

Newsletter of

THE DEMOCRATIC LEFT

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Edited by MICHAEL HARRINGTON

Why did Watergate happen?

by IRVING HOWE

The one thing we have not yet done with Watergate is to think through what it means. By "we" I refer to those with political views ranging from liberal to democratic socialist, like the people who read this NEWSLETTER or who will be attending the ADA convention this May. If the range is widened to include the national spokesmen of the Democratic Party, then the failure to engage in serious public reflection is still more striking. It's clearly not possible in a short piece to offer the comprehensive statement we need, but here are at least a few notes.

(1) Watergate was not a mere "accident," the bungling of some ideologically charged-up amateurs. That political amateurs did rise high in the Nixon administration is true, quite as amateurs rose high in the McGovern campaign. But that only leads to the next question, why were the "professionals" displaced? Because, I'd say, of the social upheavals of the Sixties, which gave American politics, for both good and bad, an ideological edge. To suppose, in the style of Ben Wattenberg and Al Shanker, that's what's needed now is a return to the professional cautions of political centrism may be temporarily shrewd but is finally obtuse. It may be a way of winning the 1976 election; but unless there's some clear thought as to what to do with the victory, the result could be a new disaster. The problems thrown up in the Sixties have not disappeared, even if public attention has been diverted. They remain with us. And the accident of Watergate was not accidental.

(2) Nor was Watergate merely a sign of capitalist corruption. It's too easy, if you're against capitalism, to blame everything on it. I'm against capitalism—always have been; but I see no reason to deny that certain administrations, say that of a Muskie or a Percy or a McGovern, even while pledged to capitalism, would refrain from at least some of the immoralities and illegalities of Watergate. There are capitalist societies in Europe which, while by no means free of corruption, do not spawn Watergates. There are non-capitalist societies which spawn their equivalents, or far worse. Watergate does have something to do with capitalism, but in ways that need to be specified carefully.

(3) The Watergate men were not crooks, or not mainly crooks. They were ideological thugs. They had, God help us, a mission. And their mission was a kind of distorted mirror-image of the apocalypticism of the more extreme forces on the New Left. There is nothing

new about Stans and his type: just corporate agents or parasites accustomed to doing dirty jobs. But the Haldemans and Ehrlichmans saw it as their mission to defend America from its defilers, its soft-minded celebrants of drugs, permissiveness, and amnesty, its enemies of hard work. (Breaking into the office of Ellsberg's psychiatrist was hard work.) The Watergate men saw themselves as agents of traditional

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The politics of issues— challenge to Democrats

by MICHAEL HARRINGTON

In assuming that the elections of 1974 and 1976 can be won simply by condemning Richard Nixon and evoking the memories of Watergate corruption, much of the Democratic Party—including, alas, the Party's left—is making a dangerous error.

Gerald Ford alone can ruin that strategy. He will probably be President by 1976, and he may even be in the White House before this fall's elections. Whenever he takes over, we can be sure that the "honeymoon effect" will be stronger than it has been in many transfers of power. The American people want desperately to be done with Watergate, not the least because more than 60% of them voted for Nixon, and his public degradation reminds them of their own gullibility. Once Nixon is out, the whole complex of issues associated with Watergate could vanish as quickly as the popular consciousness of the energy crisis on the first day you could get a full tank of gas without waiting in line.

But there is another and more compelling reason for the Democrats—and the democratic Left in particular—not to "wallow in Watergate." Quite simply, Republican corruption is not the only issue in the land. In the long run, Watergate is not even the most important issue.

During 1973, the average worker lost 3% in buying power, and was threatened by rising unemployment; the energy crisis, whatever the public may now think, is very much with us and will be for the rest of this century; and Watergate, for all the talk, has not even led to a decent campaign reform law. Just suppose for a minute that Ford, not Nixon, is President of the

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The future of NOW

by MARJORIE PRESS LINDBLOM

The National Organization for Women will mark its eighth anniversary at the national conference in Houston, May 25-27; the occasion may also mark a watershed in feminist strategy.

