

Xs: PC, Bob S., Fred F.

(all attachments to Larry)

1108 Mathis  
Houston, Texas 77009  
February 20, 1979

Larry Siegle  
New York

FEB 24 1979

Dear Larry,

I attended the bulk of the DSOC convention that was held here in Houston, Feb. 16-19. The following is a report on what happened there. Just a note: I was unable, due to illness, to attend the Monday session, so I am not sure what happened there.

The public rally held Friday night at the University of Houston had about 325-350 people present. Convention registration, according to a report by the head of the credentials committee, was about 200 -- including delegates, alternates, observers and press. Of those, about 150 were delegates and alternates. The overwhelming majority of those in attendance were Anglos -- mostly over-30, professional and public employee types. I would say that there were less than a dozen Blacks and latinos in attendance.

Michael Harrington, not surprisingly, was the principle speaker at the Friday night rally. The other speakers were Patricia Ford-Roegner of the Coalition of American Public Employees and Maury Maverick, Jr., a liberal San Antonio attorney and long-time Democrat. Roegner's talk was on the "tax revolt," attacks on women's rights, and the "new right." Maverick, who is not a member of DSOC, spoke on the rise of militarism, and extolled the virtues of such freedom fighters as Sam Houston and Vorhis.

Harrington's speech was simply a preview of the main line address -- his keynote the next morning. I've enclosed a copy of that keynote, which the convention organizers were gracious enough to print up and put in the press and delegate kits, so I won't go into great detail about it. The main thrust of Harrington's talks, and the convention as a whole, was the need for the democratic left, together with other progressives and liberals, to challenge Carter in the 1980 elections. Not surprisingly, Harrington, and Ron Dellums, in his speech Sunday, said that now is not the time for a third party challenge to the Democratic Party. That DSOC and other democratic left, progressive and liberal forces had to come together to ensure a challenge to the Carter candidacy within the Democratic Party. Harrington charged that the Democratic administration was carrying out Republican policies and had subverted the New Deal, as evidenced in the national budget proposal. That the only effective challenge to Carter would be Kennedy, and that he (Harrington) would enthusiastically support such a campaign. That a big problem is that everyone in the "democratic left", progressives and liberals are "waiting for Teddy", and for that reason, DSOC can't just move ahead on its ideas for the 1980 elections. Harrington spoke at length about the need for DSOC not to "wait on Teddy". By this, he meant that DSOC should be in the forefront of the search for a candidate to challenge Carter for the Democratic nomination. What DSOC laid out was the idea of a fall, 1979, conference of all "progressive" forces to develop a "Democratic Program in Search of a Candidate." (I kid you not! precisely

their formulation.) Such a move would be far more preferable, he argued, than either he or Dellums, or some combination thereof, entering the presidential race.

The latter seems to have some support in DSOC. Two resolutions were submitted calling for Harrington to run. Of course, what DSOC means by a Harrington candidacy is not running an independent campaign to challenge the Democrats, but Harrington and/or Dellums entering some of the primary elections as Democrats. Harrington felt compelled to explain that a DSOC campaign as such was out of the question because this would entail registering with the FEC, and thus subject their members and supporters to scrutiny by the government.

At Harrington's urging, the two resolutions, which came up for discussion under the plenary to discuss "domestic policy resolutions", were tabled and referred to the National Board.

On Saturday, Jack Clark (DSOC's national secretary) summarized a written report contained in the kits which went over what the organization had done since its last convention and where it had to go. He placed big emphasis on the development of their "Youth Section" and the work the organization had done on the Democratic Agenda. The work on the Democratic Agenda appears to be universally regarded in the organization as the most important work DSOC has engaged in since its founding.

Among the problems that Clark cited was the continuing lack of success in Black recruitment to DSOC. As for Latinos, DSOC has set up an Hispanic Commission, which is headed by Miguel Rivas, a Cuban. The commission puts out a newsletter, [REDACTED]. They claim to have a local in Miami that is 90 percent Cuban, although I have no idea how large it is. The Hispanic Commission was the sponsor of a Latino Unity night the Sunday evening of the convention. The meeting was held in the heart of the Chicano community on the northside, but the bulk of those in attendance were DSOC convention participants bussed in from the Holiday Inn where the convention was being held. The program was a flop. Counting our own Chicano comrades who attended, there were no more than 10 local Chicanos present. The program itself was an embarrassing display of adulation of Harrington and Clark, complete with fuertes abrazos for the two and abstract and empty appeals to unity among the various Hispanic communities. One interesting speaker was Juan Manuel Rodriguez of DSOC and head of the Union of Cuban Americans. He and Rivas had recently been to Havana after 18 years of exile. He gave a strong pitch for opposition to the blockade, Puerto Rican independence and against the attacks on undocumented immigrants.

