1 occurred in over 100 cities in January, reminding Carter of his campaign statement that the B-1 is "a system which should not be funded and is wasteful of taxpayer's dollars." Full page advertisements placed in newspapers and magazines across the country by the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees stressed the constructive programs in education, health care, and transportation that could be funded instead of squandering \$100 billion on what Sen. Frank Church called "a 20th century version of the Spanish Armada."

In the end, of course, President Carter did announce the scrapping of the B-1 bomber program much to the dismay of the Air Force (which sought the added prestige of a new manned bomber), the "defense" industries (whose millions of dollars in propaganda and high-pressure lobbying was for naught), and the hawks in Congress. However, once the liberals in the Congress and the anti-B-1 coalition recovered from their jubilation over Carter's surprise move, many came to the realization of how hollow their victory actually was.

Carter did not base his decision on the "human needs versus weapons" argument advanced by the Stop the B-1 Campaign and its Congressional allies. Rather, the decision seemed narrowly technocratic—defined in terms of cost-effectiveness and strategic strength—with an element of politics mixed in. Carter did not wish to be perceived as disavowing the anti-B-1 themes he

echoed throughout the presidential campaign. Secretary of Defense Harold Brown admitted that had the B-1 been 30 percent less expensive it probably would have been approved by Carter.

In addition, and most importantly, the demise of the B-1 did not signal an acceleration in American efforts to reach substantive arms control accords. In fact, quite the contrary. By substituting the cruise missile in place of the B-1 as "more bangs for the buck," the Carter Administration tossed a new wrench into efforts to negotiate on a SALT II agreement with the Soviets.

Essentially a small pilotless aircraft which carries a thermonuclear warhead, the cruise flies at low altitudes and is, accordingly, a challenge to Soviet air defenses, a selling point which appeals to many hawks and erstwhile liberals in Congress. The cruise, however, presents arms controls negotiators with incredible and nearly impossible problems as to verification of numbers and ranges of the missiles. At this juncture, it appears that the Air Force would like to modify 150 B-52s to carry 25 cruise missiles each and plans are being laid to deploy thousands on the ground in Western Europe. The cruise missile, then, is a significantly more destabilizing weapons system than the B-1, which it ostensibly was to replace. Hardly what one could tout as a victory.

The next substantial fight over weapons systems procurement in Congress and the public arena promises to be over the Administration's push for development of the MX missile. Only two days after President Carter, in addressing the United Nations on October 4, offered reciprocal reductions of up to 50 percent in strategic weapons in order to "express his strong commitment to arms control," a more telling example of that commitment was unveiled with the announcement by Secretary Brown of the Administration's intent to approve

full-scale development of the MX, a new mobile intercontinental ballistic missile. MX missiles will cost \$100 million each, or \$30 billion for the entire program, and move around in underground trenches 20-30 miles long in order to cut down on what the Pentagon considers the "vulnerability" of the present U.S. ICBM force. In addition to the paucity of evidence indicating the Soviets have the capability to eliminate our fixed ICBM sites, the question is moot since the strength of the U.S. nuclear triad lies in our virtually invulnerable submarine-based missiles, a force which alone can assure the destruction of the world several times over. Questions need to be raised as to the efficacy, on strictly military terms, of maintaining our bomber and land-based strategic forces and whether the unilateral scaling down of those "legs" of the U.S. nuclear triad might further the progress of genuine arms control efforts. By contrast, the American development of the MX missile seems certain to represent a major step by the Carter Administration in escalating an already runaway arms race.

The twisted logic of the arms race and the illogic of weapons procurement is well represented by the present furor over the neutron bomb. Although the Pentagon and its allies claim that the neutron bomb, as a tactical nuclear weapon, will deter a Soviet blitzkrieg of Western Europe, our allies there have demonstrated a notable lack of enthusiasm since it is their countryside and populace that would be ravaged by such a weapon. Egon Bahr, General Secretary of the German Social Democratic Party has gone so far as to denounce it as "a mental perversion" and has lamented the bankruptcy of any morality which affixes the appellation "humane weapon" to any implement of mass destruction.