NOW has worked, in the words of its statement of purpose, "to bring women into fuller participation in the mainstream of American society NOW, with all the privileges and responsibilities thereof in truly equal partnership with men." Nationally, NOW has been a leader in fights like the sex discrimination suit against Bell Telephone. On the local level, the 550 NOW chapters have been involved in issues like eliminating sex-stereotyped material in the public schools. While both national and local work is vital to improve the status of women, more coordination between the locals and national would strengthen both kinds of work. Local chapters benefit from having a recognizable national affiliation, and the national benefits by being able to claim (and collect dues from) more than 30,000 members. But chapters too often "re-invent the wheel" on each project because national information exchange is poor; and the national priorities adopted at the annual convention have had little impact on chapter actions.

Proposed Sears campaign

This year may be different. The Compliance-Industry Task Force (which deals with enforcement and regulations on sex discrimination) will propose that NOW focus both local and national efforts on economic issues in 1974. The Chicago chapter will present a specific program targeted against Sears which will utilize both the national's legal resources and the chapters' local influence.

Nationally, NOW would go to court to fight Sears' challenge to regulations requiring federal contractors to disclose their affirmative action plans. Gulf and Union Carbide have joined Sears' suit to avoid making affirmative action plans public. This case is clearly important to the cause of equal employment opportunities for women. Affirmative action plans, even weak ones, provide a means to force employers toward

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non-discriminatory policies. If the federal government backpedals affirmative action, the symbolic impact would be terrible and far-reaching.

Locally, chapters could challenge Sears in a variety of ways: some might focus on discrimination in hiring and promotions, others on credit policies, and still other chapters might focus on discrimination in insurance, concentrating their efforts on Sears' affiliate, All-State Insurance. If 550 Sears stores were confronted on any or all of these issues, Sears would be under tremendous pressure to change discriminatory policies. Perhaps more important, other retail outlets might follow suit to avoid being targeted themselves.

Many NOW members have high hopes for such a coordinated strategy. As Mary Jean Collins-Robson, National Task Force Coordinator and candidate for president of NOW, said, "It's an illustration of how NOW can operate with the national and local working together. And we're going after someone big enough to make a difference."

Will the convention agree?

NOW's annual meeting is a membership, not a delegate, convention. Although the conference is held in a different city each year, it cannot be representative of NOW's total membership. Previous national conferences took on so many issues that clear national programs, tied to local chapters' actions, were not established. For example, at last year's convention, NOW adopted a resolution calling 1974 NOW's "Action Year on Poverty." While the convention recognized the special problems of being female and poor, the moral statement was not backed by local and chapter activities. NOW's Action Year on Poverty is falling by the wayside as local chapters continue to focus on other issues.

A bylaws amendment to change the convention structure failed earlier this year, so the Houston meeting will be as unrepresentative as in earlier years, even though more than 10 per cent of NOW's membership—3500 people—is expected to attend. The three day convention may again dwell on symbolic issues, notably the question of whether NOW should work for integrated sports program for girls and boys or whether the organization should aim for "preferential programming," or, less euphemistically, separate but equal programs. The outcome of the sports issue, paradoxically, may greatly influence the convention's response to adopting a united program on economic issues. The question boils down to whether NOW will remain a "pure" feminist organization, or whether the organization will focus its efforts on limited, but clear, short-range goals.

After the conference, what?

Even if the convention adopts a coordinated national-local strategy focusing on economic issues such as the Sears program, there is no guarantee that the locals will follow through. No consensus has been built through local discussions of the program, and NOW chapters are unaccustomed to programs coming down

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CLUW: sisterhood and solidarity

by GRETCHEN DONART

Meeting in Chicago March 23-4, 3200 women unionists founded the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW), an organization committed to increasing the number, participation and power of the approximately four million women in the labor movement. In its Statement of Purpose, the CLUW convention vowed to push for equal pay, affirmative action in hiring and promotion, and improved maternity benefits at the bargaining table, and in the political arena, ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment, equal protective labor laws and day care legislation.

Six months ago, convention organizers expected about 800 women to attend CLUW's birth. Two weeks before the convention, organizers raised their estimate to 2000. But on opening day, 3200 women, black, brown and white, auto workers and teachers, teamsters and government employees, machinists and flight attendants, electrical workers and retail clerks, mobbed the registration tables at the Pick-Congress Hotel.

