

By Edward Gold

WASHINGTON

MIDEAST

USSR and Iraq may be winners in coming summit

NEXT WEEK'S SADAT-BEGIN meetings represent the last chance to implement what many Mideast observers refer to as "Pax Kissinger," an eight-year-old diplomatic offensive designed to create a long-term political stability in the area that would enhance economic development and insure the flow of oil from Saudi Arabia.

The meetings also signal the deepening desperation of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and a widening split within the Saudi ruling family over the advisability of the American connection. Whether or not the talks result in a settlement, they will most likely usher in vast changes on the Mideast political scene.

Saudi Arabia the key interest.

The Near East is particularly crucial to both the U.S. military and business sectors. Military strategists have long defined two national security goals in the area: a land-bridge between the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean Sea (Israel) and a safe port for the Sixth Fleet (Haifa). Israel offers the added bonus of a "client army," which when supplied by the American defense industry obviates the need for American troops.

But the key interest in the area is Saudi Arabia, the beneficiary in this decade of the largest shift of finance capital in history. In dollar-value, the U.S. exports more to Saudi Arabia and imports more from Saudi Arabia than from any other country in the world.

Saudi holdings in the dollar are a closely-kept secret, but former Treasury Secretary William Simon stated that if the Saudis were to withdraw their deposits, "it would seriously crimp this nation's ability to borrow."

A vast array of government agencies, military missions and private corporations are currently working on contracts with the Saudis valued in the tens of billions of dollars. Four multinational oil corporations—Exxon, Mobil, Socal, and Texaco—have a particularly keen interest in the area, stemming from their near-total control of Saudi crude exports. Up to 17 percent of that oil is carried through Jordan, Syria and Lebanon through the Trans-Arabian pipeline (TAPline) at profit margins considerably higher than those of oil shipped by supertankers.

Neutralizing the PLO.

The thrust of American foreign policy in the Mideast since 1970 has been to neutralize the Palestinians as an immediate threat to the status quo and as a rallying-point for radical activity throughout the region.

In 1970, when Yassir Arafat and a group of commando leaders wrested control of the Palestine Liberation Organization from elements installed by Egyptian President Gamel Abdel Nasser, the Palestinians became a formidable factor in the region's politics. In the same year, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, still under the PLO umbrella, cut the Saudi pipeline in the Golan Heights.

Jordan's Prince Hussein expelled the Palestinians in 1970, unleashing the full weight of his armies on soldiers and civilians. The Syrians reneged on air-support for the PLO, a decision attributed to then commander of the air force, Hafez Assad. Shortly after, while TAPline was still closed, Assad rose to power in a bloodless coup. He quickly acted to return western business seized in 1964, invited Western business in, and signed a lucrative long-term contract with TAPline for wayleaves through Syria.

Sadat, in 1973, abandoned the Palestinians when he signed the Sinai Disengagement Treaty, which ignores the existence of the Palestinians.

Most of the Palestinian exiles from Jordan settled in Lebanon, where Arafat forged an alliance with Kamaal Jumblatt, a Moslem nationalist leader who sought to alter the power balance in Lebanon. The country's constitution grants legislative autonomy to the Christian minority over the Moslem majority.

The Arafat-Jumblatt alliance was suc-

cessful on the battlefield, isolating Christian forces to the northern sixth of Lebanon. Syria, now under Assad, was forced to show its hand and its new political and economic orientation. Assad invaded, controlled the PLO, and occupied Lebanon.

By 1976, Arafat found himself between the Syrian army in the north and the Israeli army in the south, cut off from his traditional sources of supplies and the target of more and more attacks from radical groups based in Iraq. The stage seemed set for the flowering of "Pax Kissinger," in which the PLO would accept the West Bank, thus blunting radicalism in the area for years to come.

But Israel was no longer in the hands of the cooperative Labor Party. The reins had fallen to a right-wing nationalist theocrat, Menachem Begin, who refused to withdraw Israeli forces and colonies from the area he referred to as "Judea" and "Samaria," to reinforce Israel's Biblical claims to the West Bank.

Sadat's trip to Jerusalem changed nothing—Israel had rejected the "moderate" strategy, the strategy on which Sadat built his public career. The rejectionists in Syria and Iraq waited eagerly for the failure of the negotiated approach, to justify new calls for war.

Saudis call the meeting.

Sadat is not the only Mideast leader to hitch his fortunes to an American-spon-

sored settlement. The other is Crown Prince Fahd, the heir-apparent to King Khaled of Saudi Arabia. Fahd has long been the most visible proponent of the American connection in the Saudi hierarchy.

Resistance to Fahd's position began among his senior bureaucrats centered in the finance ministry, who argued that Saudi oil production levels were too high. At lower production levels, they argued, the Saudis could control their own development, avoid inflation, and avoid the need for imported labor. Fahd's policy was to comply with American demands.

As long as the opposition remained confined on the bureaucratic level, Fahd's position was not seriously threatened. But American hesitations on the F-15 deal shook Fahd's position.

Prince Abdullah, claiming that Fahd had attempted to maneuver him out of the succession line to the throne, joined with the growing faction in the Saudi hierarchy that urged a more independent course. When the F-15 deal passed the Senate, however, Fahd was off the hook.

But Fahd is on the hook again. Israeli intransigence or American weakness is seen in Riyadh as putting the lie to Fahd's reliance on the U.S. alone. Fahd outflanked the opposition by calling Sadat home last month, demanding that he cease negotiations with Israel or risk a cut-off of funds.

Carter, who can ill afford a breakdown

in the Mideast, appealed to Fahd for one final chance. Fahd, not surprisingly, relented. The Camp David meeting was as much called by Fahd as it was by Carter.

