

## *Turning the heat on California utilities*

by HAROLD MEYERSON

LOS ANGELES—The propaganda of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce notwithstanding, people in Southern California do turn on the heat; we also turn on the oven; and of late, when we do, we subsidize the Atlantic Richfield Corporation.

In return for a promise of first right to bid on 60 percent of Arco's Alaskan natural gas (to be delivered some time in the 1980's), the Southern California Gas Company has agreed to pay the interest—\$330 million—on \$420 million Arco has borrowed from investment institutions to develop its Alaskan fields. Or rather, it has agreed to collect this \$330 million from its users, along with an additional \$270 million it must pay in income tax on the \$330 million. The California Public Utilities Commission, which must approve all consumer rate hikes, has agreed reluctantly to this \$600 million surcharge spread over the next seven years.

In resistance there remains only a disagreeable gaggle of consumers, who, faced with a monthly surcharge which will rise to an average of \$2.50, say they ain't agreed to nothin' yet.

A coalition including consumer organizations, senior citizens groups, unions, and liberal and left organizations has formed the Campaign Against Utility Service Exploitation (CAUSE) and has turned enough heat on the Gas Company for the Company to lower its initial surcharge to an average of 13½ cents, with plans to raise its rates as quietly as possible every six months.

The Arco deal is made possible by a Federal Power Commission (FPC) ruling in 1970 authorizing consumer prepayment financing for utilities. In a broader sense, it is a good study of the corporate sector's increasing ability to obtain its risk capital from the public, and of the government's inability to protect the public from such arrangements.

When the energy corporations have complained to the FPC of insufficient incentives to develop more natural gas, the FPC's response has been to open new sources of capital to the corporations. 1974 saw the FPC raise price ceilings on new gas; and in the five years since the authorization of utility prepayments, roughly \$2 billion of consumer money has supplanted internal sources of corporate capital investment.

Right now, the corporations which own the rights to the Alaskan gas fields—principally Arco, Exxon, and Sohio—are presenting utility companies and the state agencies which oversee them with prepayment con-

tracts on a take-it-or-freeze basis. This has resulted in the spectacle of the California Public Utilities Commission hurriedly meeting at 10 p.m. on the evening of October 31 to comply with Exxon's end of the month deadline to approve its prepayment deal with the San Francisco Bay Area's utility company, Pacific Gas and Electric (at an average additional monthly cost to the consumer of \$1.25), or risk having Exxon go east to sell its gas. The PUC recounted its manful and unavailing efforts to get the FPC prepayment policy repealed, then approved the deal.

Accordingly, a Bay Area consumer coalition, TURN (Towards Utility Rate Normalization), is contesting the PUC decisions in court; while in Southern California, CAUSE's coordinators, Tim Brick and Burt Wilson, have organized a protest in which consumers will send their gas bill payments not to the Gas Company but to the PUC, a procedure normally followed when the user and the Company disagree on the amount of the bill. Surprisingly, this protest has been endorsed by Sen. John Tunney, an advocate of natural gas price deregulation, in an apparent attempt to step to the left while careening to the right.

Two of the five PUC members were appointed by Governor Brown. The commissioners reluctantly ap-

*(Continued on page 4)*

## **Report from an emerging movement**

by JACK CLARK

In the interests of truth in packaging, I hereby warn my readers that I am about to engage in one of the worst sins of journalists and political organizers.

On the basis of a 48-day tour which took me to California, Texas and through the Midwest, I will make cosmic generalizations about the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee, the prospects for socialism and the general state of American politics. In so doing, I err exactly as Gerald Ford does. Our President returns to Washington from a round of speeches to business audiences in the Midwest, assured of broad popular support for his program. On my return from seven weeks of relatively successful socialist meetings, I'm about to tell you that the mood of the country is radical.

*(Continued on page 6)*

# CLUW adopts constitution, considers action plan

by GRETCHEN DONART

The Coalition of Labor Union Women, at its second national convention, December 6 and 7, reaffirmed its commitment to work within the mainstream of the labor movement to achieve equality for working women. The convention turned back various proposals to change the structure and membership put forward by an opposition dominated by members of left sects.

