

DEMOCRATIC LEFT

EDITED BY
MICHAEL HARRINGTON

Sept. 1981 Vol. IX, No. 6 \$1

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No to Jelly Bean Policies

By Michael Harrington

IN THE SUMMER OF 1981, RONALD Reagan took gigantic strides toward repealing the corporate income tax, the inheritance tax and the capital gains tax. The President also persuaded the Congress to pass a regressive "across-the-board" tax cut in which the 80.5 percent of the taxpayers making \$30,000 or less get 33.1 percent of the benefits and the 4.8 percent at the top, with \$50,000 a year and up, receive 35.9 percent.

If you make between \$15,000 and \$20,000 a year, that tax law will cut your payments to Washington by \$323. If you get \$20,000 to \$30,000, the reduction is \$509. If you make between \$100,00 and \$200,000, your payments will go down by \$4,667; and if you are among the really rich, with \$200,000 a year and more, you will save \$13,346. (All figures come from the Congressional Budget Office, a nonpartisan research arm of Congress).

What did the Democratic party do while Reagan was engineering these gigantic giveaways to the wealthy? Among other things, it fought for a \$400 million tax break for commodity speculators—those people who shoot crap by betting on whether food prices will go up or down. And they battled to exempt oil companies — which already account for between 30 percent and 40 percent of all the profits in America—from part of the windfall profits tax.



"Let them eat tax cuts."

**DSOC
SALUTES
SOLIDARITY
DAY**

(see p. 5)

As Yale economist William Nordhaus, a moderate who served on the Carter Council of Economic Advisors, put it, "... the recent tax battle has shown the moral and intellectual bankruptcy of the current Democratic party. Many of the worst features of the bill that emerged from Congress were added in the process of Democrats bidding for conservative votes. . . . In the end the Democrats valued victory more than justice, and they lost both."

There was one exception to this Democratic collapse. The Congressional Black Caucus prepared an alternative budget that came in with a lower deficit than the Reagan proposal but in which the cuts were achieved by taking the rich off of welfare rather than increasing their take as Reagan has done. Except for this effort, the Democratic party either stood idly by while reactionaries mounted their savage attack on social programs, particularly those aimed at helping the

working poor, or worse, joined in the destruction of gains they themselves had pioneered.

Given this background, this Labor and Solidarity Day issue of DEMOCRATIC LEFT is based on the premise that the progressive forces in America, the trade unions first and foremost, desperately need to develop an alternative program for the eighties. Reagan has presented a coherent vision and carried out a radical reversal of the economic and social policy of the past generation. He was able to do so precisely because the traditional Democratic strategies for fighting inflation and achieving full employment simply do not work any more.

It was certainly true that Jimmy Carter carried out those Democratic policies with a faint heart, if at all. But that fact should not be allowed to obscure the larger truth: even an effective and bold implementation of traditional Democratic policies would not have overcome the structural crisis of the economy.

Make no mistake: Ronald Reagan's reactionary plan is going to fail, much as Margaret Thatcher's assault on the working people of Britain is failing. But his defeat will not be our victory if the liberal-labor wing of the Democratic party is either "me-tooing" Reagan or else proposing to go back to the good old days of Johnson or Kennedy or Truman or Roosevelt. In this article, then, I want to look at why Reagan will fail in order to understand how the progressive forces can offer a real alternative to Reaganism and finally to spell out a few specific economic proposals that move us toward full employment without inflation by means of more social justice.

False Hopes

While Ronald Reagan was selling snake oil to Congress and the people, telling them that tens of billions in tax relief for the corporations and the rich would lead to massive investments in jobs and productivity that would benefit

LETTERS

To the Editor:

There is merit in Ron Radosh's observation (June) that personal involvement—such as my fighting in Spain and his being a nephew of a hero—has nothing to do with scholarly pursuits and the need for "fresh looks." However, I am disturbed by his willingness to accept Bolleten's judgment that the war was lost by the Republic because of deeds, or lack of them, attributed to the communists in Spain and Stalin in the Soviet Union. Somehow omitted in this historical construct, made up largely of anti-communist virus and very little history, are major factors such as:

1. The military intervention of Hitler and Mussolini; there were about 100,000 Italian soldiers, 20,000 German military personnel, and their tanks, planes, artillery, ammunition, etc.; and oil and trucks from the U.S.A.

2. Also lacking is any analysis of the non-intervention farce orchestrated by England and France and the abominable "neutrality" stance of the U.S.A. Yet Bolleten, *et al.*, fault the Soviet Union for giving "woefully inadequate aid," rendered only for ulterior motives and it came "relatively late in the war," namely just three months after its beginning!

For the Bolletens it seems nothing is as significant as the roles, real and trumped up, they—and Radosh—assign to the Stalinists.

Illusions I may have had about the cause being "unsullied" have been shattered long since, but I have absolutely no doubts about the justness of the cause of the Spanish people which I, Radosh's uncle, and so many millions of people throughout the world supported with our hearts, minds, and bodies. Insofar as Radosh entertains doubts he is to be pitied.

Of course Bolleten (and Claudin) should be read. Even the pro-Franco histories should be read. However, for books not only fresh but providing a healthy, needed balance read the recent brilliant work by Ronald Fraser (*Blood on Spain*) and Professor Gabriel Jackson's scholarly opus (*The Spanish Republic and the Civil War*).

Dr. Albert Prago
Flushing, N.Y.

Letters to the editor must be signed. We reserve the right to edit for brevity. Please limit letters to less than 250 words. Letters should refer to articles that have appeared in DEMOCRATIC LEFT.

DEMOCRATIC LEFT

Formerly the
Newsletter of the
Democratic Left

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DEMOCRATIC LEFT is published ten times a year (monthly except July and August) by the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee, 853 Broadway, Suite 801, New York, N.Y. 10003. Telephone: (212) 260-3270. Subscriptions: \$15 sustaining and institutional; \$8 regular. Signed articles express the opinions of the authors. ISSN 0164-3207.

Second Class Permit Paid at New York, N.Y.

all, those same corporations and the rich were giving us examples of what they will do with a good part of the money.

In the numerous corporate takeover battles of 1981, the commercial banks of America came up with \$38 billion in credit which yielded them \$150 million in fees before they lent a single dollar. That was on top of the \$35.7 billion the corporations had spent on acquisitions before the current madness got under way. A mere five oil companies, the *Wall Street Journal* reported in August, picked up \$24.7 billion of that credit. These billions were borrowed despite the fact, noted earlier, that the oil companies have between 30 percent and 40 percent of all the profits in the United States.