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Heresy in East Germany: Democratic Communism

by MICHAEL HARRINGTON

The ferment within the European Communist movement—"Eurocommunism"—continues to make news. In Italy, the Socialists have joined with some minor Left-Center parties to demand Communist Party participation in the government. The American response to this crisis—and an incredibly dishonest interview with Henry Kissinger perpetrated on the American public by NBC—make it clear that this nation's establishment is not simply against Eurocommunism; it is horrified by the growing power of Eurosocialism, particularly in France and Spain. Washington is not concerned with Communists in power in those countries. It fears the Left in power.

In France the Communist Party—which has nothing like the strong democratic socialist tendency to be found within Italian Communism—is doing its level best to sabotage the Union of the Left even as the polls show the Right to be more vulnerable and divided than at any time since De Gaulle returned to the Elysee in the late Fifties. That the French Communists claim to be "Left" critics of the Socialists while favoring a nuclear strike force for France, arguing against workers

control and for centralist nationalization and playing an old part as "Gaullists of the Left," should surprise no one familiar with the history of that Party.

But the most fascinating development in Europe—and the one which has received the least attention in the American press—is the Manifesto of the League of Democratic Communists of Germany published by *Der Spiegel* last month.

One reason why this phenomenon has not been given the coverage it deserves is that there are some doubts as to the document's authenticity. Predictably, the East German government claimed that this vigorously anti-Stalinist statement was a fabrication of the West German secret police. *Spiegel's* East Berlin office was shut down in retaliation for having printed the Manifesto. The only problem with the theory that the whole affair is a West German government plot is that Bonn was clearly disturbed by the event, fearing that it might jeopardize detente and negotiations between the two Germanies. As the NEWSLETTER goes to press, Helmut Schmidt is dispatching one of his ministers to have conversations with the East Germans.

One doubts, then, that the West Germans would

have invented a piece of "disinformation" which would make their own policies much more difficult. But then there are some—most notably Herbert Wehner, the chair of the Socialist fraction in the West German parliament—who see the Manifesto as an East German fabrication. For some time now, the East Germans have been moving against every hint of dissidence: the satirist Wolf Bierman was effectively exiled to the West in 1976; various dissidents have been placed under house arrest; and one economist, Rudolf Bahro, has been charged with espionage. In Wehner's view, the Manifesto was concocted in order to provide a rationale for draconian, more Stalinist policies.

On the other side, there are serious observers, perhaps including Helmut Schmidt, who take the document more seriously. The Austrian socialists noted that the very fact that the East Germans accused the West German secret police gave credibility to the authenticity of the Manifesto. And *Le Monde* and other papers have noted that the statement's strong advocacy of German reunification is something which would not have been fabricated by the secret police of any nation.

There is no point in trying to settle this issue in a short report. Though I tend to think the Manifesto real—the product of middle level functionaries and members of the Socialist Unity (i.e., Communist) Party—even if one assumes it to be false, it is fascinating what is now being fabricated. The East German scholar, Wolfgang Hairich, published similar ideas in the wake of Khrushchev's speech at the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party in 1956. He spent 1957 to 1964 in jail and the event hardly occasioned a stir in the Western world. (Hairich, incidentally, has dissociated himself from the present Manifesto; he still lives in East Germany.)

What is the document which has caused all this fuss? It is divided into two parts. The second section is a searing attack on corruption, bureaucracy and demoralization in East Germany. It talks of drugs, nepotism, censorship, waste, a decline in the quality of products, the exploitation of the workers. "We have been dragged back into a reactionary feudal order," this section argues . . . "We have pre-Tsarist conditions." This material is of greatest interest to experts on the internal life of East Germany, and the density of its detail has been cited as proof of the authenticity of the whole document.

But the part of the Manifesto which is most interesting to the Left outside of Germany is the one which deals with a general analysis of Communist society. Even the Italian Communists have refused to develop a systematic theory of why Russian society developed as it did. From some questions which Palmiro Togliatti, the late Communist leader in that country, formulated in 1956 and 1957, there have been hints and bits of such an analysis but, for a complex of reasons, the Italian Communists still tend to fudge over this issue. The Spanish Eurocommunist, Santiago Carrillo, has moved in that direction in his book, *Eurocomunismo y Estado*, but, until now, he has been considered the most heretical and dissident of the breed.

The East German Manifesto goes far beyond Carril-

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lo. It proclaims, "We do not believe in God-the-Father-Marx, Jesus Engels or the Holy Spirit Lenin, nor in the fatalistic inevitability of history, but we value the 'classics of Marxism-Leninism' as important parts of a long intellectual process, leading from More and Campanella through the French, English, and German utopians, the Enlightenment, the Classical philosophy, up to Bebel, Rosa Luxembourg and Liebknecht, who represented, in philosophic positions not printed in East Germany, the idea of a pluralistic Communism."