The adoption of the majority caucus constitution was the culmination of a struggle between union leadership and staff women on the one hand, and an opposition caucus led by members of the International Socialists, the October League and the Socialist Workers Party.

The members of fringe groups came to Detroit with agendas quite different than those of most union women. And they pushed their agendas hard. As the *Militant*, the newspaper of the SWP critically noted, supporters of the October League and International Socialists "spent all their time haggling over secondary rules and articles in the constitution. . . ." Such nit-picking by activists well-skilled in parliamentary procedure has come to dominate the life of many local chapters, immobilizing them, driving some women away and giving many no reason to come in the first place.

The Socialist Workers Party group in CLUW, which has distinguished itself by showing some organizational commitment to CLUW urged the delegates to adopt a resolution calling for the modification of seniority during layoffs. But while searching for ways to end discrimination on the job, most CLUW members, like most trade unionists, support seniority as one right that workers have won from the boss—freedom from capricious firing and favoritism. Dismissing defense of that hard won right by CLUW and the trade union leadership as "reactionary," the SWP and its members in CLUW distort the issue and make the search for alternatives more difficult. Adoption of the resolution would have pitted CLUW against mainstream labor opinion, divided CLUW members from the unions and weakened the trade union movement as a whole.

More sectarian groups have argued in CLUW against affirmative action; still others have opposed the Equal Rights Amendment. Little wonder that many CLUW members are confused and appalled.

The effect of the actions of these groups—many of which have no base in the labor movement—is to hurt the building of a mass working women's movement, and to weaken the unions. The sectarian-led bickering has deprived CLUW of the mass following it deserves; it has defeated the efforts of union women to organize for their own interests. The fringe groups have, in effect, taken the attitude that if CLUW won't follow their particular agendas, then it should have no agenda—and no organization—at all.

The constitution proposed by the minority betrayed a deep distrust of leadership. Under the alternative constitution, the officers of CLUW would have few rights or duties. They could not hire staff, for instance,

or appoint standing committees. The latter would be left to the most undemocratic procedure of all—self-appointment, a method that favors participation by full-time activists rather than rank-and-file members.

The alternative constitution would have also opened CLUW membership to all working women—not just those who are members of unions. This would have, of course, changed the basic character of CLUW to that of a general women's organization—and weakened its impact on the trade union movement. (And as one rank-and-file woman from the UAW put it, company spies could join too.)

But now CLUW has another chance. The fringe groups were defeated by a 4 to 1 vote in the election of officers. CLUW now has the chance to grow from its relatively tiny membership of 5,000 to be the mass organization it should be.

Many CLUW activists were pleased with the convention, saying that it showed that members were united across union lines. The show of unity at the convention means that the unions will take CLUW more seriously and provide CLUW with the contacts and funding necessary to build a strong organization.

In the view of CLUW president Olga Madar, more is needed than the "tokenism" of a highly visible woman labor leader or two to fully harness the labor movement's energy for the cause of equality for women. What is needed is the involvement of women in local union activities to monitor efforts to eliminate sex discrimination.

One very good proposal for an active program was circulated at the CLUW convention. Written by the steering committee of the Chicago CLUW chapter, the proposal outlines specific activities for local chapters such as lobbying for continued enforcement of anti-sex-discrimination laws, holding hearings on women's stake in the Full Employment Act, demonstrating for insurance coverage of maternity as disability, and organizing to strengthen enforcement of occupational health and safety. This is the kind of action proposal that can unite female—and male—unionists and build a mass organization capable of fighting for truly radical demands. (For more information about this proposal, write Chicago CLUW, 600 West Fullerton, Chicago, Ill. 60614.) □

*Newsletter of*

## **THE DEMOCRATIC LEFT**

**Michael Harrington, Editor**

**Jack Clark, Managing Editor**

**Gretchen Donart, Production Manager**

**David D'Arcy, Carol Drisko, Marjorie Gellermann and David Kusnet also helped to put this issue out.**

**Signed articles express the views of the author.**

**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**

# François Mitterand and 'Latin socialism'

by MICHAEL HARRINGTON

In late November, François Mitterand, the leader of the French Socialist Party, came to the United States. He spoke at a jammed press conference at the National Press Club in Washington, demonstrating an impressive — almost presidential — command. Yet, oddly enough, his visit was all but ignored by the American media. I say oddly because the European press understood the significance of his visit. The Manchester *Guardian*, for instance, reported on Mitterand's conversations with Henry Kissinger under the head of "Henry's Tribute" and noted that it was the first time that the leader of a united and mass French Left had been treated in such a manner.