Such mergers and acquisitions are not necessarily bad. They can serve an economic function. But consider some specific cases. DuPont, a company with an AAA credit rating whose debt is only 21 percent of its capital, won the wild bidding for Conoco. But, *Business Week* commented in July — and the reader should note that every figure in this article comes either from the government or from a conservative publication—the pressures within DuPont as a result of the borrowing it did to get Conoco “could constrain spending for a while in other company operations such as the life sciences or electronics, relatively new areas for DuPont.” Indeed, the *Wall Street Journal* noted in July that last year—before the quantum leap of 1981—America spent more on take-overs than on research and development!

There are other negative consequences from mergers. When Atlantic Richfield bought Anaconda Copper it closed its Montana plant to avoid environmental regulations and took the jobs to Japan.

In another *Business Week* analysis, prominent business economists argued that these billions for mergers might well put a further upward pressure on interest rates at a time when they are so high that housing, auto, and other industries that depend on financing are facing grave difficulties. Not so, said one management thinker. Those billions for takeovers are “empty calories”; they have neither positive nor negative effect. Can we afford \$38 billion in “empty calories” at a time of industrial crisis and 7 percent unemployment? But, a Standard Oil of Indiana expert said, there is still hope.

Eventually those “empty calories” will produce more wealth for the rich, who will, of course, invest their money. In more corporate take-overs?

These speculative maneuvers have disturbed business itself. “The Benefits are Doubtful,” the *Wall Street Journal* headlined a July story on the Conoco and other mergers. But perhaps the most sobering single comment was *Business Week's* August 10 editorial. Some mergers are positive, *Business Week* said, but Pan Am's going in with National Airlines has led to the brink of financial disaster. “Even worse from the standpoint of promoting the growth of the economy, when Seagram, or DuPont buys Conoco, and when Penn Central buys Colt Industries, not a single new job will be created in the U.S. If Mobil Oil buys Conoco, not a single new barrel of oil will be discovered.”

“When Seagram, or DuPont buys Conoco, and when Penn Central buys Colt Industries, not a single new job will be created in the U.S.”

RCA, *Business Week* continued, didn't have enough money to develop its own videocassette recorder — but it borrowed \$1.2 billion to buy “a lackluster finance company.” The editorial concluded: “What U.S. industry needs is giant investment in new products and modern manufacturing processes.” Amen.

But did anyone in Washington realize that, while the Congress was voting tens of billions in federal subsidies to the rich and the corporations on the theory that they will invest those funds in jobs and productivity, when in fact they were already putting tens of billions in borrowed monies into non-job-creating mergers and takeovers? That is one of the reasons why Ronald Reagan is going to fail. Throwing money at the Pentagon is another. And following Milton Friedman's monetarist economics to the point of the highest interest rates in memory is a third.

What Alternatives?

But where is the progressive alter-

native to Reaganism?

Reagan says that the old liberalism no longer works. *He is right.* That liberalism was based upon the theory that it was possible to “trade off” unemployment and inflation. If you had too much of the one, increase the other by a little bit. A recession would bring prices down; government spending could put people to work without raising them back up. It worked, although not too well, for a generation. But starting from the recession of 1969-70 it became plain that prices and unemployment were now linked together, moving in the same direction, rather than counter-acting one another. This occurred because of structural changes in the economy too complex to detail here. For now, let us simply note: the old wisdom is finished.

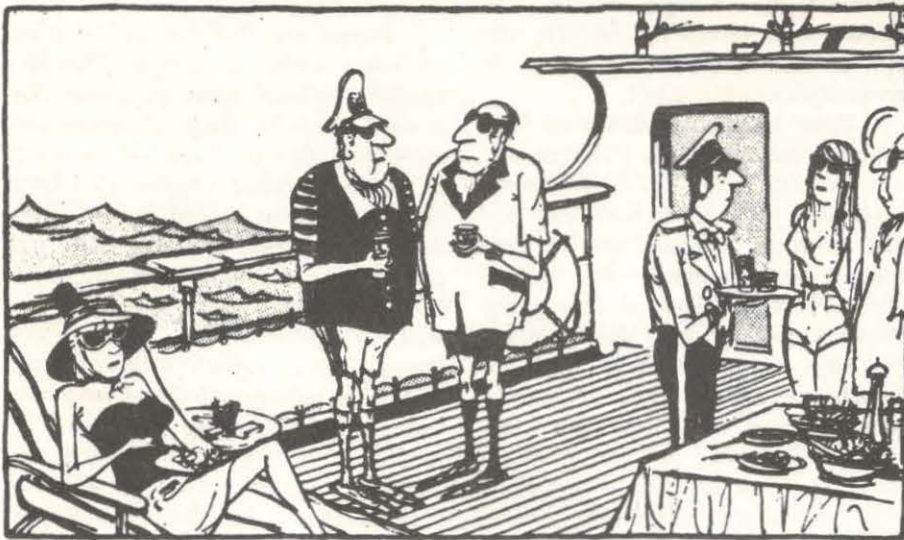
Therefore, says Reagan, let there be a new focus on investment. Government will aggressively promote the restructuring of the industrial system by providing huge tax breaks to the private sector, holding down workers' living standards, slashing social programs, particularly those for the working poor, and thereby free funds for corporations to invest in jobs and productivity. In addition to being reactionary, such a proposal, we have just seen, is incredibly naive. Corporations invest in order to make money, not jobs, and they will gladly turn those federal handouts into “empty calories.”

The democratic left, as we have argued in recent years in these pages, must also focus on investment, for the process in this country must be democratized. That is the key to the new economics of the democratic left.

How can we do this concretely? And how can we do it here and now, not in some imaginary utopia? Here are just a few ideas of the kind of a program that is needed. They are all economic demands, which is not to slight crucial social struggles — for ERA, the Voting Rights Act and the like—but simply to state one part of a democratic left approach. They are not exhaustive, but they clearly stake out an alternative to Reaganomics, a path to anti-inflationary full employment by means of social justice.

Let us rebuild America, putting people to work by:

- giving generous tax and other subsidies to the private sector when, and only when, it has actually created productive jobs in areas of need. Not one



"The country's going to the dogs. Happily, it's the top dogs."

cent of public support for speculation or runaway shops. Not a nickle to take work out of Detroit or the South Bronx. Corporations must be rewarded for performance in the social interest, not promises.