In this analysis, the Soviet Union is imperialist (so, the Manifesto says, is the United States), a form of "bureaucratic state capitalism" with strong overlays of Asiatic despotism. Russia, it continues, is led by a parasitic caste which exploits the workers. In order to cope with such a system, in East Germany, the Soviet Union or anywhere else, there must be plural political parties, free elections, an independent judiciary, and complete freedom of expression.

These few notes hardly constitute an attempt at a complete report, much less an analysis. I simply want to suggest that there are trends in motion in Eurocommunism which could lead to truly historic changes. If the East German document is authentic, then it is of a piece with developments that took place in Poland and Hungary in 1956, in Czechoslovakia in 1968; it is part of a ferment that even a totalitarian apparatus could not repress.

Even if it is a fabrication, its resonance is bound to be destabilizing. One remembers that the Tsarist secret police on occasion unwittingly made significant contributions to the revolutionary movement. In either case, I suspect we will hear more of these developments—and I am surprised that the American press has been so casual about them. □

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tion that promises the slaughter of thousands while sparing buildings and other physical structures. Simply because the neutron bomb is such a "precise" weapon, it lowers the nuclear threshold and increases the likelihood of touching off a "limited" nuclear war which will almost invariably escalate into a full-scale nuclear exchange. Though President Carter will soon have the final word on this weapons system, it was quite discouraging to witness only 90 votes cast against the neutron bomb in the House of Representatives. This does not augur well for hopes that the Congress will play a constructive role in disarmament and arms control efforts.

Arms Sales

As a candidate Jimmy Carter was quick to assail the Ford Administration for its cynical and destabilizing advocacy of massive arms sales to nations all around the globe. As president, Carter announced in May that his Administration would make strenuous efforts to control arms exports and that such sales would be "an exceptional foreign policy implement" so that the U.S. would no longer be known as the arms merchant of the world. Alas, here again the rhetoric has fallen far short of performance. As one Congressional staffer put it, "No one knows what's going on, how the arms policy is being implemented. There's a stated policy, but constant exceptions to it."

Therein lies the problem. Carter Administration guidelines make exceptions to its policy of arms "restraint" for NATO nations, Israel, the several billion dollars already contracted but not yet delivered (from the Ford Administration), military sales contracted by commercial firms (rather than the government), and foreign military service contracts (which supply U.S. personnel to train natives in the use of particular weapons systems). This leaves only about 25 percent of arms sales subject to arms sales restraints and even then President Carter reserves the right, if "national security" demands it, to make exceptions.

In the first four months of the Carter Administration, over \$4 billion in arms sales were contracted as political realities and economic interests of arms manufacturers far outstripped the principled position on which President Carter was elected. Congressional opposition is mounting to Administration plans to peddle the \$1.2 billion Airborne Warning and Control System as well as dozens of F-15 advanced fighter planes to Iran, and only the next few months will show whether "restraint" has any significant place in the Carter Administration's arms sales policy.

The future of the SALT talks

It is some sort of reflection on the efficacy of the SALT talks that few reacted with trepidation when the SALT I limitations on strategic nuclear weapons expired in October. One reason for this lack of concern is the probability of U.S.-Soviet agreement on a new pact in the next few months which will reduce slightly the limits on strategic delivery vehicles while continu-

ing to sanction quantitative levels higher than present levels. Like the SALT I Agreement, this pact will almost surely mandate no actual arms reduction or program cancellation and thus is compatible with the respective military programs of both the United States and the Soviet Union.

Herein lies the problem with SALT. Talks are conducted in the context of an escalating arms race rather than in the context of a serious commitment towards disarmament. As a result, symmetrical equivalency causes weapons limits to be set too high, weapons are developed as bargaining chips for the next round of negotiations (this is how the cruise missile was promoted in 1972) and the role of the military complex in decision-making processes is heightened to an unhealthy level. SALT ceilings are magnets in the sense that the U.S. and the USSR build up to those ceilings regardless of military necessity because not to do so might well be construed by the other side as an act of political weakness. To those interested in further exploring the pitfalls of multilateral disarmament efforts, Alva Myrdal's new book *The Game of Disarmament* is most revealing.