Around the same time, a survey in the *Economist* underscored the importance of Mitterand's movement. During the last generation there has been a perceptible increase in socialist votes throughout Europe; now social democrats hold more than half the cabinet posts on the Continent. Thus, Mitterand's concept of a new tendency in the international socialist movement — a Latin socialism — is of considerable political and even historic interest.

I had the opportunity of talking to the French Socialist leader at length on these matters during his stay. Here, in extremely brief compass, are a few pertinent impressions.

The American journalists who questioned Mitterand were primarily — and at times, obsessively — interested in two related topics: The French Socialist alliance with the Communists; the role of the Communists and Socialists in Portugal (these discussions took place well before the failure of the ultra-Left coup and the Communists' backdown). On the first count, Mitterand patiently tried to explain the simple facts of French political life. The old tactic (advocated by Guy Mollet) of Socialist alliance with the Center, which used to end up moving to the Right more often than not, is completely discredited and utterly incapable of producing a parliamentary or presidential majority.

The French Communists, though far more rigid than the Italian Communist Party (which supports Mario Soares in Portugal) are in the command of forces essential to the Left. To numerous questions about the danger of such an alliance, Mitterand answered effectively: The Union of the Left, which allegedly threatened to swallow the Socialists, has increased the Socialist percentage of the vote to 30 percent — well ahead of the CP — and permitted them for the first time in a generation to become a tendency in the working class. The Union of the Left thus helped to revive a movement which only four or five years ago seemed moribund.

On Portugal, Mitterand emphasized his solidarity with Soares (who had stayed at his house when in exile) and pointed out that at Soares' request he had invited the Socialist parties of Spain, Portugal, Italy and France to meet with the Communist parties of those countries. Every party accepted — except the Por-

tuguese Communists. At one point in the flurry of queries over Portugal, Mitterand posed an "indiscreet question" to his questioners: "During the 48 years of dictatorship in Portugal," he asked, "did any of you inquire about freedom in that country?"

On France, Mitterand was quite interesting, although many in his audience of journalists did not know it. He said, for instance, that if the Union of the Left received a majority in the next legislative elections — which precede the presidential race by some years — he would expect it to become the government. What, I asked later, would Giscard do under those circumstances? He could agree, I was told, to resign his post or order new elections. Clearly Mitterand does not believe that the French Left will have to wait until 1980 to register the fact that a popular majority now supports it.

In a private discussion I asked Mitterand about the danger of a strike — or flight — of capital if the French Left really tried to carry out its program. Then, Mitterand responded, we will have to move against that capital. Since a Mitterand government would preside over a major publicly owned banking sector, that is not an idle statement.

We then discussed the idea of a distinctively "Latin" strain in democratic socialism, one based primarily upon the French, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish parties. The Scandinavians, Mitterand said, have done wonders in the creation of a welfare state, but they have not yet moved against the structures of capitalism in their countries. The British and the Germans have their accomplishments, but neither of them have moved to transform structures either. Latin socialism, as he conceives it, would be, of course, utterly committed to democracy but would be much more "structuralist" — in the sense of public ownership, of workers' control, of changing the way in which resources are allocated — than the other social democratic tendencies on the Continent.

If the southern tier of Europe witnesses the emergence of a dynamic socialism which seeks to transcend the welfare state and to create new mechanisms of social ownership and democratic control, that would be tremendously positive for the entire world socialist movement. It can only happen if the tentative acts of Socialist-Communist cooperation in those countries result in some kind of an eventual realignment which sees a decisive Communist break with every aspect of the Stalinist heritage. Serious trends in that direction are evident in Italy and Spain; weaker stirrings in France; and practically no public manifestations whatsoever in Portugal.