- removing all tax expenditures for capital gains and other forms of income for the wealthy that do not directly and immediately lead to job creation;

- opposing a tuition tax credit system that would further segregate our public education system;

- limiting the deductibility of mortgage interest to \$10,000 in order to encourage middle and lower income home ownership by using the funds now subsidizing the mansions of the rich for those in real need;

- putting an end to the Federal Reserve's policy of fighting inflation by creating tight money inflation-recession in industries like housing and auto;

- allocating credit, with easy money for consumers to buy homes and cars and the most expensive money possible for corporations or individuals playing the merger game or engaging in other forms of speculation;

- requiring that corporations give advance notice of shutting down, or moving plants, making them justify their decision in terms of public cost as well as private gain and depriving them of all tax deductions for moving if this is not done as well as mandating them to share the social costs of their decision;

- gaining trade union and public control of pension investment decisions in order to raise the abysmally low yield they now provide under private control as well as to direct these funds into socially useful-pro-union investments;

- supplementing the income of family farmers to encourage them to produce as much food as possible to bring prices down, and ending subsidies for agribusiness and corporate middlemen who profiteer from food.

In short, the private sector is clearly going to play a major role in the foreseeable future but it must do so, particularly where there is public subsidy or interest, within the framework of a democratically determined plan.

In addition, we need new public sector policies such as:

- the immediate restoration of CETA job programs destroyed by Reagan, and an emphasis on the planned redevelopment of central cities;

- the creation of a public energy corporation, with employee and public representation at every level of decision-making, to create new jobs and develop alternate forms of renewable energy;

- commitment to the rebuilding of an efficient, high speed rail system in the Northeast and Midwest;

- public health security to increase social justice and access to medical care and control the most expensive health system in the western world.

The resultant anti-inflationary full

employment, particularly with an equitable tax system, is the economic basis for social security, for fighting institutional racism which keeps minorities at the bottom of the society and for eliminating women's second class position in the economy. In short, our economic demands merge with our social concerns.

These are only a few examples of a new direction for America. They all propose to accomplish the rebuilding of this society from the bottom up, not the top down; they all focus on the democratization of basic investment decisions. The DEMOCRATIC AGENDA (see the announcement on page 5) is a broad coalition that has been fighting for this kind of a program since 1975. It is now gearing up for an intensive campaign in 1982 which will see the creation of state and local DEMOCRATIC AGENDA Committees, the holding of three regional conferences (West, Midwest, East) to mobilize mass support for the program, and an effort to turn the Democratic Midterm Conference—now scheduled to be an elite meeting of Democratic technicians who will avoid any questions about the programmatic bankruptcy of the Party—into a serious debate over the issues of the eighties.

A final word. DEMOCRATIC LEFT is published by the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee, an organization that also plays a key role in DEMOCRATIC AGENDA. Yet the reader will note that our immediate program as presented here recognizes that private corporations will play an important, if democratically controlled, role in the reconstruction of American society. We speak thus because we want to make proposals that are both relevant and possible.

We therefore have put forward an immediate program which moves in the direction of that complete democratization of economic, social, and political power which is the core of democratic socialism but which still remains within the limits of political possibility in America today. We will work loyally with non-socialists toward those common ends—and will frankly say that we also struggle for that day in which the people will not have just democratic inputs into private corporate decisions but in which all basic economic decisions will be made democratically and the anti-democratic power of private wealth will be eliminated from the society. ■

SEPTEMBER 19



HISTORIC DAY . . . THE FIRST OF WHAT WE HOPE WILL BE MANY OPPORTUNITIES FOR the labor movement and its friends to work together to turn back the wave of political reaction that threatens the foundations of our movement and our society.

Surely this is a time for solidarity. At home the Reagan economic program is being adopted without any real dissent from the halls of Congress; abroad, the Administration proposes dangerous interventions in Latin America that will only further isolate the U.S. in the third world, and is dreaming up new weapons systems that are driving a wedge between the U.S. and its European allies providing no real additional national security. Without solidarity the Reagan juggernaut will continue.

Our best efforts must go into continuing our cooperation past one day in Washington. The message of solidarity must be carried into our daily political work. In the past, DEMOCRATIC AGENDA has been an important vehicle for coalition work within the Democratic Party—fighting for jobs, a humane anti-inflation policy, dignity for the elderly, the social and democratic control of investment, and civil rights for women and minorities.

DEMOCRATIC AGENDA: WHO WE ARE, WHAT WE'VE DONE . . .

For the past half decade, DEMOCRATIC AGENDA has been the major labor-liberal-left coalition in national Democratic Party politics. Since 1976 AGENDA has held educational conferences attended by thousands of progressive activists and has served as a major force for full employment and social justice in party platform affairs. At the 1978 Democratic Midterm Convention, AGENDA, along with other progressive political forces, garnered the support of 40 percent of the delegates in a struggle with the Administration against human services cutback and in support of an anti-inflation program that limited corporate power. At the 1980 convention, AGENDA rallied and lobbied not only for economic planks, but in opposition to the MX missile and the escalating arms race, and in favor of strengthening the party's position on women's rights. At the June 1981 meeting of the Democratic National Committee, AGENDA was one of the strongest voices for a representative Midterm Convention in 1982.

Its sponsors have included labor leaders William Winpisinger, Joyce Miller, Douglas Fraser, Murray Finley, Jerry Wurf and Cleveland Robinson; progressive political leaders such as Representatives Ronald Dellums, John Conyers, Robert Kastenmeier, and party activists such as Wally Albertson, Jo Baer, Rick Scott, and Marjorie Phyle; feminist leaders Gloria Steinem and Millie Jeffrey; economists Lester Thurow and Robert Lekachman; social theorists Irving Howe and Michael Harrington; social activists Julian Bond, Heather Booth, and Paul Soglin; and religious leaders Rosemary Ruether and Arthur Keys.

. . . AND WHAT WE'RE GOING TO DO

In the aftermath of the disastrous political events of the past year, the DEMOCRATIC AGENDA has committed itself to a new program of activity.

◀▶ It will convene conferences around the nation, bringing together national and local progressive, community, and labor leaders with thousands of rank-and-file activists. It will develop state, local, and national programs for full employment and price stability.

◀▶ In the electoral arena AGENDA will link up with local progressive coalitions already in the field, confronting both the Republican and Democratic advocates of Reaganomics with initiatives and candidacies advancing AGENDA's perspectives.

◀▶ It will organize and advocate for an anticorporate economic democracy program at the Democratic conventions and in the Democratic primaries of 1982 and 1984.

Yes, I want to carry on this work. Put me in touch with my local DEMOCRATIC AGENDA coalition.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

UNION/SCHOOL/ORGANIZATION _____

PHONE _____

Mail to: DEMOCRATIC AGENDA, Suite 801, 853 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10003.

