Newsletter of
THE DEMOCRATIC LEFT

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A critique of Carter's energy plan

An interview with Robert Engler

Editor's note—Robert Engler is among the most knowledgeable people in the nation on the structure and the nature of multinational energy companies. His earlier book, The Politics of Oil *details the creative ways The Seven Sisters and their allies have manipulated both U.S. and foreign governments. He has recently published a new book,* The Brotherhood of Oil, *which brings that study up to date.*

In this interview with Liberation News Service, Engler analyzes the energy program put forward by President Carter April 20. Engler is a member of the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee. The interview is printed with his permission and permission of Liberation News Service.

What are your general feelings about the Carter energy proposal?

One welcomes the Carter administration's invitation to a national debate over energy policy, its emphasis on conservation as opposed to giant crash programs for new energy development, and its stated concern about a just distribution of resources and sacrifices.

However, my major criticism of the Carter proposal is that while it appears to be comprehensive, and it takes in plenty, there is no real overall plan. There is no plan which looks at the way this society overall uses energy, the way it allocates capital investment.

It surrenders completely on the issue of price; it surrenders on what I think is a pop line, to say that the age of cheap energy is over. Because you really should make distinctions. There may be areas of economic life where you want to *encourage* development through cheap energy. For example, whatever the faults of the Tennessee Valley Authority were, the idea of cheap energy to help a depressed area grow was a valuable idea.

There would also be other areas where you want to *discourage* energy—not just gas guzzling cars, but maybe much of the automobile industry. Or much of industry use. By and large there's a heavy amount of our industrial apparatus which is based upon extraordinary waste, whose only justification is profit. And the energy industry is the principal user of natural gas.

And the Carter plan doesn't address that waste at all?

It addresses it tangentially. But unless they really tackle the problem of reshaping the investment patterns of this society—which means challenging the heart of private ownership of resources—I don't think they can get very far.

I suspect the energy industry and much other of the corporate world could live with a hell of a lot of what Carter now proposes. There will be a lot of publicly expressed anguish. But it remains to be seen what really is so fundamentally threatening.

So what do you think an energy policy must do to address the corporate control of resources you're talking about?

A starting point should say that private ownership

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A socialist view on global human rights

by Bogdan Denitch

President Carter's Administration's highlighting of the human rights issue has politicized and popularized a dormant but ever present political question. While the human rights issues have been systemmatically manipulated during the Cold War by both sides, the hard rock reality is that more attention is centered on this question today than in over a decade.

As socialists, we can only welcome a genuine campaign and commitment to human rights. The problem, however, is that the human rights issue has become a slogan which gathers around it organizations, forces and individuals who are only peripherally, if at all, concerned with human rights, and who use the issue almost exclusively as a surrogate for anti-communism. As the New York *Times* reported recently, Michael Harrington was booed and prevented from speaking by a furious minority when appearing at a rally defending the human rights of Soviet dissidents. His mentioning socialism and the violation of human rights in Chile and Iran outraged a loud minority in the audience at a rally organized by decent, progressive and democratic human rights advocates. That was a symbolic warning that at least in the U.S. the human rights issue, in addition to calling forth fresh resources of idealism and

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Electoral reform: Carter as radical

by JIM CHAPIN

Democrats from George Meany to George McGovern have rightly criticized the conservative bent of the Carter Administration's economic policies. But in all the resulting controversy about whether or not Jimmy Carter is a liberal, everyone has ignored some of the innovative—indeed radical—*political* initiatives of the new Administration.

The Carter team really has followed the much-publicized advice of Pat Caddell: pursue an activist course with budgetary "restraint." Thus, the postponement of new welfare spending, the parsimonious proposal on a minimum wage and other conservative economic moves fit into a political strategy. So do the liberal aspects of Carter's image and the really interesting and progressive proposals in the political sphere.

Among those innovations, perhaps the most important and least-publicized is the Administration's electoral reform package. Carter would replace the current system of voter registration with a system permitting registration at the polls on election day, and he proposes abolishing the electoral college.