But then only five years ago, Mitterand's commitment to the revival of a mass socialist movement in France within the context of an electoral alliance with the Communists seemed dangerous at best and a dream at worst. Today it is, from a socialist point of view, a healthy reality. □



## Utilities . . .

(Continued from page 1)

proved the Arco deal and withheld approval from the Exxon deal on a 3 to 2 vote. They proclaim themselves in a bind; one of them has suggested the FPC raise gas prices again as an alternate means of raising capital. Thus has preponderant political power in California passed from the 1870's publicly subsidized railroads to the 1970's publicly subsidized oil companies.

The irony here is that an estimated 14 percent of the oil and gas resources of the United States lies in or offshore California, most of it on publicly owned land. Assemblyman Charles Warren (D-Los Angeles) has introduced a bill which would establish a publicly-owned state energy corporation and authorize it to buy land and exploration and development rights, alone or jointly with private corporations, to explore for and

develop these resources, to buy or build refineries if none were operating on a competitive basis, to sell its products on the wholesale market, to develop alternate sources of energy, and to act as a purchasing agent for California utilities. Moreover, whenever a state agency leased land or exploration and development rights, it would be required to give free of charge 20 percent of the resources to the public corporation if the corporation requested it.

Governor Brown has said he is considering the bill, though he ruled out any 1975 endorsement on the basis of the cost of establishing the corporation. Meanwhile, the cost of not establishing the corporation grows steadily; and one of Brown's commissioners, Leonard Ross, complains that dealing with Arco is like dealing with a foreign power. A closer, if more ancient analogy would be to the gods who conspired to keep fire from humanity until Prometheus broke up their trust. □

## My race for Mayor

by GERRY COHEN

CHAPEL HILL—The 1975 Chapel Hill town election seemed an ideal forum for advancing public exposure to a socialist candidate. I was elected to the Board of Aldermen in 1973, although my political positions were not much of an issue then. I was known as a socialist in the community, but it never became an issue in the campaign.

But when I announced for Mayor on September 6, 1975, it became an issue. How progressive was the community to be? Chapel Hill has non-partisan, plurality elections, so that there is a possibility of winning with only one-third of the vote in a three-candidate race.

My sole opponent for Mayor, however, was James C. Wallace, a faculty member at North Carolina State University in Raleigh and one of the state's leading environmentalists. Wallace had served six months on the Board of Aldermen in 1971 before resigning to take on a state level position.

In my opening statement, quoted liberally in area newspapers and radio, I stated I was a member of the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee. My affiliation was clearly mentioned in numerous radio interviews, newspaper articles and debates. It was not, however, put on literature or in advertisements.

The campaign organization was quite good. In a town with only 14,000 voters (turnout on election day was 6200) I had 206 contributors and over 150 workers.

Among the issues that I tried to raise in my campaign were:

- continued subsidy and expansion of public transportation,
- encouragement of neighborhood planning groups,
- increased input by town employees in decision making, and
- opposition to new road construction.

My opponent agreed with most of my positions, but he argued that capitalism and socialism were irrelevant, that ideology was irrelevant in general. Wallace campaigned for no-growth—an alternative that would be racist, I argued, without redistribution of wealth.

But my youth became the decisive issue of the campaign. I was told over and over again by older liberals that I was too young at 25.

Most of the Left became involved in my campaign, including all local DSOC members. Others active in groups like New America Movement, People's Alliance and Farmworkers, gave strong support, and the week before the election, Wilbur Hobby, state president of the AFL-CIO spoke in my behalf at a \$2 a plate fundraising dinner. (My opponent outspent me by a margin of about \$5200 to \$2800.)

Public reaction to the socialist label was quite pleasing. There was a lot of favorable response, a lot of desire to know more. The local DSOC chapter will use the contacts and experience from the campaign to expand its membership.

The election itself was hardly a victory. I received 2274 votes to 3929 for Wallace. Conservative candidates for Alderman received about 1790 votes, and they lined up solidly for Wallace. (Many had long opposed Wallace but swung behind him to block my election.) The liberal-left Aldermanic candidate got about 3600 votes.

Students comprised about 30 percent of the electorate and I hoped for a solid student vote. But Republican clubs organized the 25 percent of the students who were registered Republican, and I appeared to get about 70 percent of the student vote. I carried the one black precinct by a 60-40 spread over Wallace, a long time liberal.

