

DEMOCRATIC LEFT

EDITED BY
MICHAEL HARRINGTON

June 1979  412 Vol. VII No. 6

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After years of silence, we are inundated with war films, books and plays. Most, says Jan Barry, miss the mark in covering the war's true drama.

Nuke Battle Needs Unity

By Michael Harrington

A CHALLENGE TO NUCLEAR power requires an assault upon the basic corporate priorities that undergird the entire economy. However, one suspects that many participants in the growing anti-nuclear movement, including some who consider themselves to be the most militant, have not faced up to the truly radical implications of shutting down this life-threatening industry.

To be sure, some have begun to confront the economic and social issues at stake. Barry Commoner's two-part series in the *New Yorker* showed how a shift to solar energy would require structural changes in the way energy decisions are made in this country. Charles Komanoff's analysis in the *New York Review of Books* demonstrated that nuclear energy is not only apocalyptically dangerous but also inefficient and costly. These and other crucial considerations, it seems to me, have not been examined by many people in the movement.

This is not simply an intellectual failure. If, for example, the anti-nuclear movement demands a shutdown of all nuclear facilities, but does not acknowledge the employment and economic effects of such a move, once again a middle class and college-educated constituency could be pitted against blue collar workers. Such a split was one of the reasons why the war in Vietnam dragged on with murderous consequences. It could impede the fulfillment of the goal which



Photo by Becky Cantwell/CALC

“Once again, a middle class and college-educated constituency could be pitted against blue collar workers.”

has become paramount since the events at Three Mile Island: ending nuclear power in the United States.

Need to End Nuclear Power

That goal is clear enough now, but let me just summarize a few of the reasons for committing oneself to it. First, there is the issue of safety. On April 10th, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) admitted that the sequence of events that led to the near tragedy at Three Mile Island had not even been considered in

the various safety analyses it made. How many other such surprises are in store? That problem is compounded by the corporate interest in glossing over problems and cutting costs, a factor which was plainly at work in the construction of the Three Mile Island Plant and in the initial response to the accident. As the deaths from the Nevada tests in the Fifties demonstrate, there can be a twenty-year interval between a lethal event and the premature death it causes.

Secondly, there is no waste disposal system now known that can deal with the

deadly detritus of the nuclear industry. To continue on our present course would be to increase the number of "time bombs"—like the chemical wastes at the Love Canal in Buffalo, N.Y.—that could affect generations yet unborn.

Thirdly, as Komanoff has documented, the soaring costs of nuclear energy have been rising 17 percent faster than the general rate of inflation. Now that Three Mile Island will clearly force more rigorous standards on existing plants, the industry will further price it-

Continued on page 13

LETTERS

To the Editor:

As far as he goes Pat Lacefield (April 1979) is basically correct in his assessment of SALT II. It is too little almost too late.

But he misses the point that the treaty has a symbolic significance that far transcends its substantive importance. In fact, a defeat of SALT II would have as much symbolic significance in the foreign field as Proposition 13 has had in the domestic field.

In the face of Proposition 13 fever George McGovern's ADA rating has fallen from 100 to 75 percent. Want to see it fall to 50 percent? If so, stand by and let them defeat SALT II.

Henry Bass
Boston, Mass.

■ ■ ■

To the Editor:

In your March 1979 issue, you mention the possibility of a presidential campaign by a democratic socialist candidate. I believe such a campaign could be highly successful. I call your attention to a poll conducted in 1975 by Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc., which concluded that 41 percent of the American people would support major changes in our economic system, that 56 percent would probably or definitely support a Presidential candidate who advo-

cated a system of worker managed companies, and that 57 percent believe that campaign could be developed which points to the nuclear power issue as an example of corporate irresponsibility, and which advocates worker management as a viable alternative to the half measures of the Carter administration.

Rich Shelp
Bridgehampton, N.Y.

■ ■ ■

To the Editor:

I was happy to read Rosemary Radford Ruether's article on the Latin American Bishops' Conference (April 1979) in Puebla, Mexico. As a person who lives in the context of liberation theology, I find it a "sigh of relief" to know that the official Catholic Church structures okayed the continuation of the people's struggle for liberation.

To know about Puebla is heartening, but it seems to me that knowing about it is not enough. Scores of North Americans longed to be present at Puebla. Many were able to attend. We must ask some questions of those who were there and of those of us who have been inspired by Latin America.

Why is there so much interest and enthusiasm from North Americans? Is witnessing the Puebla event just one more way North Americans vicariously take

part in social change? Is it easier for us to identify with "foreign" peoples where the lines of struggle are blatant and the poor are easily identified rather than in our own country—an extremely complex society—where the poor are more difficult to identify and where those in need of liberation are ourselves?

Models for change and hope have come from our Latin sisters and brothers for our liberation struggle. We are learning much from them, including the facts that those in power do not step aside easily; that those in power do not avoid conflict; that torture and death are assured for some in the struggle. On the other hand, our Latin sisters and brothers can learn much from us, not excluding the necessity for a feminist perspective and the use of non-hierarchical models created and used by some leftist groups.

As we U.S. citizens begin taking the next steps toward our own liberation, we could echo what one Latin asked a brother North American: "Why are you coming to Puebla? You should be holding a Puebla in your own country."

Julia McComisky
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Julia McComisky is with the Women, Work and the Economy Project of Theology in the Americas.

DEMOCRATIC LEFT

Formerly the
Newsletter of the
Democratic Left

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DEMOCRATIC LEFT is 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. Signed articles express the opinions of the authors. ISSN 0164-3207. Second Class Permit Paid at New York, N.Y.

False Assumptions Freeze Women From Job Market

By Jo Freeman

TRADITIONAL CONCEPTS ABOUT family structure and the way in which designated roles of women and men interact with the economy underlie government economic policies.

Because economists assume that all individuals reside in stable two-adult families, and the '60s and early '70s brought a rise in real income, they find the rapidly rising rate of women in the labor force both unexpected and inexplicable.

Women have been moving into the work force steadily since World War II. During the last few years, women workers have increased so rapidly that economic projections have not been able to keep up. While our *current* economic forecast anticipates that 48.5 percent of all women over 16 will be in the labor force in 1980, by 1978 over 50 percent of all such women were employed or looking for work.

Inflation Puzzle

Since economists cannot explain this within a traditional economic framework, they tend to associate it with other puzzling phenomena, in particular, why we have simultaneous high unemployment and high inflation (something impossible under the traditional view that there is a cyclical trade-off between unemployment and inflation—with one high when the other is low, and vice versa.)

Many economists conclude that the increase in women's participation in the labor force, particularly among married women, can at least partially account for both higher inflation and unemployment.

They argue that married women who "don't really have to work" tell government interviewers that they are looking for jobs when they are actually quite picky about what work they will accept. They argue that because women do not provide the major economic support for



Workbook/CPFFeminist

the family, a particular unemployment rate does not indicate the same degree of national hardship as it has done in the past. Furthermore, married women, who don't really "have to" work, are even accused of taking jobs away from married men who do, making an additional contribution to the unemployment rate.

Employed women are less often blamed for inflation than for unemployment, but some economists note that married women's contributions to family incomes increase the number of dollars families can spend. More dollars without a concomitant increase in productivity is attributed as a major cause of inflation.

Full employment is a fundamental part of improving women's economic situation. But as long as this Administration sees inflation as the number one economic problem and accepts the traditional economic notion that curbing inflation requires policies contradictory to lowering unemployment, women will continue to carry a disproportionate share of America's economic woes.