These are major proposals with the potential of reshaping American politics for some time to come. Yet, all too characteristically, the Left has tended to treat the electoral system as secondary to the "real" socio-economic structure. In doing so we ignore the "uniqueness" of American politics and misunderstand the "failure" of American socialism. After all, the failure to achieve socialism in an advanced Western society is universal. The failure of socialism in American politics is the failure to sustain even a reformist socialist party on a mass scale. We are describing an electoral failure, and it is instructive to look at the electoral context.

Historically, in the years 1890-1920 (as Walter Dean Burnham particularly has demonstrated in his work) when other countries were extending suffrage to previously disenfranchised groups and the socialist parties were rising to become the first or second parties in their lands, the United States was disenfranchising already enfranchised groups, and the Socialist party, after a fair beginning, was on the way to disappearing.

It was a self-reinforcing process. Other countries had socialist parties which aroused their electorates and created institutions to sustain them; our country ended up with a "hole in the electorate" where the Socialists should have been, and a political system which offered little reason for lower class voters to participate.

The single greatest factor in reducing turnout in the United States from the 1890s onward was the development of individual voter registration. The United States is alone among advanced democracies in putting the responsibility for registration on the individual rather than on the state. So the proposals for registering on the spot introduced by the Carter Administration will quite likely have major effects on the American political process. Yet, ironically, they have been largely ignored by the mainstream press and almost totally disregarded on the Left. Indeed, the only recent work devoted to the question of universal voter registration (UVR) was written several years ago from a hostile point of view by two conservative activists: Kevin Phillips and Paul Blackman, *Electoral Reform and Voter Participation, Federal Registration/ A False Remedy for Voter Apathy*, published by the Hoover Institute and the American Enterprise Institute.

Phillips and Blackman suggest that UVR in the U.S. would raise turnout in Presidential elections to the 65 to 70 percent range, a level five to ten points below that of most other English-speaking democracies. Patterns of turnout, they point out, do not result simply from registration systems, they also develop from specific political circumstances.

Turnout is higher when the voters think their vote matters and when the political choices before them are unambiguous and clear. Therefore, multiparty competition and close races increase turnout. "The fact that our parties are so ideologically vague discourages a high participation rate, especialy among the less affluent." Lack of a coherent working class culture in the United States means that the lower classes are exposed to media controlled almost entirely by upper-status groups.

Phillips and Blackman indicate that increasing the voter universe does not help only one group: "Party coalitions are *dynamic*, not *static*. . . . It is not possible simply to assume that everyone will remain in his original party when election laws put more voters in one party at the expense of others, or in one faction within a party. . . . Voter registration reform may not seem all important to the electoral process. . . . *But it has the potential for altering the American party system by changing the coalition of groups which now make up each of the political parties.*"

In the short run any increase in voting on the level suggested by Phillips and Blackman can only work to the advantage of the Democrats. The chances are that new voters will vote anywhere from 3 to 2 to 3 to 1 Democratic. Added to the already existing troubles of the Republican party, this could provide a fatal blow since, as I suggested in this NEWSLETTER some time ago,

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the very existence of the Republican Party and its domination by an active far-right 5-10 percent of the national population depend on the limited mobilization of today's electorate. The long run result might be the finish of the already crumbling Republican structure.

There is a potential time bomb for present politicians of all kinds in the non-electorate of today. A large mass of potential voters can be mobilized in all kinds of directions. We often hear that the Nazi upsurge in post-1928 Germany rested heavily on the mobilization of previous non-voters and the implication of this statement is that non-voters are peculiarly susceptible to extremist behavior. It would be more correct to say that they are peculiarly susceptible to mobilization in crisis situations. At various times they have been mobilized by Social Democrats in such countries as Belgium in the 1890s and England in the 1920s, by liberals in the United States in the 1830s or the 1930s, or, more recently, in the South in 1968 by Wallace among whites and by Humphrey among blacks. It all depends on context.