With two years yet remaining on my term on the Board of Aldermen, I plan to keep active in electoral politics. □

# Fear and loathing in the *Post* pressroom

Approximately 200 Newspaper Guild members, among them reporters and desk people, are honoring picket lines at the Washington Post set up by three striking unions. While the media have described the strike as a test of the ability of unreasonable, and often violent, pressmen to dictate the Post's labor policies, these Guild members have concluded that the Post is attempting unilaterally to alter the pressmen's working conditions—and break their union in the process.

One Guild member honoring the picket lines, John Hanrahan, interviewed Post pressmen and recorded their views in a leaflet, from which this is excerpted.

—THE EDITORS

Listen to some voices from the pressroom:

"Joe had a run-in with . . . , the foreman at the time, over what I don't know. Some little thing, some argument or something that could have been . . . 's imagination. Anyway, he stuck the man down in the hole, pushing them 2,000-pound rolls around. You're talking about a guy who's about 5-2, weighs about 100 pounds, about 64-65 years old. I mean he was a veteran and everything. He was one of these fucking guys who, you know, he just wasn't built for it. He was just skin and bones. He had had a couple of attacks before. He was a real nice guy, you couldn't believe how nice he was. He wouldn't offend anybody. He was a happy-go-lucky type guy. Well, they shoved him down in the hole. He used to be an oiler upstairs. He was an older guy, you can't expect as much work out of him as the younger guys. Anyway, they shoved him down in the hole pushing paper. Some of the older guys like that work, but he wasn't up to it. They shoved him down there. . . . He died—what? about eight months later. To this day, I say that's what killed him. . . . He was only down there three fuckin' weeks. . . . Then, right from there, he went out sick and he didn't come back for, Christ, about two months. Then when he came back he was back awhile, he never came back—physically he never made it back, you know what I mean. His body was just, uh—That's really what made me bitter with that [foreman], I mean shit like that."

—A WASHINGTON POST PRESSMAN

The pressmen say there are inadequate safety provisions in the pressroom and that management has repeatedly dragged its feet on the safety issue. A number of pressmen have missing or crushed fingers; some have hearing and lung problems; others have bad backs. The pressmen say that other news operations, such as the Dow-Jones plant in Montgomery County, have de-misting systems that remove much of the potentially hazardous dust and ink from the air; the *Post*, they say, does not have an effective de-misting system. Management has balked (because of cost, the pressmen say) at installing additional boxes for shutting off the presses in emergency situations. Had the additional boxes been installed last year, the pressmen believe that one of their fellow workers would not have lost his hand when

he caught it in a press. At the *Star*, which the pressmen say has an adequate number of safety boxes, that same worker would have been able to reach over with his free hand and shut off the press to prevent his hand that was caught from being badly mangled. To make the *Post* pressroom completely safe, the pressmen say, the number of safety boxes should be doubled.

Management consented to have only one meeting on the safety issue after the pressman lost his hand last year, the pressmen say.

Consider the noise of the pressroom. According to the Occupational Health and Safety Administration, pressmen must use protective earmuffs, but this is looked upon as an interim method until a better method is found, the pressmen say. The constant pounding of the presses can harm your hearing, many pressmen say, but "the publishers don't approach the sound thing at all" to try to come up with a device to protect the pressmen's ears. A number of pressmen have filed claims based on loss of hearing, but the *Post's* insurance company fights such claims tooth and nail.

## Not union busting?

The Washington *Post* has decided to break the pressmen's union once and for all.

On December 10, the newspaper announced that it would hire permanent replacements for the striking pressmen if the union continued to turn down the *Post's* "final offer." As the *Post's* own story stated the next day "yesterday's announcement means that the *Post* will try to organize a non-union press room."

Despite the clear stated purpose to "organize a non-union pressroom," *Post* management persists in the fiction that there has been no attempt to break the union.

In the last year, three pressmen have lost all feeling and gripping power in one hand each and have had operations. The pressmen don't know what caused it—some think it may be something in the ink. Yet, said another pressman, "The insurance companies are saying it's all bullshit."

And then there is the harassment. Foremen chew them out in front of other workers for minor mistakes—then, often follow this up with letters to the worker's home, they say. The letters tell the man his work is "unsatisfactory" and that a copy of the letter will go into his file.

