

DEBATE: The Presidential Elections—

Should the Left Support Johnson?

YES—Michael Harrington



THE DEFEAT OF BARRY GOLDWATER is a precondition for the future of democracy in the United States. As such, it is also a precondition for any development of the democratic Left.

These propositions strike me as so obvious and irrefutable that they are hardly worth arguing. Yet one hears that there are those radicals who are so enamored of the traditional, conservative, "revolutionary" wisdom, that they have

not bothered to notice their nation. Neither Goldwater nor Johnson propose the abolition of capitalism, therefore there is no real difference between them; both Goldwater and Johnson support the war in Vietnam, therefore there is no difference between them; both Goldwater and Johnson refuse the massive kind of economic, political and social program required to respond to the needs of the Negroes and of the poor generally, therefore there is no difference between them.

With an apology to those readers who reject such fantasies, let me sketch only a few of the most obvious and decisive differences between Barry Goldwater and Lyndon B. Johnson.

In the area of foreign policy, a Goldwater victory would bring to the White House and the control of its awesome nuclear arsenal an unstable man who regards "victory" as a possible outcome of World War III. Even if he did not set off an atomic holocaust directly, he would threaten the escalation of local conflicts, as in Southeast Asia and Cuba, into full scale war. A brinksman, a China lobbyist, an Air Corps Major General and enthusiast, he probably represents the most serious domestic threat to world peace this country has known since 1945.

Secondly, a Goldwater triumph can be achieved only by the construction of a united front of reaction, particularly joining together the overt forces of Klan racism and the covert forces of white backlash racism. There are little children who might believe that, under such circumstances, President Goldwater would "execute" the Civil Rights

Act of 1964, but even such a modest gesture is unlikely. That he would oppose any further civil rights legislation and withdraw even the most minimal federal protection of civil rights militants in the South is clear. It is hard to imagine a more terrible defeat for the American freedom movement.

Thirdly, Goldwater, like Eisenhower, would probably be unable to repeal the welfare state outright. But he would provide Presidential cover for the Dixiecrat-Republican coalition in its campaign against all domestic social reforms. The labor movement, so sorely challenged by cybernation and chronic unemployment, would be set back and Right to Work would enjoy its happiest hour since the yellow dog contract.

These are only a few of the most obvious reasons why Goldwater must be defeated if there is to be any hope in the coming period for peace, for Civil Rights, for domestic social change.

THE ONLY PRACTICAL WAY to stop Goldwater in November, it is clear, is to vote for Lyndon B. Johnson. Such support of the President does not, of course, imply that he is in any way socialist or socialistic. Neither does it assert that he is running on a program capable of solving the enormous problems of mid-twentieth century America and the world. It simply takes account of the fact that, if Johnson does not have a positive answer to the present plight, Goldwater has a terrible and negative answer. The Texan is the only practical alternative to the Arizonan. That establishes his compelling claim to a vote on election day, not simply from socialists but from anyone who seeks a modicum of sanity.

But, then, it would be a mistake to see the issue of this campaign in terms of the simple act of voting. The ballot box will register the mathematical result of the battle against Goldwater and it must count up to an overwhelming majority for Johnson. But the political result will be determined, to a considerable extent, by *how* that electoral victory will be achieved.

Clearly, there is already a tendency for the Goldwater nomination to pull the entire American debate to the Right. President Johnson has received the support of Henry Ford II and of Walter Mack of the Pepsi Cola company. The luncheon which he gave for businessmen, with all of its talk of "moderation," was calculated to throw the White House net as widely as possible. The defection of liberal Republicans from the Goldwater camp will accentuate this trend.

However, and this should be the particular vantage point of the democratic Left, the campaign has only begun. And the way in which it is conducted can be as significant as the final vote itself.

First of all, if the progressive forces in America mobilize to defeat Goldwater by registering millions of Negroes, trade unionists and unorganized poor whites, such an accomplishment will be a permanent gain which will have implications far beyond election day. These people will not be drawn into political activity on the basis of a completely negative proposition: Defeat Goldwater. They will be motivated to the degree to which they see the campaign as a means of struggling for civil rights, increased minimum wage, Medicare, and the like. And the existence of organized millions committed to such programs will be felt after election day as much as on it.