We should be aware that simply easing procedures will not of itself create a large electorate. Phillips and Blackman point out that registration drives in Texas have vastly increased its registration rolls in recent years, yet its percentage turnout remains that the same level as that of neighboring states. (They neglect the question of why poor Texans should turn out in hordes for either the party of Bentsen and Briscoe or the party of John Tower.) We cannot assume that a larger electorate will be mobilized by the Left. It is a combination of the national political context as presented by the top politicians in the country) and local/individual factors that mobilize the voters.

The two times in this century when American national turnout increased were in the 1930s and the years 1952-60. We may safely assume that the first jump was due to a combination of FDR at the top and the work of the CIO and similar groups on the bottom; while the increase in the later period was caused by Eisenhower and Kennedy at the top and the effects of the TV revolution at the bottom. (Note that these two mobilizations—partial though they both were—went in opposite ideological directions).

Carter's proposed UVR plan differs from the electoral systems of other countries. It proposes on the spot voting. Other nations use some form of national voter registration by door-to-door canvassing or postal registration. It has been rightly pointed out that the potentials for fraud may be greater under the Carter proposal than under most other systems. But registration is only a partial check on fraud at the best of times.

The proposed reform has already gotten through committees in both houses. The real fight will be on the Senate floor, where it is subject to filibuster, and where Senate Majority leader Robert Byrd has said that it is not one of his priorities.

The second key element in the Carter electoral reform proposals is his announced support for Senator Bayh's constitutional amendment to abolish the electoral college. Much of the Left seems hostile or oblivious to the implications of this reform; the rest of the political spectrum seems not to understand its potential radical implications. (The exceptions here are a few prescient conservatives in each party: Kevin Phillips among the Republicans and Coalition for a Democratic Majority political scientists Aaron Wildavsky and Nelson Polsby of the Democrats.)

Save the dates
November 12-13
"The Democratic Agenda"
conference on full employment
Washington D.C.

The fact is that the executive-centered system of the kind the United States has had, as it was intended to have, a very strong conservatizing effect on our government. This alone explains much of the dominance of the two-party system in our country. (For evidence, note that the addition of an elective French Presidency to the French system after 1960 by DeGaulle has already operated to reduce that multi-party society to an essentially two-party structure, something that all previous French changes of the electoral system failed to do.)

The electoral college system increases this conservatizing effect to an unconscionable degree. It is, after all, a unit rule system. It increases the power of local territorially based oligarchies and reduce turnout because in many areas the vote does not affect the result.

Bayh's proposed amendment (election by popular vote with a runoff if no candidate gets 40 percent) would, as various critics point out, operate against the present two-party system. The consequences might well be that the Left and the Right would fight their differences out internally before facing off against each other. It is no coincidence that most of the amendment's critics come from the conservative side of the spectrum; they realize that this reform would increase turnout and give new groups a far greater place in the system than they have now.

Given the importance of the political context, it could be that Bayh's amendment might increase turnout even more than UVR. But its future is uncertain. Kevin Phillips has suggested that Carter and the Republicans share a common interest in not seeing this reform passed; the Republicans because their survival depends so largely on the present system; Carter because he doesn't want to face real opposition from either Left or Right. The present combination of a majority "mixed" ideological party facing a right-wing "minority" party not only keeps Carter safe, but keeps the country on a "moderate" course.

Certainly the Left can look to little advantage from the present distribution of the parties, and if a change in the system submerges the Republican party, that is all to our advantage. Finally, as I suggested in this NEWSLETTER a few months back, if we propose to replace the *economic* model of capitalism with what is in essence a *political* model, we must treat politics as seriously as economics. □

Human rights . . .

(Continued from page 1)

democratic commitment, has become a stick with which to beat the Soviets and East Europeans, and is sometimes deliberately used as a part of a campaign against continuation of detente Therefore, human rights in America assumes the loaded symbolic value that the equally decent and progressive slogan of "liberation" had in the 1950s when applied to Eastern Europe.

