

# Are we naive and blind to union bureaucracy?

**Unions are outside the working class, a liberal version of established authority, Aronowitz asserts. Tell it to the workers, Moberg replies.**

David Moberg's effort (ITT, Nov. 29) to provide a framework for understanding the trade unions today is laudatory in its comprehensive tone, but it suffers from a certain myopia.

On the surface, Moberg appears to present both the "rank and file" viewpoint as well as those of certain progressive trade unionists such as Jesse Prosten of the Meatcutters and Frank Rosen of the UE. But it is these officials whose views Moberg actually accepts, rather than those of the rank and file who have grasped the meaning of modern unionism: even though the unions are still somewhat of a force to defend the workers' interests, they are perceived as outside the working class, as part of the bureaucracy, as a more liberal version of the established authority of society.

Left wing bureaucracy asserts that the problems of unionism are fundamentally ideological in nature and not structural. The Service Employees, the Chicago Meatcutters and the UE are the maverick unions that, excepting the Service Employees, which is a relatively new organization, represent the defeated tendencies in American trade unionism. The building trades, the skilled workers' organizations in general and the bulk of the industrial unions of CIO vintage, are not progressive forces.

The challenge underway in the Steelworkers reveals the extent of disintegration of even those progressive elements that were present in the immediate post-war period. The dominant leadership of the labor movement, reflecting the strength of monopoly sectors of the economy, have bargained away the health and safety of the workers, the strike weapon, and union democracy itself, in return for relative gains for the most skilled senior sections of the working class.

Even the new unions, particularly those in the state sector like the Teachers and the State County and Municipal Employees, have responded to the social needs of the working poor and of their own memberships with policies of capitulation. The behavior of SCME and of the AFT in the recent budget crises was reprehensible, even from the left liberal point of view. In New York and Detroit,

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these unions literally rolled over as the banks and the Democratic politicians gutted the hard-won social programs and services for the working and underclass populations.

Although the Farm Workers' organizing drive in California may be cited to prove that there is some life in the old House of Labor, the Farm workers Union has been forced to make compromise after compromise in order to keep the shreds of help they still enjoy from the official unions. And the poor Textile Workers Union has always suffered from President George Meany's on-again/off-again assistance. In the end, the question of organizing the south is a political question as much as a problem of recruitment. If the agencies of the federal government refuse to enforce the law (and this has been the case since the end of World War II), there is no way to bring the 800,000 southern textile workers and an almost equal number of garment and other clothing workers into the unions. The AFL-CIO has not, since merger, constituted an independent political force either for organizing or for the extension of social benefits such as national health programs. In the monopoly and the state sectors as well as the building trades (the three bastions of trade union strength) such programs exist within the bargaining agreement. This situation may change as costs of medical expenses rise, but the orientation of the big unions is still towards solving such problems on an individual basis. Similarly, there is absolutely no evidence that any of the unions would make sharp turns unless prodded by rank and file movements.

None of what I have argued addresses the question of what is to be done. That is another debate. But it is not possible to even debate the issue with intelligence until the fundamental issue of class stand-

point is clarified. Both in Moberg's article and in the editorial on labor and electoral politics, *In These Times* reveals its own naivete on trade union and working class concerns. You view both the class and the unions from the outside with ideological blinders that reflect more wish than reality. A left wing analysis would provide an in-depth exploration of the contradictions between trade union reform and the position of workers in the monopoly sectors. It would have sensitivity, not blindness, to the profound problem of bureaucracy as an independent factor in the struggle. It would be much more concrete in its historical perspective on the question of union democracy. Gone from Moberg's reports on Sadowski is the 116-day steel strike over those very issues that prompted the recent "experimental" no-strike deal, or the legacy of John L. Lewis in shaping the bureaucracy.