Secondly, the defeat of Goldwater requires an attack on the white backlash. This phenomenon, as it counted in the Goldwater calculus, is not simply a middle class disease. In the Wallace primary elections in Wisconsin, Indiana and Maryland, it struck a responsive chord among workers, particularly those belonging to the late-arriving immigrant groups. Its basis was the fear of those living in marginal neighborhoods that they would lose the property value of their hard-won housing; and the concern of workers in a time of chronic unemployment that the civil rights revolution aims to equalize the racial jobless statistics by replacing whites with Negroes in the factories.

These attitudes exist. They cannot be wished away. To deal with them, it is necessary to explain a most positive thought: that the housing, job and educational problems of the white worker and the white poor cannot be solved without dealing with the economic situation of the Negro worker and the Negro poor: The Negro, it must be explained, is in the vanguard, but only the vanguard, of the victims of automation, urban neglect, deteriorating schools. If the white workers and poor turn to a Rightist suppression of Negro claims for justice, they prepare the way for their own political, economic and social disenfranchisement in the near future.

What I am suggesting is that the only way the labor movement can deal with the white backlash is by emphasizing far-reaching domestic social reform, and by demonstrating the practical necessity of an alliance between black and white workers, black and white poor. According to the *New York Times*, this thought has occurred to Lyndon B. Johnson. He is said to have told his Cabinet that the answer to the backlash is an emphasis on jobs and housing. Unquestionably, the President will put such a proposition in its most moderate form and without any appeal for a new coalition of the working people and the poor. But the theme is there, and the democratic Left can participate in giving the fight against the backlash a profound social and political content.

Finally, if a Goldwater nomination could tend to make the cam-

paigned into a confrontation of a surrogate McKinley with a substitute Franklin Roosevelt, a smashing Johnson victory would have the exact opposite effect. The simple and sheer fact of the defeat of Goldwater would be a mighty blow at the American Right. Under the best of circumstances, it could be interpreted by the nation as a mandate for serious reform. A Goldwater in the flush of a Convention victory can move discussion to the Right; a Goldwater in the throes of an electoral defeat will push it toward the democratic Left.

HOW DOES THIS RELATE to the general situation of the democratic Left in the United States?

Since 1948 at least, radical organization and consciousness in this country have been on the decline for a number of reasons. After 1948, the hope that the progressive forces would burst out of the Democratic Party and form their own political movement grew more distant with each passing year. Under such circumstances, it became apparent that the old socialist tactic of raising an independent banner and inviting the masses to break with their established traditions had less and less chance of success.

At the same time, there was considerable political movement, but *within* the liberal wing of the Democratic Party. Significant reform movements developed in California, Texas, New York and other states. The Negro mass movement became more and more of a pressure on the Democratic reformers, forcing the Civil Rights Act of 1964 through a series of militant actions in the Spring and Summer of 1963. The peace movement also adopted something like this strategy in contributing to Kennedy's decision to seek the Moscow Treaty on nuclear testing.

As these developments proceeded, a possibility for political change emerged. It was that a new party would emerge in America, not from an act of independent organization as in the case of the Republicans in the nineteenth century, but through an internal transformation of the existing party alignments. It was with this in mind, for example, that the Southern Negro militants carried their battle inside the Democratic Party, the very party of Southern racism.

This perspective did not satisfy many traditional radicals. They argued that socialists would be corrupted by the Democratic fleshpots (remembering, as so many conservatives do, that power corrupts, but forgetting that the absence of power corrupts, too). They sincerely feared a loss of socialist program and perspective through such a strategy.

Those dangers were, and are, there. But repeating them over and over cannot disguise the fact that there is no alternative to risking them. Socialists in isolation might maintain their program and preserve it for the initiated, but they would lose all relevance, all communication

with the people (and, from the socialist point of view, these people are the most decisive means of production of the future society). Now, however, it is clearer than ever that the old ways amount to an abstention from politics, not a political abstention.