Carter may offer guarantees.

Begin will not reveal Israel's negotiating posture before the talks, except to hint that he will bring a "partial but permanent" peace settlement. What "partial but permanent" means, however, is anyone's guess.

Some expect Begin to offer Sadat half the Sinai in exchange for full diplomatic and economic relations, including trade and tourism. By itself, that would not represent even a partial settlement. Any settlement in the Mideast, to be durable, must deal with the Palestinians. As desperate and ill-armed as Sadat is, it is difficult to see him accepting such a humiliating solution.

Others hold that Begin will offer the Palestinians five years of limited autonomy on the West Bank, after which the status of the area would be renegotiated. This approach would cool the hottest flash-point in the area, blunting the Palestinian rejectionists' drive toward war.

Carter, many believe, will offer the American government as guarantor of the agreement, implicitly committing American troops.

The truth is probably a combination of the two. If the talks are a success, Sadat could attempt a graceful exit from Mideast politics as the man who brought a solution to the Palestinian problem.

The hitch is, of course, the Palestinians. Arafat's reported reconciliation meetings with Iraq leader Ahmad Bakr and even Assad suggest that the Palestinians may no longer be willing to accept a move to the West Bank. The decision facing Arafat is whether he is safer on the West Bank under international guarantees or under the protective wings of Syria and Iraq.

Nothing may come.

It is just as likely that nothing will come of the talks, that they were called out of desperation because of the impatience of the Saudis, that no one has anything new to offer, and that everyone will go home to prepare for a new war.

Sadat will have no other choice, if he has any choices at all. His entire domestic policy rests on the assumption that peace with Israel means prosperity at home, and that the only way to achieve peace with Israel is through the efforts of the U.S. He expelled the Soviet Union in an early move to reorient Egyptian foreign policy.

If Sadat were to return from Camp David with nothing, his policies of the last eight years would be shown up to be totally bankrupt, his "courageous steps" actually desperate scuffling.

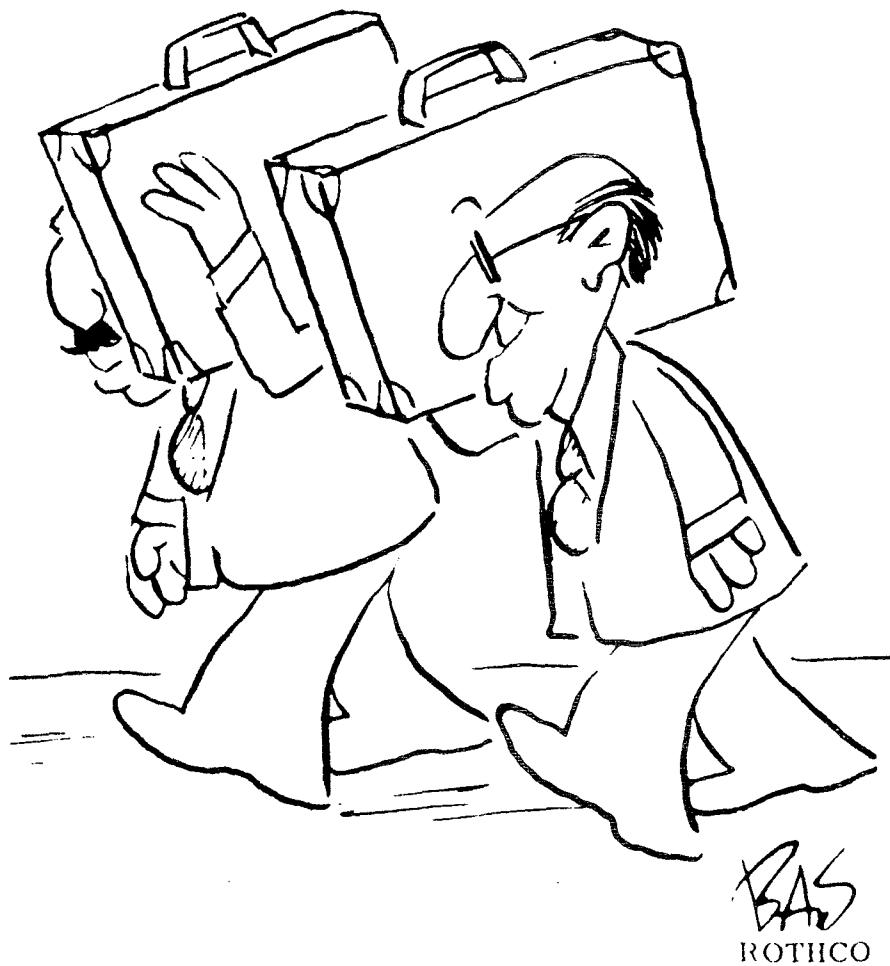
A stalemate in the talks would probably produce a united Arab front, dominated by Saudi Arabia. A modified use of the oil weapon would not be surprising—a reduction in production would mollify the anti-Fahd faction at home and partly mollify the rejectionists in the Arab world. War looms as a real possibility, and soon.

Either way the talks wind up, the Soviet Union and Iraq figure to play a much larger role than they have played in the '70s. Iraq's oil industry, first retarded by the partners in ARAMCO and then boycotted after nationalisation, shows signs of independently developing the second-largest oil field in the Mideast.

Iraq's purchases from the French are seen as signals that Bakr is prepared to do business with the West, as long as no political strings are attached. Although at odds with the Soviets over Soviet support for Ethiopia against Eritrea, Iraq has no other solid source of weapons.

But the key to any settlement in the Near East remains the Palestinian issue. After Sadat's Jerusalem trip, Mideast observer Joe Stork wrote, "If it is true that Egypt and Israel are trying to beat their swords into plowshares on the Palestinian anvil, it is useful to recall Orwell's observation that it is always the anvil which breaks the hammer, and not the other way around."