The situation in the miners is a case in point. Miller received open-throated left-wing and militant support because of the perfidious record of the Boyle administration. Miners for Democracy, the rank and file organization that had propelled the reform movement, was dissolved by the new leadership. Now, a few years after gaining power, the Miller administration is just another union apparatus dedicated to its own perpetuation and labor peace and opposed to the self-activity of the miners. The rank and file knows that it cannot rely on its leaders to support their demands for the right to shut down mines at any time, for a militant stance against strip-mining and for extension of democratic unionism. Rather than cheerleading every shred of democratic opposition and formal obeisance by the leaders to social reform, I hope that *In These Times* will show itself as a militant paper of the rank and file, as an opposi-

tion paper which, upon occasion, may support the initiatives of the bureaucracy or segments of it, but knows its own class and social interest better than has been revealed thus far.

—Stanley Aronowitz

**David Moberg replies:**

Stanley Aronowitz has simply misread what I have written in the labor series. There are problems with the structure, ideology, leadership and the power and interests of the bureaucracy in relation to the members in American unions. That much should be clear from any careful reading of the two articles I have written, and those issues will be developed more in the remainder of the series. Aronowitz may have an argument with the left leaders in the unions, but I am not a spokesman for their views.

I suspect that Aronowitz was upset that I tried to show the complex, contradictory nature of the unions. That includes good along with the bad. That approach demands critical attention to the actions of both rank and file and leadership. Any one-sided representation is not only untruthful but also a poor guide to action.

Union members often do see their unions or, more often, their officials as separate from the working class. There is some truth to that. Yet the same workers will also fight with determination to defend their unions in most cases.

Nowhere did I give the impression that the "overwhelming majority" of southern workers were organized. Aronowitz's cursory summary of other unorganized areas is simply an incomplete and partially accurate duplication of the figures I presented. Also, the whole thrust of the article on new organizing was the necessity of making organizing a political movement and not just recruitment of new dues-payers.

Restatements of abiding faith in the rank and file and blanket attacks on labor leaders do not constitute the kind of subtle analysis that is necessary and that Aronowitz has so often provided. ■

## Succession to the Chicago city hall

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age jobs into it for dispersion. Daley was both mayor and chairman of the Central Committee, giving him total control over government and politics alike.

►Dunne is chairman and leading candidate.

George Dunne, president of the Cook county Board of Commissioners and committeeman of the 42nd Ward succeeds Daley as Central Committee chairman. He is also expected to be the organization's candidate for mayor. Dunne is an old-line Irish politician, now in his 60s, with a history of health problems and an extraordinary record of electoral success.

Dunne has long been considered one of the heirs apparent; his succession to the chairmanship is little surprise. He knows the organization, how it has been run, how to run it and keep it together. He has been free of major scandal, although his holding of tainted race-track stock and dealings in banking leave many unanswered questions that are certain to be probed in the coming weeks.

It is surprising that he should be considered for mayor as well as Central Committee chairman because most people in the party organization have chafed under the rule of a single governmental and poli-

tical boss. Early after Daley's death there were sweeping statements from all factions of the organization that never again would one man hold both posts.

But the necessity of holding the organization and the government together became immediately apparent to the big powers in the city. They saw the Young Turks maneuvering, the blacks bidding, the Poles pushing and the long knives out.

They recognized that first, there must be a sense of continuity, if not total unity, to avoid panic (particularly the panic that might be induced by a black mayor, even an interim figure) and second, that in the absence of a strong secondary tier of leadership, a holding action was in order.

While Dunne has many enemies within, he has more friends. More importantly, he is old enough seemingly not to be in a position to entrench himself for more than a few years.

The Young Turks tried to grab Central Committee power by adding anti-Dunne forces to their ranks, but it all fell apart as the syndicate as well as the business/finance establishment came down hard upon old-liners who were about to go with the Turks.

Dunne is acceptable because he is not

a long-term threat. The various insurgents, having lost their early bids, need time to regroup; the establishment needs time to pull things together and to spot the strongest long-term leadership potentials from within.

►Black or reformer likely to run.

There will still very likely be a contest in the special primary, emanating from the black community or the liberal-reform elements who represent about one-third of the city vote, but at best only four aldermen.