Union Growth Linked to Strength of Socialists

By Melvyn Dubofsky

IN WESTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES the occasion of a centennial celebration of the founding of the labor movement would call forth massive parades with a sea of red flags. In the United States the red flags will be few and unfurled as labor marks the 1881 founding of the Federation of Trades and Labor Unions, predecessor to the American Federation of Labor (AFL). Nowhere has socialism seemed less linked to the labor movement than in America. Conventional wisdom has it that American trade unionism has focused almost exclusively on the narrow issue of job control. But working-class and trade union history are more complex than such a picture suggests.

To sectarian American socialists who railed against Samuel Gompers and the AFL, Friedrich Engels rejoined, "Where do you want to find a recruiting ground if not in the trade union?" To an American in 1886 he wrote, "The masses must have time and opportunity to develop, and they can have the opportunity only when they have a movement of their own."

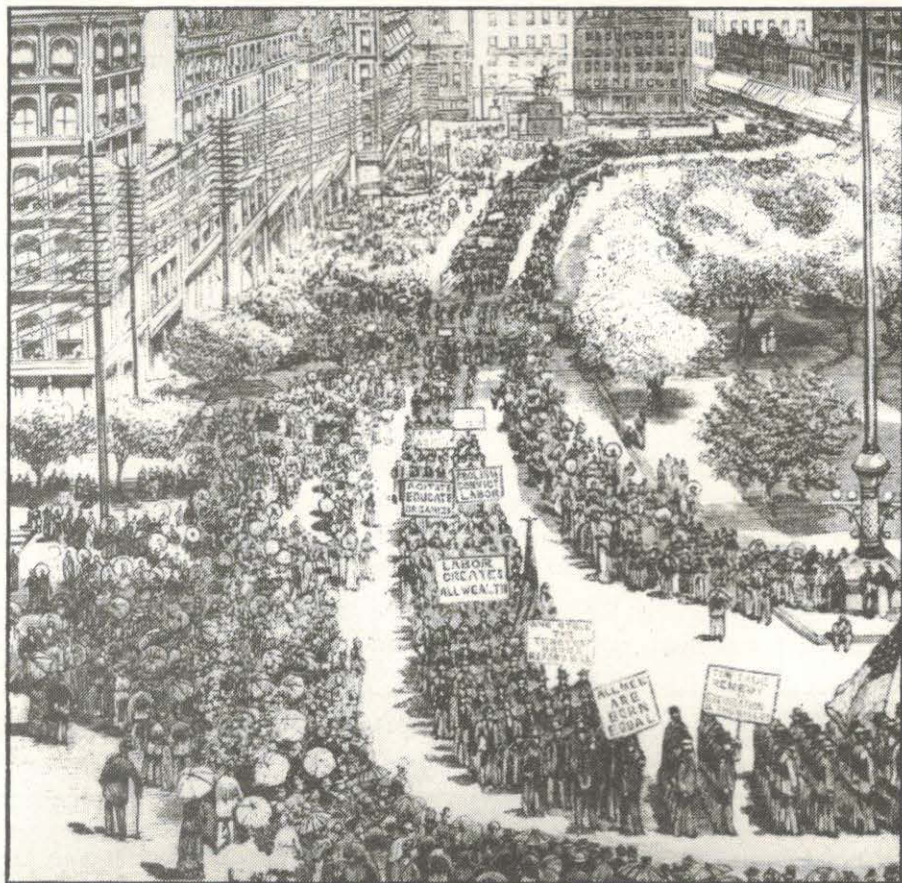
In fact, the rise of the labor movement and the growth of socialism were inextricably linked—in the U.S. as well as in Europe. Yet it remained a peculiar, dialectical, contradictory relationship. John Laslett's study of labor and socialism shows that whenever unions chose between socialist principles and collective-bargaining goals, radical action and union security, they fought on the more restricted job control front. And David Brody's perceptive studies of American trade unionism, especially of the CIO, stress the American labor movement's nonideological, nonradical traditions. Socialism was essential to the growth and success of the American labor movement in the late nineteenth century just as union

growth reinforced socialist political inroads. But once unions survived and flourished, their ties to socialism attenuated, in turn diluting radical influences in the larger society. Let us examine this history briefly.

Although the AFL is commonly perceived as a "job conscious," "pure and simple" institution, that perception distorts a complicated historical reality. At its nadir in the 1920s it deplored class consciousness and partisan politics; indeed, no more unalloyed advocate of "pure and simple" trade unionism could ever be found than in the AFL of that

decade.

But in its formative years during the 1880s and for a quarter of a century afterwards, the AFL owed an enormous debt to socialism. Its founders, particularly Samuel Gompers and P.J. McGuire of the Carpenters, matured as trade unionists within the milieu of New York City democratic socialism. During the 1880s and 1890s Gompers and McGuire spoke the language of class struggle and called on workers to emancipate themselves from wage slavery through organization, education, and political action. McGuire, for example, never relinquished



Union supporters gathered for the first Labor Day rally, September 5, 1882, in New York's Union Square.

his vision that unionism's ultimate goal must be a democratic, cooperative, socialist society, and that unions existed primarily to educate members in socialist principles, not solely to monopolize jobs.

Militant Period

It was no mere historical coincidence that the AFL emerged in a period of intense political ferment and militancy. Between 1886 and 1896, when socialism Americanized itself and Populism swelled, the labor movement rooted itself in socialist notions of class struggle and promoted a radical political consciousness among its members.

If the AFL turned more conservative after 1897, the links between socialism and the labor movement had not snapped irrevocably. Instead, in the 1910s the most significant advances in trade unionism occurred among those organizations affected by democratic socialism: the United Mine Workers, the International Ladies' Garment Workers, the United Cloth Hat and Cap Makers, and especially the Amalgamated Clothing Workers. Socialists played a role in the growth of those unions comparable to that of British socialists in the emergence of the British "new unionism" of the 1880s and 1890s. Indeed many contemporary observers referred to this American phenomenon as a form of "new unionism."

The golden age of American socialism (1900-18) can best be understood in terms of the interaction between leftwing unions and socialist politics. The period of greatest socialist electoral gains were also the years of most substantial leftwing union advance. A combination of leftwing union growth and rising socialist political strength occurred not just in New York City, Chicago, and Milwaukee, but also in Arkansas, Louisiana, Kansas, Oklahoma, and east Texas, among workers and agrarians, many of the latter in reality a rural proletariat. A similar conjuncture repeated itself during the war years (1916-19), when militant labor advances and socialist gains went hand-in-glove.