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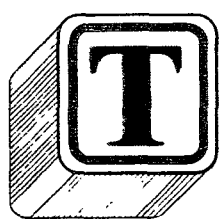


The U.S. attempt to create political stability in the Mideast is riding on next week's Sadat-Begin talks. Failure is the forecast.

HOW THE ME DECADE IS BECOMING THE WE DECADE

A BABY BOOM IN THE 80's?

YOU'VE GOT TO BE KIDDING



THE PRESENT IS ON THE verge of becoming an anachronism, and most of us don't even know it. Just at the moment when almost everybody appears to have caught on to the cult of single personhood with its narcissistic consumerism, the style is about to be

outdated without any advance signal.

The *Me* Decade is being superseded, quite naturally and without much fanfare, by the *We* Decade. America is about to be inundated with the biggest baby boom since the post-war explosion. Yesterday's baby boom babies are, as they near 30, today's baby boom parents. And just as the former boom lasted for ten years, from 1947 until its peak in 1957, when 4.3 million kids came screaming into the world, the coming boom will also be a prolonged affair.

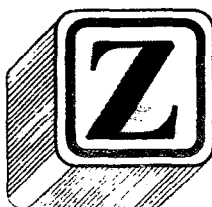
As the Seventies fade—a decade that social historians will eventually view as the infertile hiatus of the post World War II generation—the fecund Eighties are coming into view. For the past ten years or so, fewer women of childbearing age than ever has been having children; instead, young women have been spending their 20s trying to establish their independence, primarily by securing jobs and staying in the workforce. It was commonly thought by women that their personal strategies would be undermined most directly by having children. Careers are often tenuous, requiring pure concentration.

But the feeling of an impending limit to the years these women may continue to be childless looms imminent as they approach the fateful demarcation age of 30. For men, this age is freighted with emotional significance as well. Women, however, face an additional fact: it is increasingly unhealthy to bear first children after 30. Although entirely normal children can be born to mothers over 40, 30 is often felt to be a deadline. Most women, it turns out, don't want to avoid it. Only 10 percent of all women and 5 percent of married women wish to remain childless, accord-

ing to Census Bureau figures. Regardless of delay, a vast majority of young women desire to have children. They have merely pushed the decision back from the early 20s to their late 20s and early 30s.

This decision translates on a mass scale into a social phenomenon that might well define what the Eighties will look like. Although the family is undergoing changes of various sorts, it is not disappearing by any means. It remains, after all, the central institution in almost all our lives. But it doesn't exist in a vacuum—as the New Right wishes. Instead it is shaped by time and money. The increase of women in the workforce is a sign that families are unable to support themselves on a single income.

In Marxist terms this means that the rate of exploitation has increased, whether or not it is reflected in the amount of goods people possess. The economy shows no indications that the present dismal long-range trends will be reversed. Problems of employment, housing, day care, the cities, and taxes are likely to intensify. And the pressure point on all of these many problems may be traced, a decade from now, to the new baby boom. An increase in population will put renewed stress on all these crisis areas. It will also catalyze parents, who for the most part were the youth of the Sixties, to seek relief in the Eighties. The left can offer a great deal in the Eighties, especially if it understands that the coming decade won't be like the Sixties at all.



ZERO POPULATION GROWTH is the first group to see the early warning signs. It notes that the birth rate is up in the first four months of 1977 by five percent, a glimmer of things to come. In a recent report, ZPG expresses fear and trembling about the inevitable

"future rise in fertility." The study warns that if cou-

ples simply begin to reproduce themselves, having no more than two offspring, within the next five years the birth rate will increase by 18 percent, with four million births anticipated in 1980, a number just shy of the record achieved in 1957.