Blacks are especially incensed because Ald. Wilson Frost, the President Pro Tem of the City Council, was denied his logical role of acting mayor for even a week until the council could elect Bilandic. Then Frost was bought off to keep him from even putting his name into contention for the role of interim mayor.

Black community leaders, including publisher Gus Savage, Congressman Ralph Metcalfe and Rev. Jesse Jackson have already set up a process to draft an independent black mayoral candidate. A similar effort two years ago failed dismally.

The absence of Daley, the new enlightenment and the anger over the blatant racism of the city powers may bolster the prospects for a better showing if a reasonable candidate can be found—still a real question.

White reformer Bill Singer, who ran against Daley in the last election, is likely to make a second bid as well. He has substantial support on Chicago's lakefront and a backlog of goodwill among many who voted for Daley.

But head-to-head with Dunne, neither Singer nor a black would seem to have

much potential. Even in a three-way race, Dunne would probably have a commanding plurality.

A real split from inside the machine might open things up in the special election. Possibilities include Vrdolyak or one of his cronies, and Ald. (and former congressman) Roman Pucinski who has declared himself a candidate, lame-duck Lt. Gov. Neal Hartigan, former State's Atty. Edward Hanrahan, or perhaps someone from elsewhere in the organization who believes he can put it all together among the dissidents.

Historically, efforts to split the machine from within have gone down disastrously. The iron powers of patronage have reigned supreme. But enough voters have now expressed one or another form of discontent to perhaps encourage such an effort.

The difficulty is that those, such as Pucinski, who talk the most, have never been noted for their courage in following through on such threats. Hanrahan, who gained national notoriety as the perpetrator of the killing of Fred Hampton and its ensuing coverup, is today looked upon as an outsider and a dip even by his once loyal following in the aftermath of some failed political efforts. His day is likely gone, even as Chicago's George Wallace, when it comes to splitting up the Machine.

While it may break apart unpredictably in the coming weeks, the best guess is that things are moving from Big Dick to Big George without a remarkable amount of fragmentation. ■

Don Rose is a veteran political organizer for independent political campaigns in Chicago and a well-known local writer and commentator.



# IN THESE TIMES OPINION

Robert Carson

## Keynes and Carter

As the inauguration draws closer, Carter's strategy for dealing with unemployment becomes clearer. He seems to be leaning toward a \$10 billion to \$15 billion one-shot individual tax cut, an increase in investment tax credit that may reduce business taxes by \$3 billion, a federal jobs program and continued deficit spending. Compared to recent Ford administration austerity, this may sound experimental and bold; in fact, it has all been tried before. Carter has clearly plotted a course of fiscal stimulation to reduce unemployment that varies little from routes earlier traveled by Kennedy, Johnson and even Nixon. The economics of John Maynard Keynes, after some recent slippage, is to be rehabilitated by the White House.

In its simplest form, modern Keynesianism holds that: 1) the level of unemployment depends on total demand for goods and services (in other words, the level of GNP); 2) without government fiscal and monetary intervention aggregate demand for goods and services will always tend toward long-run stagnation, thus creating greater levels of unemployment; and 3) government actions to offset falling demand must come either through tax and monetary policies that encourage investment, or by means of general tax cuts and increased government spending.

Until confronted by the paradox of rising prices and rising unemployment these last four years, Keynesians generally accepted the logic of a price-employment trade-off. Inflation was the cost of full employment; but so long as it was moderate it was not important.



By late 1974, however, Keynesians were in trouble. Unemployment had swollen to 9 percent and prices were rising annually at a rate of 12 percent. "Stagflation" stymied (or so it was assumed) any efforts at fiscal policy expansion to lower unemployment. Massive government spending or large tax-cuts were viewed as having undesired inflation trade-offs. Given the politics of the moment—a Republican president and rising middle-class reaction against inflation—the Keynesians silently slipped off stage. The ideological victory went to Secretary of Treasury Simon, Federal Reserve Chairman Burns and other conservatives who argued successfully that higher unemployment was necessary to hold prices and wages down and to allow corporate profits to go up.