Through two days of discussion and debate they found that they had common problems—unequal pay and promotional opportunities on the job, underrepresentation in their union leadership, lack of leadership skills, and little confidence in themselves. More important, they had a common strategy—to build an organization to meet their needs by offering training, information, encouragement and experience.

Many delegates hoped that CLUW could find strategies to activate more female unionists. Even in "women's occupations," the leadership is often male. As one teacher from Colorado put the problem, "There are two men teaching in my school, and they're always the ones elected delegates to our state convention."

For some, the occasion of CLUW's founding was enough to inspire more confidence in themselves. A woman from Akron said, "Last year I was offered the position of director of education for my local, but I turned it down. I didn't think I could handle it. But the convention has given me confidence. They're going to offer me the job again in the fall, and now I know I'll take it."

Most women felt that discrimination in their union was due more to male—and female—neglect and indifference than to malice. "I'm trying to get more women active in the local," said a hospital shop steward from Illinois. "Every time I go to a CLUW meeting I bring along another member who hasn't been active before. It sort of lights a fire under them—gets them interested in coming to local meetings."

The labor and feminist traditions merged in Chicago. Participants called each other "sister" with a naturalness not previously felt in the women's movement. The issues discussed were first raised by middle class feminists, but the delegates never forgot that they were feminists within the labor movement. The boss—not other women, not males in union leadership—is the real enemy of working women, pointed out Addie Wyatt, CLUW Vice-Chairperson. In one work-

shop, a UAW member from Detroit argued successfully against a proposal to allow all working women to join CLUW. She pointed out that unionized women have problems and interests that not all women have. "Besides, I don't want management to be able to worm its way into this group," she said.

Economic issues dominated much of the discussion. Many feared that a recession would wipe out recent gains made in hiring women. One delegate, the first woman hired at a truck transmission assembly plant in Tennessee, worried out loud that all the women who now work in her plant will lose their jobs if layoffs in the transportation industry continue. Another woman suggested that separate lines of seniority be established in industries that have only begun to hire women. When layoffs hit, she explained, women could be laid off in proportion to their number in the plant or department. But others were afraid that separate lines of seniority would create bad feelings and would weaken the union.

CLUW brings to the women's movement a concern for protective labor legislation. Until its last convention, the AFL-CIO opposed the Equal Rights Amendment, in part, on the advice of women union activists. These women feared that women would lose the protection of weight and hours restrictions, rest periods, and in some states, a minimum wage.

But as the courts struck down protective labor laws, and ruled illegal special contract provisions, women trade unionists looked in different directions. Groups like Union WAGE in California applied pressure within the labor movement and built alliances with other women's groups to lobby for an extension of protective labor legislation to cover all workers, male and female. Those women unionists who had been undecided or hostile to ERA began to actively support it. And concerned labor feminists began to look outward: toward their thirty million unorganized sisters. These factory workers, domestic workers and field hands work under some of the worst conditions at the lowest wages in the United States; they are protected by neither laws nor unions.

The prospects for a good relationship between CLUW and the existing union leadership are unclear. The UAW, which sent the largest contingent to Chicago, has already donated staff time and money to CLUW's founding. Other unions provided meeting halls for the series of regional conferences preceding the Chicago convention.

Unions without women leaders will have no one to mediate disputes or speak directly to other union leaders. To the degree that women are already in the leadership, relations will probably continue to be good.

At the close of the convention, Addie Wyatt said, "We are the unions. We are telling our unions that we are ready, available and capable to fight the fight. I still believe that the union is the most viable and available channel through which we can win our goals." □

Issues . . .

(Continued from page 1)

United States. What do the Democrats have to say on these basic issues?

The Democrats, in short, are not in the position of simply picking up the Watergate chips; if that's all they try, the Republicans could win in 1976 (with Ford playing Coolidge to Nixon's Harding). More than that, the nation will not face up to some of its most critical problems. Ben Wattenberg, the co-author of *The Real Majority* and adviser to Presidential candidate Jackson, has recently been working on a new approach for winning Congressional seats and not influencing anybody. According to Evans and Novak, the hatchet men for the Democratic Center-Right, Wattenberg's newest book (to be released in the fall) urges the Democrats to stop criticizing and complaining about America. In a similar vein, Democratic National Chairman Robert Strauss is working hard to keep the special convention in December focused on the narrowest questions of party structure and to make the official Party deaf, dumb and blind to issues. That way lies disaster.