The bottom line on current efforts towards arms control and disarmament seems clear: President Carter may be sincere in speaking for disarmament but he wants to reduce weapons on terms favorable to U.S. political power, including the power to intervene throughout the world if necessary. Future U.S. SALT proposals will be compatible with this overall context and thus while using SALT as a vehicle we should harbor no excessive expectations regarding its efficacy. Bold, ground-breaking unilateral initiatives must be undertaken by the United States so that the increasingly dangerous drift towards nuclear war and excessive military spending at the expense of vital social needs might be arrested before our time runs out. This is the challenge the Carter Administration must speak to in the coming months; the Democratic Left needs to hold the Administration responsible for its performance. □

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Jimmy Higgins reports . . .

THE CONSTRUCTION UNIONS' RESPONSE to their nearly desperate situation will prove most interesting for the future of the labor movement. Always weak in the building of single family homes, the building trades by many estimates are now down to controlling as little as 50 percent of non-residential construction. And they're losing their strength even in previously solid union cities on the West Coast and in the Northeast. At a meeting before the AFL-CIO convention, they pledged to organize the unorganized in the construction industry. That, of course, would be a drastic break with past practice which has concentrated on control of the hiring hall and job access. Organizing would also mean an effort to reach out to non-union minority workers who have been alienated from the all-white crafts. Along with the political goal articulated by Building Trades Department President Robert Georgine of defeating liberals who have betrayed their labor support, an organizing drive could signal a modest left turn among some of the nation's oldest union organizations. To be sure, there are problems. Seventeen craft organizations will have difficulty coordinating trade union and political work among them. Georgine is hoping to negotiate a master national contract for construction of nuclear power plants, a position which puts him in conflict with a number of liberal-left activists. But the building trades abound with young, vigorous leadership, people like Georgine, J. C. Turner from the Operating Engineers, Bill Sidell of the Carpenters, Ed Carlough of the Sheet Metal Workers and John Lyons of the Structural Iron Workers. *Business Week* predicts an industrial union for construction.

PARTICIPATORY PLUTOCRACY—Like many major corporations, Rockwell International is organizing a corporate political action committee. Such committees as vehicles for channelling pro-business money into politics legally began to proliferate after the campaign reforms enacted in 1974 and 1975 to curb Watergate-style abuses. The corporate political committees supposedly balance the political action committees run by unions. For the unions, the standard pitch is to collect a dollar, or even as much as \$5 or \$10 for the year. As for the corporations, a standardized Rockwell pitch might be representative: "The amount you contribute is your

decision, as is your participation. However, \$10 to \$20 for every \$1,000 of your yearly salary is a reasonable guideline" emphasis added).

SUN DAY COMES ON A WEDNESDAY—A broad coalition with extensive labor and environmental support, has designated Wednesday, May 3, as Sun Day to demonstrate the feasibility and desirability of solar energy. The key organizers of the effort come from the environmentalist movement, and a number of them conceived and largely carried out the national coordination of Earth Day in 1970. While many of Sun Day's supporters cite the successful Earth Day activities eight years ago as a model, Sun Day seems to be building an even broader base. Not surprisingly, the UAW, which has long urged greater cooperation between trade unionists and environmentalists is supporting and publicizing the effort. But there have also been indications support for Sun Day from the leaders in the Teachers, the ILGWU and the building trades who have not always been friendly to environmental activists. In addition, the coalition has reached out to political leaders in both parties and to consumer leaders like Kathleen O'Reilly of the Consumer Federation of America. More information about Sun Day is available from Solar Action, 1028 Connecticut Ave. N.W., Room 1100, Washington, D.C. 20036, phone (202) 466-6880.

IN ANOTHER SIGN OF SOLIDARITY between sometimes warring environmental and labor constituencies, Environmentalists for Full Employment (EFFE) used its January ACTION ALERT to urge its supporters to contact senators to indicate support of labor law reform (S-1883), to oppose weakening amendments and to oppose a filibuster by voting for cloture. The *AFL-CIO News* reported on the environmental support, noting that EFFE had organized a similar support effort when the bill was before the House last fall. (By the way, all democratic Left activists in and out of the labor movement should take a few minutes to write their Senators supporting S-1883). More information on EFFE, which is a sponsoring organization of the DEMOCRATIC AGENDA, is available by writing 1101 Vermont Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005.

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