Goldwater has posed a Rightist concept of political realignment: the unity of the Southern Klansmen, the Northern reactionary stratum of the middle class and the white working class backlash. As a result of this impetus toward realignment coming from the militant Right rather than from the democratic Left, the first consequence has been to pull politics toward the dead Center. But if the only electoral alternative to Barry Goldwater is Lyndon Johnson, the only political alternative to the trend toward the dead Center is the invigoration of the democratic Left within the framework of the Democratic Party. The problem is to turn Goldwater's reactionary realignment into the democratic Left's positive realignment.

And the mechanics of such an undertaking are as already described: the mobilization of millions around a positive and progressive program to defeat Goldwater; the confrontation of the white backlash on the basis of social change and the unity of black and white which it requires; an overwhelming Johnson victory at the polls in November.

THE ISSUE IN THIS ELECTION IS NOT, alas, socialism. That this is so has not been determined by a handful of radicals anxious to make their peace with the Democratic Party but by the American reality itself. The issue in this campaign is moderate liberalism versus the Right. If the Right wins, the nation will have proceeded one terrible step further away from the relevance of socialism. If Johnson wins, it will not be utopia or anything like it, but the victory will contain the possibility of important developments. How pregnant that victory will be if it takes place depends, in some small degree, on the democratic Left.

The abstention of the American radical remnant will not have any decisive bearing on the coming election. The main victims of such an action would not be the Johnson forces but the socialists who had managed once again to isolate themselves from the actual struggle.

The participation in this campaign of the radicals will not determine its outcome or character. But it could help in making Goldwater's defeat, not a consequence of politics-as-usual, but a result of a vast popular mobilization around a positive program. And that is something practical and possible to do now.

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DEBATE: The Presidential Elections—

Should the Left Support Johnson?

NO—Ian McMahan



FOR MANY YEARS there has been a continuing debate among socialists on questions of electoral action. The nomination of Senator Goldwater has deepened the confusion that surrounds this issue. For the first time since 1932, the Republican Party has put up a candidate whose policies are substantially different from those of his Democratic opponent.

The first consequence of this is that those who in past years were

content to argue that there was nothing to choose between the candidates must find some new basis for their attitudes. A second, less obvious, consequence is that those who propose to bring about a realignment of the parties must explain why, in these propitious times, such a realignment has failed to come about. The third consequence is that those who oppose a policy of supporting President Johnson and the Democratic Party must review their arguments to counter those who, with new relevance, argue for supporting the "lesser evil."

This article will attempt to do just that. Further, it will try to counter the argument for a policy of working within the Democratic Party, that of the proponents of "party realignment." Finally, it will address itself to the underlying question in this continuing debate: what role can socialists play in American politics today.

IT IS TRUE, OF COURSE, that in political contests there is always one side that is either a greater good or a lesser evil, since no two forces are equally good or indistinguishably evil. Wilson may have been preferable to Taft, Cox to Harding, Roosevelt to Willkie, etc. In World War I, many American radicals supported the war on the ground that American democracy was better than Kaiserism; similarly, German socialists who supported their government argued—neither more nor less convincingly—that Czarism was the most reactionary force in Europe, whose destruction was a precondition for social progress on the continent. Yet, for

radicals to have supported, say, Cox as the lesser evil would have been disastrous, and aid given by socialists to their respective governments in the Great War on the lesser evil rationale was an enormity for which all of mankind continues to be penalized.

On the other hand, there *are* many instances when socialists have been obliged to throw their weight behind a lesser evil. One striking example would be the Prussian referendum of 1932, when the vote involved the maintenance of a bourgeois parliamentary regime with all its vices and hypocrisy, or a victory for Nazi barbarism. The argument made here, then, is not against the fact that there are lesser evils in politics; nor is it disputed that socialists can ever justifiably support a lesser evil. What is contested is supporting the lesser evil, or the better side, as a matter of *principle*. For socialists to adopt this stance as a way of political life is to sacrifice on the altar of *realpolitik* their alleged objective of a revolutionary, democratic reorganization of society. At best, it reduces the socialist movement to a liberal pressure group with utopian ideals.