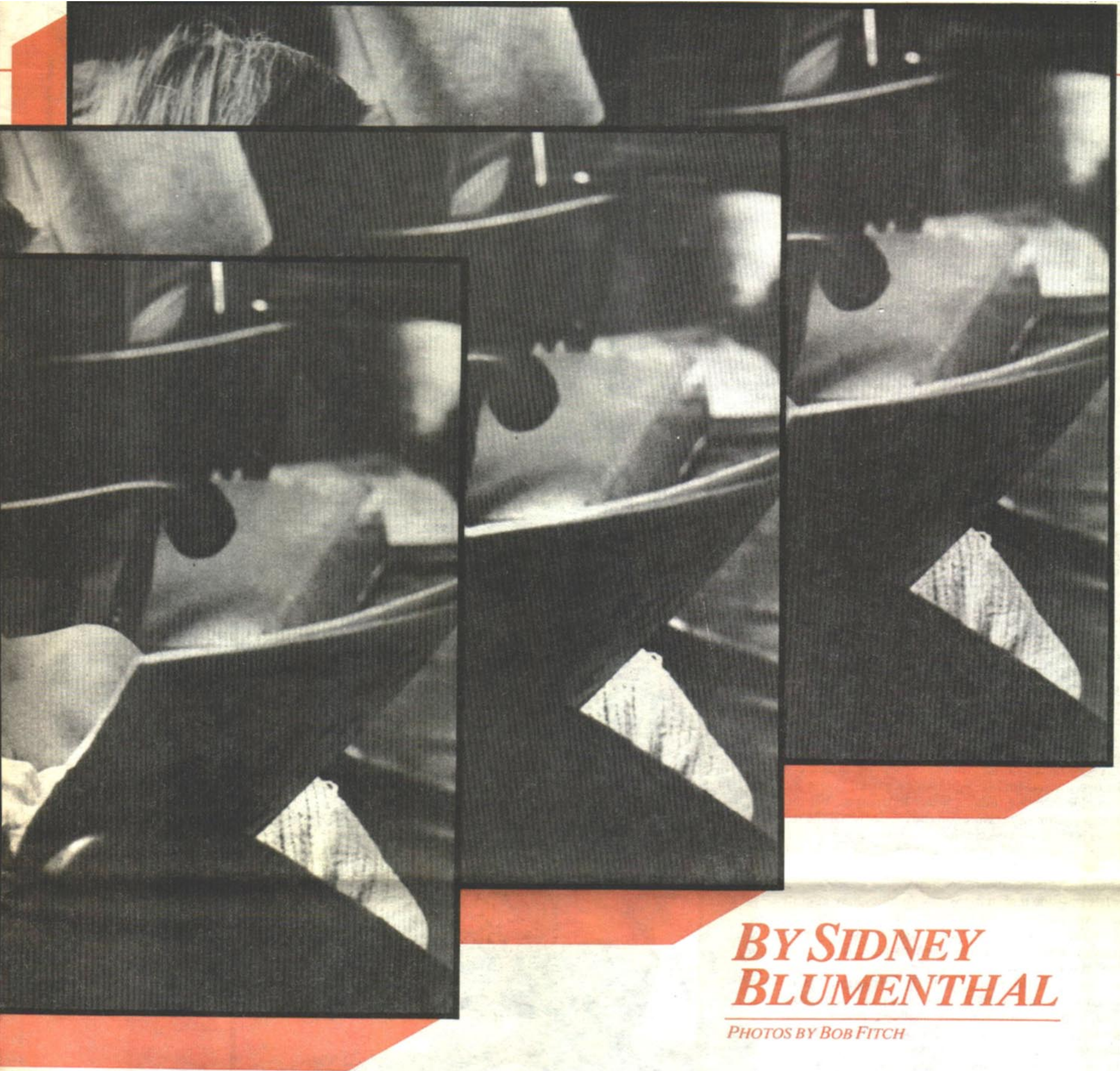
The Boston Hospital for Women, where 40 percent of the city's babies are born, has detected a definite upswing in births over the past two years. The low point was reached in 1972, but since then the rate has picked up, although not yet in a dramatic manner. Instead, the rise has been steady and incremental. This isn't surprising because the cutting edge of the post-war generation—the 1947 and 1948 babies—has just arrived at the age of 30.

"Many observers have a false impression that many women are not having children," observes Alvin Sanders, chief planner in the Massachusetts Office of Planning. Sanders has spent considerable time analyzing raw Census Bureau statistics and sketching an outline of the most fundamental social development of the Eighties: baby boom babies will reproduce themselves. Sanders has authored a new report on the subject, released as an official state document. The magnitude of the coming boom, he believes, will have enormous repercussions.

The statistic he regards as most crucial is the number of people turning 30, which in the last half of the Eighties will be roughly double that of the entire Sixties. The message of these figures is unavoidable:

- In the Sixties, 11 million turned 30.
- From 1970-75, 13.7 million turned 30.
- From 1975-80, 17.1 million will—the start of a great leap forward.
- From 1980-85, 19.1 million will reach 30.
- And from 1985-90, 20.7 million will attain that age.

From then on the curve will gradually descend again, but not before a major demographic shift carrying to the edge of the next century has occurred. The peak of this unprecedented mass rite of passage should be reached in 1988. And it will be accompanied by a new baby boom, too large to be called a boomlet. Couples



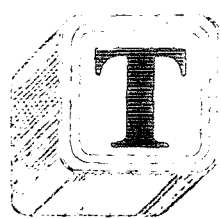
**BY SIDNEY
BLUMENTHAL**

PHOTOS BY BOB FITCH

may have fewer children than past generations, but they are beginning to have them in a sufficient quantity to generate another jump in the birth rate.

Perhaps a more conclusive indication that the boom has started is the perceptible jump in the infants' retail trade. Filene's department store in Boston reports that 1977 has been the biggest year in the Seventies for its infants' section. Macy's in New York City has launched a new maternity and infants' accessories departments with a free-public, week-long series of special seminars on parenthood conducted by doctors, psychologists and authors of books on having and raising children.

At the \$443 million-a-year Gerber Products Company, which does most of its trade in baby food, there is renewed faith that the birth rate will swing upwards. "We are somewhat optimistic about the future," says Arthur J. Frens, chairman of the board. His optimism has been fed by the company's demographers who are "predicting that the number of births might approach post-war levels of four million a year by the mid-1980s," he says.

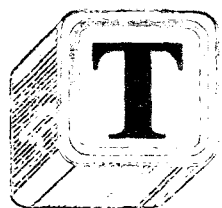


The post-World War II generation has always been a special case. Its sheer size requires that its elemental needs become paramount questions of social policy. The vast expenditure of public funds for the construction of schools and colleges was provoked by this population explosion. Similarly, the post-war generation has dominated popular culture since the rise of Elvis Presley.

With their ascendance to wage and salary-earning jobs in the mid-Seventies, but without the drain of having to support children, advertising has been pitched to attract their very disposable money. *Playboy* magazine, a bellwether of sorts, for example, shifts in ful-

some full-page spreads about the young adult male's acquisitive "lust" for living well. "You're the most vital, alive group of young men to come down the pike in a long time—the most vibrant group of prospects American business has been blessed with since the post-World War II boom," the ad informs its readers. Other media have also aimed their sights in this fancy-free market. *Us*, a new celebrity magazine cloned from *People* and published by the New York Times Company, describes itself as "for the young, lively, 18-34 year old crowd, the most dynamic, sought-after market in the U.S." Even the addition to newspapers of special supplements instructing readers where to spend a night on the town or which vegetable is chic this week can be attributed to the emergence of this market. Everyone with something to sell eagerly courts consumers, and the most attractive consumers these days are young adults. They are the biggest market with the most money to spend. A telling shift may occur, though, when young adults become more intrigued with cribs than waterbeds.