What is particularly characteristic of the human rights campaign of the Carter Administration is the narrowness of its focus. It addresses itself almost exclusively to the rights of political dissidents without touching on some other fundamental human rights. Socialists defend the rights of dissidents and the civil liberties of persons holding unpopular and anti-regime views. Starvation, exploitation, systematic underemployment and racism are at least as fundamental an attack on human rights as the violation of political freedoms. Therefore, in the coming meetings in Belgrade, when the two sides—Moscow and Washington—begin to trade charges about respective violations of human rights, we can only cheer since they will be mostly telling the truth about each other.

It is an open question as to where the greater violations are to be found today. There are probably more political prisoners in the dictatorial countries allied to the West than in all the countries of the Soviet bloc put together. In Iran, Indonesia, the Latin American despotships, and the various unlovely regimes friendly to the West throughout Africa and Asia, there is also hardly any question that the primitive and advanced brutalities and torture inflicted on political prisoners go beyond the bureaucratic repression and violation of democratic norms which occur in the communist countries. Torture, rape, political murder of dissidents, paralegal police violence, massive semi-starvation of workers, massacres of political opponents, systematic subordination of entire submerged nationalities are issues which can be more pertinently addressed to the West today than to the East European states and the Soviet regime.

This is why the Carter Administration, even in its own terms, has had to go softly in pressing the human rights issue. It has explicitly excluded several of the worst violators because of their strategic importance to the U.S. This note of *realpolitik* is hardly reassuring to the prisoners of the Shah of Iran and the victims of the South Korean regime.

When properly addressing itself to rights in the Soviet Union, the United States finds itself in an awkward position. Not only does the U.S. government have close political and economic ties to sundry dictatorial client states, but many of these repressive regimes have also had their police forces trained and modernized through U.S. aid. One of the more scandalous stories here is the role of some American universities which have helped in training police forces for some singularly unlovely regimes.

Having said all this, one must go on to say that the concern with the rights of dissidents in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union is both welcome and legitimate. Violation by one set of dictatorial regimes cannot excuse those violations of rights which occur in the Soviet bloc. The fact that the Soviets and the East Europeans are violating rights guaranteed by international treaties in Helsinki has an additional problem attached to it. It is, of course, the problem of the validity of the treaty signed by those regimes in general. After all, one of the more effective safeguards for any long-range detente agreement is presumably an articulate public opinion which can bring such violations to light.

There are problems attached to a human rights campaign which have rarely been addressed by American civil libertarians. Small groups of terrorists can often provoke repression out of all reasonable bounds. Human rights violations in Northern Ireland and Israel, for example, are not an outgrowth of any determination by the British or Israeli governments to suppress free speech so much as a response to threats which endanger civic order and go beyond peaceful advocacy. But these democratic regimes *have* violated human rights.

The number of political prisoners in any given country is not and cannot be the sole criterion as to how democratic, decent or popular a regime is, or how much support it may have from the majority of its citizens. Rumania, for example, the most hardboiled of the East European dictatorships, has fewer political prisoners

DSOC youth to meet

A three day conference for the Youth Caucus of DSOC is now in the planning stages for late August or early September. This year the conference will be held at a dorm-style camp, and a full schedule of activities, in addition to seminars, is being slated.

According to Cynthia Ward, YC coordinator, "The principal goal of the conference is to develop a blueprint for individual, local and natonal action for confronting the important challenges facing the democratic left in the coming year."

Besides looking ahead, the conference will also look back. The role of radical politics of the '60s and discussion of labor and political organizing history of the 1930s are topics to be discussed.

Current areas that will be considered at length are the energy program of the Carter administration, the thrust of unionizing the South, the fight for full employment, and the mixture of conservative and liberal policies that President Carter has advocated.

Workshops in methods and skills of effective activists are expected to attend. They will pool their experiences and speak about the skills necessary for community and labor organizing.

Michael Harrington, chair of DSOC, will deliver the keynote address.