The Administration is emphasizing inflation for two reasons: one, despite his populist campaign rhetoric, Carter is more in tune with the needs of business than of labor—and business worries about inflation; and two, politically, everyone feels the pinch of inflation, but the only

ones affected by unemployment are the unemployed.

Now, even the cries of the jobless are being rationalized away by attributing most unemployment to women. Thus, Administration economists are saying that the consequences of continued unemployment will not be too severe.

False Premises

They are wrong. They are wrong because they have simply not understood that the principal economic unit is no longer, if it ever was, the two-adult family with one primary wage earner. Not only is the two-earner family becoming the norm for families with more than one adult, but the single person and the single-parent family is also growing by leaps and bounds.

Presently, 36 percent of all minority families and 11.5 percent of all white families are headed solely by women. Because women's unemployment rates are higher and their incomes lower than men's, 51 percent of families headed solely by minority women and 24 percent of equivalent white families were below the poverty level in 1977. Only 5 percent of the families with a white man, and 13.5 percent of those with a minority man in them, were below the poverty line.

While the percentage of all families in poverty has been declining in the last two decades, most of that decline has been among families with men in them. More and more, poverty is becoming a female problem. And it is a female problem because the programs designed to alleviate poverty mainly help men.

Most public employment programs have trained women for traditional, low-paying jobs. They have encouraged men to gain employment experience and discouraged women from leaving the home. Later, if the family breaks up, it is the woman who has little or no experience to help her in job-hunting.

As long as male preference is institutionalized, women will continue to dominate the ranks of the impoverished and the unemployed. And it will remain institutionalized until there is a concerted approach to improve the economic situation of women.

What is needed is an entire rethinking of women's role in the labor force.

The current view of equal employment opportunity is that women who are like men should be treated equally with men. Instead, what we need is recognition of women's right to equal labor force participation, recognition that does not view economic dependency on men as the ultimate fallback position, in fact the preferred fallback position. We need to recognize that all adults have responsibility for the support of themselves and their children, regardless of their individual living situation.

This means that all are entitled to policies which facilitate carrying out this responsibility without regard to sex, marital status, or parental status. From this perspective, programs and services that appear to be luxuries under the traditional view become necessities. It is from this perspective that the following proposals should be developed:

- A major priority should be programs that foster job integration by sex and race to alleviate the overcrowding by women and minorities into a few occupations. Large-scale programs must prepare and place women in high-paying skilled jobs through subsidized adult vocational education, on-the-job training, upgrading within firms during layoffs without loss of unemployment benefits, and massive efforts to place women in non-traditional jobs. In addition, government should put teeth into affirmative action requirements for women and mi-



Workbook/cpf

norities: first, by making a viable affirmative action program a prerequisite for bidding on government contracts (not merely a paperwork requirement after a contract has been secured); and second, by creating more varied sanctions for non-compliance than contract denials.

- Further research should be done on the possible implementation of the concept of equal pay for work of equal value in job evaluation systems.

- Unions and employers should be encouraged to distribute the cost of an economic downturn equitably among their workers by ending traditional layoff policies which result in disproportionate dismissals of women and minorities and developing programs of work sharing.

- Child care must become a public responsibility, just as necessary as the provision of schools, police and fire services. Parents who choose to leave the labor force for short periods to bear and care for young children should have their jobs held for them just as they would

be if they were drafted to fight a war.

- To provide more options for all workers, the development of alternative work schedules including part-time and flexitime should be encouraged without loss of seniority or benefits.

- Because the standard work week coincides with the standard hours that businesses and agencies are open, it is difficult to be a fulltime worker and to maintain one's private life without the assistance of another adult in the family, usually a wife, who does not work these hours. In order for women to have the opportunity to maximize their earnings, the government should encourage establishments that cater to the public to lengthen the hours and days they are open. Such policies would also increase jobs.

Women need proposals like these if they are to achieve their right to equal participation in the labor force. But as long as women are viewed as temporary workers, or secondary contributors to family income and national growth, as long as women remain tokens in policy-making, they will not be equal. ■

Jo Freeman is the author of The Politics of Women's Liberation (Longman, 1975), and editor of Women: A Feminist Perspective (Mayfield, 1979). This article is adapted from a paper given at the Conference on Women and the Economy, sponsored by the Conference on Alternative State and Local Public Policies and held in Cleveland, Ohio.

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Peace Movement Gains New Momentum, Allies

By Harry C. Boyte

ON MANY SIDES THERE IS mounting evidence of a growing, still relatively small peace movement. The new activism, which overlaps with citizen protests on related issues such as nuclear power, the Carter budget, inflation and unemployment, has caught up a range of groups that includes traditionally pro-military constituencies such as the Southern Baptists and many Christian evangelicals.

The result is a crazy quilt of alliances. Native Americans join with midwestern cattle ranchers to oppose uranium mines. Public employee unions find allies in irate taxpayer groups as they fight against military waste. Defense workers unite with pacifists to seek passage of military conversion legislation.

The peace activism grew quietly through the mid-decade. Though a lavishly funded right wing campaign to regain "U.S. military supremacy" tended to dominate public debate, peace groups like the Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy, SANE, Clergy and Laity Concerned (CALC), the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), War Resisters League (WRL), Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) and others were also at work.

Repeatedly, peace forces mounted challenges to Pentagon budget requests. They won scattered victories, such as the B-1 bomber termination. Perhaps equally important, peace groups educated a sizable constituency about the terror of constant arms escalation.

And they developed skills. "A lot of people learned how to think as organizers," explains Kay Halvorson, a staff member of CALC. "We started addressing issues of jobs and military conversion and learned to think in terms of strategy and specific campaigns."

In the spring of 1978 many strands of peace activism began to come together. The United Nations Special Session on Disarmament provided a rallying point for education and outreach. The pre-session conference drew 3,000 people from around the country and the demon-



United Methodist Board of Global Ministries/
John C. Goodwin

Death figures were part of a play about the Pentagon at the Riverside Church convocation.

stration coordinated by the Mobilization for Survival brought 20,000 people to the streets in front of the United Nations.

In June, Riverside Church in New York built on the momentum with a "Reverse the Arms Race Conference" that drew 750 people from 42 states, almost all new to peace activity.

Local Activities Grow

Following up the Riverside Conference, a program called "Riverside on the Road" scheduled 75 state and local meetings for 1979. They proved diverse and successful. In Hartford, the Machinists and Auto Workers unions linked up with local churches in a conference that highlighted military conversion. At the University of Michigan, a conference focused on the Year of the Child. In Wichi-

ta, Kansas, activists concluded a meeting near a Trident missile base by planting seeds to symbolize life.

Other protests materialized. When weapons' manufacturers sought to display their wares in an arms bazaar (called "the world's most outstanding defense marketing experience") in a Chicago suburb, 4,000 demonstrators converged to turn the event into a farce. Over 1,000 residents of Santa Cruz, California, turned out night after night at a series of hearings to voice overwhelming disapproval of a Lockheed plan for a weapons plant. Three thousand demonstrators surrounded the Connecticut launch site of the Trident submarine on April 7, protesting the newest multi-billion dollar component of the U.S. arsenal. And the peace movement translated into political pressure as well.