Few Keynesians would argue that the inflation problem has gone away, but it has now diminished enough for the old creating expenditure programs. Immediately after the meeting Henry Ford chirped, "Mr. Carter is becoming more reassuring every day."

workers and blacks. But this explanation misses the point because fiscal expansion at this time is also attractive to corporate leaders. Carter may owe his election to modern capitalism's failure to create jobs, but this does not mean that Carter and the corporate leadership are on opposite sides of the fence. Witness the trek of Henry Ford and other leading business figures to Blair House early in December and their near unanimous agreement that now is the time to try tax cuts and job creating expenditure programs. Immediately after the meeting Henry Ford II chirped, "Mr. Carter is becoming more reassuring every day."

Why would American business, precisely at a time when they are reporting record profits, "endanger" their earnings by supporting government fiscal policy actions? The answer is simple. Corporations have enjoyed high profits during the past two or three years of austere government policy, but profits can be made only if continued sales are possible. With demand for autos and other goods softening, the workforce, bled earlier to provide profits, must receive a transfusion so that it can again increase its consumption.

The big question, of course, is: Will it work? The answer: for whom? For American business, expansionary fiscal policy should stimulate sales and profits—at least for a while. For American workers, fiscal stimulus will have precious little effect upon unemployment.

Such a conclusion flies in the face of modern employment theory and popular expectations, but ample evidence supports this view.

The failure of expansionary fiscal policy to deal with chronic unemployment is evident if we go back to the "Great Tax Cut of 1964." That action was perhaps the first self-conscious Keynesian effort to use fiscal policy in a bold attempt to reduce the existing, 5-6 percent unemployment. To be sure, the \$13 billion Kennedy-Johnson tax reduction spurred business investment and increased GNP. Between 1964 and 1966, investment increased by over 22 percent or more than twice that of the previous two years. GNP grew by 13 percent over the same period as compared to less than 10 percent in the earlier years. However, reported un-

employment fell by only 900,000 between 1964 and 1966—even though the government hired 1.7 million new people over this period. Real reduction in unemployment came not from tax cutting a la Keynes but from good old government hiring.

Another example of the ineffectiveness of "full employment" fiscal policy is the hyper-expansion of government spending during the war in Vietnam. Although government policy during the war may have been "unintended and undesired" (in other words, spending policies were determined on military as opposed to economic grounds), there is no evidence of significant increased employment as the result of war spending and expansion in the business sector. During the height of war spending, between 1966 and 1969, unemployment fell by less than 100,000. Meanwhile, direct government employment added 1.6 million people to public payrolls. Direct government hiring and not private sector job growth brought unemployment rates down during the middle and late '60s.

From the available data we can conclude that expansionary fiscal policy can increase business investment and profits and Gross National Product as well as raise average wages for those working. It also can stimulate, as the explosive effect of Vietnam spending showed, considerable price inflation (which of course gnaws into the wage gains of those working). However, fiscal policy has not changed the tendency in American corporate capitalism toward higher levels and rates of unemployment.

The fiscal option as a solution to the unemployment problem is a dead end for Jimmy Carter. Of course it will be tried, but to encourage hope for rescue via the economics of Lord Keynes is a cruel hoax on most of the unemployed, and on many of Carter's most ardent supporters.

Conventional Keynesian fiscal policy, of course, is not Carter's only option for dealing with the unemployment problem. Next we shall examine the possibility of government as an "employer of last resort."

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## Letters

### DSOC tells us it isn't so

Editor:

I fear you were unkind in your treatment of us ("Retrieve the legislative branch," *ITT*, Dec. 20).

The Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee does—and will continue to—work in Presidential politics. We actively supported the Carter-Mondale ticket this year because we consider the power of the Executive crucial in any attempt to transform this society. We are not and were not looking for a "short-cut to socialism"—rather, we joined with our friends and allies in the trade unions, in the black and other minority communities, in the feminist movement and throughout the entire democratic left to support the ousting of Gerald Ford, so that all of us could have some minimal breathing space.