But then the forces of conservatism and reaction beat back both labor militancy and socialist politics. The ebbing of the great strike wave of 1919 and the postwar "red scare" were fitting preludes to the capitalist hegemony of the 1920s. During that decade leftwing and socialist unions suffered the greatest losses, leav-

ing the labor movement largely under the control of more conservative leaders, the type who reminded Reinhold Niebuhr of nothing so much as a small-town banker.

Socialists, however, had not disappeared. They retreated and regrouped. Many found a home in the bucolic environment of Brookwood Labor College in Katonah, New York, where they kept alive the principles of industrial unionism, democratic socialism, and class struggle. At the same time, a group of labor intellectuals published a brilliant and acerbic analysis of the existing labor movement and its future prospects, *American Labor Dynamics*, edited by J. B. S. Hardman. The book served as a guide for the Brookwood students, labor intellectuals, and trade union militants who later joined forces to rebuild the American labor movement in the debris of the Great Depression.

The precise nature of the conjuncture between socialism and unionism during the New Deal years remains paradoxical. The man who personified labor's army on the march was, in David Brody's words, "a pragmatist in the dominant tradition of American trade unionism," and in the words of another commentator, "a big-bellied, oldtime labor leader . . . An aristocrat, per capita counter, egotist, power seeker." Such, indeed, was John L. Lewis. Yet in the 1930s he sounded the tocsin of class struggle at every opportunity.

Lewis invited radicals and socialists to join him in the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) and a campaign to rebuild the labor movement through the unionization of mass-production workers. Old socialists like John Brophy, Adolph Germer, and Powers Hapgood as well as more numerous cadres of young socialists like the Reuther brothers gave the CIO an élan lacking in the stodgy AFL. Lewis and his socialist lieutenants (also many communists) conquered the open-shop bastions of American industry and helped transform the Democratic party into a sort of workers' or social democratic vehicle. Democratic socialism as a separate, independent political force declined during the 1930s precisely because the Roosevelt Democratic party appeared much like the British Labor party or continental social democratic ones. Roosevelt's words, if not all his actions, pitted masses against elites, people against economic royalists, workers against capital-

Do It Now! TIE UP THE TOWN!

Let that be your answer to Farley, Phelan and the Furies

TIE UP THE TOWN

Don't Feed Scabs. Don't Have Scab Protectors. Don't Serve the Scab-Hearted Herd of Cowards.

Guns May Brattle. Guns are for Scabs. Scabby Gunners.

TIE UP THE TOWN

Janitors, Cooks, Teamsters, Printers, Carpenters, Servants, Clerks.—Don't Serve the Scabs. Don't Serve the Cowards Who Serve Scabs.

TIE UP THE TOWN

Misery is Misery. This is the old fight between the rich and the poor. Where do you stand! With the rich, if you serve the Scabs. You serve the Scabs, if you work at all.

Tie Up the Town. Not had to do that. Not hard to do that.

EASY TO TIE UP THE TOWN

You are miserable when any are miserable, so DON'T RIDE. DON'T WORK. Don't do a thing but TIE UP THE TOWN.

JUST DON'T! THAT'S THE GAG—DON'T!

Soldiers, Police, Judges, have to be miserable with you in misery if you

TIE UP THE TOWN TIE UP THE TOWN

TIE IT UP! TIE IT UP NOW! TIE IT UP!

Of course you could have voted the Socialist Ticket last time and you would not have to tie it up now, but

TIE IT UP. TIE IT UP NOW. DO IT NOW.

Hear

WALTER MacARTHUR

at EQUALITY HALL, 139 Albion Ave.

bet. 18th and 17th, Valencia and Guerrero St.

Under the Auspices of the Socialist Party

SUNDAY, MAY 12th, 1907, 8 p. m.

SUBJECT: "TRADES UNIONISM; ITS ESSENCE; ITS EFFICIENCY."

Never mind about your boiled shirt! Don't phone that you can't come!

Don't ride a car, but come. Admission Free

DO IT NOW!

A Socialist-sponsored strike for higher wages and an eight-hour day stalled trolley car service in San Francisco in 1907 for six months.

ists. Once again labor militants and democratic socialists joined together in the 1930s to transform society in a more egalitarian manner. Only this time trade unionism benefited without an equivalent gain for democratic socialism, which found itself swallowed almost whole by the Roosevelt New Deal. Older and younger socialists one by one enlisted in the New Deal and/or the CIO, leaving American socialism, as an organized political presence, even more enfeebled than it had been during the 1920s.

World War II and the combination postwar cold war-red scare widened the gulf between socialism and trade unionism. The war integrated the CIO into the system, and, after the war, corporate capital bargained with organized labor instead of smashing it. By the 1950s class struggle seemed a dim remembrance of things past. Those labor militants and leftwing intellectuals who during the 1920s might have gathered at Brookwood and written withering critiques of society, in the 1950s celebrated the "American Century," served the C.I.A., and saw communism as more of a threat than domestic poverty, the maldistribution of income and wealth, and the concentra-

tion of economic and political power in ever fewer hands.

In the 1960s, however, militant protest revived, young people resurrected "ideology," and socialism reappeared on the national agenda. The future once again became an open question. Yet the labor movement barely seemed to share or participate in this ferment. A labor movement scarcely seemed to exist as most trade union leaders focused on their own narrow sectoral interests to the exclusion of broader concerns. And socialism just as certainly lacked a real presence within the universe of American labor.

When in the 1970s the New Deal synthesis ruptured, the labor movement appeared lost. For a time, many labor leaders, including George Meany, flirted with Richard Nixon. Then, in 1976, they adopted Jimmy Carter, only to watch Carter, as president, disappoint labor. Still, the AFL-CIO supported Carter against Reagan in 1980. Not surprisingly, almost half of all union members and their families voted for Reagan.

Where does this leave the labor movement? The alliance between labor and the democratic left, which proved so effective in the 1880s-1890s, the pre-World War I years, and the 1930s, now seems tenuous indeed, although there is evidence of growing activity by and with democratic socialists at the local and community levels.

In closing, I would like to add a few words about the dichotomy between trade union and socialist consciousness, reform and social transformation. History does seem to suggest that, in the American case at least, radical trade unionists assimilate into the dominant order. The record of the past is on the books but the pages of the future remain to be written. In considering how those pages may one day be filled, it is well for us to bear in mind Friedrich Engels' sage advice of a century ago: "Where do you want to find a recruiting ground if not in the trade unions?" In the American future, as in its past, there will be no democratic socialism without a healthy labor movement; without a socialist presence, the labor movement will atrophy.