The narcissism characteristic of the Seventies cannot withstand the wail of babies, who must be picked up, comforted, fed, burped, diapered, and rocked back to sleep. Celebration of single living and instant gratification may be suddenly eclipsed by the new boom. The present no longer seems timeless and the future abstract when the generation that will inhabit it is crying in the next room. Werner Erhard (entrepreneur of "est") will not be able then to compete with Dr. Spock, who really does have the answers.



THE PRESENT IS SO SLOW that it feels like it may never go away. It is so artificial in tone that it cannibalizes past decades for disguises. *Happy Days* are here again, and every week. Most movies and made-for-television features employ the past as a backdrop: re-

fusing to depict contemporary scenery is part of the Seventies style. The fashions of the Seventies are basically reworkings of ordinary garb from the past, finished with designers' labels. There is a bored tenor to much cultural effort. Publishers and movie-makers, having exhausted a string of social movements for material, are now running out of sexual practices to present.

The self-absorption of the Seventies is perhaps best captured by Gail Sheehy's bestselling guide to personal growth, *Passages*, which portrays life as nasty, brutish, short and distinctly non-working class. The book itself has few passages on the profound effect children have on their parents, except to say that they help enslave women as housewives. These topics are the only ones listed under "children" in the index of *Passages*: "as companions; divorce and; letting go of." With books like this so popular it is easy to understand why the new boom is proceeding without any announcements. Although it has already begun, it is still not widely considered conceivable.

The new birth rate increase so far has been like a gentle, almost silent Leboyer birth, conducted under muted lights. It has hardly been noticed at all, except by those having babies. Part of the reason the trend has been received so informally is that it is unlike the past baby boom, which was intricately formalized in the suburbs. Children were typically regarded by the post-war suburbanites as the organizing principle of their lives. Suburban culture revolved around children, with most community facilities and activities devoted to keeping them busy. For adult residents, suburbia was felt to be some kind of fulfillment, the proper outcome of years of Depression and war. Nesting there was the common dream of the time. More than that, it was thought to be progress. In 1957 and 1958, Art Linkletter's book of humorous anecdotes, *Kids Say the Darndest Things*, placed at the top of the best-seller lists. The following year, Pat Boone's *Twixt Twelve and Twenty* dominated the literary charts.

Regardless of the merit of these efforts, they indicated interest in more than how to be your own best friend. In the Fifties parents subscribed to the ideal that they should try to be their children's best friend, as if the family was the buddy system.

A few things can be said with some assurance about the new boom, the most salient thing being that it will not replicate the last one. Compared with the excesses of the Fifties, the new emphasis on children will be tempered, primarily because of the mothers' desire and need to work. Having children will not inhibit women, who have already spent several years cultivating careers, from returning to them within a relatively short time after giving birth. Young families incur their greatest expenses at this point and without a second income the squeeze can be tight. Maintaining a family at a middling level now usually requires the mother to work; the fact that women also want to work hastens the process. In addition, almost all young women do not view day care centers as communist. They think of day care centers as a right, meaning that there will probably be more pressure on the federal government to finance expanded day care facilities.

Perhaps as important a factor in restraining child-centeredness like in the Fifties is the housing crisis, another key issue that may lead to pressure for federal intervention. In the past, children were offered as the *raison d'être* for the exodus to suburbia. But the housing problem facing young families now and in the foreseeable future is so severe that the experience of the late Forties and Fifties cannot possibly be reproduced.

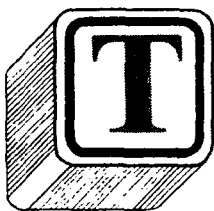
There will not be another great suburban migration. The housing issue primarily is one of cost, which at the present high levels prevents most young families from purchasing adequate houses of the type that were readily available to their parents.

The *Wall Street Journal* concurs that the housing situation is decisively linked to the post-war generation. "Currently pouring into the housing market in burgeoning numbers," the *Journal* reports, "they already are buying so many houses that they are helping keep home prices high." Paradoxically, the post-war generation as a group apparently desires to live in single family dwellings more than preceding generations. More than a third of all home purchases now are made by those under the age of 30.

A key factor making home ownership possible is the two-income family. Only with a working wife is a man able to swing today's heavy mortgages. Yet this creates enormous pressures on the family when the decision is made to have children. At least for some time, a woman with very young children is out of the job market, which drastically decreases family income when financial needs are greatest.

It's possible that many young families may migrate to towns located 30 to 40 miles from city centers, beyond the inner suburbs. The housing stock there is generally older and cheaper, perhaps making it attractive. But if suburbanization of exurbia were to happen, many of the problems of the Fifties and Sixties would simply repeat themselves on a more outrageous scale. Urban sprawl would be extended; new highways might have to be built; and the outer suburbs would have to increase services. Property taxes would then rise in these communities, driving more young families even farther to the fringe. Also, while inner suburbs, heavily populated by older middle-aged couples with neither children nor intentions of moving, are debating how many schools to close, the exurban towns may have to raise funds to construct new schools if the child population grows. The disjuncture may be great. Meanwhile, many young families will probably find themselves in cramped city apartments, willing to embrace any practical solution. Unfortunately, there doesn't appear to be any in the works. Few social planners or legislators are exhibiting any foresight.