The problem posed for socialists, then, by the coming presidential elections is whether the real and undenied differences between lesser evil Johnson and greater evil Goldwater are that deep, whether the practical consequences of the victory of one over the other imply such fundamental changes in the country's domestic and foreign policies, that socialists should work toward the victory of the Democratic Party.

It is here, in assessing the vagary of "Goldwaterism," that this writer must take issue with the hysteria emanating from some socialist and liberal circles about the significance of the Goldwater nomination and the calamitous fate that would befall this country should the Republican candidate win in November. Let it be said at the outset, that Goldwater is no Nazi, no fascist and not an extreme racist. If we grant, for the sake of argument, a Goldwater victory in November, that will not mean that democratic institutions will be abolished, the labor movement smashed, liberals and socialists forced underground. Goldwater is an ignorant 19th century individualistic reactionary, but his "program" is not the social program of fascism with its traditional radical-sounding demagoguery. Indeed, there is a stark contrast between the Arizonian's stone-age "philosophy" and the more sophisticated radical-sounding appeals for state controls which are endemic to fascist propaganda and objectives.

Also, should Goldwater win, progress in social legislation would be difficult, indeed, but it is most dubious that a Republican administration is going to prove either desirous or capable of undercutting the advances in social and welfare legislation won in the past 30 years.

In foreign policy, Goldwater's pre-November readiness to give greater controls to the military is ominous. But, on the whole, a Re-

publican administration of foreign affairs could hardly be more reactionary and more threatening to peace than Johnson's policy in Vietnam (5,000 more American "advisors" are to be sent there), or his predecessor's "eyeball to eyeball" brinksmanship during the missile crisis two years ago.

It is naive to believe that Goldwater is a Birchite or could act like one in the White House, despite the fact that the ugliest elements in America are supporting him. He is prepared to accept Birchite and Southern racist support, but this does not make him one with them. (Franklin Delano Roosevelt did not repudiate Southern racists before his 1932 victory, Stevenson had as his running mate Alabama's Sparkman and John F. Kennedy found it politically expedient to court and accept McCarthyite support at a time when his Senatorial colleagues were beginning to speak out against McCarthy.) Given the realities of American political life today and Goldwater's need to neutralize, if not to win the support of the more liberal elements in the Republican Party, it is almost certain that in the course of the campaign Goldwater will feel compelled to project a more moderate image and, in the event of his victory, will be obliged to move toward the center.

A victory for Goldwater would unquestionably mean a setback for the civil rights movement; but a Republican administration in this period can neither undo (nor will it want to) all that has been won thus far, nor prove an insurmountable obstacle to continued gains. Indeed, one of the greatest defeats has just been inflicted on the civil rights movement by most of its own leaders who, in panic, and in the interest of furthering Johnson's chances in November, have declared a moratorium on all civil rights protests and demonstrations. This is a voluntary retreat that a President Goldwater would be hard-put to achieve. It is the bitter fruit of joining forces with the lesser evil at the expense of independence, militancy and political leverage.

SOME LIBERALS AND RADICALS expect that next year will see a wave of major social reform measures passed by Congress. This may well be so; President Johnson's expected landslide, combined with the additional liberal Congressmen whom Senator Goldwater will inadvertently sweep into office, will certainly provide the strength for such a wave. Medicare, increased public works, and more anti-poverty measures are almost assured. According to some, this is clear proof that the election of Johnson will set off a leftward movement of American politics.

This argument is largely a product of faulty, or at least selective, memory. If such measures prove a leftward swing, it is only because the political atmosphere in the country, despite the advances for civil rights, has shifted to the right over the past 20 years. Today, the Democratic Party may succeed, after three years of in-fighting, in pas-

sing a minimal plan of health care for the aged. But in 1949, that same party proposed, and nearly passed, a program of comprehensive medical care for all, modeled on the British Health Service. Today, the Administration has committed itself, after a fashion, to reducing unemployment below 5%. But in 1946, a Democratic Congress passed a bill requiring the Federal government to maintain full employment. Similar examples abound in the area of public works and the functioning of the regulatory agencies.