Additional information can be received by contacting Cynthia Ward at the DSOC office.

than either Yugoslavia or Israel. It would be foolish to argue that that makes it a more decent society than the other two states, both of which face the kind of external threats and pressures that Rumania is free of. There are more political prisoners in Israel, i.e., Arab nationalists not convicted of a crime of violence or terrorism, than in any single East European country today. This merely underlines the complexity of the human rights issue, and while one may be understanding about the problems of a beleaguered state, we socialists must still insist that minimae of decency be extended to these prisoners, and insist that it is an anomaly which must be faced and eliminated

Deportation of pro-PLO advocates who have violated no law, forcible removal of Arab farmers, settlement of occupied territories are all violations of human rights, and here much of the U.S. democratic opinion has been silent. The President has not seen fit, for that matter, to address the issue of documented torture in the citadel of liberal democracy, Great Britain, or the McCarthyite wave of anti-radical legislation in West Germany. I mention these cases to point out the problem that raising an absolute standard of human rights poses in a world of insecure and sometimes unstable nation-states.

It is this feature of the human rights issue which makes it inappropriate for the U.S. to unilaterally wage a campaign. The U.N. and the various multilateral arenas such as Helsinki and Belgrade provide a better forum, and the issue would be better pressed if it were divorced from its Cold War confrontationist aspect. One could press for *minima* of human decency. Torture, imprisonment without cause, murder of political opposition, genocide and racist repression of majorities probably form such a core of issues on which broad international agreement can be reached. It is true that these extreme violations are, if anything, more common in the West than in the East, if one extends the term "West" to include its allies and dependents in the Third World.

A human rights campaign for the *rights* of dissidents should be separated from a defense of the *views* of these dissidents. Solzenityn's stature as a writer and his rights as a human being must not blind us to his narrow, reactionary, nationalist, apologetics for right-wing repression. Our support for the rights of these dissidents is an issue separate from our support for the views of the democratic and socialist victims of repression and terror. And what is remarkable about the current wave of dissent in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe is that included in that movement are allies of ours, the Medvedevs and the strike support committee in Poland; those who speak for a democratic and socialist society, for the rights of the broad masses, those who are our comrades and allies.

We socialists, therefore, support the raising of the human rights issue but call for a genuine, universal campaign for human rights, one which links social, economic and political rights. We do not accept either of the reactionary propositions: that poor people do not care for democratic rights since a full stomach is presumably more important than human decency, nor the notion that the right of a handful of dissident intellectuals to publish and state their views is an adequate measure of a regime's commitment to human rights, more important than prevening massive starvation and misery of the majority. The point of a socialist campaign for human rights is precisely to stress that the social and political rights are inseparable. □

This will be the last issue of the *Newsletter* for the summer. We'll be back in September with our annual Labor Day issue.

In the meantime, if you have moved or you are planning to move, let us know. Changes of address made through the post office slow down delivery and cost us money.

Energy . . .

(Continued from page 1)

of natural resources is inappropriate. Now, public ownership would not solve problems automatically. You could have the same incompetence, the same vested interests, or whatever. But I don't think you're able to deal with these things anymore by assuming you can persuade private forces to act in the public interest, or that you can sufficiently use the tax power. I'm convinced that a major fight ought to be made to say that resources ought to be publicly developed and allocated.

Why does our society waste so much energy?

There's been a glib assumption, fostered by the energy industry, that high energy consumption is consistent with a high level of living. Indeed it's not necessarily true. There are countries that have standards of living as high as the United States, but with maybe 50 percent of the energy consumption per person. But we have an extraordinarily wasteful economy.

What kind of waste are you referring to? And how could we have a similar standard of living without so much energy waste?

That brings up one of the criticisms some people are making of the Carter proposal—that there's no real aid for mass transit. (His defenders say there will be a separate message.) If you take major American cities, there's extraordinary waste because of inadequate mass transit. To what extent you could develop a mass transit system that would make that kind of travel attractive, as opposed to the wasteful bumper to bumper driving?