In November, when the choice is between the Democrats and Republicans, those of us on the democratic Left will, in almost every case, rally to the Democratic side. But in May, when the platforms have not been set, when it is a question of transforming, and not merely accepting the Democratic Party, there is no time for cheerleading.

I can not, largely because there are so many questions on which the Left and the Democratic Party are unprepared, offer a program on all of the issues I will identify. Some will be treated more fully in subsequent NEWSLETTERS; all of them must be debated more fully within the democratic Left and the Democratic Party.

INFLATION. The labor movement and most liberals will demand a lifting of wage-price controls and will probably oppose even stand-by power for the re-imposition of controls. That is utterly understandable. In 1973, while the Cost of Living Council insisted on limiting wage increases to 5.5%, prices rose 8.8%, with food up 11%, gasoline and oil 25.7%, fuel oil and coal 61.2%. The Nixon controls were used to hold down the consumption of the people but not the profits of the corporations or the sky-rocketing prices on which they were based.

So, Nixon's controls will be defeated, and rightly so. What then? Suppose the Democrats do win a landslide victory and achieve a veto-proof Congress. What then is our program to deal with inflation? One thing is certain. Dropping the controls will not halt the rise of prices. Profits will boom; so will executive compensation; there will still be fierce competition for food in a world threatened by famine in its poorest areas; the enormous surcharge imposed by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) on the advanced economies will still be there.

But the problem is even more serious. Ever since the Keynesian revolution—and particularly since the success of the New Economics under Kennedy and

Johnson in the '60's, we have known, within certain limits, how to deal with the great issue of the '30's: unused capacity. But does government intervention to guarantee employment automatically create inflation? We can stimulate the use of underemployed resources. Can we deal with over-demanded resources?

The reactionary answer is relatively plain: hold down wages, and cut government spending. That of course means reducing the consumption of the poorest people in the society and reducing the bargaining power of the workers in order to "loosen up" the labor market. Nixon has been doing that in one way or another—through inducing a recession-inflation in 1967-71; through controls on behalf of the corporate rich since then. Now Milton Friedman, the dean of laissez-faire theorists, has just taken a trip to Brazil and returned with the news that fascism works. In Brazil, Friedman tells us, there is an "indexing" system according to which all forms of compensation are automatically adjusted to take inflation into account. Friedman does not mention that this miracle also requires the military suppression of any labor or popular demands for an increasing share in that rapidly growing economy, or that indexing is consonant with an increase in the gap between the rich and the poor.

The conventional Keynesian monetary response to inflation is also fraught with reactionary consequences. When credit is tightened up, it is not the multi-billion dollar corporation which feels the squeeze, but working-class families looking to finance a home, or small businessmen who need to borrow.

How, then, to deal with inflation? I do not pretend to have a simple answer or to be able to even outline a complex response in a few words. But the essence of what is required is clear enough. There must be a positive incomes policy which seeks to repress demand at the top, not at the bottom, through closing the \$77 billion in tax expenditures for the wealthy, and through instituting other redistributive measures. There must be, as the United Auto Workers have insisted, at least a public monitoring of price increases, with major companies required to make a case for their price hikes. That would be greatly facilitated if the law required every major corporation to have public and employee members on the board of directors. Such people could be assigned to systematically violate company secrecy by publicly reporting what goes on in the board rooms.

There must be, in short, a selective program to dampen the demand of the rich even as the purchasing power of the rest of society is increased. That is contrary to the "natural" tendency of the American economy which, according to the immemorial custom of capitalism, solves the problems of prosperity by imposing recessions and depressions on the most defenseless citizens. The current Democratic demands for increasing the income tax exemptions can bring some relief, but they tend to be isolated, vote-catching proposals which duck the serious structural problems. If the Democrats—and the democratic Left—simply belabor inflation in a Republican Administration, what will they do when a Democratic President is inaugurated in 1977?

