

# Candidacy No Shield for Zimmermann

Some contenders for the highest public offices often acquire a regal aura which shields them from minute scrutiny, but not so Matilde Zimmermann, Socialist Workers Party vice presidential candidate.

There are questions a Walter Cronkite just wouldn't ask a Ronald Reagan or Jimmy Carter, because their relationship is oh so polite.

And awe inhibits the layman who has the rare opportunity to ask one of the campaigning biggies any question at all.

When a leading contender occasionally does get a blunt question, laden with potential to embarrass him if answered honestly, he usually can shrug it off aloofly.

But for a longshot such as Ms. Zimmermann, the questioners are deterred by neither politeness nor awe, and as a socialist candidate she cannot afford an iota of aloofness.

Her predicament was evident July 12 when she was the guest of honor at a potluck supper at the Worcester home of Tom and Valerie Eckart.

Although the small gathering was dominated by her supporters, some from the Socialist Workers Party office in Albany, N.Y., Ms. Zimmermann ran an obstacle course of questions not only about her own views but also about socialism in the abstract and in practice from Cuba to the Soviet Union.

Already showing signs of fatigue from having spent the day collecting signatures on nominating petitions, the candidate nevertheless responded in detail to whatever she was asked, however irrelevant or irrelevant were the questions.

How would a socialist government respond to an industrial waste-dumping crisis such as the Love Canal case in upstate New York?

"I think Hooker Chemical and every other dumping company should be held 100 percent responsible for the costs of cleanup, of relocating anybody endangered and of their medical expenses," Ms. Zimmermann replied without hesitation.

Such a straightforward, albeit simplistic, answer from a major party presidential or vice presidential candidate is nearly unthinkable.

Cuban refugees?  
"The Carter administration was only interested in the refugees for one reason, to score some propaganda points against the Castro government. Carter cynically used those people. I'm in favor of open borders."

Another direct, blunt answer.

What about unemployment?  
Her response: Cut the work week from 40 to 30 hours, without cutting pay, and also spend tax money on programs such as child care and public housing construction.

"There is no reason for unemployment but the profit system. It's not that people don't want to work or that there are not things to do."

Position on the military draft?  
"No registration. No draft. No war."

Equal Rights Amendment?  
She's for it.

What distinguishes her party from the Socialist Party U.S.A.?

"David McReynolds (Socialist presidential candidate) still looks toward the liberals or progressives to solve problems; we look to the power of the labor movement."

But is the labor movement strong?



Capitol Comment  
By Neil Davis

"No. The labor movement is taking it on the chin — unions are under attack, wages are being driven down. That's why we feel the labor movement has got to get into politics: to stop the string of defeats."

Can the Socialist Workers Party count on organized labor support?

No. Not as long as unions primarily support Democrats out of a sense of pragmatism, she said. However, with roughly 100,000 votes cast for its presidential candidate in 1976, the Socialist Workers Party is the strongest of the minor parties.

Could a socialist president be effective, given domination of Congress by Democrats and Republicans?

No. You would need a workers' government. What's wrong with Congress is that it's made up of the rich and powerful.

And what chance does a socialist have of being elected?

"I'm not going to be elected unless there's a great social upheaval," she said. "I think we need a revolution — I'm not afraid of the word — that would change things as much as the original American Revolution."

But isn't the general populace becoming more conservative?

"We're running a successful petition drive to put the SWP on the ballot in 30 states, and that is the best answer to people who say the country is moving to the right."

If Ms. Zimmermann was pointed with her answers, her interrogators were equally so with their questions.

One asked whether movements such as that for gay rights weren't diverting socialists' attention away from the more pressing problem of massive poverty among and widespread discrimination against blacks.

That touched off a debate which drew about 10 participants.

The candidate's position was that the greater priority of the problems of blacks is insufficient reason to ignore the problems of homosexuals.

Even one of the three potential Vermont electors for the party's presidential and vice-presidential candidates asked demanding ques-

tions. Bernards Sanders of Burlington pressed Ms. Zimmermann to explain why she is dead set against nuclear power when it might be possible that a socialist society, with health and safety as its primary concerns, would run the plants for the public good.

Her ultimate answer was that closing the plants would give the nation an opportunity to determine whether nuclear power's problems have solutions before it might be too late.

Although the tone of the questioning became almost hostile at moments, the candidate was imperturbable.

After having been interviewed by a reporter for about 45 minutes she offered to come back for more, saying she considered answering the questions of the news media to be essential.

Contrast that with the campaign visit to Vermont of First Lady Rosalyn Carter, who promised 15-minute exclusive interviews to two reporters but gave them less than 10 minutes together, while her staff members frequently reminded her to hurry.

What was refreshing about Ms. Zimmermann was her willingness to supply answers specific to the ques-

tions asked. She seldom reverted to the tactic, common among candidates, of turning questions into slim pretexts for mouthing rehearsed generalizations.

In her opinion the major party candidates are ducking questions such as why race riots have erupted in Miami and how big industry is abandoning the American worker.

Whereas she and presidential candidate Andrew Pulley are trying to get into debates with the Republican and Democratic contenders, the biggies don't want to debate anyone but each other — if that.

What they are avoiding is discussion of the nation's social problems on a practical level, Ms. Zimmermann said.

Sometimes you listen to Carter and Reagan, and you wonder if they could be living in the same country you do."

\*Neil Davis is chief of the Free Press Capitol Bureau.

You'll never know the power of Free Press Classified until you use it. To place an ad call 658-3321 today!

## If headaches are a daily routine in your life, here are a few facts you should know:

- \* Aspirin is one of the most misused medications by persons suffering from headaches.
- \* Very few severe headaches are actually migraines, though they are often mislabeled as such.
- \* Problems with vision and sinus difficulties often trigger extreme headaches.
- \* Skeletal irregularities are the major cause of physical strain and consequential headaches.

Whatever the cause of your headaches, proper diagnosis is the key to relieving the constant pain they inflict. For a free pamphlet describing the various types of headaches and their causes, call or write our office. There's no obligation.



**Dr. Craig L. Barcomb**  
Chiropractic Physician

42 Colchester Avenue  
(802) 864-5000  
Hours by Appointment

Burlington, Vermont