"It follows you home," said one pressman. "When you're made to eat shit all day at work, how can you go home and think about being a good husband or father. They want to push us down. They want us to sit there and take it all and not complain, or they'll bust us some more. They don't want us to have any self-respect." □

## DSOC . . .

(Continued from page 1)

With that warning out of the way, I can be shamelessly optimistic. And honestly hopeful. I came back from that tour convinced that, along with the rest of the national DSOC leadership, I have been underestimating the strength, numbers and dedication of our activists in the field and that we've been too cautious and too limited in assessing our possibilities.

In part, I hope that this and subsequent issues of the NEWSLETTER will bear out my reports and my optimism about the DSOC. In this issue, for example, we have an article by Harold Meyerson on a consumer fight against utility interests in California and a report by Gerry Cohen on his recent mayoral campaign in Chapel Hill, N.C. Next month, we'll have a report on the Texas Farm Workers' struggle by one of our Austin members, Richard Greene, who has helped organize a state-wide support committee for the TFW. All three pieces represent the kind of participant-observer reporting on the grassroots Left that the NEWSLETTER has sought since its founding. They also represent contributions by young members from areas where the organization did not exist a year ago.

**CAMPUSES.** The activism of the '60's has disappeared, and too many campuses are caught in the budget crunches of the '70's. Some activists remain—a great proportion of them graduate students and faculty, people who were radicalized by the civil rights and anti-war movements—but the radical atmosphere of the '60's and early '70's on campus is gone.

Those radicals who do remain show great seriousness though, and one senses a greater commitment to the long haul than was evident in much of the trendy left-

ism of the last decade. And the notion that students acting alone will transform society has completely vanished. The people who are political are acutely aware of the need for outreach and relations with a larger community. Finally, it's important to understand that the quietude that currently pervades the campuses is quite different from the apathy of the '50's.

There is the possibility that student radicals, specifically socialists, can once again break out of the traditional Left isolation by addressing themselves to the issues that students seem most worried about right now: jobs upon graduation and tuition while still in school. Young DSOC members are active in several attempts in that direction.

**DEMOCRATIC PARTY.** As I've argued in the NEWSLETTER before, the radical and liberal activism of the '60's has had a continuing impact on the Democratic Party. That's been evident at the last two Democratic Conventions (the '72 Presidential Convention and the 1974 Interim Conference on the party charter), and it reflects a continuing trend, not some minor aberration.

After visiting with grassroots activists in a score of cities, my conviction on that point is strengthened. And I'm convinced that one of DSOC's strengths is our relationship to those forces in the Democratic Party.

I think of our members in Austin, Texas, where one of the shapers of opinion in the local Democratic Party is a former University of Texas student body president and SDS activist. Other local Democratic activists come from the feminist, black and Chicano movements. All had been involved in anti-war protests and identified themselves with the larger Left. Some were anarchists, others socialists, others simply left-liberal Democrats. Our DSOC group in Austin, which is still in the process of organizing, is perceived to be

## It's January 1977 . . .

. . . Gerald Ford has been defeated, and a Democratic President has just been sworn in. What difference will it make? Will we get a decent national health care system? Significant tax reform? Anything approaching full employment? Or will we be treated instead to a diet of Jerry Brown and Mike Dukakis aphorisms about government trying to do too much, a Democratic version of Herbert Hoover?

We could end up with that disaster unless we begin now to define the issues and the programs that President will have to respond to.

That's why the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee is holding a conference on January 31 and February 1 in Washington DC. We want to work out a program which moves from what is politically possible to what is socially necessary. We want to carry that program into the Democratic convention. We want to shake up the liberals who are becoming conservatives.

## Among the topics to be discussed:

- Full employment & planning
- Energy & public ownership
- Housing & the urban crisis
- Income redistribution
- Global economy & the third world
- The arms budget & American foreign policy
- National health insurance & beyond

Special luncheon speaker  
Jerry Wurf, *President*  
American Federation of State,  
County & Municipal Employees

January 31 - February 1  
Mayflower Hotel  
Washington DC

For more information write: DSOC, Room 617  
853 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10003



and is a part of that mainstream left tendency in the Democratic party there.

