



Bert Lance is the definite Washington outsider, while Clark Clifford (in the background) is the ultimate insider. Only an issue of extreme importance could bring the two together.

## NEWS ANALYSIS

# Economic policy underlies the Bert Lance issue

By Alan Wolfe

Clark Clifford is the ultimate Washington insider, a man who serves his country by gaining the confidence of presidents and subtly shifting their views around to his. Bert Lance is a definite outsider, a gregarious and public figure whose loyalty is neither to a class nor a system but to one man. Yet these two men, so different in every respect, sat together in mid-September facing a Senate committee that seemed unsure of what it wanted to ask. The issue that brought together a Clifford and a Lance in a unified front must have been a serious one indeed.

That issue was not sloppy banking practice. Lance was undoubtedly right to claim that he did nothing contrary to the mores of his profession. Gigantic firms like Chase Manhattan can cringe at the folksiness of Lance's practices while in Georgia, but this is the way smalltimers operate. Nor was the issue the administration of the Office of Management and Budget, since Lance left the professionals there in charge.

Carter stayed loyal to Lance to the point of political damage to himself. Why did this politically astute president not force Lance's resignation sooner?

There is a reason for the long delay in Lance's departure. It has to do with the question of the role government should play in the economy and the importance of Lance's answer to it.

During the New Deal economists close to the Democratic party began to discover how valuable government could be in preventing serious disturbances in the economy. When defense spending during World War II brought the U.S. out of the Depression, they realized that from this moment on the economy and the state were inextricably linked.

But the question of the form that government spending should take to preserve prosperity was not so clear. Some argued that the purpose of government spending should be to redistribute income in order to win popular support for the system. Others suggested that since it did not matter how the money was spent—the important thing was simply macro-economic stimulation—spending the money on matters dear to the hearts of businessmen would win their support, something crucial to the Democratic party if it was to remain in power.

Clark Clifford was a key advocate of domesticated Keynesianism and promoted defense spending as an ideal way to stimulate the economy and win establishment support for the Democratic party at the same time. Based in part on his advocacy, Truman, Kennedy, and Johnson all chose Keynesian techniques that involved business stability more

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## LABOR

# Prospects for a military union setback

## Congress is out to prevent any form of military organizing

By Michael Uhl and  
Tod Ensign

The effort to unionize the armed forces suffered a major setback in early September when it was announced that locals of the American Federation of Government Employees (AFL-CIO), the union contemplating the drive, had voted four to one against implementing the controversial unionization plan.

AFGE's decision was apparently influenced by the near-unanimous opposition to military unions that has been gathering momentum on Capitol Hill and in the Pentagon. Many AFGE members were also reluctant to undertake a new organizing commitment because they feel the union is not doing an adequate job representing its current membership.

In the two months before AFGE called it quits both the Defense department and the Senate Armed Services Committee launched comprehensive attacks on unionizing activity by uniformed servicemembers.

On August 15 Defense Secretary Harold Brown issued a new set of regulations designed to severely cripple, if not totally suppress, any organizing attempt. The new regulations prohibit commanders from bargaining with any group representing GIs, and bars individual soldiers from conducting strikes, work stoppages or any concerted activity that "obstructs or interferes with the performance of military assignments."

In the Senate South Carolina's Strom

Thurmond attacked Brown's administrative directives for not going far enough and introduced a bill to outlaw military unions. The report accompanying his bill (S.274) offers Thurmond's reasoning: "The directives, while suggesting the urgency of the problem, cannot provide direct sanctions against the unions themselves."

Brown, however, defended his preference for regulations by arguing that legislative efforts would be more vulnerable to "adverse court decisions" that might lead to greater restrictions on the military's ability to suppress union activity than exists at present.

Thurmond's bill, however, with 50 Senate sponsors, has the lead in the race to outlaw GI efforts toward self-organizing and labor's desire to expand its territory. S.274 was unanimously approved by Thurmond's colleagues on the Armed Services Committee, including two erstwhile "doves," Gary Hart (D-Colo.) and Tom Culver (D-Ia.).

On September 16, the bill was approved by the full Senate, with only three "no" votes (McGovern, Metcalf, and Abourezk). The AFL-CIO, according to one Senate staffer, made "no effort" to defeat the anti-union measure.

The bill now moves to the House, where no significant opposition is anticipated. Jimmy Carter has taken no public position on the legislation.

The implications of the Thurmond legislation are much broader than they appear to be on first reading, say critics, who argue that the bill poses a threat to the rights of GIs, trade unionists and civilian organizers. Specifically, they charge that rights to free speech, assembly, association and petition are seriously undermined by the bill's terms.

The bill, they say, is also an attack on

the network of anti-militarist activists and counsellors that has grown up since the anti-war activities of the '60s. This loosely-coordinated network has provided individual servicemembers with support and representation in conflicts with the command structure.

Thurmond's bill strikes at these groups by presenting a sweeping definition of "labor organization." Under the bill any group that has as one of its objectives, "the participation in the process of resolving individual complaints or grievances in the chain of command," is deemed a "labor organization" and subject to the act's criminal sanctions.

