

Socialism in their *TIME*

To be on the cover of *Time* is to have "arrived." Socialism was on *Time*'s cover last week (March 13). But in this case, it's *Time* that has arrived—by coming to terms with the fact that "Socialism in its various manifestations is now the world's dominant political and economic ideology."

Time's discovery is a recognition that socialism is superceding capitalism as a universal outlook in humanity's further evolution.

Time's 8-page Special Report, "Socialism: Trials and Errors," may be disdained as a coarse mixture of fact and fiction, of American provincial pride and prejudice. But illuminations and realities often come dressed in distortion. Many important ones surface in *Time*'s treatment, among them the following:

- Warts and all, socialism has emerged throughout the world in a rich diversity of practice, experimentation, philosophy and ethics, while capitalism is becoming increasingly inflexible, especially under the impact of global "Americanization."

- Socialism is the secular inheritor of the Christian ethic (and that of other religions) aspiring toward equalitarianism in a society of people serving one another, while capitalism (as *Time* reports its leading intellects concede) offers little more than acquisitive materialism and the cash nexus. (The bourgeois Christians have become the "godless materialists.")

In power for only a few years or decades, socialism has manifestly not fulfilled its promise of equality. But capitalism, in power for generations or centuries, has renounced the promise altogether.

Time's report is significant also for what it glosses over. It cites the statist qualities of early socialism, but neglects the statism of early capitalism, e.g., in Britain, Germany and Japan, and of mature capitalism everywhere from the U.S. to South Africa, the Philippines and Chile.

It also avoids the fact that only among socialist thinkers is there to be found a serious search for a non-statist path to a society that resolves the conflicting claims of development, liberty, and equality.

Time bluntly repeats the accepted capitalist wisdom that equality cannot be squared with liberty. That is the "prophecies and Moses" of capitalism.