The great national defense highway system, which was the greatest public works project in American history outside of war, pumped about $60 billion into highway building. And in retrospect one could ask how much of that might better have been used for other kinds of development.

Barry Commoner points out another kind of waste. He shows how decisions, let's say by canning companies, to shift from tin plated to aluminum cans, *increases* the energy used in the production of these cans several fold. The decision, from corporate perspective, serves their ends. They make more profit. Or another

example is the shift to natural soaps to detergents, so that now it's pretty hard to go into a supermarket and find a soapflake. That's a profit-based decision which has energy consequences.

Are Carter's proposals going to address any of that?

The appeal to the American people to conserve, to sacrifice, is very noble. But I think if people are going to sacrifice or conserve they have got to have a real genuine feeling that they're in control of the situation about which they're going to make sacrifices.

Also, these sacrifices are going to have to be just. There's endless emphasis on this in Carter's messages, but it's not clear to me that if you require a man who drives a huge car to pay more for it, that that's really a penalty. So he just adds it to the cost of doing business.

On the other hand, there are people I know in rural Massachussets who if fuel prices go up and they don't get it back through one of these so-called rebate plans, they're already so close to the margin of survival that they're really going to be hit hard.

Carter has said that he doesn't think it's necessary to break up the oil companies, that antitrust mechanisms are sufficient. What do you think? Is there any evidence that points in that direction?

No, there's not. Carter is not really challenging the control of the oil companies. He's scolding them occasionally, and they're trotting out and saying, some of them, 'this is pretty bad, he doesn't understand the real problems.' But I wonder if we're not getting put on a bit, you know.

The antitrust record suggests that in order to work, antitrust requires the absence of corporate power. It's never really worked because of the political power that spills over from this concentrated economic power.

I'm reasonably convinced—and I say this not out of glibness—that given the range and the power of the energy industry, its increasing takeover of all competing energy resources, its extraordinary drain of capital (maybe one fifth of all capital investment in the United States is in the energy industry) and its corrosion of the whole political process—given all this, antitrust mechanisms are not enough.

For example, during the Watergate investigation, people wondered why, with all the televised drama, did the Ervin/Wartergate committee appear rather shy about pursuing certain questions of corporate involvement and corruption. Well, every single member of the Senate Watergate Committee, except Ervin, was a recipient of oil company funds for his campaign.

What I'm saying is that the whole process is corrupted—whether one looks at the way the industry sets the definition for energy "reserves" or their massive assault on public opinion. (Can you turn on an educational station and find something *not* made possible by a grant from Mobil or Exxon?)

For example, during the energy crisis, the United States government relied on the *industry* to conduct most of its negotiations to allocate the oil supply. They relied on the *industry* to deal with negotiations with Saudi Arabia, with Iran and so forth. The State Department said, "we have no judgment that would supersede theirs, we don't know what to say about price; and they have the competence."

One problem I see is that the energy policy creates the illusion that something is changing when in fact the same people have the control who have had it all along.

That's obviously a real problem. And I spend a major part of the last chapter in my new book arguing about the whole case of planning. Because I favor a kind of planning which Carter *doesn't* talk about—a planning which would be democratic.

So you're quite right. National planning with the present rhetoric could just be corporate leadership. In fact, it is conceivable that a fair amount of corporate perspective will increasingly welcome national planning. I'll give you an example:

Until recently, if you talked about national land-use planning, you were labeled as someone dangerous. But in relatively recent years you're getting, among others, corporate interests calling for national land-use planning, moderately.

They're not asking to become accessories to their own socialization. What they're fearful of is that people, say in Santa Barbara or Nasau and Suffolk counties,

Do figures lie?

Denying that they are "innocently incompetent," the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) stuck by their figures of the number of poor people in America.

A spokesperson for the CBO admitted that *The New Republic* article by Michael Harrington (February 23, distributed at the DSOC convention) had been widely read by CBO staffers, but added that no public or internal statement had been drawn up in response. "We stand by our figures," the CBO official said.