"Last year, we had five or six very strong local coalitions on military spending and the budget, and maybe 10 more cities where something was happening," says Betty Bono, staff of the Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy. "This year there's been a great increase in activity." In each session of Congress, the Coalition introduces a resolution to transfer wasteful funds from the military to needed human services. It has also served this year as a rallying point for opposition to Carter's military budget proposals. Thirty coordinated press conferences in opposition to the Carter budget took place. Referenda calling for a military funds transfer passed by large margins in San Francisco and Madison, Wisc. State legislatures in Illinois and Massachusetts have opened hearings on the transfer resolution. Even in Washington, where the right wing campaign for a revived Cold War has created something of a frenzy, signs of resistance have appeared. Thus, the House Budget Committee—after extensive pressure from Coalition affiliates—cut five billion dollars from the Pentagon's supplemental budget

requests for 1979 and 1980.

But the Washington conflicts—soon to be inflamed by debate over SALT II and the MX missile — have barely begun. When these issues heat up, many more Americans could become activated.

"People are beginning to get scared," says Cora Weiss, director of the Riverside Church arms control program. "Nuclear war has seemed mythological and distant, but people sense it's getting closer."

A commonly voiced perception, moreover, is that increased public consciousness of the dangers of nuclear power, nuclear fallout and the crisis at Three Mile Island have contributed to heightened awareness of the arms race as well.

Groups such as the Mobilization, AFSC, and CALC consciously draw the links between weapons and nuclear power. A new tactic of these groups is to call for a moratorium on new weapons

and development and on construction and use of nuclear power plants.

Even America's most conservative religious groups are beginning to be politicized. Billy Graham recently called worldwide arms spending a form of madness and vowed to dedicate major energy to the efforts for world disarmament. The Southern Baptists have distributed disarmament literature such as Richard Barnett's "A Time to Stop" and held a well-attended disarmament conference in February.

Throughout the spectrum of religious denominations, signs of a renewed peace activism have multiplied. "A fantastic shift has occurred in people's thinking over the past year on disarmament," says the Reverend Vincent Hawkinson of the Lutheran Church of America.

In late March an international meeting of religious leaders backed SALT II as a

timid, inadequate but crucial first step. The National Conference of Churches has called a special meeting for the fall to consider proposals for funding disarmament projects.

The 1970s, which began with the stormy controversy over Vietnam, could end with rising furor over modern warfare in general. And the peace movement could prove an unexpected, but potent force in the 1980 elections. The constituency for a halt to the arms race can only grow. As one minister, recalling Einstein's warning that "with the nuclear age everything has changed but our thinking" put it, "Once your thinking changes about nuclear weapons, nothing ever looks the same again." ■

Harry Boyte serves on the National Executive Committee of DSOC and is a writer and activist in Minnesota.

DEMOCRATIC AGENDA

Trade unionists, feminists, community action groups, black and Hispanic organizations and other friendly forces in the Democratic left will gather for the 1979 DEMOCRATIC AGENDA Conference in Washington, D.C. on Friday, November 16 and Saturday, November 17.

"This conference can help save the Democratic Party from creeping Republicanism," said DA Conference Coordinator Ruth Jordan. "It will give activists a chance to answer the right wing assault on the Democratic Party's traditional commitment to progressive social policies."

Planners expect the conference to attract good press coverage and show that most Americans still want a humane government.

Workshops will be held at the International Inn. Two major plenary sessions are slated for the Metropolitan AME church. Special events are planned for trade unionists and young people.

Jordan urged DSOC locals and DEMOCRATIC AGENDA supporters to start planning now to attend. Specific tasks are:

- Fundraising to meet the cost of hotel and transportation. Special rates of \$56 for a large double and \$44 for singles have been arranged. Triples and quads will be available. The rooms must be blocked soon.
- Trade unionists can plan to attend the AFL-CIO convention being held at the same time in D.C. The same rates will apply throughout the week if reservations are made through DEMOCRATIC AGENDA.
- Notify conference organizers if you plan to come or if you will lead a delegation from your community, university or organization.
- DSOC members will meet for a one-day conference on Sunday, November 18. Other groups planning to get together with members of their organization may contact the DEMOCRATIC AGENDA to arrange for space.



Executive Photo Service

More information about fees and conference program will be available soon.

Mail to:
 Ruth Jordan, DEMOCRATIC AGENDA Conference Coordinator,
 1730 M Street, N.W., Suite 713, Washington, D.C. 20036

I plan to attend the DEMOCRATIC AGENDA conference.
 I will help organize a group from my area.
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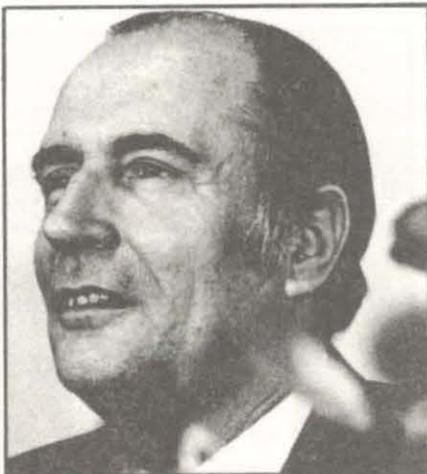
Mitterrand Is Still No. 1 In French Socialist Party

By Nancy Lieber

THERE CAN NO LONGER BE ANY question about it—the French Socialist Party (PS), led by François Mitterrand, solidly dominates the French left. And, given the decisive developments of the past year, the PS most likely will continue to do so for years to come.

Momentarily stunned by the United Left's defeat in the March 1978 legislative elections, the Socialists rebounded to emerge as the big winner in a series of fall legislative by-elections. The following March, the PS proved again to be the major victor in cantonal elections, receiving the highest vote (27 percent) in French Socialist electoral history.

At the same time, however, internal party politics threatened to mar this otherwise positive record. From September through to the recent April Party Congress, Mitterrand's personal leadership and political line experienced a strong challenge (notably via the media) from Michel Rocard and the moderate, reformist wing of the party. The key issues in the pre-Congress debate concerned the strategy of union of the left, European policy, the nature of the proposed "rupture with capitalism," the relationship between the market and the National Plan, and party organization. To non-Socialists, the actual differences between the social democratic (Rocard, Mauroy) and democratic socialist (Mitterrand, CERES—the Center for Socialist Study, Research and Education) positions were difficult to grasp. For PS militants, this theoretical debate was further obscured by the underlying power struggle between Mitterrand and Rocard (see NEWSLETTER OF THE DEMOCRATIC LEFT, November 1978). In the end, Rocard failed in his bid to dislodge Mitterrand, who clearly remains the symbol of Socialist unity and party renovation. The Mauroy/Rocard Congressional



French Embassy Press

François Mitterrand

motions together received 38 percent of the delegates' votes. Mitterrand, with 47 percent, rejected the former challengers' call for a synthesis motion, and chose instead to form a new governing majority with the CERES (15 percent).

The resulting departure into "loyal opposition" of half the incumbent national secretaries permitted Mitterrand to renew and rejuvenate the 15-member National Secretariat, replacing "those who formed the party with those who have been formed by the party." They see their task now as preserving party unity, keeping the party to the ideological left, strengthening its structures, and—most controversially—competing openly with the Communist Party (PCF) in the trade union (in particular, the CGT) and working class constituencies. Of course, the PS remains committed to union of the left. It remains the only way the majoritarian left can come to power, and has clearly worked to the Socialists' rather than to the Communists' advantage.