What are the specific policies of the Johnson Administration? By and large, it has continued the policies of its immediate predecessor. In civil rights, the thrust of Administration policy continues to be toward removing the conflict from the streets, from mass involvement, and getting it back into the courts. In labor, Johnson has, in a year of unprecedented corporate profits, continued the Kennedy policy of resisting the shorter work week and attempting to set down "non-inflationary" guidelines for wage raises. The two major areas of Administration policy in which Johnson has effected changes are the war in Vietnam and the war on Poverty.

THE UNITED STATES IS MOVING STEADILY in the direction of a general war in Southeast Asia. In recent weeks, State Department spokesmen have been making increasingly bellicose statements, while the news media have shown an intriguing reluctance to report the anti-Administration speeches of Senator Wayne Morse. The appointment of General Maxwell Taylor as Ambassador to Saigon is one more indication of the drift of Administration policy. This policy is echoed in the press. James Reston, who is very close to the Administration, stated in the *New York Times* on July 8 that if the Viet Cong insist on waging "Revolutionary War," the United States cannot be expected to continue to abide by "Marquis of Queensbury rules." Since Mr. Reston presumably includes the use of anti-crop chemicals, the establishment of concentration camps, and torturing of civilians under his "Marquis of Queensbury rules," one shudders to think what must lie outside them.

But Johnson's Vietnam policy goes beyond intensifying the war. Washington is taking direct steps toward overt colonization of South Vietnam. In a long and informative "Letter From Saigon" in the July 11 *New Yorker*, Robert Shaplen reveals that the United States, weary of the incompetence of the Saigon government, has set up a "shadow government" of its own,

a large and constantly growing group of American specialists, who function as a sort of "brain trust" in the areas of economics and finance, foreign relations, public affairs, and psychological warfare.

Washington has decided, in Shaplen's words, "both to formulate and to implement" what an American colonel called "a national campaign

that is beyond the competence of the [Saigon] government." Thus the United States, having assumed the military inheritance of the French in Vietnam, seeks to inherit their political liabilities as well. That the Pentagon should be impatient with the bumbling of the Khanh regime is understandable; but it is a logical result of attempting to defend a corrupt, unpopular and dictatorial regime in the name of "freedom."

Johnson's policies in Vietnam have placed the United States in a situation from which it will be impossible to withdraw with any dignity. The war cannot be "won"; if the United States escalates the conflict into a general war, it may save Vietnam at the cost of eradicating it. In the absence of a democratic foreign policy which could offer the Vietnamese a genuine alternative to the Viet Cong, the only options open to the United States are various forms of withdrawal. But Johnson's policy is closing all these options save one: the complete collapse of the American military effort in Southeast Asia. This collapse will not only end any possibility of neutralization; it will have serious effects on domestic politics in the United States. Just as the French collapse in 1954 sowed the seeds for fascist tendencies in the French Army, so the coming American collapse will greatly strengthen the Ultras in the United States. The debacle in Southeast Asia will have untold consequences, not merely for some unknown peasants in a far-off land, but for every struggle for progress in the United States.

THE WAR ON POVERTY is Lyndon Johnson's contribution to the American political vocabulary. Preparations for it were being made before President Kennedy was assassinated, but it is Johnson who has given it its unique tone. This part of Administration policy, more than any other, has given rise to the myth of Lyndon Baines Johnson, the earnest, sincere New Dealer who has at last been freed from the exigencies of parochial politics. Radical journalists seek precedents in the Populist heritage of Texas and speak learnedly—and yearningly—of agrarian radicalism.

The poverty of Johnson's war has been amply demonstrated. The few "self-help" measures which are at the heart of the anti-poverty program will do little more than ease the consciences of some legislators. Those socialists who favor "vigorous support" for the War on Poverty admit this readily, but feel that Johnson will be forced to go further when it becomes apparent that poverty is still increasing. While this may be so, it is by no means a valid argument for "vigorous support." It is a much more logical argument for vigorous criticism. A withering attack on the specific measures proposed, an attack precisely because these measures will *not* deal with the problem of poverty, is far more likely to force the Administration to go further.