CAMPAIGN REFORM. The current pussyfooting on campaign reform, particularly in the House and not just among the conservatives, is an outrage. It is like the Congress' refusal to adopt gun control legislation even after the assassinations of John and Robert Kennedy, Martin Luther King and Malcolm X. Almost everyone, including the liberals, is out to protect some special interest. Yet the need is clear: for the nationalization of television time in federal election campaigns and its allocation on a democratic basis; for a legal limit on campaign contributions so that an average working man or woman can afford to be the top bankroller of a campaign.

THE ENERGY CRISIS. Some of the immediate pressure of the energy crisis is off. But it is absolutely certain that the unplanned growth of energy consumption, more often than not induced by corporations for profit (gas-guzzling cars from Detroit, 1001 ways to waste electricity from your local utility, etc.), cannot continue. To let energy use grow without checks will feed inflation, increase our dependence on the OPEC powers, and transform the world market in the most unpredictable and dangerous ways.

But then the forces which have created the energy crisis menace us in almost every area of American life. The crunch came because the government followed private, corporate priorities: tax deductions, depletion allowances, oil import quotas, a multi-billion dollar federal highway program—all supposedly in the public interest, all actually maximizing private profit and corporate power. What is required, then, is a recognition of the crisis which is not dependent on the length of lines at the gas pump. There must be a democratic Left—and Democratic Party—capable of making the long-range connections and proposing structural changes in corporate power. We must develop new, democratic modes of economic decision-making. Senator Jackson and others have made a lot of noise, some of it pleasing to the anti-corporate ear. But where is there an alternative program? Even the Stevenson bill for a TVA-type energy corporation, modest as it is, is in deep trouble.

THE THIRD WORLD. The difficulties of the energy crisis must be multiplied a thousand-fold in the Third World. Increased oil prices have already wiped out a \$9 billion profit which the poor countries were realizing from higher commodity prices (the first time the world market has tilted in their favor since the Korean War). In India, peasants have lined up for three days for a five gallon can of gas needed to run their irrigation equipment. The "Green Revolution," which was supposed to help solve the Third World's hunger problems by vastly increasing the yield per acre, is basically dependent on huge inputs of petroleum-based or chemical-based (manufactured with petroleum) fertilizer, and therefore, in grave danger.

Time was—in the days of Point Four under Truman or the hopeful period of the *Allianza* under Kennedy—when American liberalism was at least stirred by the masses of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Today there is a sense of guilt, but no program.

THE ARMS RACE. We stand on the edge of new escalation in the arms race. Senator Jackson has called for an end to SALT II and an American policy of rigid equality in all arms reduction, a policy which is simply incapable of dealing with the asymmetric balance of world terror. Some on the democratic Left have been deeply troubled by the Soviet role in the Middle East, in arming the Arabs for the Yom Kippur War. How can we have a policy which guarantees Israel's survival and moves the world back from the brink?

When I first conceived of this article, I had hoped to at least suggest the direction of solutions to some major problems. But as I went on, it became obvious that the number of questions on which the Democratic Party—and even the democratic Left—is unprepared is overwhelming. While not exhaustive, I hope this list provides at least the beginnings for some discussion.

I end where I began. As we prepare for an election, there is no time for Watergate-induced complacency, or for preparing a cut-and-dried Democratic Convention in December. This is a time to be painfully aware of the programmatic and political limitations of the Democratic Party—for only by being aware of them can we transcend them.

The way out is to the Left. □

NOW...

(Continued from page 2)

from above. The locals may well decide to continue their community-based projects as before.

Two tendencies, however, point to the possible success of a coordinated nationwide program. First, a majority of NOW chapters responding to a recent survey already have Compliance-Industry task forces. These chapters may already be interested in the proposed Sears action. Many chapters have carried out projects, such as the program on revenue sharing, suggested by national NOW. Two pragmatic considerations also intervene: there is a Sears store in every community in which there is a NOW chapter, and a local action is more likely to succeed if it receives information and publicity from the national organization. If the Sears program is flexible enough that chapters can adapt actions to their own particular styles and circumstances, it may well take hold.

The first eight years of NOW have seen great advances for feminists. Women have entered new fields and broken down centuries-old barriers. Feminist issues, little known and less cared about a decade ago, are now part of a wide popular consciousness. We are on the verge of passing the Equal Rights Amendment which will legally insure women's equality.