The problem is that since the fall of 1977 the PCF has continued to retreat from its once-ardent commitment to union of the left. Logically, the Commu-

nists hoped for a Rocard victory at the April PS Congress, since a social democratization of the PS and backing away from the union of the left line would more easily have allowed the PCF to regain hold in its traditional domains. The recent victory of the Mitterrandists, on the other hand, means that the Socialists will persist in challenging the Communists on those very trade union/working class grounds. The PCF is nervous. Its leaders have recently gone so far as to call the Common Program a "mistake" that led to the "demobilization of the popular masses" (i.e., eroded PCF influence, enhanced PS power) and they now refuse any notion of a PCF-PS accord.

The next test of strength comes with the June 10 direct elections to the European Parliament (see DEMOCRATIC LEFT, March 1979). The polls indicate that parties perceived as pro-European will gain, while parties seen as more nationalistic will lose. On the right, this means the Giscardien UDF will probably do well (despite public disapproval of the government's domestic policies), the Gaullists less well. On the left, it portends a PS forging ahead, a further PCF decline. ■

DSOC National Executive Committee member Nancy Lieber is living in Paris this year.

■ ■ ■

Help Build Campus Chapters

DSOC has begun a major campaign to build chapters on college and university campuses. If you live in a college community and can help set up meetings or organize a chapter, contact:

Joseph Schwartz
National Youth Organizer
Room 617
853 Broadway
New York, N.Y. 10003
(212) 260-3270

Fun City Leads Attack On Municipal Hospitals

By Patrick Lacefield

KILL OR CAPTURE" WOULD seem to be a slogan more suited to military operations than a plan for adequate health care delivery. Nevertheless, it appears to be a guiding strategy in New York City's health war.

Mayor Edward Koch, bound by political pressures to close a budget gap by 1982, has argued that the city can no longer afford a public health system.

New York City is hardly unique. Philadelphia closed its only public hospital—the nation's oldest—last year and harsh cutbacks have plagued public facilities in Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, St. Louis and Boston. New York's municipal system, however, is by far the country's largest with 17 hospitals. Though accounting for only 22 percent of total city hospital beds (7,600 out of 35,000-plus), the municipal system provides nearly 90 percent of all emergency services and fully half of all outpatient visits. More importantly, the municipals—unlike their counterparts in the private sector—serve all New Yorkers regardless of ability to pay. It is estimated that nearly a million and a half New Yorkers and half a million undocumented workers in the metropolitan area earn too little to afford private insurance or, in the case of the working poor, earn too much to qualify for Medicaid. "These patients know they can go nowhere else," said one doctor at Bronx Municipal Hospital. "It's either us or no one and Mayor Koch is proposing to make it no one."

Only some 30 percent of the public hospital budget is provided from city tax levies and critics are quick to point out that even with the closing of the municipals the city would still be required to provide care for those without third party coverage. Money, say defenders of the public system, is not the primary rationale

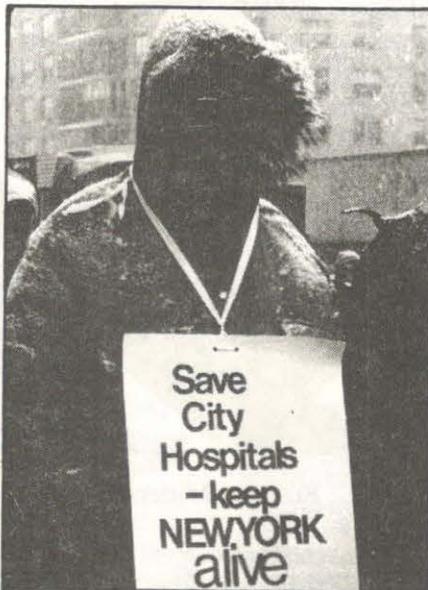


Photo by Pat Lacefield

for the cuts. At Bronx Municipal, for example, the psychiatry department is slated for a 10 percent cut despite an occupancy rate of 125 percent and the fact that it actually turns a profit to the city of \$6 million.

Health Activists Fight Back

The private voluntary hospital sector, which receives half its operating funds from public coffers to compete with the municipals, would benefit from the Koch "kill and capture" strategy. Older hospitals in the public system would be closed (boosting the occupancy rates of the voluntaries) while municipals with new physical plants—like North Central Bronx, Metropolitan, Bellevue and the as yet unopened Woodhull—would be ripe for capture by the voluntaries, in one form or another.

Some have charged that Koch chose the health sector for budget cutbacks because public hospitals—unlike police, fire,

and sanitation—lacked an aroused constituency. If that is so, then he must be surprised by the furor his plan to halve the municipal system has aroused among labor unions, patients and community groups who are demanding a rational, democratically-determined health care policy guaranteeing all New Yorkers access to medical care. Protests led by the Committee of Interns and Residents (representing 2500 physicians in the municipals), the NAACP and District Council 37 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees have forced the resignation of Dr. Martin Cherkasky, Koch's erstwhile "health czar" (and vigorous opponent of public hospitals) and caused Koch to exercise caution in moving to ravage the municipals. On May Day, more than 5,000 people rallied at City Hall in a demonstration against the cutbacks and closings, spearheaded by DC 37 (headed by DSOCers Victor Gotbaum and Lillian Roberts) and supported by over 30 other unions and 100 community organizations including the New York City DSOC (local). Only time will tell whether this spirited resistance will ward off the crippling of this nation's most extensive public hospital system. ■

Patrick Lacefield is a free-lance writer and serves on the steering committee of the NYC-DSOC.

REMINDER

DEMOCRATIC LEFT does not publish in July and August. Look for our bigger than ever Labor Day issue in September.

CORRECTION

The May issue of DEMOCRATIC LEFT incorrectly identified Lance Compa as a member of DSOC.

A SPECIAL REPORT

New Health Care Alliance Could Build New System

By Robb Burlage

THE NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE debate has gone from bang to whimper. The national health insurance scheme intermittently and hesitantly promised by the White House will be limited in scope and introduced only in phases, subject to the state of the economy and the inflation rate.

Senator Edward Kennedy, while pressing to keep the comprehensive health insurance issue alive, has shifted from support of a federally financed system to one financed through private insurance carriers. To varying degrees, both the Administration and Kennedy have voiced their determination to hold down hospital costs, but only the most toothless schemes to this end seem able to get Congressional approval. Still at the very horizon of political debate is Representative Ronald Dellum's DSOC-endorsed bill for a National Health Service providing comprehensive and community-directed health care through public planning, budgeting, and salaried-worker-managed organization.

The reasons for this inertia certainly cannot be found in satisfaction with the American medical care system. Almost everyone agrees that Americans pay more and get less in health care than almost any other industrialized nation.

Now upwards of \$200 billion, or close to 9 percent of the Gross National Product, is spent on health care in the U.S., making the health care industry the third largest in the country.

Nevertheless the U.S. ranks 19th in life expectancy for men. It has an infant mortality rate worse than that of 14 other countries.

Health care inflation continues to run in double digits, far ahead of the

Consumer Price Index; total expenditures in the last decade have increased three and a half times. For union workers covered by health care plans, this means that limited health insurance for some takes an ever bigger bite at the bargaining table. AFL-CIO members' coverage now costs more than one month's wages. Neither workers nor management have much say as to how the money is spent.

And what do we get for these enormous sums? While the best super-specialized medical care in the world is available at some major centers, 138 counties in the U.S. have no medical practitioner of any kind. Nearly 40 percent of children ages 6 to 17 do not see a doctor in a year. At least 26 million people have no insurance coverage.

Minorities have less access to health care than whites; life expectancy for blacks is six years less than that of whites and 20 years less for Hispanic migrants.