Time's cover shows the word Socialism

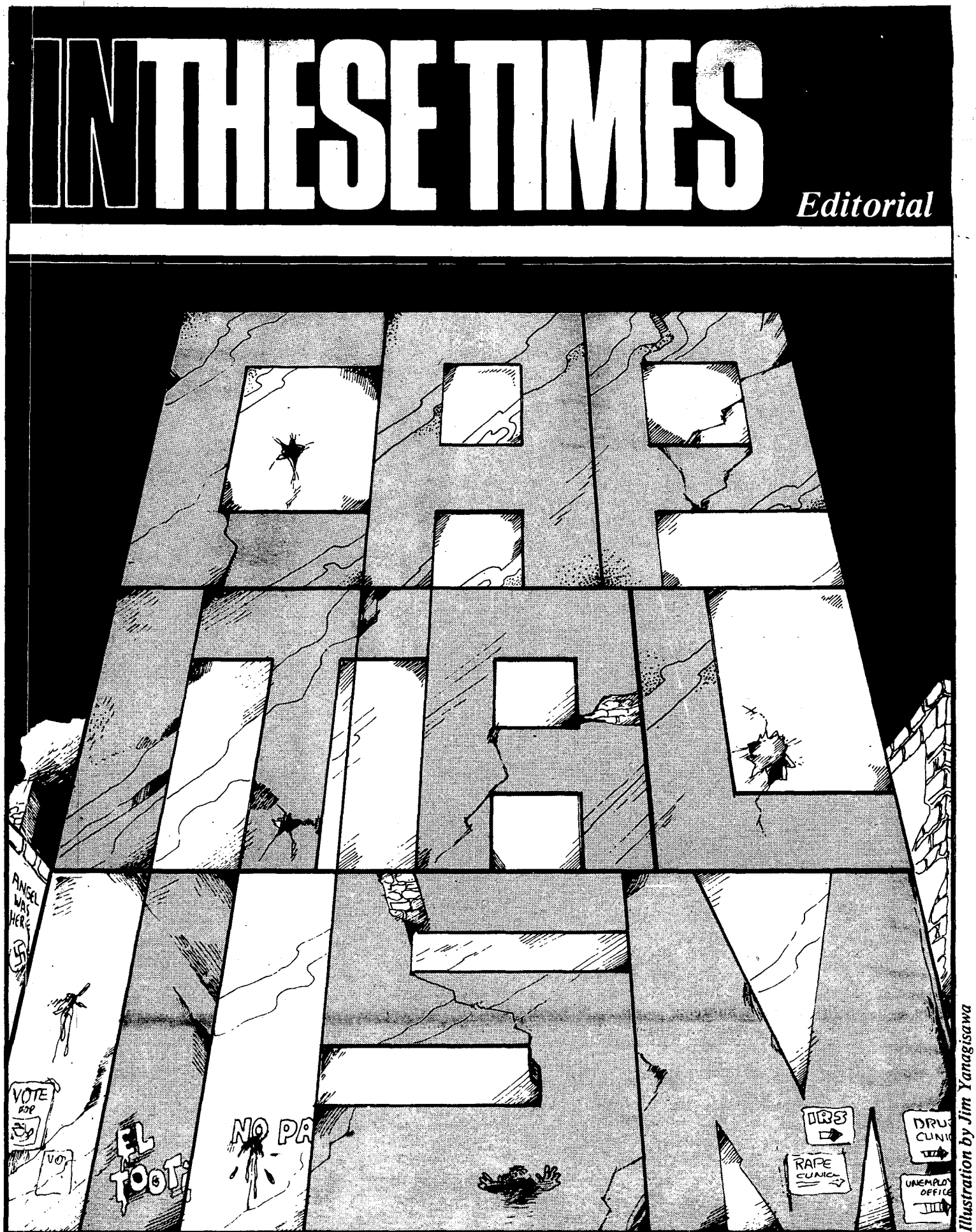


Illustration by Jim Yanagisawa

in a way that suggests people learning through trial and error, assembling and re-assembling the building blocks of a childhood journey to greater knowledge and proficiency. There are disarray and broken blocks, but there are also hope and challenge and creative possibility.

A Capitalism cover might resemble ruins going to seed, overrun by weeds of inflation, unemployment, cynicism and exhausted possibilities beyond the repair of all the king's wizards and their technological magic.

One significant omission in *Time*'s re-

port more nearly reflects than evades the reality: No prominent American socialist appears among the photographs of socialist leaders or is mentioned in the text. If *Time* can put socialism on its cover, is it not time for us socialists to put socialism on the American political map? ■

The miners' challenge to business as usual

The Carter administration, the corporate mine owners and the media—as usual—are determined to confine to the narrowest ground the attention finally being paid to the miners' grievances. They are carefully avoiding public debate over whether business as usual is consistent with workers' human rights and a sound energy system.

But the miners' strike has nevertheless forced basic questions to the surface. An aroused public awareness of coal industry conditions makes this a good time to raise the kinds of questions the Carter administration and the corporations would prefer not to discuss.

First, the strike illustrates how the national labor law embodies a class bias in favor of capital against labor.

The labor law reform bill now before Congress seeks to redress the balance in the sphere of labor organizing, but other changes are in order. For example, to strengthen management's incentive to place a higher value on workers' needs, the law should require that corporate executives (not only the workers) lose salary and benefit payments during a strike. Also, under Taft-Hartley, workers are

forbidden to engage in secondary boycotts to aid other workers on strike. But corporations are not forbidden (as they are in other industrial countries) to engage in secondary lay-offs, as some steel companies did and as others have threatened to do. The law leaves capitalists but not workers free to engage in such acts of class solidarity.

Similarly, protection of public health and safety is the ostensible justification for invoking Taft-Hartley to force striking miners back to work. But the same reasoning supports enjoining capital strikes (corporate withdrawal of capital that reduces jobs or closes plants). A capital strike, or the threat of one, is a potent weapon against workers' efforts for better conditions. And it places the public health and safety in no less jeopardy than a labor strike.