The inevitability of an intensified housing crisis almost guarantees that it will become a volatile national issue within five years. The portents are too obvious. Young parents may then be among the largest voting blocs in the country. And politicians understand that housing is a direct bread-and-butter question. There will be pressure for a prompt resolution. The possibilities for rational metropolitan and city planning may increase, but so will the chances for expedient short-sighted programs. Whatever happens, housing will no longer be tainted as just a poor people's problem. The fate of housing then will dominate much of public debate.



THE FAMILY ALREADY IS AN issue in national politics, although mainly on an emotional and symbolic level. Politicians from Jimmy Carter to Ronald Reagan have based parts of their appeals on defending the family from the encroachments of modern life. Opposition to funding of abortions, among other things, is often justified as a "pro-family" stance. None of these politicians, however, has proposed crash construction of family dwellings, extensive upgrading of

the public schools or even the banning of sugar-cereal and toy television ads aimed at pre-schoolers.

The most strident and least programmatic defense of the family comes from the far right, which has tried to appropriate the issue for its own ends. It's striking that the new right (which is really the old right with a computerized mailing list) has seized upon the family as an issue when there are more single people than ever before. With their clarion call for a restoration of traditional values the right hopes to convince parents that only conservatives speak in their interest. Phyllis Schlafly, a member of the John Birch Society and the leading right-wing opponent of the Equal Rights Amendment, says, "The libs (women's liberation advocates) will learn that lesbian privileges and child care and the Equal Rights Amendment and abortion are anti-family goals, and not what the American people want."

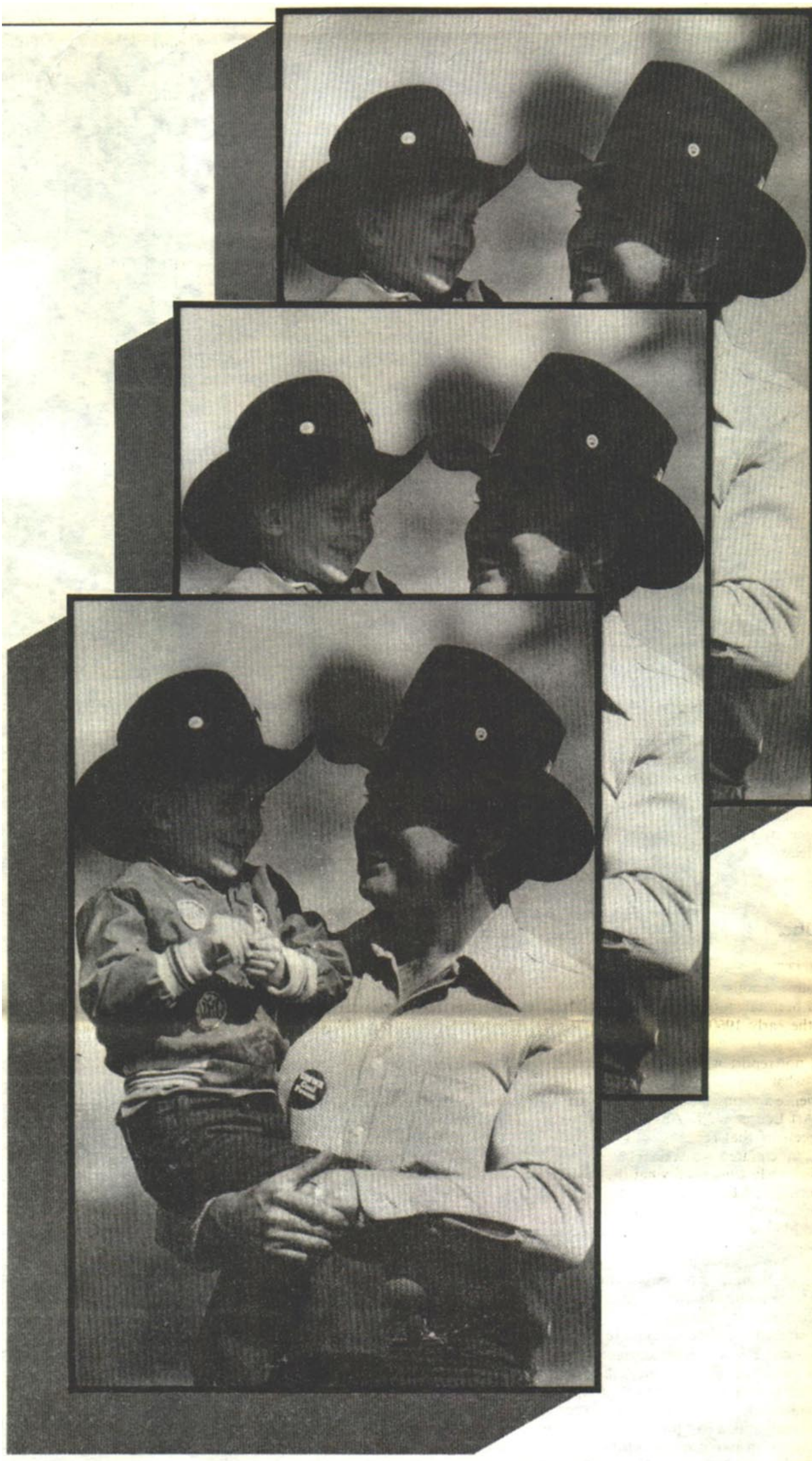
But if family demographics change sharply within the next five years, conservatives may be left without the convenient "pro-family" catch-phrases. They prefer to oppose the existence of reality rather than cope with it, yearning for a return to the self-sufficient 19th century agrarian family in which adults exercised complete control over their brood. This myth is a corollary of the conservative quest for absolute individualism.