Melvyn Dubofsky is a professor of labor history and sociology at the State University of New York at Binghamton, and the author of a history of the IWW, We Shall Be All, and co-author of a biography of John L. Lewis.



Passaic police attacked workers and sympathizers during New Jersey's eight-month long textile strike of 1926.

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WHAT'S LEFT TO READ

By Ron Radosh

David Brody, *Workers in Industrial America: Essays on the 20th Century Struggle*. New York: Oxford University Press. \$14.95 hardcover, available in paper.

James R. Green, *The World of the Worker: Labor in Twentieth Century America*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1980, \$7.95 paper.

Herbert G. Gutman, *Work, Culture and Society in Industrializing America*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976, \$12.50, available in paper from Vintage Books.

David Montgomery, *Workers' Control in America: Studies in the History of Work, Technology and Labor Struggles*. New York and London: Cambridge University Press, 1979, available in paper.

AMERICAN LABOR HISTORIOGRAPHY," DAVID BRODY writes, "is haunted by the achievement of E. P. Thompson. Why has there been no American equivalent of *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963), no comparably rich accounts of an American working class, or of working-class consciousness in Thompson's meaning as the cultural expression of class 'embodied in traditions, value systems, ideas, and institutional forms?'"

We cannot say as yet that such a task has been accomplished, but the past decade has shown that at least a start has been made. Indeed, although labor history used to be a rather dull and one-sided account of purely trade union history, it has advanced to a complex and rich discipline that takes into consideration class, culture, race, and ethnicity. In no small measure this has been the result of the pioneering work undertaken by Herbert Gutman and his students. A good place to start, therefore, is with Gutman's *Work, Culture and Society in Industrializing America*, a book of collected essays that reveal the depth and sophistication of his work. His focus is on the tensions between work, culture, and society. In his essays, he shows the manifold ways in which workers resisted the new industrial system of the late 19th and 20th centuries, and he traces the efforts of management to impose the tenets of a work ethic on a new and resisting body of immigrant workers. His studies range from that of blacks in the early United Mine Workers, to one of Paterson, New Jersey as a model for evaluating the relation of class, status, and community in American industrial cities.

Gutman's work is that of a specialist. The young socialist historian James R. Green has produced the first synthesis of the new working class and labor history. It successfully integrates workplace, union, and political experience, and gives major attention to the roles of immigrants, blacks, the neighborhood, family, and the changing character of women's work. His book, *The World of the Worker*, virtually replaces any previously existing one volume popular history of the labor movement. It is readable and popular, yet is based on careful study and consideration of the most important monographs in labor history. Green, like Gutman, places his main focus on the relationship "between the leaders and the masses of workers." He seeks consciously to take what he calls "a rank-

and-file approach," with his main emphasis being on the self-activity of workers who act in conjunction with leaders of their own choosing.

Green, therefore, produces what he calls "labor history from the bottom up," while realizing that this approach has certain pitfalls. He asks why the militancy he describes throughout his book was "invariably repressed, deflected, or channeled into bureaucratic organizations?" To answer that question, he summons a "dialectical approach which accounts for the challenge of the rank and file and response of the leadership," as well as setting strikes and struggles in the context of community and local settings.

Central to Green's thesis is that workers in their own way waged "a struggle for control," not for social ownership of private property, "but the freedom to determine certain activities at the workplace." He does not claim that this means workers had a revolutionary tradition, but that it shows there was continuous conflict over power and authority through the 20th century. He begins his book with a picture of an early company town and an urban ghetto, goes on to discuss the new capitalism of the 1920s and its effect on unions, and ends with a study of the worker's changing world between 1950 and 1980.

For an evaluation of organized labor in the late 20th century, David Brody's *Workers in Industrial America* is must reading. Brody, considered by many to be the leading historian of the 20th Century labor movement, raises thorny questions relating to the impact and role of labor struggles of the 1930s. He is a particularly sharp critic of New Left interpretations of American labor—including those by this writer—and he correctly chastises New Left historians for overemphasizing business support for industrial unionism. "Power and interest," he writes, "can be issues of deadly conflict even in a system in which men agree on the fundamentals." He notes that in the very early days of CIO militancy, the possibility existed briefly that the labor movement "represented an emergent social-democratic movement," rather than a body that would fall into the pattern of the older, traditional trade unionism.

He also raises serious questions about labor's weakness in challenging the two-party system. Why, he asks, didn't the most advanced sections of labor move toward a more independent political stance? Brody is critical of Walter Reuther's dictum that labor should "work with a party without trying to capture it." Indeed, he responds: "Well, why not?" If he has no solid answers, he does note that taking the old and tested path—not so different from that taken by Sam Gompers—no longer "translated into the kind of ongoing, predictable influence the unions had exerted within the Democratic Party for twenty years after World War II."

For a more sharply drawn treatment of the same period, one has to turn to the work of David Montgomery. Once an electrical worker and union activist, Montgomery is now a professor of history at Yale University, and author of the outstanding *Workers' Control in America*. Like James Green, his focus is on the concept of workers' control. He argues

Continued on page 20

Party Debates Will Alter Next Labor Gov't Policies

By James Cronin

REPORTS FROM BRITAIN IN RECENT months have been filled with the royal wedding, with the fate of the Irish hunger strikers, and with expressions of shock over Britain's summer of discontent. There is another story, however, which, though it has been making headlines there, has had little resonance outside Britain—and that is the fight over the future of the Labor party.

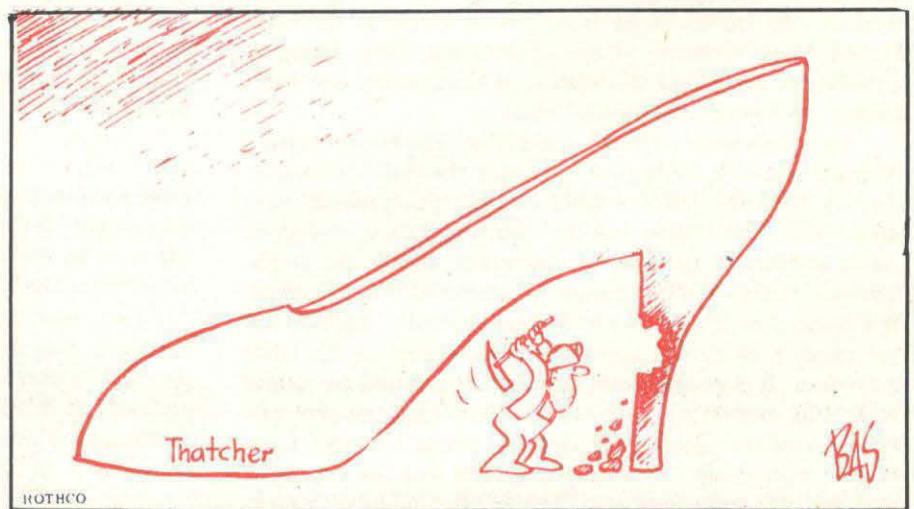
The clearest manifestation of the struggle is the contest between Tony Benn and Denis Healey over the post of deputy leader of the party. But, of course, the issues and splits run deeper and have a much longer history. Indeed, tensions between left and right have been present since the very founding of the Labor party at the turn of the century. What makes the current fight so important are three factors: first, there is a genuine prospect that the left might finally win; second, the current economic crisis in Britain has cut down substantially the scope of possible maneuver for all parties and factions and has focused policy choices more sharply than ever before; and third, the present struggle concerns not merely personalities and policies (Benn and the leftwing Alternative Economic Strategy *vs.* Healey and his more rightwing variant of Keynesian policies) but also the nature and structure of the party itself.