A second basic question is whether the public interest is best served by the private ownership of energy resources. A steady, reliable supply of coal requires a healthy and safe work force, which corporate ownership—unprodged by bitter, protracted strikes—has never been willing to provide, the less so now that many of the mines

have come under conglomerate ownership.

Many miners have expressed less fear of "working for the government" than for the companies. Working for a government subservient to corporate interests, however, may not be the best alternative. But the miners' attitude raises the question of public ownership and control, and points the way to sharpening debate on the issue. A federated system of miner-community owned mines under congressional charter with a parallel federated public banking network, would be an effective alternative to the existing corporate regime. It could also be applied to ownership of other energy resources. It would make the workers' well-being, instead of private profit grabbing the priority basis of production for public need, and in so doing be the best guarantee of reliable supply at reasonable prices.

Third, in demanding full health care and adequate pensions, the miners are standing up for what ought to be every American's birthright. Until full health care and adequate pensions are accorded all Americans the miners are right in seeking to provide for them through the price

of coal. But in so doing they help all the rest of us to see that it would make more sense, and yield lower-cost coal, to spread the financing over the entire economy through a comprehensive public health care system and a universal public pension system in place of the existing inadequate hodge-podge of social security and private insurance. Universal public health and pension systems would make it unnecessary for miners (or other workers) to strike for such elementary human rights, and would cheapen the price of coal (and other goods). It would be one less obstacle to steady production and dependable supply.

None of this is to say that the immediate issues in the miners' strike are "less important" than the broader issues involved. It is rather to acknowledge the debt owed the miners for helping us, with their courage and militancy, to see more clearly some of the deeper questions currently facing American society, in addition to the debt owed the miners for the crucial role they played in past times in helping millions of other workers to organize for better conditions and a fuller human dignity. ■

Letters

ITT around the world

I'VE JUST COME BACK FROM Mexico where we (a group from University of Colorado) spent several hours at the Camp of 2 October (ITT, Dec. 14, 1977). In a camp meeting, the leader, Pancho de la Cruz, held up a reprint of the ITT article, and stressed again and again the need for international press coverage of what is happening in Mexico, including the Camp of the Siege of Oaxaca.

—Philip Gordon
Boulder, Colo.

Muzzling authors

I HAVE FOUND YOUR COVERAGE of the drugging of mental patients in hospitals enlightening, if frightening. As a psychotherapist, I am opposed to drugging mentally ill or retarded patients unless absolutely necessary. I have been very much impressed by the book, *In Search of a Response* by Leida Berg and Harold Steinberg, in which they show how it is possible to work with patients diagnosed as schizophrenic, without using drugs.

The book itself involves transcripts of sessions with two patients (husband and wife). The authors carefully edited the book in order to hide the identities of the patients. The identity of the wife was only revealed when she brought suit against the authors for invasion of privacy and, previous to this, when she attempted to use the book to invalidate her deceased husband's will. (She later dropped the suit.)

The decision of the N.Y. Supreme Court in November 1977 was that the authors pay the wife \$20,000, destroy the book, do not discuss the case and that the contents of the trial be "sealed." The opposition of professional associations to the book probably contributed to this decision.

The muzzling of these authors and the attempted destruction of their work involves a violation of the freedom of direct speech, of printed speech and, unfortunately, possibly a portent of what we, as Americans, can anticipate, if such a case is not made widely known, and protested.

—Leonette Vanderhorst
New York, N.Y.

Vitriolic?

THERE IS MUCH ROOM FOR DISAGREEMENT—especially on so momentous a question as a strategy for a socialist movement in the U.S.—but the distortions and personal vitriol to be found in Sid Lens' "Perspectives" piece (ITT, March 1) should have no place in ITT. I do not here wish to argue the merits or weaknesses of Economic Democracy vs. Socialism as a shibboleth. I do think it is important to comment on the tone of Lens' piece, which is neither socialist nor humanist.