But we supported Carter, in the words of our *Newsletter*, "without illusions." To accomplish any of these things, to win any of the victories we need immediately just to survive, we saw Carter's election as a beginning and not as an end. That's why we've been working steadily to raise issues, educate constituencies and move the debate leftward.

We began early last year with a project that has proved one of the most effective vehicles in more than a decade to inject left-wing politics into the political mainstream. The project, "Democracy '76," focused on the Democratic plat-

form and demanded that the Democratic Party adopt a program of full employment planning, income and wealth redistribution and increasing democratic control over investment decisions. Support for that project came from leaders of the Black Congressional Caucus, major feminists, trade unionists from more than 12 international unions, office holders at the state, local and national level, leading liberal and radical figures ranging from I.F. Stone to Heather Booth to Tom Hayden. In 1977 we'll be building upon this effort to win wider public support for our three-point program. In this way, we hope—and expect—to bring pressure to bear upon Carter, to continue the struggle that began with his election.

Your editorial was unfair in its dismissal of DSOC as an organization interested only in presidential politics. It just isn't so. Our members have been active around the country in local and Congressional races since our founding. Gerry Cohen, one of our National Board members, ran as a publicly identified socialist for mayor of Chapel Hill, N.C.; our national chair, Mike Harrington, and four other DSOC members were elected delegates to the 1974 Democratic Mid-term Convention, running explicitly as socialists. This past year, our members were active in Congressional campaigns from the successful effort to re-elect Rep. Robert Drinan in Massachusetts to the Abzug and Hayden Senate campaigns to Ab Mikva's narrow win in Illinois. Two of our members, Seymour Posner in New York and Julian Bond in Georgia, sit in state legislatures. Like most of our members involved in electoral politics, I am an active member of a reform Democratic club in which I make my politics quite clear.

We have discussed within DSOC the very idea you advanced: running publicly-

identified socialists for legislative offices. We hope to do it—soon. We're looking for opportunities to advance credible socialist candidates against conservative or reactionary opponents, but since we conceive of ourselves as a loyal but critical section of the mass movement of the existing left in the United States—which is unfortunately a liberal, not a socialist mass movement, we will not run socialists against genuine liberals.

Your editorial implies a grand strategic design in DSOC's neglect of socialist candidates for legislative positions, but we have to make hard decisions about the allocation of scarce financial and staff resources. In our biggest push to date, we chose to concentrate on Democracy '76. I think it proved a wise choice.

Let me close on a less complaining note. Your newspaper is a welcome boon to a still small, but growing socialist left. It's an ambitious effort in which we all have a stake. Like Carter's election, your paper is a harbinger of hope and of our rising expectations. I am convinced that the left faces a new period of dynamic growth. May we all cooperate toward the fulfillment of our socialist dreams.

—Jack Clark

National Secretary  
Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee

### Too easy on Vance

Editor:

Tim Frasca's story on the "ambiguity" of Cyrus Vance, our Secretary of State-designate (*ITT*, Dec. 13), paints Vance as being more "dovish" during the war in

Vietnam than he in fact was. Frasca, who based his analysis on the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* stories, omitted the facts that Vance was a key defender of the Gulf of Tonkin resolution, which was the official justification to bomb Hanoi for the first time in February, 1965; in 1966 he personally ordered the commitment of 175,000 U.S. troops to Vietnam that made the eventual half million almost inevitable; in 1966 Vance was responsible for more bombing raids on Hanoi which destroyed (among other things) a promising start on negotiations. It was only in 1968 when the Tet Offensive exposed the hollowness of official U.S. claims that Vance opposed another major escalation. All these facts were published in *The New Republic*. Why didn't *In These Times* have them?

—Jon Wiener  
Los Angeles

### More Shor

Editor:

Ira Shor's piece on why working class people ought to go to college (*ITT*, Dec. 6) even when the economy can't guarantee jobs to graduates is the kind of concrete personal advice that gives socialist analysis a genuine immediate relevancy. Socialist publications have traditionally neglected emotional life and the everyday problems of social survival, giving themselves a somewhat remote character. Shor's piece is the kind of thing of which I hope to see more.

—Arthur Maglin  
Brooklyn