The origins of the present crisis go back to the late 1960s and the problem of Harold Wilson's government in the years 1964-70. Wilson's victories in 1964 and 1966 had generated a wave of optimism on the left, but the hopes turned quickly to disappointment as Wilson decided that his top priority was to combat inflation. That required extracting the consent of the unions to an incomes policy and finding some way to make such

consent stick among the rank and file. The growth of workshop power, based on an expanding network of shop stewards, made this very difficult, and led the government into open confrontation with the unions over its proposals to reform industrial relations by tightening control over their members.

The breach between the Labor government and the workers was widely believed to be the cause of the Conservative victory of 1970 and Edward Heath's accession to power. In opposition, Labor started a process of rethinking its policies. Even Wilson and Roy Jenkins shifted their line on unions and began talking of the need to revitalize the economy by a series of innovative policies that have come to be known as the Alternative Economic Strategy. In fact, the strategy was not all that innovative, but its call for a National Enterprise Board with the power to purchase a controlling interest in major companies and thus direct investment and its support for import controls and for "planning agreements" did mark a break with the orthodox demand-management policies pursued by Labor and Tory governments since the late 1940s.

When Labor (and Wilson) returned to power in 1974, therefore, they were committed on paper to some major new directions in economic policy, and Tony Benn's appointment to head the Department of Industry suggested that the commitment was taken seriously. Within months, the plans were stalled. Benn's proposals gutted, and in mid-1975 Benn himself moved from Industry to Energy. During 1976, the setbacks turned into an all-out retreat as the pound fell, and the government went hat in hand for loans to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which demanded in return major cuts in expenditure. By December 1976, the Labor government appeared to have abandoned the key elements in its new program, and to have turned into a mere agent of the IMF. If the appearance did not accurately reflect reality, it was close enough. Two points, in particular, had emerged with clarity: that the old approach of trying to stimulate growth by "finetuning" the mixed economy was no longer viable; and that the pressures of office had caused the bulk of the Labor Cabinet to abandon the policies to which they had been committed by successive party conferences.



These two lessons were reinforced by the last two years of Labor government under James Callaghan, and driven home with still greater force by Margaret Thatcher's victory in 1979. The result has been increasing support among party activists for more thoroughly socialist policies, and an intense desire to reshape the workings of the party and to make Members of Parliament (MPs) truly responsible to the organization. This has led to the recently enacted demands for the election of the leader (and deputy leader) of the parliamentary Labor party by an electoral college made up of members of the constituency parties, the unions and the MPs, and the mandatory reselection of MPs by their local parties. By thus coupling support for specific policies with the movement for structural reform, activists believe they can prevent a re-enactment of the tragedy of the last Labor government.

Split in Party

Inevitably, the battle within the Labor party has produced a great deal of heated argument, both in the party and in the press. Several figures on the right of the party, such as David Owen and Shirley Williams, after losing to the left at the conference and in the National Executive Committee, have left and set up the rival Social Democratic Party. Others, such as Healey and Roy Hattersly, have sought to counter the left by mobilizing members of the more conservative trade unions and by deals with the union leaders. It has become clear in recent months, however, that the union heads can no longer guarantee the allegiance of their membership. Benn, for example, has won the support of several unions for his campaign despite the opposition of the leadership. Finally, for a variety of personal and political reasons, Michael Foot and other longtime allies of the left have turned against Benn and his supporters with the argument that the left should rest on its current victories and rally around the party in order to drive Thatcher from office. Further efforts to change the shape and coloration of the party, they say, will only weaken it and ensure continued Conservative rule.

But those who support Benn and the policies he has championed are unlikely to be swayed by such arguments, for they know that if anyone brings down Thatcher, it will be those in her own party

BENN ON BRITAIN

When Tony Benn attended the Eurosocialism conference in Washington, D.C. (December 1980), Ruth Jordan interviewed him for DEMOCRATIC LEFT. In light of subsequent events, his comments on race relations and social unrest are excerpted here.

"As the slump worsens, race relations worsen. If you're black or if you're a woman and worst of all, if you are a black woman, you are really at the bottom of the pile as far as new jobs are concerned. We have a fascist minority, very insignificant in terms of their electoral strength, but with ideas that are capable of spreading and their line is very simple: if a black has got a job, you say to a white 'he stole yours' if he hasn't got a job, you say, 'he's a scrounger.' . . . Frankly, I'm surprised race relations aren't worse than they are. We have had some race riots in Bristol near my District last spring [1980] and it was a warning. I might add that blacks also suffer from discriminatory immigration controls and women suffer too. I'm especially trying to find out how we can build a winning coalition based around the labor movement. There is a very bright black lawyer called Rudy Narayan who summoned a meeting in London and invited me to attend it. . . . He is trying to bring the black movement into some relationship with the Labor party. Now I personally went further and argued that the black organizations, like the trade unions, affiliate with the Labor party. . . . Why couldn't you have the Indian Workers Association, as it were, representing their own interests in their own organization, affiliated to the Labor party, influencing directly Labor policy, sponsoring candidates, etc? This is part of the process of the development of leadership. We've got to set up a completely alternative democratic structure where affiliated unions, individual members, the peace movement, the blacks, the women, and ethnic communities are organizationally associated with us and they will fight their own corner . . . but they will also have this second string to their bow of political affiliation."

Benn explained how easy it has been for the ruling class to exploit the sense of defeat that ordinary people feel when their nation appears to be on the losing end of historical events.