The Harrington article criticized the method of counting used by the CBO, saying that it took into account "in-kind" subsidies such as food stamps and medicaid, while it estimated families and "unrelated individuals" living in poverty at 5.4 million, half of the U.S. Census count for *that* group.

"The CBO is playing dirty in cutting down on the number of poor. In taking into account "in-kind" subsidies they are altering the definition of poor. An impoverished aging person entitled to Medicare, who suffers a long terminal illness can enter the middle class because of his suffering. This is nonsense," Harrington said.

While some government reports estimate the number of poor in America to be 30 million people, the CBO by changing the definition of the poor by "statistical legerdermain" knocked off 4 million people from being labeled poor.

A revised report on the poor by CBO is planned, and when asked whether Harrington's criticism would be taken into consideration, an official said, "no comment."—FRED BRATMAN

Summer reading

Here are some recently published books by DSOC members that would make stimulating additions to your summer reading list:

Bogdan Denitch, *The Legitimization of a Revolution: The Case of Yugoslavia*, Yale University Press.

Robert Engler, *The Brotherhood of Oil: Energy Policy in the Public Interest*, University of Chicago Press, $12.50.

Michael Harrington, *The Twilight of Capitalism*, Simon & Shuster, paper $4.95, and *Fragments of a Century*, Simon & Shuster, paper $3.95.

Irving Howe, *The World of Our Fathers*, Simon & Shuster, paper $6.95.

Jack Newfield and Paul Du Brul, *The Abuse of Power*, Viking Press, $12.50.

Larry Swain, *Waiting for the Earthquake*, Little Brown & Company, $8.95.

B. J. Widick, *Auto Work and Its Discontents*, Johns Hopkins University Press, paper 2.95.

won't think of the larger national interest when the companies come along and want to put in giant tanker terminals, pipeline setups, refineries. So national land-use planning would protect them (industry) from regional and local ecological movements.

I could see national planning mechanisms furthering what radicals in the sixties called the corporate state. Therefore, the debate should not be to say "no" to planning—I see no out for planning given a technological society—but to keep such controls accountable to people in different parts of the country and the world.

And so the real fight is for democratic control. Not a father who's going to do it for you, and behind the smile of the father might be the same old array of corporate interests controlling every single major agency of the United States and the state governments.

The energy industry is betting that as long as we can drive and have all of the equivalent comforts, we won't give a damn about questions of control.

But it seems that increasingly in the U.S. this is no longer the case. For example, those people you were talking about in western Massachusetts won't be getting all those "comforts."

The question is, how do you translate it into some political reality. In this last book I describe in brief all kinds of experiments around the country, where people in communities and states and regions are trying to exercise some kind of control over the coal in their region, the way it is mined and so forth.

Then there are places where people have fought for public ownership of resources in regions. And that there are communities which have taken the lead in solar energy, garbage conversion and so forth. So there are hundreds of experiments—technological, political and economic.

Do you think Carter's program could undermine environmentalists' efforts? For example, the attempts to stop strip mining. Now the response could be, "but we have to."

That question is a very haunting one. Just as Nixon, among others, preempted the conservation/ecology movement of the early seventies, will this really preempt all these various popular movements?

Part of it is whether you can really generate a genuine political debate. Because my argument is essentially that the crisis is not of energy but of politics. The crisis isn't that we're running out of energy right now.

What do you mean?

What I mean is that ours is a system which has allowed all these critical decisions to be made privately. And the argument's always been that's the most efficient, it serves us best and it eliminates government bureaucracy, tyranny, waste, etc. But I think this has to be challenged. There must be a willingness to say, "Damn it, we ought to have an energy policy which is ecologically sane, political accountable, and economically just."

Can you give any examples of what such a policy would look like?

There aren't any now. But when the Mexican Revolution nationalized and threw out the foreign oil companies in 1938—the date became a national holiday—they set up a public corporation, Pemex, and part of their argument was that the oil should be used to meet the needs of their people—to develop resources, to develop depressed areas and so forth.