But new times demand new strategies. The largely symbolic gains of the last eight years were and are necessary, but they are by no means sufficient. This year, there is a chance that organized feminists can change direction while consolidating past gains. There is a possibility that NOW can begin to function as a truly national organization capable of dealing with the economic issues which affect women most. □

Watergate . . .

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values, true-blue squares standing fast for Gary Cooper, J. Edgar Hoover, John Wayne and Richard Nixon, Our Nation's Heroes.

But also being men of the 20th century who loved to see themselves as *tough* and knew that you had to screw the other guys before they screwed you—for what else had they learned in the advertising agencies, the corporations, the law firms?—they had no hesitation to cheat, lie, break and enter, malign.

Nice guys finish last? Well, we're out to save the Republic from McGovern, Tom Hayden, Ben Spock and even Mike Harrington. So we're not going to hesitate about the methods we use. This is a crisis, man!

Using ugly methods made them feel *good*; it was like shooting it out side by side with John Wayne. They weren't finicky do-gooders and intellectuals. And if dizzy rich girls could get a bang out of throwing bombs in the name of The Revolution, the Watergate gang could get a bang out of their more sophisticated, electronic shenanigans. Isn't that the American dream: to combine the ethic of the Wild West with the technology of the Space Age?

The association of Mitchell, Stans, Haldeman, Ehrlichman, Barker and Hunt created a terracing of elites: corporate lawyers and agents, ideological toughies, CIA veterans, underground men. Behind them stood the wealth of American business, or a large segment of it, which was being passed around with lavish abandon. If George Meany could not bring himself to support McGovern, the American corporations, with a keener sense of class realities, seem to have recognized that Nixon was their man. And they were ready to pay.

The Watergate men were not fascists. Some, like Ehrlichman for values and Barker for jobs, could fit into fascist movements. But in the main, what they had in mind was establishing a sort of "dual power," a system of "parallel centers" behind and within the government. There'd be an inner group, a chain of reliables, which would give this country some *spine*.

Malcolm Moos, the influential conservative Republican, put this very well in saying that Watergate signified a potential *coup d'état* by one portion of government against another. In a *Dissent* piece last summer I had a similar idea: that Watergate found its best analogy in the situation portrayed by the movie *Z*. *Z* shows

a country where some of the externals of democracy survive; the opposition is still legal, it has the right to hold meetings and publish papers. Yet through a systematic use of gangs of hoodlums working in close collaboration with the police, the regime [in *Z*] achieves a state of quasi-terror, rendering the opposition helpless and the nation morally inert. Not that the Haldemans and Ehrlichmans thought their way through to such a goal [I wrote this before Ehrlichman testified before the Ervin committee; now I'd say that Ehr-

lichman indeed had thought his way through to such a goal] . . . but it was to the condition of *Z* that their behavior tended . . .

(4) What happened in Washington can be described as the creation of a Praetorian Guard, after the elite corps of bodyguards which protected the Roman Emperors.

Our Praetorian Guard yielded its main loyalty, *not* to the Republican or any other party, but to the Emperor himself. Ehrlichman made this absolutely clear. The Praetorian Guard was "above" ordinary politics; it scorned slow-moving bureaucrats; it was intent upon a steady *usurpation* of power . . . by people who already had a considerable share of it. It had as precedent and rationale the earlier tendency in American government toward a concentration of Executive power, as well as earlier dubious actions by Republican and Democratic administrations. Still, Watergate was something new.

The Praetorian Guard drew for its methods, material, and personnel primarily upon a recent major American experience. It took over the shoddier ways of the Cold War and applied them to domestic politics. It worked on the premise that the methods used in fighting external enemies, or "enemies," were appropriate in fighting internal ones. As a result, the opposition party was no longer to be regarded as quite legitimate within the American political system. It might be tolerated, but no more. Nor was only the McGovern wing so treated. There, at least, one can see an ideological rationale on the part of the Watergaters. But the other portions of the Democratic party—those symbolized by men like Muskie and O'Brien—were also subject to this process of "delegitimation."