But the War on Poverty is of interest beyond its specific proposals. Its rhetoric reveals a great deal about the nature of the Johnson Administration. This rhetoric has been largely responsible for the confusion in radical circles over the Poverty War because it is an unfamiliar animal. It is the rhetoric of the Southern politician, who appears to be as liberal on economic issues as he is reactionary in other areas. It combines the vocabulary of the Populist with the fervor and speech rhythms of the Holiness preacher. Lyndon Johnson is very good at it. But the most interesting feature of this rhetoric is not what it says, but what it does not say.

Johnson has appropriated only half of the Populist vocabulary. He speaks fervently of the trials of the poor, but he never mentions the rich. The enemy, as the very name indicates, is Poverty. If one inquires who causes poverty, or who profits from poverty, the response is silence. The Populists, and even the New Dealers, had answers to these questions. The correctness of these answers may be doubtful, but they recognized the need for answers. But Johnson is silent. Since his record shows that he is an astute man with an excellent grasp of political realities, we must conclude that his silence stems not from ignorance but from other considerations. The nature of these considerations becomes clear only when we further examine the movement toward the right spoken of earlier.

This movement is the result of many factors, one of which is the prevailing liberal theory on the nature of American politics, or rather, the mistaken conclusions which liberals draw from that theory. This theory observes that American politics is a politics of consensus. From this observation it concludes that the proper place for liberals in the political spectrum is left of center. It takes little more than elementary arithmetic to foresee the result: as politics moves to the right, the left of center shifts accordingly. What was left of center in the 1930's would be considered left extremism today.

LYNDON JOHNSON HAS RAISED CONSENSUS politics to new levels of virtuosity. In Detroit recently, he spoke at a fund-raising dinner for the Democratic Party, with Walter Reuther and Henry Ford II on the dais and four \$100-a-plate tables of General Motors executives in the audience. He is on speaking terms with Martin Luther King, Jr., and a close personal friend of Mississippi's Governor Johnson. Throughout the country, industrialists and trade unionists, bankers and sharecroppers, civil rights leaders and racists, are united behind Lyndon Johnson. How was this feat possible?

The answer is remarkably simple: Johnson does not need to fear any opposition from the left. The forces which might contribute to such an opposition—the trade unions, the Negroes and other minorities,

the unemployed—feel that they have no political alternative. In Johnson's words, "I'm the only President you have." This prior commitment of the bulk of the liberal left to Johnson's candidacy has freed him to build his consensus elsewhere.

He has been able successfully to woo large sections of the business community with the tax cut, which helped the corporations far more than other sectors, with economy measures, with increased trade with the Eastern Bloc. His closest advisor and choice for the next Secretary of State is reputedly Robert MacNamara, as staunch a representative of the corporate power structure as can be found. Even Johnson's widely reported feud with Robert Kennedy has helped to buoy the confidence in him of businessmen, who continue, however mistakenly, to regard the millionaire Attorney General as "anti-business."

However, this confidence was not easily won, nor will it be easily held. A Democratic President is automatically suspect to the business community and its salaried hangers-on. At the first hint of "anti-business" policies, they will desert him for the Republicans. The result is that Johnson, in order to preserve his consensus, must accommodate to business interests far more, and far more concretely, than to a labor movement which is already committed to him.

This situation explains the peculiar gap in the rhetoric of the War on Poverty. No one is for poverty. Everyone is against poverty. But as soon as someone points to some sector, some class in society, as bearing a basic responsibility for the continued existence of poverty, the consensus disappears. Everyone agrees that automation poses grave problems. But once suggest that these problems arise in part because of a society which is profit-oriented, and agreement disappears. Lyndon Johnson does not need to have this explained to him; he has a masterful awareness of how far he can go without disrupting his consensus, and he has no intention of passing that point.