I have to plead ignorance on what trade union officials actually spoke at the convention. Several were listed on various parts of the program, including Hoyce Miller of CLUW and the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers; William Holayter and Richard Greenwood of the IAM, and a local official from the Operating Engineers. Most of them were scheduled to speak in several workshops, but since I was the only one present for that session, I could not get to all of them. The interesting fact is that no union official played a major role or gave a major address.

Most of Sunday's session -- with the exception of Dellums' speech -- was taken up by the discussion and voting on resolutions. After dividing the resolutions submitted into "Domestic Policy" and Foreign Policy resolutions, the resolutions committee chair, Ruth Jordan, would

make a recommendation on what action should be taken. This guaranteed control of what was to be considered by the delegates, as well as stifled discussion. In fact, many resolutions that were passed were passed with no discussion, on the resolution committee's recommendation. Most resolutions around which there appeared to be differences, or that were deemed controversial by the leadership were simply referred to the National Board. One that was referred was the only resolution on affirmative action and the Weber case. That resolution was submitted by Harry Fleischman, ~~it was~~ opposed to quotas and gave half-hearted support to the reversal of the Weber decision. There was disagreement expressed during the little bit of discussion allowed for this resolution on the question of quotas. The convention tabled the proposal and referred it to the National Board, stipulating that the board organize a discussion nationally and at the local level on the issue of affirmative action and the Weber case.

Among the resolutions passed unanimously by the body was one submitted in Harrington's name to support Marroquin's request for political asylum. Hector was given a minute to explain his case and was given a big applause when he finished. A resolution supporting the freedom of the Puerto Rican nationalists also passed unanimously, despite an attempt to amend the resolution to delete all references to the Puerto Rican nationalists as political prisoners. The person who placed the amendment before the body argued that they weren't political prisoners because they had carried out violent acts against the government.

The main resolution -- "the Perspectives Resolution" -- was taken up last. The resolution was handed out to the delegates just prior to its being taken up for discussion, so very few had had a chance to read it. It was the result of a compromise, so-called, between 3 perspectives resolutions submitted prior to the convention. Unfortunately, I was only given 2 of the 3, so I'm not sure what the third was really about. One of the res. was submitted by Clark and Deborah Meier, and appeared to be the national office's resolution. The second, entitled "Present in Every Struggle," was submitted by Ben Ross of Boston. The main thrust was that DSOC had to do more than just what is done on a national level around the Democratic Agenda. That the locals had to be free to participate in local struggles, and that DSOC nationally and locally had to be especially present in trade union struggles. The third resolution was submitted by the "Left Caucus." The person who spoke for them in the discussion was Bogden Denitch. Denitch expressed the view that their main concerns were that DSOC had to move away from the tendency of the organization to "blur" the distinction between DSOC and the "mass organizations" it worked in; that DSOC needed to do specifically socialist propaganda and other work; that the national leadership needed to be tightened up to be more effective in aiding the locals. All the makers of the three resolutions accepted the "compromise" or "consensus" resolution, even though all admitted that they had not had a chance to really study it. If this "Left Caucus" had any programmatic differences, or differences over the Democratic Agenda, that did not surface.

An interesting thing in the "compromise" resolution is that it calls for setting up a committee to explore the possibilities of fusion with the New American Movement. The resolution also calls for a membership drive to take DSOC from its present size of 3,000 (their figure) to 5,000 in 1981. There did seem to be a lot of grumbling about the need for more attention to be paid to local building, including financial aid to the locals for the national office. I have no idea what their financial

^

structure is, but from some of the proposals that were put forward, it appears that the bulk of all moneys raised goes to the national office.

Before I close with our intervention and what other forces were present at the convention, a word on Dellums' keynote. He gave a very radical-sounding speech, which attacked the Carter administration, the Congress and the Democratic party, especially the liberal Democrats. He said it was time for "we" meaning DSOC to "raise our banner", that "we" can no longer accept being an appendage of the Democratic Party. At the press conference following his speech, he made clear that now was not the time to leave the Democratic party. That when he leaves, he wants to be sure he doesn't go alone. That he thinks Kennedy would be the best challenge to Carter.

### Our intervention

The main axis of our intervention was around the Marroquin case. prior to the convention, we had tried to get permission to set up a Pathfinder table, but Clark told us only "fraternal organizations" with DSOC would have tables, but we could sell the Militant. Among the "fraternal organizations" that were there with tables was the Canadian NDP, the Committee for a Revolutionary Socialist Party (CRSP), the New American Movement, and the Socialist Party, USA. We were able to do a brisk business at the Marroquin table, and sold a quantity of pamphlets by Hector (I'm not sure of the number actually sold). We got a lot of signatures on the petitions, and Hector was interviewed by the Guardian, and spoke to some other press that was there.

We sold about 60 Militants, 2 PMs, 2 Militant subs, and about 8 YSes.