There are many, many criticisms of Pemex. And the Mexican Revolution was a long time ago, and has a long way to go—that is, millions of people live dreadfully. But it did suggest an ideal, that you could use energy not simply for crash programs of development, or so everyone can drive bumper to bumper on super highways, but to allocate it so it meets the needs of people. □

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Jimmy Higgins reports . . .

NOW WE KNOW WHY the multinational energy conglomerates need high profits. Mobil Oil's ads on the virtues of high energy profits are by now familiar to all. Once a week on the Op-ed page of the N.Y. *Times*, a column of wisdom in Sunday magazine supplements, special spreads of a page or two in other periodicals, all remind us that profit is needed for investment capital. And investment in energy is very expensive. So, quit knocking the oil companies for making lots of money and being too big. Mobil never used those ads to tell us about investments in such important energy exploration ventures as the Ringling Brothers-Barnum and Bailey Circus. But the money invested there would be peanuts compared to the bid Mobil made for the Irvine Co., a California land-development outfit with no relation at all to energy resources. Mobil's final bid to gain control of Irvine was $40 per share for a total of $336.6 million. A competing consortium of bidders went higher than Mobil to win control of Irvine. Now, if we can just finance a few more tax breaks for the energy conglomerates, Mobil can be spared such embarassing defeats in the future.

IT'S BECOME FASHIONABLE TO TALK ABOUT a "New Breed" of Democrats lately. Ever since ADA President George McGovern attacked the meager social programs of the Carter Administration at last month's ADA convention, the President has found defenders. The manager of McGovern's Presidential campaign, Colo. Sen. Gary Hart, and the Washington *Post* were among those springing to defend Jimmy by attacking George. Hart argued, and the *Post* concurred, that Carter is indeed a liberal. He's just not the kind of tired, New Deal liberal chic opinion is so weary of. He is, along with Hart, Jerry Brown, Mike Dukakis and other younger Democrats, part of a new breed challenging the orthodox liberal belief in big government and expanded social spending. New York *Daily News* correspondent James Weighart has cut through the baloney on these "new Democrats." In a May 23 commentary, Weighart called them "men in their 30s who earned the liberal label by opposing the war in Vietnam, but who are essentially economic royalists . . . they are more concerned about high taxes than they are about providing services for the poor and downtrodden. . . . The problem with the new breed's limited government approach is that it offers no real solution to the grave social problems that afflict the country."

CAPITOL HILL SHORTS AND SHOTS — Senator Daniel P. Moynihan, who prides himself on a Kennedy connection because of his association with the late President and with Bobby's ill-fated Presidential effort in 1968, has latched onto an alliance with a different familial dynasty in Washington. Moynihan and Sen. Russell Long find themselves in agreement more and more of late, especially on tax policies. Moynihan recently introduced an amendment for accelerated depreciation allowances for businesses in high unemployment areas, which would have covered more than half of the United States. Leading the fight against the Moynihan-Long alliance for more business tax breaks is Senator Edward Kennedy. . . . The Admnistration's two biggest anti-inflation crusaders, Arthur Burns and Bert Lance aren't protesting about proposals to raise their salaries. Under legislation proposed by the Administration, both the chair of the Federal Reserve Board and the director of the Office of Management and Budget would go from $57,500 to $66,000 per year.

MULTINATIONAL TRADE UNIONS as a response to multinational corporate power? That's one of the focal concerns explored by a new socialist journal, *The New International Review,* which several DSOC members are involved in publishing. The NIR concerns itself primarily with theoretical issues and has run articles on Keynesian economics, the theory and practice of appeasement and socialist Zionism. It seeks to revitalize strands of the social democratic tradition and has reprinted the Frankfurt Declaration of the Socialist International and Menshevik Julian Martov's reply to Lenin's *State and Revolution.* The second issue has just been published and copies can be obtained for $1.50 from NIR, Box 26020D, Tempe, Arizona 85282.

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APPLICATION TO MAIL AT SECOND CLASS POSTAGE RATES PENDING AT NEW YORK, NEW YORK.