At the outset, Lens dismisses our most populous state as some sort of looney-land "where panaceas bloom like dandelions," thereby subtly equating Derek Shearer's concept of Economic Democracy with the multitude of crackpot notions that the media love to associate with California. The people who live in California have no monopoly on either sense or nonsense, as Lens knows—but he makes use of media hypes for his own purposes.

Lens then begins a systematic distortion of Shearer's (and Tom Hayden's) position, symbolized by his misquote of Hayden's campaign slogan: for "The radicalism of the '60s is the common sense of the '70s" (Hayden), Lens quotes "The radicalism of the '60s must be re-

placed by the common sense of the '70s." (My emphasis.) There is a vast difference between these two formulations, but Lens must misquote Hayden in order to "prove" that Hayden is a "cop-out" or worse, traveling the perfidious road of Bayard Rustin.

Rustin, we should remember, forsook his pacifist origins to become a Vietnam war and cold war apologist, associating himself with the most retrograde segments of the labor movement. Is this the inevitable fate of all who disagree with Sid Lens? Is this what Hayden and Shearer are doing in California? Again, Lens knows better but chooses to accuse them of crass, opportunistic, unprincipled betrayal of the socialist vision—on no evidence other than what might be in Lens' heart and mind.

For the sake of a developing left in America, for the sake of keeping ITT a truly open forum for that movement, for the sake of socialism and humanism, can't we leave this kind of polemic behind us? Please?

—Mickey Flacks
Santa Barbara, Calif.

The Nazi menace

IN LIGHT OF RECENT DECISIONS in the St. Louis and Skokie, Illinois courts sanctioning Nazi demonstrations, the problem of combatting the Nazi threat arises.

The danger from the Nazi resurgence cannot be overstated. As with their predecessors of Pre-World War II Germany, the Nazis of today have accused Jews, blacks, and other minorities of many of the world's problems. If Nazis had the opportunity, by acquiring political influence for example, the brutal consequences against minorities would certainly be predictable. Although the possibility of Nazis acquiring broad political power is remote, the possibility of their acquiring limited political influence concentrated in a small area is far from remote.

We must block them now from spreading their dangerous propaganda by the most effective means possible. If all legal and peaceful channels are exhausted, force should be considered a viable alternative. Just as the Communists were justified in fighting Nazis in the early '30s, so too the serious danger from the Nazis today warrants violent counter-measures under certain circumstances. For example, the threat of force was successful against Nazi demonstrators in St. Louis on March 11. In order to avoid a confrontation with a group called the Black and White Defense Committee, Nazi demonstrators cancelled their planned rally.

If Nazi influence cannot be checked by peaceful means alone, then violent attacks or threats of attack may be the only avenue open, before we again mourn their victims.

—Dan Rothbart
St. Louis, Mo.

Mixed toilets

I CAN'T UNDERSTAND WHY SOME people believe that ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution means that their darling wives and precious daughters will have to go to the toilet with 250-pound drunks!

Nor why these same people are making such an issue of sparing their daughters the horrors of war when we have just buried 55,000 of their sons who they let their government send to Vietnam.

But what really burns me is Phyllis Schaffly telling American working women that they don't really have to go out and earn a living, just land some rich businessman to give them a \$100,000 home to live in, like she did.

This whole thing is ridiculous but there is one group among the opponents of the ERA who have a legitimate gripe: the businessmen. They know damn well they're going to have to cough up big bucks to equalize salaries and this has them on the verge of hysteria!

Ratification of the ERA will be a significant step toward the liberation of the American people from corporate capitalism, a system that perpetuates itself by turning everyone into a dependent producer-consumer. This is a just cause that deserves our total support: women's rights to self-determination.

—Art Liebrez
Annandale, Va.

What every auto worker knows

AL NASH (ITT, MAR. 8) SAYS your review of *Blue Collar* was off base. He says he was a former steward at "the" Detroit Chrysler plant (which one, he doesn't say. There are a dozen or more).

If Nash was once a steward, it must have been a long time ago because *Blue Collar* presents a fairly accurate picture. (Maybe he's one of those who is always telling you about what they did 30 years ago, just like *Blue Collar* laid out.)