Not only can't unions sign up GIs as members, but the existing right of National Guard and Reserve "technicians" to union representation will also be withdrawn under S.274's provisions. This will affect over 60,000 federal employees who work in "dual status" where membership in a Guard or Reserve unit with part-time duty in uniform is a condition of employment. Warning that this "germ of unionization" might infect the whole military, the bill strips these workers of their union membership and contracts.

The anti-union campaign in Congress has been assisted by the public relations efforts of two far-right organizations: Americans Against Union Control of Government and the Heritage Foundation's Americans Against Big Labor. Using mail and polling techniques originally developed by the George Wallace campaigns, these two groups mailed millions of "opinion surveys" that condemn the "unchecked menace" of public employee unionism. Soliciting the addressee's response to heavily-biased questions like, "Should soldiers disobey

lawful orders due to demands from union officials?", the "surveys" include a strong pitch by Senators Jesse Helms (R-N.C.) or Jake Garn (R-Utah) for funds to operate a multi-million dollar anti-union crusade.

However the anti-union legislation fares in the months ahead, military union proponents say that it will not alter the underlying conditions of military life that spawn pro-union sentiments. "It will do no good for Congress," says AFGE's Pres. Ken Blaylock, "to ban unionization and proceed headlong, ignoring signals being sent by rank and file military personnel." Such signals, observers say, are flashing brighter than ever, with the frequency of unit-level punishments, volume of AWOLs, and rates of attrition prior to completion of normal duty tours, all at near-record levels.

During the Vietnam war, they say, the resistance of soldiers, including the ultimate refusal to carry out combat missions in the field, didn't depend upon directives from union stewards or civilian "agitators." While perhaps not as consciously "political" as their war-time predecessors, today's young trooper seems even less willing to endure the arbitrariness of command authority.

In an essay on contemporary service life, Professor Ezra S. Krendel refers to recent Navy research that studied criteria for enlistment among 16-22 year olds. It found that "fate control" or dislike for authoritarian leadership, petty regulations, and the illicit use of power, was the main consideration in any enlistment decision. If this is so, then we've not heard the last word on military unions from those who are directly affected.

*Michael Uhl and Tod Ensign work with the New York-based Citizen Soldier.*



## NEWS ANALYSIS

# Not addressing the real issues defeated Bella

On Monday, September 19, Democratic voters in New York City voted for mayoral candidates. It was their second election, following by 11 days a seven-way primary. Mario Cuomo, relatively unknown and backed by Gov. Hugh Carey, faced Rep. Edward Koch. Koch won with 55 percent of the vote, giving him the inside track to occupy the mayor's seat. He still faces a regular election battle, however, which will once again pit him against Cuomo, as the candidate of New York's Liberal party as well as a Republican challenger and assorted other candidates.

Left after the polls closed, however, was the question of what happened to Bella Abzug. Long considered the front runner in the mayoral race, Abzug came in fourth, behind Cuomo, Koch and present Mayor Abraham Beame.

Last week *In These Times* printed an article by Paul DuBrul, issues manager for Abzug, analyzing the election. This week we are printing an article by Jim Chapin, professor of history at University College of Rutgers University and the secretary of the New York state New Democratic Coalition, taking a different look at the campaign.

By Jim Chapin  
According to Paul DuBrul, the victory of Ed Koch and the defeat of Bella Abzug mark a move to the right. The "shift to the right" has been a staple of the mass media for the last decade or more. I'm sorry to see Paul succumb to this analysis.

In fact, the voters in the New York democratic primary continue to be an extremely liberal group by any American standards: a plurality identified themselves as liberals, and only 25 percent as conservatives (the opposite of the figures for nationwide voters).

Thirty-five percent were Jewish, 25 percent were minority, and over 40 percent union members or members of union families. Except for a few social issues like the death penalty, their attitude towards basic economic questions remains on the "left." For example, they favored the city takeover of Con Edison by a plurality of 44 to 39 percent. (All figures are from polls taken by the Bella Abzug campaign and made available to this reporter.)

DuBrul apparently has forgotten that the winners of the last three New York mayoral primaries were Abe Beame (1965, lost to John Lindsay running as a Republican), Mario Procaccino (1969, lost to Lindsay running on the Liberal party line), and Abe Beame (1973, a victor). These primary victories hardly represent a "left" political trend.

## A leftward trend.

It is true that there has been a general leftward trend among New York's Democratic voters. The vote for candidates on the "left" or "center-left" (which would include Koch in the current election, albeit as a law and order liberal) has consistently risen. In 1969 the candidacies of Herman Badillo, Norman Mailer and James Scheuer drew a combined 35 percent; in the present election the candidacies of Badillo, Percy Sutton, Bella Abzug and Ed Koch won 62 percent.

That the "left" component of this vote—represented by Badillo, Sutton and Abzug—is not yet a majority is also obvious. Combined they drew 42 percent, but polls done for Bella Abzug, the strongest of the three, on September 1 showed her losing to Koch by 13 points and to Cuomo by two points had she won a spot in the runoff. The day for a "left" majority in New York City may be approaching, but it is not yet here.