Between the Praetorian vision of things and the more extreme of the New Left visions there was a curious parallel. The Praetorian Guard accepted as reality fantasies of revolution which the more sober among the New Leftists found embarrassing; it found in the rantings of the Haydens, Cleavers and Newtons a reinforcement for its worst and *most cherished* fears; it agreed with the New Left as to the feebleness and rot of "the mushy liberals."

(5) What was the relationship between the Praetorian Guard and Big Business? The Guard served as agent of big money and parasite upon it. Services were rendered to the dairy industry, to airline corporations, to ITT. The Nixonites were ideologically devoted to corporate America and some may have hoped for later rewards. In return, for favors rendered—antitrust suits not pursued, special franchises secured, price rises approved—they expected financial support. And got it. Stans and Kalmbach ran their errands efficiently.

The corporations paid, sometimes grudgingly. When Kalmbach got \$50,000 from the president of an airline without even saying what the money was for, the latter probably didn't even want to know. He was paying off those Washington characters (flunkies and parasites at the same time) in the way a corner storekeeper pays off the cops. They were "his" cops.

It is a lovely illustration of the interdependence of the capitalist class (which, yes, still exists) and the political bureaucracy, the latter serving the interests of the former while feeding off it. Still, the corporation executives seem to have recognized they were getting their money's worth.

(6) If not merely "accidental" (though, obviously, with some components of accident) and if not merely "intrinsic" to capitalism (though, obviously, with some shared values and procedures), what then is Watergate about?

I would say that Watergate expressed a number of interlocking impulses in our society:

a) the sustained amorality which is inculcated by corporate and advertising life, the chiseling, side-swiping, quasi-legal methods which have become built-in to our society at this stage of its development;

b) the growing interdependence of big business and federal government, with the increasing interchange of personnel and working methods;

c) the ideological *ressentiment*, that sleazy-crusading outlook of lower echelon elements in corporate and advertising life, partly in reaction to the outbursts of the sixties;

d) the tainting of domestic society by the Cold War;

e) And here I come to what I think is the heart of the matter. Late-capitalist society, with its growing bureaucratization of the state and its increasing de-personalization of existence, has very little capacity

for generating strong convictions as to the values of democracy or the moral precepts we associate with an earlier America. It creates a deep cynicism, both among those who support "the system" and those who don't. Nothing is more alarming about our society than this erosion of democratic conviction. There is of course no way of measuring the depth of this corrosion, but I believe it to be very considerable.

I don't want to indulge in the prefab glooming which passes as profundity in some intellectual circles. We're not witnessing The Decline of the West—at least not quite yet. We're not on the verge of fascism; not at all. But what we are experiencing is not so much a coming-apart of the economic structure of the society as a loosening of the bonds of common conviction and value.

The temptation in 1976 will be for the Democratic Party to fall back on what might be called the Noble Blockheads, those who won't rob the till or raid the GOP national office, but who have nothing to offer programmatically. They will be seen as the "safe" candidates. And maybe they will be. But the task of liberals and the democratic Left ought to be to insist that, while honesty is necessary, it is not sufficient. A simple stance of moralism isn't going to cope with our problems. What we need is to push the welfare state into its second great stage, toward democratization of socio-economic life, toward greater egalitarianism and freedom. And to do that, there can be no substitute for a social program. □

Will the Democrats sweep in '74 and '76?

Will it make a difference?

Socialist perspectives in the Democratic Party

• Ann Wexler
• Joe Duffey

• Michael Harrington
• Sanford Gottlieb

• Bill Duchese
• Leon Shull

What does political realignment mean in the '70's?

Why We Need Socialist Democrats

Workshops on: Issues of the 1974 Charter conference
Democrats and defense policy
Labor in the Democratic Party
Economic and the Democrats

Ramada Inn, 10 Thomas Circle (14th & M Streets) Washington, D.C.

Saturday, May 18, 9:30 a.m.

Jimmy Higgins reports . . .