Sure, it's true that stewards earn the same pay they made before election. But they get all the overtime there is! It's one of the ways that the company scratches the union's back.

I'd be surprised if any steward made less than \$17,000 in the UAW last year since my husband made close to \$16,000 working as little overtime as possible.

Every auto worker knows that stewards go in every day they possibly can, sleep in the committee room, and if you call them you're lucky if they show up the same day.

My neighbor is an alternate committeeman at a Chrysler plant. For a long time, he was working every Sunday. He'd go in in the morning, punch in, come home a couple hours later, do the grocery shopping, and be back at work to punch out. Then he'd come over and brag about it.

Also, stewards are not easily recallable. Every auto worker understands Zeke's frustration about not getting his locker fixed. Most live with plenty of small problems like this. It's very difficult to build the kind of shop floor organization you need to actually make the stewards responsive to the membership.

Once, when I was working in an auto plant, I asked my steward to write a grievance. He kept assuring me he would. He promised and promised. Several weeks later, I asked him about it, and he said, "I'm not going to write that grievance."

One thing Nash said is true. If any

foreman went around asking workers if they "picked cotton that slow" he'd be taking his life in his hands.

Sure we need our unions. But we need to rebuild them, too. The real scandal in the "AAW" was not that the union local made unsavory loans, but that they took dues money without giving any representation.

Every audience that sees this movie in Detroit cheers, because *Blue Collar* tells it like it is.

Elissa Clarke
Detroit, Mich.

Double correction

In our Feb. 22 issue we printed a column by Edith Taylor, a national coordinator of Women Strike for Peace, on SALT. Taylor argued in it that the talks and treaties created a framework in which the arms race has flourished. The article was printed as if this were the only WSP view. It was not, as we soon discovered.

Last week (March 15) we printed another WSP view by Edith Villastrigo, National Legislative Coordinator of WSP. It was also printed without comment, and some people may have concluded that this was the official WSP position. It also is not.

Both pieces were the views of their authors. Our purpose in printing them was to air various points of view about SALT. We regret any other implication caused by the manner of publication.

Editor's Note: Please try to keep letters under 250 words in length. Otherwise we have to make drastic cuts, which may change what you want to say. Also, if possible, please type and double-space letters—or at least write clearly and with wide margins.

Making a Big Move?

Then make a small one, too. Send us your new address with your old address label. And we'll make sure that your subscription to IN THESE TIMES is uninterrupted.

New Address

Address _____
City _____
State _____
Zip _____

Circulation Report

Weekly subscription and income figures for the ten weeks from Jan. 6 through March 10.

The following figures show an increase in our average weekly total of subscriptions (new subs plus renewals) from the previous 12 week period from 308 to 428, but a drop in our average weekly income of \$46. The reason for this is that income from direct mail subscriptions is not included because we now have a revolving promotion fund that is kept separate from our operating income into which direct mail revenues go.

The result is that we have a faster circulation growth but a growing operating deficit. That means we must increase our efforts to raise money and encourage our readers to help us increase our spontaneous subscriptions. At present, we still have debts of some \$35,000, and we are running a weekly deficit of \$1,500 to \$2,000. In order for *In These Times* to continue improving, we must quickly raise enough money to pay off our debts, mostly to non-staff writers and artists, and to pay for expanded coverage of news.

Week (ending)	New Subs	Direct Mail Subs	Renewals	Total Subs	Money/wk
1/6	102	16	256	374	\$5,400.35
1/13	136	20	194	350	4,935.33
1/20	111	11	136	258	3,537.54
1/26	98	16	124	238	2,954.17
2/3	101	10	366	477	7,361.01
2/10	79	17	217	313	4,790.33
2/17	71	258	137	466	3,565.54
2/24	68	590	104	762	2,615.68
3/3	46	366	189	601	4,096.41
3/10	79	196	165	440	4,362.77
Totals	891	1,500	1,888	4,279	\$4,362.91
Weekly Averages	89	150	189	428	\$4,362