## Liberals, minorities and polls.

DuBrul cites several other reasons for Bella's defeat:

• Rich liberal givers closed their checkbooks. But Bella raised close to \$700,000, almost exactly the same amount as Koch.

• Bella got "90 percent" of the minority vote in 1976 (the actual figure was about 50 percent) and was hurt by the presence of the two minority candidates in the race. But before she entered the race she knew that both of them were



The question was not Bella Abzug in the abstract, but whether Bella would make a good mayor. This was an issue she did not address.

running. Percy Sutton had announced long before she did, and Bella had promised Herman Badillo that she would support him for the job in exchange for his support in her Senate race last year.

• Power brokers of the city opposed Bella. What did she expect?

• Ed Koch read public opinion polls and told voters what they wanted to hear. If we accepted this argument, it would mean simply the voters agreed with what Koch said rather than with what Bella said.

• Koch was in favor of capital punishment, as were 80 percent of the voters. Bella's own polls, however, showed that capital punishment was not a key factor in the result. Less than two weeks before the election her polls showed that while the primary voters favored capital punishment by 64 to 26 percent, only 19 percent of the voters knew that Koch was for capital punishment, 11 percent thought he was against it, and 70 percent had no idea of his position.

## Money and issues.

So what happened to Bella?

1. She spent her money badly. First, she set an unrealistic standard for what she could raise, expecting to raise about a million and a half dollars. This was a goal that only one candidate, Mario Cuomo, was able to reach, and that only after the incumbent governor twisted every arm he could reach.

Secondly, she allocated most of her money for field and vote pulling operations, rather than media. This was a rather strange choice for a candidate who had the most motivated voters in the city.

Money was not crucial to Bella's defeat. Koch won with the same kind of money.

2. Bella ran an issue-less campaign. This statement will infuriate any Bella supporter who will undoubtedly rush to point out that 62 issue papers were put out during the campaign. But this is to miss the point about what an issue is.

An issue must reach the perception of the voters. Admittedly, this is a terribly difficult task since it must be filtered through the roar of the mass media to the rather independent voter. (As an example of the unclarity of voter issues note the poll already cited about Koch and the death penalty.) An issue oriented campaign *must* be one that stresses two or three issues repeatedly throughout the campaign.

DuBrul complains of Koch's anti-union rhetoric, but fails to mention three interesting points: first, that even members of union families were anti-union; second, that by Bella's poll her supporters were more hostile to unions than those of the other three major candidates, and third, that attitudes towards the banks were as negative as those towards the unions.

Bella could have orchestrated a thematic campaign around opposition to the banks, but she did not seriously and persistently pursue such a campaign. Bella made the mistake of thinking that if she played a low-keyed "centrist" game, the large interests would not go after her. She also thought she could hold her own support without giving it any meat.

Most of the Koch gains came at the expense of Abzug. DuBrul does not attempt to explain this fact.

## Problem of identification.

3. She did not address the real problem with her candidacy. Bella's own polls and telephone canvassing laid out the nature of the problem.

She paid for more than 500,000 calls to voters in heavy voting areas asking them their opinion of Bella Abzug; 130,000 of them answered positively. These voters were polled on election day, but as one Bella insider put it, "What we ended with was a list of liberals, not of Bella voters."

The question before the voters after all was not their opinion of Bella Abzug in the abstract, but whether they thought she should be mayor. Her polls show that the voters thought of her as a personality, as a fighter, as someone who stood up for her beliefs. But they also showed that she was seen as abrasive, incapable of compromise and a relatively poor administrator.

Bella should have run a media campaign speaking to these issues, as well as in opposition to the banks. She should have pointed out that her record as an administrator was a match for that of any of the other candidates.

The "fears" that DuBrul speaks of in the New York electorate were not of Bella Abzug's ideological views, but of her ability as a possible administrator. By the end of the campaign her own polls showed that Koch was seen as more of an articulator of issues than she was.

In other words, Bella had the wrong solution for her problem. She thought her problem was that she was too left-wing, so she tried to blur that image. But her real problem was a problem of personality and she failed to face up to it.

It is possible to argue that Abzug's campaign was too good for the voters (Mario Cuomo supporters are using the same line and they have even more to explain away than Bella's people). That, however, is hardly any excuse for a democratic politician.

## Running for Bella.

Aside from the electoral results, did the rhetoric of the race move the city to the "right"? It is clear that it did. But I would argue that that is largely the result of the objective circumstances in which the city is at present.

The key decisions about the future of New York are being made outside of the arena of electoral politics. The voters know that these circumstances are far beyond the power of a mayor. If Bella thought differently, she failed to successfully articulate this position.

As one skeptical liberal put it, "Bella didn't run for the job of being mayor, but for the job of being Bella." She failed to convince a majority of the Democrats of the city that she should be mayor. In 1976 37 percent voted for her for the Senate; in 1977 only 17 percent voted for her for mayor. That was the bottom line.