Perhaps Austin, a liberal Texas city with a large university population can be considered an aberration. What about other Democratic activists in other cities? In the San Francisco Area, our first West Coast conference drew three members of the State Assembly, half a dozen Democratic club presidents, countless reform activists. The planners of the conference involved community organizers, consumer activists, trade unionists—all at an explicitly socialist conference entitled, “Who Should Own California?”

In Los Angeles, where our organization hasn't existed for as long and we have fewer contacts in Democratic politics, an insurgent Congressional candidate has actively sought the participation of the local DSOC group as a major campaign base. In Dallas, Texas, the North Central Texas Young Democrats, the major organization of liberalism in the area, called a regional meeting to hear me. In Iowa, the Davenport local of DSOC sponsored an excellent meeting attended by a state senator, some city councilors, two union presidents, and as one DSOC member put it, “more leaders of the local Democratic Party than we generally get for city committee meetings.” And in Des Moines, our one DSOC member put together a meeting which drew union political activists from three major unions, a member of the state Democratic committee and several local community activists, for our first meeting ever in central Iowa.

Perhaps the best indication of how we're doing within the Democratic Party came in Louisville, at the end of my tour, at the national Democratic issues conference sponsored by the Democratic Forum. This unofficial Party gathering had the blessing of the Party leadership and was attended by all the Presidential candidates, except Sanford, Harris and Wallace. We had decided earlier that there would be an effort to create a specific DSOC presence there. We succeeded not just in establishing a presence but in affecting the conference in several major ways. We distributed literature to every participant at the convention; a meeting with DSOC leaders during the convention attracted more than 200 people. It generated lively discussion and many favorable comments—and more Democrats now know what DSOC is.

DSOC members played an important and militant role in the women's caucus at the convention. Doris Kolvoord spoke for the women's caucus from the floor of the convention; Marjorie Gellermann led the fight to get more women on the issues panels at the convention. We played an important role in the debate about the major black issue at the convention: busing. When our Louisville members learned that the convention organizers were granting speaking rights on Sunday to a major organizer of the anti-busing forces in Louisville, they were distressed that his points would go unanswered. We approached the people who had organized the conference and arranged for equal time for Lyman Johnson, a DSOC member and president of the Louisville NAACP, who spoke eloquently to the issue.

---

## A modest proposal

“As a follow up to your recent news article on the subject, I would like to present a modest proposal which might go a long way toward cleaning up the pollution which we have been suffering in Pittsburgh, not only for the last few days but since the industrialization of the area. My proposal might be tried first in the Pittsburgh area on a pilot project basis and, if successful, could be applied throughout the country.

All top executives from polluting industries should be required to live within, let's say, 200 yards of their plant gate, and a system could be set up whereby water just down stream from their plant would be piped directly into their homes for personal use.

While these requirements would create temporary hardships for these individuals and their families, not unlike the hardships many Pittsburghers suffer every day, I think that the pollution solution will be remedied quite quickly without recourse to the long legal battles, foot-dragging, diversionary tactics, stalling, etc. that we are experiencing now. If the pollution is not cleared up, at least the average citizen will have the satisfaction of knowing that the creators of the pollution are not escaping it by living in the suburbs.”

—Letter to the editor of  
The New York Times  
December, 6, 1975

---

**CONVERGENCE ON THE LEFT.** The single most important impression from my tour and from the political trends of the last three or four months is a sense of newly found common purpose on the American Left. Some of the measures of that are small and personalistic, others are indicative, I think, of larger trends: a conversation in Austin where a former student activist says she feels I'm the current equivalent of an SDS traveller; a meeting in Dekalb, Illinois, where more than a dozen members and former members of the New American Movement want to engage in a serious and fraternal discussion of our agreements and disagreements; a conversation in Louisville with Gar Alperovitz, Jeff Faux, Mike Harrington and myself to discuss Alperovitz and Faux's excellent paper on economic planning and common strategies for the Left in the next year; the issue of *Working Papers for a New Society* entitled “Left with the Democrats? Politics and Programs for 1976.” People who disagreed, sometimes violently, ten years ago, people who just weren't in contact with each other, are coming to the same conclusions and the same approaches to political priorities. On the radical Left, as Harry Boyte suggested last spring, the old rift between the LID and the SDS has been breached by at least some of the survivors of and successors to the fight. And within the mass Left, the liberal Democratic party which we're all trying to affect, there is new openness to the issues we're trying to address. □