Families, like the Cartrights in the television Western series *Bonanza*, are the only form of communalism the right permits in theory. Politically, conservatives focus on lurid aspects of modern life like pornography, although their intent is much broader. They feel things are so out of control that families ought to be insulated from social influences. This brand of conservatism is a new isolationism. Young families of the near future, however, will be preoccupied with vexing problems like housing. *McGuffey's Reader*, a conservative symbol of the back-to-basics approach, won't provide answers, but the federal government, the right's bogeyman, might.

The Eighties promise to be a curious, unique amalgam. In order to preserve the equilibrium of the family, buffeted by economic forces, some kind of political action will be required. To youths of the Sixties—the parents of the Eighties—it might seem ironic that the supposedly ultimate sanctuary of privatism, the nuclear family, will become the focus of public debate. But private life will become a public question because its internal problems will demand external solutions.

The Seventies will not last forever. They're just a passing lull.

Sidney Blumenthal is the Boston correspondent for IN THESE TIMES.



Letters

Bill Walton and the new class

THANKS TO MARK NAISON FOR this piece on Bill Walton and the pressure on pro athletes to use pain-killing drugs. It would be a mistake, though, to see this purely as a case of greedy owners against exploited players.

The main reason players get hurt is the same reason mediocre players make in excess of \$100,000 a year. The season is too long—about 100 games in 200 days. It is a grueling, inhuman ordeal, suitable for an antelope or a John Havlicek. First-stringers are supposed to go all out 35 to 40 minutes a game, night in and night out. In fact, they don't—as a discriminating viewer of a meaningless mid-season game can readily perceive.

The players get hurt, the fans are cheated and much money is made. But if any of this upsets the Players' Association, it is a well-kept secret.

The fact is that NBA players would rather be rich than healthy. I'm sure this makes the owners very happy, but it does not make them the only villain in this drama of occupational health and the proletariat.

—David Gelber
Chicago, Ill.

Cuba

IN *ITT*, JULY 12, I REPORTED ON conversations with young people who had been taken out of Cuba as children in the early 1960s and had recently returned to the island for the first time. I did not report what I had experienced, but what they told me had been their experience and observation.

Art Lebrez (*ITT*, Aug. 9) challenges aspects of that report dealing with the reasons children were taken out of Cuba in the early 1960s and what they experienced in the U.S. He was there, Lebrez writes, I was not. True. But the people I interviewed were also there, and their experience—or perhaps their perception of it—differed from his. It was their perception I was reporting, not mine.

A second critique, citing the story's warning by Cubans not to idealize their revolution, observes that this was precisely what I did. The people I interviewed went to Cuba to observe the situation there but were in no position to make a detailed study of the complex Cuban revolutionary phenomenon, nor could *ITT* publish such a detailed study. They were enthusiastic about the revolution's positive achievements (and surprised by some of them) and they communicated this. Unquestionably there are shortcomings, some quite severe. But a couple of things should be said about this.

Over the past five years or so the revolution has gone through radical structural changes that have altered its character considerably. Some of these have been in response to criticism both from within and from foreign radical socialist sympathizers. The changes have far from eliminated all failings, but they have substantially met some past major criticisms. Hence Cuba cannot be

CORRECTION:

In the article by David Pitt on the New York Pressmen's strike, we erred by suggesting that the Printing Trades Council called for simultaneous strikes by member unions. They have held off on calling the other unions out. The Guild at the *Post*, the Machinists and the Paperhandlers have, however, joined the striking Pressmen.

judged today on the basis of earlier observation. The current evolving structure is a consequence of years of experimentation and fumbling.

—Max Gordon
Rockaway Park, N.Y.

Opposing abortion not anti-woman

OBJECT TO THE RECENT ARTICLE (*ITT*, Aug. 9) listing non-violent sit-ins among the "assaults" against abortion clinics, and unfairly implicating PEACE (People Expressing a Concern for Everyone) as guilty of anti-woman violence.

If *ITT* is concerned about truth in its journalistic language, then you must admit that the statement "non-violent sit-in = violent assault" is simply Orwellian. And the assumption that anti-abortion activism is anti-woman also deserves a critique.

I am a feminist with an 11-year history of anti-war and civil-rights involvement. Together with four other women and four men, I participated in a sit-in at Women's Health Services in Pittsburgh, Pa., on Aug. 8. WHS is a veritable Pentagon of abortion, aborting nearly 10,000 fetuses a year. Five medical malpractice lawsuits are pending against WHS, brought by women who have had their uteruses punctured, who have suffered serious infections and lost their reproductive organs (uterus, tubes, ovaries, all), or who have endured other complications following botched "legal" abortions.

I sat-in at WHS because I believe that when a woman's pregnancy poses an emotional, social, or financial crisis, she has a right to better help than that offered by the abortion industry.

It is no surprise that Playboy Foundation money joined with Rockefeller Foundation money to lobby for "elective" abortion. Any volunteer at any problem-pregnancy service hears, over and over again, women explaining that their boyfriends are willing to pay for an abortion, but will desert them if they decide to bear the child. These men are following the lead of the playboys and male technocrats who can neither interpret nor control their own sexuality, or who would rather "terminate" a few hundred thousand Medicaid babies a year than promote the kind of redistributist social justice that would give the children of the poor their birthright.

—Juli Loesch
Erie, Pa.

A word from our sponsor

I WAS VERY PLEASED WITH your articles on religion. As everybody knows, Nietzsche is dead.

—God
(Address unknown)

Alternative Policies

UPON READING JOHN JUDIS' and David Moberg's accounts of the National Conference on Alternative State and Local Policies (*ITT*, Aug. 2), I was confused by Hayden's position that the left must have a national organization in order to be effective. If he means that we need a single organization with affiliates throughout the country, I fear a dictatorship with a few "organizers" at its head.

As a former community organizer for such an outfit, I saw development in just that direction.