And thanks to the incentives built into our "fee-for-service" system combined with private health insurance coverage, we encourage medical procedures of perhaps dubious value, even undergoing twice the amount of surgery performed (a one-third rate increase since 1971), in proportion to the population, in Great Britain.

No More Good vs. Bad Guys

The public is not unaware of American medicine's shortcomings, and some groups, like the labor movement, have been struggling long and hard for cost control and national health insurance. It would be comforting to explain their failure to achieve reform as due to nothing more than the lobbying of "bad guys" like the American Medical Association and the drug companies. Of course no one should underestimate the self-inter-



Workbook/cpf



"Take one of these pills when you can save up enough money for it."

ested machinations of such groups, but unfortunately the problem is related to the complex "medical engineering" model and "medical empire" system building around us.

Likewise much of the current inertia on health insurance is directly attributable to the anti-tax and anti-government mood that is having its day in the wake of Proposition 13. Yet here, too, the problem goes deeper. It is not only rugged individualists and dogmatic anti-taxers but many of the "good guys," who have supported some sort of national health policy, who are worried about becoming ensnared in red, white and blue tape, increasing medical costs, and reinforcing the power of the medical establishment. Medicare and Medicaid have demonstrated that subsidizing the private sector to deliver health services seems to grant an unregulated license to provide more and more episodes of "care," regardless of what's appropriate and needed, at ever-increasing costs.

Doubts about public funding that left crucial decisions in the hands of private elites clashed with both the political and institutional advantages of accommodating at least some of the private elements—the medical profession, the hospitals, the insurance and drug companies—that now dominate health care. This tension was expressed in the debate on the left between advocates of national health service. But that debate, too, was complicated by another dimension to the problem: the recognition that virtually all the forces for change in health care had probably been too sanguine about the merits of high technology medicine. Living conditions and routines, occupational

exposures and environment appeared to be more central to maintaining health than pills, x-rays, and operations.

Public health experts have long maintained that systemic approaches to well-being were more effective than individual medical approaches. For example, death rates and infant mortality in this country went down when the water supply in most communities was purified and widespread sanitation measures were instituted.

Some figures show that 80 to 90 percent of all cancer is caused by environmental factors, with ten percent of that being related to industrial occupational exposures.

Numerous studies have linked heart disease to American eating habits, which in turn are shaped by agribusiness, advertising and marketing.

The poor, as usual, suffer higher rates of illnesses and injuries related to stress, poor diet and unsafe environments.

One hundred thousand men and women die each year from occupationally related illness.

Every day's paper brings news of a cancer-causing food additive, or further proof of the harmful effects of tobacco.

The anti-nuclear power advocates dramatize the potential health hazards of generating, transporting, handling, storing and mining radioactive materials.

If the old certainties about health care reform have been disturbed, this very disturbance is preparing the ground for a new democratic health movement that could escape the traps of the present system by: (a) emphasizing collective and community responsibility for care and challenging systemic causes of illness; (b) reducing dependence on high technology and professional expertise; and (c) putting into place the elements of a permanent health constituency.

New Health Movement

The basis for this development is aptly termed "popholism"—a health movement that is, on the one hand, both populist and holistic and, on the other hand, endangered by elements of "pop" trendiness. "Popholism" concern for health may be individualist, collective, or politically militant in its orientation.

The jogger who cuts down on high cholesterol foods while improving his or her cardiovascular system symbolizes an individual response.

The same person may also be active in a consumer health education group where people learn more about their bodies and health needs in order to demystify the search for adequate health care.

He or she may be part of a political pressure group to halt the building of a nuclear power plant, or bring pressure on the government to enforce and strengthen the occupational health and safety administration regulations—or for local, state, and federal budgets for preventive and primary care services as the base of a national health service.

Clearly the new movement contains several possibilities. With its awareness of the unhealthiness of both our physical and economic environments, it could challenge the systemic causes of illness and promote holistic self-health. It could unite the issues of health services financing and organization, health planning and cost-containment, traditional public health matters, and the newer focus on health and safety in the workplace and community environment. On the other hand, the movement's emphasis on personal lifestyles and individual fitness could merely fuel new industries and reinforce the budget cutters' rationale for reducing social services.

"Popholism" has a tendency toward a fetishism or piety about health and even a degree of spiritual shamanism. Its protagonists are often young professionals, college-trained workers and students, well prepared to take action on corporate responsibility for poor health or on issues of planning and budgeting. But their attitudes can also be unattractive to people in working-class communities who face immediate problems of an economic envi-



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ronment with few, if any, choices, and are a confusing departure from the traditional campaigns for medical security through government funding.

At its best, an alternative health movement could challenge the present fragmented system and, along with lobbying for national health financing, help build "mini-systems" for a healthy future.

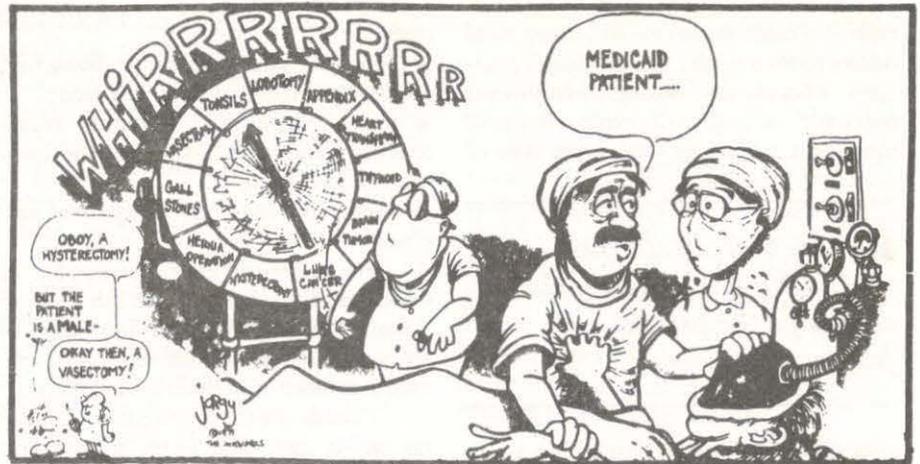
Seeds of "Mini-Systems"

These "mini-systems," although they cannot survive without total system reform, offer models for service delivery under a national health system, regardless of the framework that emerges from various legislative proposals.

These positive ingredients include:

- *Community-based health maintenance organizations (HMOs)*, pre-paid group practices such as the user-controlled Puget Sound Plan in the Seattle area or the labor-backed Contra Costa County, California one run by the local government;
- *Preventive and primary care oriented public health and hospitals programs* such as the city of Newark clinics network that, with focused federal funding support and pre-natal care emphasis have contributed to halving the infant mortality rate from 1970 to 1975 . . . or the Stickney Township, Illinois program where for more than 30 years this community of 40,000 has used low cost "taxpayer-prepaid" primary medical and dental services in public health centers;
- *Community health centers* such as rural clinics in the South, funded by the Office of Economic Opportunity and Health, Education and Welfare, that have emphasized prevention and paramedical worker outreach;
- *Labor health centers* such as the coal miners community clinics in Appalachia which, as a result of the recent miners strike settlement, must now rely more on public funding and restricted coal company insurance coverage;
- *National Health Service Corps* physicians and other health professionals, now about one-fourth of medical graduates who, having benefited from federal scholarships, take federal assignments to medically under-served areas, often in community health services.