FROM "THE BATTLE OF THE CENTURY" in medical economics to a "fixed fight." That's how the *Progressive* characterized the new debate over national health care after Senator Kennedy withdrew his own plan and joined Wilbur Mills in supporting a compromise similar to the Nixon Administration's proposal. Kennedy didn't consult with the chief supporters of his old bill, though, and they weren't too happy about the switch. The Committee of 100 for National Health Security says that the elderly and the poor would be worse off under the Kennedy-Mills proposal than they are under the present system. The Committee, along with its backers in the AFL-CIO and UAW, is still backing the old Kennedy-Griffiths health bill (although both of its sponsors have deserted it). Local committees for health security around the country are holding together (many were planning to support the more comprehensive old Kennedy bill even if the national committee foiled). As one activist put it, "We're gearing up for a more liberal Congress next year." Despite the compromise, no health legislation is expected to pass Congress this year (the Committee of 100 will lobby against any health legislation this session). A full-blown (and blunt) public critique of Kennedy-Mills will be heard when George Meany testifies before the House Ways and Means Committee on May 17.

MOVING IN MASS.—Meanwhile, back in the home state, Kennedy is up to something unprecedented. He's mobilizing for the delegate elections to the Democratic Charter Convention. Neither Ted Kennedy nor his brother and Senatorial predecessor, John, ever really mobilized anything for state Party fights. So why start now? And why mobilize for a measly Charter Convention? One state Party activist opines that "Teddy is out to croak the liberals." A Kennedy enthusiast had a different explanation: Anything that the Massachusetts delegation does will be blamed on the senior Senator. Therefore, it's important to have a "responsible" delegation, i.e. one that Kennedy controls. It certainly sounds like visions of '76.

SENDING A DIFFERENT MESSAGE—No longer content to be the protest candidate of the Right, Alabama Governor George Wallace is determined to become President. He and his aides think that he'll have to move up from the Vice-Presidency. Their dream ticket for '76 is Kennedy and Wallace, but they'll settle for Scoop Jackson's offer of second place on his ticket. Wallace is out for respectability, so he's campaigning against his image as a racist, anti-labor demagogue. Virtually unopposed in his bid for re-election, Wallace is using this campaign to appeal for support from old enemies. Charles Evers, black mayor of Fayette, Miss., says that Wallace could be "another Lyndon Johnson." Closer to home, the black mayor of Tuskegee, Johnny Ford (who backed Nixon in '72) is supporting Wallace for re-election. Not much enthusiasm was generated for the Governor at a recent meeting of Alabama COPE, but there was no active opposition, and the state labor council endorsed him. There's still a lot of skepticism. George Meany says he couldn't support him for President. Joe Reed, the chairman of Alabama's black Democratic Conference takes Wallace at his word, and "the Governor says he hasn't changed." The Southern Poverty Law Center takes him at his actions. Of the 768

appointments to state boards and commissions Wallace has made, three have gone to blacks. The Council has filed a suit charging the Governor with "purposefully and willfully discriminating."

SELF-RESTRAINT—The three top officers of General Motors remained within the government's wage guidelines last year. And as the company took pains to point out in an April 18 release, staying within the 5.5% guideline wasn't easy. The government's wage restraint also applies to executive bonuses, and the GM bonus plan grew 11% because of increased profits. Still, Chairman of the Board Richard C. Gerstenberg only got a raise of 5.5% and President Edward Cole and Vice-President Thomas Murphy were limited to 5.4% wage boosts. That left Murphy and Cole scrimping along at \$833,000. Gerstenberg made a mere \$932,000.

IOWA DEMOCRATS GOING TO THE RIGHT—That's what the *New York Times* said in a recent report on the county caucuses, Iowa's first step in selecting delegates for the Convention. "Party regulars" dominated the meetings, according to the *Times*, and the liberals just didn't show up in the expected numbers. But then again, no one showed up in the expected numbers. Several counties didn't have enough people present to fill their delegations to the Congressional District conventions. As for the "regulars," one leader in the state's Labor for McGovern effort said, "Hell, those 'regulars' were McGovern people and people who worked damned hard to elect [Senator Richard] Clark. Some of our 'insurgents' are people who support Strauss and Barkan in the national party. I'm not worried at all about our delegation. We'll do just fine in Kansas City." And in Scott County (Davenport and environs) the Party went so far "right" that three publicly identified socialists were elected officers of the county Party, and a platform of nationalizing the railroads, withdrawing all aid from the Chilean junta and taxing the multinationals at higher rates was passed on to the District convention.

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