The problem arises when perpetuation of the organization becomes the most important function of individual groups, with local and state issues assuming a secondary priority. Neighborhood groups then must avoid confronting issues that are possible or even probable, losers as non-members and members alike might feel the organization is ineffective.

That policy is perhaps wise at first to build group confidence, but continuing with the policy year after year gives com-

munity people very little intellectual credit.

However, if Hayden is talking about small, democratic, and independent groups maintaining contact with each other and organizing together on some national issues—he has my wholehearted support.

—Kathleen Garrett
Mission, S.D.

The Peace People

I SUGGEST THAT ALFRED McClung Lee reexamine some of the petrified ideological misconceptions he tossed out in gratuitously denouncing the Peace People movement in Northern Ireland (*ITT*, Aug. 2)? In Lee's vulgar economic determinism the Peace People are merely "muppets" serving the British and multinational capital in that troubled land.

The truth of the matter is that the situation is not so simple. As Denis Barritt, director of the Belfast Voluntary Welfare Society (which ministers to both Catholic and Protestant areas) once said to me, "The problem in Northern Ireland is more complicated than just 'British get the hell out.'"

Of course British capital has exploited Irish workers for centuries and at times played Catholics off against Protestants to achieve their ends. The current Labor government, however, would like nothing better than to extricate itself from Ulster in a manner that would preclude bloodshed and insure self-determination. Lee seems to forget his recent history: the escalation of British military might in the province was originally designed to forestall attacks by the Protestant Ulster militia against the Catholic community.

While not a religious war in the strictest sense, people still identify with the church in cultural terms and it is the Peace People that are trying to bridge the gap between Protestant and Catholic, to isolate the armed gangs on both sides from popular support. Yes, the Peace People want British withdrawal but above all they want a halt to the indiscriminate shootings and bombings that have cursed the province for the past decade and a half.

—Patrick Laceyfield
New York

From sunny Alaska

ENCLOSED IS A SMALL CONTRIBUTION to help keep your publication going. Yours is the best and most complete regular publication of the left that has the possibility of nationwide dissemination of socialist feeling and philosophy.

Sorry I can't afford more but here's hoping you can keep up the good work!

—Norman Thompson
Adak, Alaska

And from the rainy Northwest

YOU ARE IMPORTANT TO US.

We want you to survive and grow. Enclosed is a check that we hope, in a small way at least, will help you do just that.

We get information from you that other publications either ignore or distort. You go in depth while other publications only scratch the surface assumptions and move on. Please survive, we not only like you but need you.

—Daniel Farber
Brian Cantwell
Kathy Pruitt
Olympia, Wash.

Christian socialists

I READ YOUR ISSUE RELATING Christianity and socialism (*ITT*, Aug. 2) with a deep sense of joy and satisfaction. Finally a publication is willing to recognize that there are sincere Marxists who are also Christians. It's a terribly lonely position to a Marxist and a Christian in the U.S.

I was deeply hurt by the criticism leveled at the issue. You deserve praise and not a lambasting. I hope that those who claim the church to be a socially reactionary institution, are aware of how pro-labor and socialist preachers were driven from Protestant pulpits earlier in this century. Where were the socialists when their allies needed them? They were arguing over Marxist doctrine and attacking Marx's opiate. It should be noted that as long as the socialist movement refuses to support its Christian socialist friends, it participates in a continual self-fulfilling prophecy that assures that socialist Christian church movements will always fail.

One of the reasons capitalism has succeeded as well as it has, is that it has not refused to participate in religious encounter or to use Christian religious symbols. In contrast there has been a socially prophetic minority throughout the history of the church, long before Marxism. It would be wrong to ignore the crimes of the church, for they are many. It would also be wrong to claim the prophetic minority is the majority. Nevertheless, it exists and it is a minority that secular Marxists need not fear! Socialism cannot afford to allow itself to be culturally impoverished by refusing to accept religious symbols that arise from the people.

—Timothy Bancroft
Oak Brook, Ill.

Kennedy and Dellums

YOUR ARTICLE (*ITT*, AUG. 16) on Carter's recent health insurance proposals does a good job of dissecting his attempt to give a little something to each special interest group—and, as a result, to deny a decent health care system to the rest of us. In the end, though, you fall into a carefully-designed trap laid by Kennedy and his labor supporters.

Months before his well-advertised split with Carter, Kennedy had abandoned his own bill for national health insurance (once termed the Kennedy-Corman bill). That called for a comprehensive, publicly-administered insurance system, regional budgeting to foster planning and cost control, and incentives to creating integrated, prepaid health systems.

Months ago Kennedy dropped all this and acceded to Carter's insistence on a gradual phase-in of the plan and on administration by the private insurance industry. He also gave in to Carter's unwillingness to tamper with the present privately-controlled fee-for-service health care system and was actively pursuing a joint compromise proposal.

Kennedy finally split with Carter only when the President refused to commit himself to a comprehensive program and insisted that implementation of later stages would depend on factors like the general rate of inflation and the size of the federal deficit. Kennedy stopped short when Carter decided to sell out the health of our people for the health of business, but he had already given away crucial features of his health insurance program.

The crucial need in providing Americans with decent health care is not only for financing, but also for reorganization of health care delivery and for its administration under public auspices. With Kennedy having abandoned his own bill, Ron Dellums' Health Service Act remains the only health plan that progressives can, in good conscience, give their full support.

—Leonard Rodberg
Washington, D.C.

Editor's note: Please keep letters under 250 words. Otherwise we must make drastic cuts, which may change what you want to say. Also, please type and double-space letter, or at least write clearly and with wide margins. Letters must be signed, with a return address. We will withhold your name or use a pseudonym if you wish, but we will not print unsigned letters or those without addresses.