There are, however, severe limits to these positive seeds of a national system. Only a small percentage of the population is covered by federally certified HMOs. Most of these are not community based,



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labor backed or local government initiated. Federal HMO assistance funds remain restricted.

Many municipal hospitals are being closed down, as was Philadelphia General, the oldest in the U.S., or many in California counties. Some are being turned over to private management corporations. (See story on page 8.)

Local public health programs are being rolled back in the current fiscal crisis, while federal appropriations for preventive and personal health services to communities are being squeezed.

Another extremely positive force is the challenge mounted in localities by community and health worker coalitions to local health planning and budgeting.

In 1974 the National Health Planning and Resources Development Act (PL 93-641) established area health systems agencies (HSAs) with state coordination and a call for majority health consumer boards. Any federal health financing or cost containment programs relying on such state and local planning and regulation agencies will encounter organized consumers.

In Massachusetts a coalition of hospital workers and community activists swept 16 of 17 seats in local health planning council election. The Cape Cod Health Coalition insisted that the local HSA work to improve access to primary and preventive care. In Philadelphia, elderly citizens and activists have reshaped long-term care and nursing home plans and women activists have defended home birthing centers.

In Los Angeles, local consumers and consumer-oriented providers fought a 12-month battle to force HEW to shut down a scandal-ridden HSA.

Four Key Constituencies

An important factor in shaping future national health policy are the constituency groups of women, senior citizens, minorities and labor.

Women are involved in more than two-thirds of care episodes if contacts involving children are included.

They make up more than 70 percent of the 5.8 million health workers in the U.S. Women's health centers and self-health groups are vital building blocks for community services and basic rights, most forcefully for reproductive rights (e.g., Coalition for Abortion Rights and Against Sterilization Abuse), but also around common workplace and community hazards.

Women are becoming more actively involved in health planning decisions, particularly around alternatives to regional hospital control of obstetrical and gynecological services.

Women are leading union organizing, especially among nurses and technicians, forming a base of health worker and user control on the community level.

People over the age of 65 now represent a tenth of the population, and will form 12 percent of the population in the 1980s. They require three times as much medical care as younger people, but pay more for their care today out of their own pockets than in the year Medicare for the elderly went into effect. They often prefer home and community care but most Medicare dollars have gone for institutional care.

Gray Panthers and other senior activists and allies are leading strong networks for health service action as well as forming mutual aid self-help groups.

Minorities are involved in the leadership of most inner city and many rural battles to save public and community services. They demand strong commitments for equal access, full explanations in their own languages, and protection of

“At its best, an alternative health movement could challenge the present fragmented system. . . .”

rights, including protection against sterilization and experimentation abuses.

Occupational and environmental concerns are reaching beyond the most dramatic industrial exposures, such as black lung and cotton dust and air and water pollution in the community. They are focusing as well on the general social stresses in the working community.

In California the Campaign for Economic Democracy is making occupational and environmental cancer an issue.

Major unions are developing health and safety departments. Local Committees on Occupational Safety and Health (COSHe) have sprung up from Massachusetts to Tennessee to Illinois.

Union activity in Washington, D.C., Los Angeles and other major cities has focused on nurses, interns and residents demands, with other health workers, for an organized vote on patient care planning, scheduling, budgeting and institutional control and community needs.

The growing "popholist" health movement may thus provide what has always been needed not only to achieve major reform of the health care system but to keep any reforms from rebounding to the benefit of elites rather than consumers—a permanently organized health constituency. While liberals, labor and the left may remain divided on whether national health insurance or a national health service is the best legislative call, almost all can subscribe to certain principles:

- a comprehensive single standard of benefits;
- universal coverage;
- universal access to health care;
- quality controls;
- reform or restructuring of the delivery system away from fee-for-service;
- cost controls that preserve basic health services for all;

- minimum administrative overhead costs;

- equitable and progressive financing, nationally integrated and equalized;

- strong, democratic consumer representation and participation at the community level; and

- preventive and community-based emphasis.

For real-world examples, opponents of our fee-for-service system can point to Canada's national health insurance or Britain's national health service as well as to a number of prepaid group plans.

Canada spends 7 percent of its GNP on health care. The administrative cost of medical care in Canada is 2.1 percent compared to more than three times that for private insurance in the U.S.

The British spend 6 percent of their GNP on health care and the cost of their National Health Service is rising at about one-sixth the rate of medical inflation in this country.

Control of costs in both Britain and Canada come from national planning and policies. Although many doctors were

fearful at first, the large majority in both countries support the systems.

If national health insurance in the U.S. is being waylaid by the current mood of budget stringency, indeed if preventive and primary health services are falling victim to right wing cutbacks and corporate inspired "cost control" strategies, no one should be surprised if national health financing suddenly reappears on the political agenda, this time with a stronger base, armed with an even more comprehensive understanding of health, and determined that control of health services rest firmly with citizens, workers and communities. ■

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RESOURCES

The organizations and publications shown below, by no means a complete list, publish position papers on health policies, costs and actions.

Coalition for a National Health Service, P.O. Box 6586, T Street Station, Washington, D.C. 20009. Working for passage of the DSOC-endorsed Dellums bill.

Committee for National Health Insurance, 821 Fifteenth St., N.W., Suite 801, Washington, D.C. Backs Kennedy's Health Care for All Americans Act.

Consumer Coalition for Health, Suite 220, 1511 K St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20055. Publishes CHAN (Consumer Health Activist Network) Newsletter in cooperation with Ralph Nader's

Public Citizen's Health Research Group,

2000 P St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Consumers Opposed to Inflation in Necessities, 2000 P St., N.W., Washington, D.C. Has a background paper on health care cost causes and cures.

Health-PAC, 17 Murray St., New York, N.Y. 10007. Background reports on policy issues.

Elements journal, published by the Public Resource Center, 1747 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009. Covers environmental and occupational health issues.

Socialist Review, Jan./Feb. '79, contains a critical historical account of holism: "The Holistic Health Movement and Scientific Medicine" by Howard S. Berliner and J. Warren Salmon.

WHITCAPS



self out of business. Nuclear energy is big corporate energy: concentrated; capital intensive; bureaucratic and centralized.

There must be a transition to new, and renewable, forms of energy. That, as Commoner demonstrated in his *New Yorker* articles, is economically feasible if—but only if—there is government intervention overriding current energy industry priorities. Such intervention could lead to an energy system on a human scale—with farmers creating methane from biomass and photovoltaic cells providing an energy source available to single families and small communities. That, not so incidentally, might prove to be an enormous boon to the Third World which is blessed with an abundance of one good: sunlight.

This would mean, according to an estimate in a recent Joint Economic Committee study, the loss of 1,137,000 jobs, 644,000 of them employing people operating and supplying facilities based on non-renewable fuels, 493,000 of them in power plant manufacture and construction. Concern for that fact was clearly manifested at the annual legislative conference of the Building Trades Department of the AFL-CIO in April. The conference came out in favor of continuing nuclear power in the United States.

Anti-nuclear activists may ask if this is not just one more example of the narrow job consciousness of the building trades. After all, these people supported the war in Vietnam. Now they're supporting nuclear power. Won't they line up for whatever program will put the most construction workers on the site?

It is not nearly that simple and to pretend that it is exacerbates a split that already exists between the anti-nuclear movement and this crucial section of labor.