There is one exception to this: the civil rights issue. On this issue Johnson is willing to go beyond his consensus if necessary. He is continuing the Kennedy policy of making concessions to the civil rights movement while at the same time attempting to limit its scope, but that in itself is radical by the standards of large sections of Southern white society. The reason for this willingness must be sought not in some mystical moral force in history, as Senator Dirksen would have us believe, but in the essential distinction between the civil rights movement and the other progressive or potentially progressive forces in American society. That distinction is that the civil rights movement *does* have someplace to go if its demands are ignored: it can go into the streets. It can challenge the power structure directly. More than that, it is willing to do so. This willingness alone forced the passage of the civil rights bill, and played a major role in prompting the war on

poverty. The Negro movement has not yet wholly succumbed to the pressures of consensus politics, and as a result it is able to force concessions from the power structure. Its independence from the power structure is its greatest weapon. Those who advise the civil rights movement to abandon its independence, to think first of the consensus, to make concessions to its would-be allies, are advocating a policy which would completely disarm the Negro in the face of racist and status quo opposition.

A WORD MUST BE SAID AT THIS POINT about those who advocate working within and supporting the Democratic Party as a means of furthering a realignment of the two parties. This idea has an undeniable attractiveness for many socialists: it enables one to go "where the masses are," to advise them to do what they are likely to do anyway, to work for candidates who have a chance to win, and still to feel that one is fighting for socialism. However, this year has provided a certain amount of evidence which bears on this theory of political action, and which must be properly evaluated.

In general, proponents of this theory believe that at some point the Dixiecrats will be forced to leave the Democratic party, clearing the way for popular control of that party. Many believe that the "liberal" wing of the Republican Party will go over to the Democrats at the same time. This cataclysm will come about as a result of a coalition of labor, liberals and Negroes which will force the Dixiecrats out.

This has not yet, of course, taken place. But the events of this year inside the Republican Party do offer an analagous situation, in which a militant wing has carried the day against the center of the party. The analogy at least permits us to verify the cohesiveness of a major party. What has the effect of this upheaval been?

Unfortunately for the proponents of realignment, it has been comparatively slight. Senator Keating of New York, the most outspoken opponent of Senator Goldwater, has announced that he may conduct his campaign for re-election separately from that of the national Republican ticket. Other liberal Republicans have been unwilling to go even that far.

As for the Dixiecrats, they continue to show a stubborn attachment for the Democratic Party. Their dissatisfaction with its national position on civil rights is shown by the Wallace campaign, which is in the best tradition of the 1948 Thurmond campaign, but even if Wallace should bolt the party, it is unlikely that the leading Dixiecrats will risk their Congressional chairmanships to support him.

As for the likelihood that Goldwater will carry the South and thus get rid of the Dixiecrats, as it were, behind their backs, this is

dubious barring major intervention by the Federal government in Southern affairs, such as the dispatch of troops to Mississippi. At present, it would appear after the votes for the first Southern President since the Civil War were counted, the Senator from Arizona would have to settle for a disappointing few.

In all fairness it must be stated that the current initiative for realignment has been made by the right wing, not by a left coalition such as its socialist proponents envision. Nevertheless, the current situation does indicate that it is far easier to leave a party than to force others to leave, particularly when the chairmanship of almost every House and Senate committee is at stake.

Even were this not true, it is difficult to see how enthusiastic advocates of realignment can reconcile their political perspective with their equally enthusiastic support of Lyndon Johnson. As we have seen, Johnson has devoted much of his energy precisely to maintaining the coalition in the Democratic Party which realignment advocates seek to rupture. If they are sincere in their desire to provoke this rupture, it would seem logical for them to direct their fire, not at the Dixiecrats, whom nobody likes anyway, but at Johnson, who is trying to straddle both horses. In this way, they might succeed in forcing him to choose between the liberal-labor wing of his party and the conservative-Dixiecrat wing. But by supporting him they only encourage him to continue in the exercise of consensus politics.

Some proponents of realignment will counter that one cannot go half-way into the Democratic Party, and that refusing to support Johnson will only isolate them. If this is so, it is an argument, not for support of Johnson, but against the realignment perspective. If one's perspective obliges one to give support to those who are actively engaged in fighting against that perspective, this might well be taken as an indication that a mistake was made somewhere along the line, and that a re-evaluation is in order. In the absence of such a re-evaluation, one is forced to conclude that supporting Johnson and the Democratic Party is of greater importance to these people than is their perspective of realigning that party.