Among the notables present throughout the convention were Ruben Berrios of the Puerto Rican Independence Party, a leader of the Social Democratic party in Germany, and a leader of IS, who appeared to have been invited as a special observer. I don't know his name, but he was especially introduced during the convention.

I will try to get an article done on the Marroquin side of the intervention. If you think there is something else I should write for the Militant on this convention, please let me know as soon as possible.

Comradely,

*Olga*  
Olga

PS I've included a mountain of materials I picked up at the convention, in case you're interested.

# Socialist author predicts he might run for president



MICHAEL HARRINGTON

By MARY FLOOD  
Post Reporter

Michael Harrington, nationally known socialist author, said in Houston Saturday that he might think of running for president if Ted Kennedy doesn't run and no other viable left-wing Democrat throws a hat into the ring.

Harrington, 50, is here for the four-day national convention of the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee — a 6-year-old group of assorted activists that Harrington chairs.

He stressed in a speech to the group that rather than playing the "waiting for Teddy" game, those disenchanted with President Carter should focus on the platform they want the next Democratic presidential candidate to work with.

"I WOULDN'T LOOK for persuading Jimmy to be a good guy anymore," said Harrington, author of *The Other America* and *Toward a Democratic Left*. He said Carter's increased emphasis on the defense budget along with decreasing social programs spending puts him well beyond the ideals of this socialist group bent on government spending in social areas, full employment, progressive taxes, national health insurance and corporate price controls.

"Jimmy Carter is, in short, engaged in a war against inflation which is both socially cruel and economically ineffective," he said.

Harrington told the more than 150 delegates from at least 30 states meeting at the Airport Holiday Inn that the media is pushing the idea that this country is moving to the right without adding that there is also a movement to the left.

"JUST AS IN THE 19th century, when there were teetotalers who were alcoholics because of the medicines they drank, there are many American workers who are socialists today and don't know it," Harrington said at a post-speech press conference.

He said that socialist goals in areas of employment, health and corporate prices have many non-vocal advocates in this country who don't realize what socialism really is.

Jack Clark, national secretary of the Democratic Socialist group, said Houston was chosen for the convention partially because of the Spanish-speaking

the group believes there is a place for Democratic Socialist politics all over the country.

"We picked Houston because in some ways it is the opposite of what we're for because it doesn't plan for people — it plans for profit," Clark said.

**HARRINGTON EXPLAINED** that at the core of the socialist philosophy he is preaching is anti-corporate sentiment. He said that the best way to work toward a change in the oil corporations' hold on the market would not be to nationalize oil production but to set up a model company and start what he called some real competition from outside of the existing oligopoly.

He said due to lack of enforcement on industrial health issues and environmental issues, Carter's administration has been playing corporate politics with lives. He pointed to stories about dangers of vinyl chloride found in Houston-area plants and said intolerable costs of corporate technology are being paid by human beings.

The Democratic Socialist group — made up of people from feminist groups, labor unions, peace groups and some minorities — has worked to affect Democratic policies. "Perhaps we're the only radical American organization in which we like one another," said Harrington.

**PEOPLE LIKE FEMINIST** Gloria Steinem, black leader Julian Bond and U.S. Rep. Ronald Dellums, D-Calif., are active members in the 3,000-member, 40-chapter group which claims to stay on the "left wing of the possible."

Harrington said he really thinks of himself as one of the worst choices as a presidential candidate and he noted that Dellums might consider a run if no stronger liberal candidates come forth.

During workshops and speeches given Saturday, Puerto Rican Independence Party President Ruben Barrios called for a federal pardon of Puerto Rican nationalists in prison for political reasons.

"The fact is — in eight decades of our so called 'special relationship' with the United States — you have taught us very little about democracy and more than we wanted to know about hypocrisy," Barrios said.

The Democratic Socialist group favors the Puerto Rican party's call for politi-

Harrington told the group he is considering running if Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass., does not become a presidential contender.

Dellums told the 200 delegates from 30 states attending the meeting at the Holiday Inn Airport national policies make the government "the pimp of the economic brothel that is the multinational corporations."

He said, since World War II, the portion of federal taxes paid by individuals has risen from 48.5 to 73.9 percent, while the share paid by corporations has fallen from 33.6 to 14.6 percent.

Left-wing Democrats must not be afraid to challenge President Carter or the Democratic Party, Rep. Ronald Dellums, D-Calif., told Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee's fourth biennial national convention here Sunday.

But the liberal member of the Congressional Black Caucus declined — at least for now — to be the one to do it.

Although he said he has not "closed the door" on a presidential bid in 1980, Dellums said he has no immediate plans to do so. He said he would prefer that a liberal senator take up the cause.

Saturday, socialist author Michael

Don't run from Carter, left-wingers told here

8.8  
Post 2/18/78  
HSH