Jobs Not Sole Concern

Jobs are certainly central to the construction unions' concern in this area, but it is fantasy to presume that building trades leaders are planning to put all their members to work by constructing more nuclear plants. The largest single building trades union, the carpenters, would be only peripherally involved in nuclear plant construction, and the sheet metal workers have a trade union interest in maximizing solar energy. Plumbers, laborers, electricians, and other crafts

NUCLEAR BATTLE, from page 2 have been employed building nuclear plants, and, in part, they favor nuclear power to save and expand those jobs. But they and the carpenters and the sheet metal workers are also genuinely concerned about the energy crisis and its impact on the living standards of all workers. In response to soaring costs of oil, they favor the development of all energy sources. Many building trades workers fear that anti-nuclear advocates and environmentalists advocate "no growth" economics. When politicians and environmental leaders associated

“When those associated with the anti-nuclear cause talk about the era of limits and the need for Americans to ‘lower their expectations,’ building trades workers rightly fear a decline in the living standards of workers and the poor.”

with the anti-nuclear cause talk about "the era of limits" and the need for Americans to "lower their expectations," building trades workers rightly fear a decline in the living standards of workers and the poor. The challenge facing the anti-nuclear movement in this respect is to convince building trades workers and other citizens that a non-nuclear future can provide a better quality of life.

The articles already mentioned by Commoner and by Komanoff provide guidance in that respect. So do hearings conducted by Senator Kennedy last year which showed that investment in solar and renewable energy resources would create more jobs than following the present course.

One of the witnesses at those hearings was William Winpisinger, President of the Machinists and a Vice Chair of DSOC. Winpisinger made the essential point that the transition to new and benign forms of energy could, and must, be part of a full employment program that would have a net effect of reducing joblessness in the United States.

The April 1979 Joint Economic Committee study clearly supports Winpisinger's basic point. There would be

a loss of 1,137,000 jobs and a potential increase (from conservation and solar energy investments) of 7,870,000 jobs. A very large number of these slots, it should be noted, would put building tradespeople to work. That matching up would not come from the workings of the invisible hand of Adam Smith. It would require careful planning and a serious full employment policy, i.e., the very measures which the American labor movement, in all of its wings, has been advocating for some time.

In this context, an important initiative undertaken by David Livingston, President of District 65 of the Distributive Workers, is significant. In late April, Livingston assembled representatives of the Retail Clerks, Machinists, Communication Workers, Auto Workers, Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers, Equity, Teamsters, Hatters, Mineworkers and Hospital Workers. They heard Komanoff and Robert Polard, both appearing on behalf of the Union of Concerned Scientists. There was no consensus achieved, or attempted, but there was agreement to continue to explore the issue on an ongoing basis. This is an important sign that there are many others in the labor movement, in addition to Winpisinger, who are open to persuasion. In addition, the United Electrical Workers—already on record in favor of public ownership of domestic energy—will be considering the implications of Three Mile Island at its convention this September.

So it is at least possible that the current crisis—and the demand to end capital intensive nuclear power generation—could be made a part of a national full employment plan. Whether that will happen is not, however, an academic question. It will be settled by political power and requires that the anti-nuclear movement be willing to take on giant corporations. In October 1978, *Business Week* printed a revealing article entitled "General Electric Hedges Its Bets," which notes that, while the energy corporations do not see solar power as an immediate threat, they do fear a solar future, because it might disperse the generation of energy by putting collectors on every roof top. So, the article concludes, General Electric and its friends are going into solar energy on a hedge basis, i.e. (and this, of course, is my own comment, not *Business Week's*), in order to be sure that any solar technology

of the future will be centralized and bureaucratized under their dominion. As Roland W. Schmitt, a GE Vice President, put it, "... the real key is that the government is willing to spend a lot." Anyone who thinks that industry will stand by and allow those public investments to be used for a technology scaled to the common good of America and the Third World is naive.

Therefore, the anti-nuclear movement must adopt a more complex program than the one it now articulates. The basic proposition is not simply: end nuclear energy for all of the obvious reasons. It must be: end nuclear energy through a full employment program

which will produce an alternate technology of human scale. Such a formulation points in the direction of two basic considerations. It allows the anti-nuclear movement to reach out to the unions, much as groups like Environmentalists for Full Employment have begun to do. And it focuses on the fact that the movement will be radical or else it will fail—that is, that a resolution of the current nuclear crisis requires a defeat of the corporate power that has dominated American energy policy from the very beginning. ■

Michael Harrington is the National Chair of DSOC.

Vietnam Myths Obscure Drama

By Jan Barry

IN MANY WAYS, THE VIETNAM WAR is still being fought by Americans—now with cultural weapons rather than with rifles and bombers. After a strategic wartime blackout, broken only by John Wayne's blunder into the crossfire, Hollywood has brought up its big guns, so to speak, and begun to bombard us with the Academy-approved view of it all.

The "big lie" propaganda technique of Nazi days is dusted off in the most ballyhooed Hollywood fantasy about Vietnam, the Academy Award-winning *The Deer Hunter*. In this film, no American ever shoots Vietnamese women and children or anyone but *bona fide* bloodthirsty Viet Cong. The latter are portrayed not only as slaughtering unarmed villagers (as at Mylai), but forcing

In Memoriam

Julius Bernstein, lifelong socialist, founding member and Vice Chair of DSOC. He would have been 60 this month.

American POWs to play Russian roulette—an insane game concocted by the filmmakers, who also parade this brainless studio invention as a popular Saigon pastime. Poor American innocents fell into this snakepit of depraved Orientals, got their minds blown and had to beat a hasty retreat in helicopters from the roof of the U.S. embassy in Saigon.

"This is the final chapter of the Vietnam War," a television reporter tells the audience in a newsreel clip slipped into this outrageous piece of anti-Asian venom. Here are the same old "dirty Jap-Chink-Gook" clichés blown on the Hollywood screen and palmed off as pop history.

The Deer Hunter, recipient of an Academy Award as the "best film of 1978," is as phony as John Wayne's 1968 paean to *The Green Berets*. Indeed, the hero of *The Deer Hunter* is a Green Beret—a beard-bedecked supersoldier lofted on a fantasy filled with so many inaccuracies of time and place, cause and consequences that this film could have been produced by the CIA as part of a war "disinformation" campaign.

The other recent Academy Award-winning war view, *Coming Home*, isn't much of an antidote. It errs in the opposite extreme. Here we have men who come home from the war but never say what they did there, while their wives and women friends try to cope with explosions of suicidal despair and murderous rage inflamed by experiences the audience is left to guess at. Once, a marine officer starts to tell his wife that "my men were cutting off heads," but blubbers off into dazed sniveling and snarling throughout the rest of the film. We never learn what he was doing, or why the "winning hearts and minds" war deteriorated into such barbarity.

Jon Voight's portrayal of a paralyzed veteran is nearly as incomplete. Although Voight's character becomes an antiwar activist of sorts, we never learn what in particular quashed the gung-ho GI in him. This film more accurately should have been titled *Waiting*—for someone to explain what happened to these men.

Instead, Jane Fonda's portrait of a



Universal Studios

Christopher Walken, Robert De Niro and John Savage star in the recent and widely acclaimed Vietnam War movie, *The Deer Hunter*.

military wife provides the film's true focus. *Hers* is a rare study of war's effects on waiting women, and deserves recognition in that regard. But *Coming Home* leaves the war itself unexplored.

In contrast, Michael Herr's best selling book, *Dispatches*, is about real GIs, trapped amid massacres and other insanities mostly of our own making. For many of these men, the enemy included war correspondents, "unfaithful" wives and assorted other Americans.