IN ALL THIS DISCUSSION, one question, the most crucial question, is never raised. That is, what does it mean to be a socialist? Why does one go out of the way to affix an unpopular label on oneself? What distinguishes socialists from liberals? How do we differ?

These questions can be answered in many different fashions. The answer can be that socialists have an ideal for a new society in which poverty, exploitation and oppression have no place. But the twentieth century has taught us one thing above all others: that men can act sincerely in the name of ending oppression, and in the process can

construct an even greater mechanism of oppression. If socialism has meaning today, it must have it not only in regard to a future society, but in direct relation to the existing society.

The distinguishing characteristic must be this: socialists are oppositionists. We have more than a vision of a future society of justice and equality; we share an unalterable opposition to the present society which breeds and feeds upon war, poverty and human misery. Any theory, any perspective which acts to negate our opposition, to mute our criticism, we must reject. A theoretical advocacy of a future order is meaningless unless it is coupled with a practical struggle against the present order.

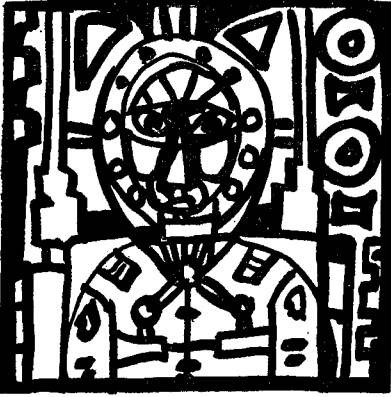
We have seen earlier that the potential forces for progress in the United States are paralyzed by the lack of an alternative to the status quo policies of the Democratic Party. Socialist politics can be relevant in this situation, socialists can play a role in breaking this deadlock, but only if they are willing to express their opposition to the present policies. If, in their desire to avoid isolation at any cost, they are unwilling to express themselves too clearly, unwilling to criticize forcefully the actions of the Administration, unwilling to oppose the status quo, then their socialism becomes rather hypothetical.

If they can make the break, however, they can help burst through the immobilism of American politics and begin the long climb toward a new society. They can play a major role in freeing the spirit of mankind, can pave the way for the entrance of humanity onto the stage of history.

"What else," as Engels once asked, "are we here for?"

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The Cybernation Revolution



ON MARCH 22, 1964, a group of 32 people, calling themselves the Ad Hoc Committee on the Triple Revolution, sent a statement to President Johnson. They stated that three separate and mutually reinforcing revolutions were taking place in the United States which they believed would "compel in the very near future and whether we like it or not, public measures that move radically beyond any measures now proposed or contemplated." The group described the three revolutions in the following terms:

The Cybernation Revolution. A new era of production has begun. Its principles of organization are as different from those of the industrial era as those of the industrial era were different from the agricultural. The cybernation revolution has been brought about by the combination of the computer and the automated self-regulating machine. This results in a system of almost unlimited productive capacity which requires progressively less human labor. Cybernation is already reorganizing the economic and social system to meet its own needs.

The Weaponry Revolution. New forms of weaponry have been developed which cannot win wars but which can obliterate civilization. We are recognizing only now that the great weapons have eliminated war as a method for resolving international conflicts. The ever-present threat of total destruction is tempered by the knowledge of the final futility of war. The need of a "warless world" is generally recognized, though achieving it will be a long and frustrating process.

The Human Rights Revolution. A universal demand for full human rights is now clearly evident. It continues to be demonstrated in the civil rights movement within the United States. But this is only the local manifestation of a worldwide movement toward the establishment of social and political regimes in which every individual will feel valued and none rejected on account of his race.

It is within this context that this paper, divided roughly into three parts, is written: first, a presentation of the evidence for the cybernation revolution; second, a suggestion for the first step which *must* be taken at this time; finally, some of the implications for the depressed regions of the country, particularly Appalachia.

I BELIEVE, TOGETHER WITH OTHER members of the Ad Hoc Committee, that we are entering a new socio-economic order. Its requirements are as different from those of the industrial age as those of the industrial age were different from the agricultural. In the agricultural era, human skill combined with