# Jimmy Higgins reports . . .

A MAY DAY PRESENT FOR MR. FORD has been promised by House Speaker Carl Albert. Albert told the Black Congressional Caucus that full employment will be the top priority for Congressional Democrats and that a revised version of the Humphrey-Hawkins bill will be "on the President's desk by May 1." The revisions in the bill result from meetings between the AFL-CIO legislative staff and George Meany with the Black Caucus. They successfully worked out their differences on the existing Humphrey-Hawkins bill, and Hawkins and Humphrey asked Leon Keyserling and Jerald Jasinowski to draft a new version of the bill to be introduced when Congress reconvenes this month. Meany has called passage of the bill labor's top legislative priority, and all the current Democratic Presidential candidates, except George Wallace, support the thrust of the bill.



**LEFT WITH THE DEMOCRATS** is the title of the most recent issue of an excellent journal, *Working Papers for a New Society*. Subtitled "Politics and Programs for 1976," the issue presents some excellent analysis of what went on in the '60's, what's going on in the '70's and what programs the Left and the Democratic party must develop. One of the articles, Gar Alperovitz and Jeff Faux's piece on economic planning, became a major item of discussion at the Louisville Democratic Issues conference and in the national media. Along with the other innovative proposals in this issue, that paper is must reading for the entire democratic Left. The magazine is available for \$2.50 from *Working Papers*, 123 Mt. Auburn Street, Cambridge, Mass. 02138.

**GANGING UP ON WHOM?**—Governor George C. Wallace of Alabama charged last month that some members of the Democratic party's "hierarchy" were "ganging up" on him. But he was careful to note that he had been treated fairly by the Democratic National

Chairman Robert Strauss. The same day that Wallace made his accusations, Strauss and Governor Philip Noel of Rhode Island, who will chair the Democratic platform committee, called a press conference, and according to the *New York Times*, they "said similarly conciliatory things about Wallace. But they were sharply critical of a passionately pro-busing speech made last month by Senator George McGovern. "That kind of irresponsible statement, if it becomes the position of our party, will lead to an absolutely crushing defeat in 1976," said Mr. Noel." Curious, isn't it, that a racist demagogue who has not supported a national Democratic candidate in his entire public career is conciliated while the titular head of the Party is attacked by the official Democratic leadership?

**PRESIDENTIAL POLITICKING**—Democratic reformers in Massachusetts and New York failed to agree on a candidate, so, as the *New Republic* said, it's up to Iowa to choose the liberal front runner. Unfortunately, the unliberal Jimmy Carter looks strong there. And Sargent Shriver may show some surprising strength here, based on his campaign's organizing Catholic and anti-abortion constituencies. One state over, in Illinois, Senator Adlai Stevenson's withdrawal from the Presidential primary gives Shriver a shot at one of his original Presidential constituents, Mayor Richard Daley. The *New York Daily News* predicts that Daley will swing his votes to Scoop Jackson, but some skeptics guess that Shriver is more likely to "da Mare's" nod. Jackson has been picking up strength lately, particularly in New York. Kevin Phillips' analysis is that Jackson was moved to action by the attention and power of the Carter campaign. Carter was pre-empting the field on the anti-Wallace Democratic Right. So, Jackson's well-funded but dormant campaign machine went into action, lining up some Jewish and Democratic regular support in New York and pushing into the Florida primary, particularly in the districts around Miami. Speaking of funds, one of the ironies on the Party's Left is that the liberal candidate with the most money, Morris Udall, emerged from the reform meetings in New York and Massachusetts as the weakest of the three major liberal contenders.

The Newsletter of the Democratic Left is published ten times a year by the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee. It is available by subscription or by membership in the DSOC.

I want to subscribe. Enclosed find my check or money order. (\$10 for a sustaining subscription; \$5 for a regular subscription; \$2.50 for a limited income subscription.)

I'd like to join the DSOC. Enclosed find my dues. (\$15 regular dues; \$8 limited income; \$50 sustaining dues.)

Send to: Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee, 853 Broadway, Room 617, New York, N.Y. 10003.

Name.....

Address.....

City/State..... Zip.....