"There were hundreds of these albums in Vietnam, thousands, and they all seemed to contain the same pictures . . . the severed-head shot, the head . . . being held up by a smiling Marine, or a lot of heads, arranged in a row . . . a picture of a Marine holding an ear or maybe two ears or, as in the case of a guy I knew near Pleiku, a whole necklace made of ears, 'love beads' as its owner called them."

Herr is a writer in the hair shirt tradition, reporting that despite the atrocities he couldn't help enjoying himself. "Take the glamour out of war! It's like trying to take the glamour out of sex," he quotes a wounded war photographer with a laugh. By Herr's account, there was no peace movement, nor women reporters worth describing, nor Vietnamese friends or lovers, nor dissenters worth recording beyond a few under-the-breath mutters. Although done with considerable style, as befits an *Esquire* assignment, *Dispatches* is also a false recording of the Vietnam War. Herr seems oblivious to the complexity of a conflict that tore America as well as Indochina apart.

Hollywood and Herr are not alone in the current effort to convey selective fantasies about the muddy, bloody obscenity Americans made of Vietnam.

Real Drama Ignored

"We checked our minds at the door," a character in David Berry's Broadway drama, *G.R. Point*, mocks out a newcomer. The line sums up this play about soldiers who refused to question or confront the war management.

In contrast, the mind-blowing drama of this war is precisely that a considerable number of numbed soldiers reclaimed their minds, screwed up their courage in the face of social ostracism and publicly blasted the war as senseless. It shocked the Pentagon, two Presidents and the daily press, but Hollywood, Herr

and Broadway seem not to have ever heard about it.

Nearly every commercially acceptable artistic comment on the Vietnam War these days is hailed as antiwar, and then sold to the public for its entertainment shock value. Some may claim that depicting shattered bodies or shattered lives is an antiwar stance. But artists and war survivors have been graphically telling other Americans that "war is hell" at least since General Sherman's famous dictum on the Civil War. What seems to have been more effective has been work showing that war is wrong. None of the cultural events mentioned above makes any such point.

“The drama of this war is that a number of numbed soldiers screwed up their courage and publicly blasted the war as senseless.”

At the moment, that sort of drama is being recreated in the mass marketplace almost solely by the film version of *Hair* and ABC-TV's recent airing of *Friendly Fire*.

Hair illuminates nothing about the Vietnam War either, except that "it's a dirty little war," but its zany satire of life in America during those years is as marvelous as the Marx Brothers—shocked suddenly cold sober by an unexpected death in the war.

Friendly Fire, at last, is more complex, reaching for the range of war emotions. An Iowa farm family propelled into relentless antiwar work by the death

of a son in Vietnam, discover that they are considered by many fellow citizens to be part of the "enemy." Some fine, sensitive performances by the actors, especially Carol Burnett. But punches get pulled, questions go begging here, too. Why the Mullens' telephone was tapped, their mail tampered with, when they asked too many questions about their son's death, is lost sight of. Author C. D. B. Bryan, indeed, got mad at the Mullens for not accepting his version of their son's death, a military minutia shared with a writer but not (why not?) with the parents, which missed the point of the Mullens' anguished protest altogether. The war was a monstrous wronging of millions of American and Asian families. A son's death opened the parents' heart to that.

And intuitively, I think, the Mullens understood what so many writers and filmmakers have missed about the Pentagon's criminal crusade in Indochina: the best way to stitch a "big lie" propaganda cover together is to weave in some small threads of truth. The main technique of this kind of information manipulation, of course, is constant repetition of the big lie—war means peace, mass murder is manly, people who question this are crazy-mad—over and over.

None of the current round of films, books and plays on the Vietnam War examines this "black art" contribution to the bitterness of those years at all. Indeed, the propaganda blitz on this issue is still big business. ■

Jan Barry is a poet and journalist who was a founder of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War.

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JIMMY HIGGINS REPORTS

I HAVE A LIST—That used to be one of the late Sen. Joe McCarthy's great phrases. He had lists and lists and lists of lists, all naming names of disloyal Americans, associating them with past subversive activities and questioning the current loyalties of those listed. The technique lives on and is being perfected by Carl Gershman, executive director of Social Democrats, USA. He has written a piece for *Freedom at Issue* (publication of Freedom House, 20 West 40 St., New York, N.Y. 10036) raising the question: Can the New Left in its new guise fool America into destroying itself? Of course, "New Leftists remain committed to an anti-American foreign policy," according to Gershman, but the main arena has become an effort to exploit the "contradictions of the capitalist system." Then Gershman names names. It's a great compendium for Birchite Congressman Larry McDonald (who has used some of Gershman's stuff in the past) or for sundry corporate givers who want to be sure their foundations aren't supporting anything close to Tom Hayden, Gar Alperovitz or Michael Harrington.

GERSHMAN'S PIECE IS PART of a larger "anti-left" offensive. The trade union leader closest to Social Democrats, USA, Al Shanker of the teachers union, let loose with a blast of his own. Speaking before the right wing National Strategy Information Center, Big Al charged that within the AFL-CIO attitudes toward the left are "softening tremendously." If the trend continues, Shanker warned, the labor movement might lose some of its enthusiasm for big defense spending and anti-communist foreign policy. "A kind of primitive, Marxist class solidarity on these economic issues and 'forget about this defense stuff' becomes very appealing to a bunch of people who lost a battle [on labor law reform]," Shanker said.

LABOR'S 1980 LINEUP—In addressing the Building Trades Department of the AFL-CIO, Fritz Mondale told an anecdote illustrating the proper role for the Vice President of the United States. One woman in the Harrisburg area, it seems, became convinced that the Three Mile Island reactor was really safe. How did she know,

a friend asked. The President came to visit the reactor, she explained. If it had been really dangerous, he would have sent the Vice President. "So here I am," Mondale told the more than 4,000 trade union delegates. His assessment was accurate: a trade union audience is a dangerous place for President Carter in the wake of his wage guidelines, oil decontrol and other Republican economic policies. But the Administration is not without labor friends. In fact, a labor committee for Carter's re-election is being formed. Seafarers president Paul Hall (who headed Labor for Nixon in 1972, then in 1974 refused to back impeachment, explaining that "a sailor never deserts his whore") and Bill Winn, president of the Retail Clerks (which will soon merge with Amalgamated Meat Cutters to form the largest AFL-CIO union) will head the effort. Glenn Watts of the Communications Workers is close to the effort and Chick Chaiken and Murray Finley from the garment trades are expected to join in as well.

ON THE OTHER SIDE some unionists are openly hostile to the White House. Most notable among them are Machinist leader William Winpisinger and Service Employees International Union president George Hardy. Hardy is stumping for Jerry Brown, who seems unpopular with other unionists (and with many of Hardy's California public employees members). The Machinists, on the other hand, are promoting draft Kennedy efforts in Iowa and New Hampshire. While not officially in favor of dumping Carter, George Meany has made it clear that he's unhappy with this Administration (which he has called the most conservative in his lifetime). Unionists from Meany's old base in the building trades are pushing to elect union delegates to both 1980 conventions; and Democratic unionists elected by the building trades won't be friendly to Carter. In 1976, many liberal unionists were closer than the AFL-CIO was to Carter. They still are; thus Watts is in Carter's corner; AFSCME and the UAW are not in open opposition to Carter, and the National Education Association leans toward the Administration. P.S. If Kennedy were to run, the whole lineup is off; he'd sweep almost all labor support from Carter.

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