"When the British establishment realized that imperial power had been wrested from its grasp, it really became extremely dangerous and the public was easily told this was all due to the Reds or whatever. Actually it was history. . . . There is a general feeling that the sun is setting on the American empire, and on the Russian empire too. It long ago set on the British empire, and that does create conditions."

Ruth Jordan is a member of the DSOC National Executive Committee.

who sense that her policies will be the ruin of them all, not Labor's parliamentarians. In addition, the insurgents can claim that their efforts have produced a marked revitalization throughout the Labor party. On this score the evidence is unequivocal. Labor's central office is bustling with activity, overwhelmed with requests for speakers and literature; its local organs are more active than ever before; and its women's section has become a locus of major growth. Most important, individual membership is growing again after years of steady decline. The inner life of the party is in a more healthy state than it has been for a very long time, and if this is the product of its partial restructuring, they argue, shouldn't the process be pushed to its conclusion?

The argument is thus thoroughly engaged, the outcome by no means clear. Whoever wins the contest this fall, the Labor party will probably never be quite the same again. The leftward drift of policy and the implementation of reforms have proceeded far enough to virtually ensure that any future Labor government will initiate more far-reaching changes in British society than anything attempted since 1945, and that no Labor government will be able to ignore the mandate of its supporters in quite the way Wilson and Callaghan did in the late '60s and '70s. That is a substantial accomplishment and it may be only the beginning. ■

James Cronin recently returned from a research stay of six months in Great Britain

"Rosie" Highlights Gains As Well As Power Losses

By Kate Ellis

SUSPECT THAT *Rosie the Riveter* means different things to different generations of viewers. For me it was a movie about my mother, and about the time of my earliest childhood. It was about the messages she got about what being a woman meant, and the messages she gave to her daughter on that same subject. I have always suspected that my peers and I, those of us who were moving toward thirty when the feminist movement of the late sixties swept us up, formed our sense of gender identity at a time when one very strong set of signals was followed quite suddenly by a completely opposite set.

In *Rosie the Riveter*, five compelling, wonderful women tell what that was all about. Lola Weixell is a Jewish woman from Brooklyn; Margaret Wright is black and from Los Angeles; Lyn Childs is also black and worked during the war in the San Francisco shipyards;

Gladys Belcher, a southern white woman, spent the war years in Richmond, California; and Wanita Allen is a black woman from Detroit.

All five of these women worked before, during, and after the war. We hear first of their dull jobs, their struggles to make ends meet during the Depression. Then came the call for women to form what was called "the hidden army," and Lola Weixell discovered that it didn't take six years to become a welder. "That was just a line they were stringing us," she says.

Counterpointing the women's stories is propaganda footage from *The March of Time* that shows various aspects of welding to be no harder than cooking, dressmaking, and cleaning a house. Happy images of camaraderie are translated into personal anecdotes by the women, but they also tell stories of industrial accidents counteracting the official line that the women were safer on the assembly line than in their own homes. A newspaper headline for January 2, 1944 gives the figure of 37,000 deaths in industry since Pearl Harbor, exceeding by 7,000 the number killed on the battlefield.

There are stories of white women who wouldn't use the same showers as the black women, and of racism in the assignment of jobs. Lyn Childs learned that black women couldn't get the shipfitters jobs they'd been trained for. Juanita Allen worked in a foundry, where there were only a few token whites. It was unpatriotic then even to mention unions, but Lola Weixell and her fellow electrical workers were locked out, went to the NLRB, and won union recognition and an 80 percent raise. Another myth that was exploded for me had to do with day care. I had always heard that there

was plenty during the war, but the *March of Time* footage showed only white children being taken care of by the state, and the black women spoke sadly of separation from their children.

Inevitably, of course, the war ends; the troops get off the train and start looking for jobs. "We believed the economy was going to burgeon," Wanita Allen recalls. "There would be a market for everything industry wanted to produce, because everyone wanted to buy a lot of things. Then, too, there were 'those undeveloped regions of Asia and Africa, to whose people,' the newsreel voice comments, 'war has brought new glimpses of modern industrial civilization. From these lands can come raw materials . . .'" So there would be jobs for everyone.

We know in fact what happened. The media began claiming that working mothers did irreparable damage to their children, and lost their femininity besides. "Femininity became a problematic category. If you couldn't catch, or keep, a man it was not enough of an explanation to say that you were dull, or plain, or had an unappealing voice. What you lacked was the essence of womanhood: femininity. It didn't simply come with being a woman. You fanned it into existence, and kept it alive and well, by deferring to men.

You also did it by having babies. "And we wanted babies," Lola Weixell said. "But we gave up everything. . . ." It is that admission to which the women's movement, twenty years later, responded with a deeply heartfelt "Never again!" What comes out in the film was that during the war women discovered power. They had worked before, and the money they brought in was necessary to the survival of their families. But the work they did was not socially honored. They



U.S. Govt. Poster

weren't doing anything important.

This power they experienced was not the kind a token woman can attain: something she gets because she is better than the rest of her sex. Nor was it conferred by one man, but by a whole society. In the scene in which Lyn Childs is called a "commie," she has just threatened with her blowtorch a man who had been kicking a Filipino. When she is summoned by the ship's captain, everyone who saw the incident comes with her and explains that she was doing what they should have done. "If that's being a communist," she declares, "then I'm a commie." What was important about that experience for her was the power of people working together.

After the war, the women go back to "female" jobs doing clerical work, domestic work, working in a restaurant. Gladys Belcher is a widow, but none of them has the option of following the propaganda offered by authors like Marjorie Farnham, co-author of *Modern Woman: the Lost Sex*, who is interviewed in the film. The point of that book, like so much of the writing about sex roles done in the fifties, is that women who go after power, at work or wherever else they may find it, lose the capacity to love that is the defining characteristic of their gender.

But if contemporary feminists have rejected Farnham's conservative solution, they fudged the issue she raised. Thus a wish for power became not unfeminine, as Farnham had maintained, but unfeminist. Nothing in recent feminism has caused so much turmoil as this inevitable ambivalence about power. I say inevitable because the fifties have come between us and the wartime world of *Rosie the Riveter*, where power in the hands of women was socially honored.

After the war it became once again a scarce resource, and women who had it got it by taking it away from someone else. Yet the legacy of the war years did not die out entirely. If having babies was not going to mean giving up everything, if women were going to be able to contribute to a world outside the home and experience solidarity, rather than competition, in doing so, then the gendered division between power and nurturing would have to be done away with.

This profound reorganization of social relations is still at the center of the feminist project, and what makes it a



Gordon Parks

“The women in “*Rosie the Riveter*” were told that the autonomy and pride in their work that they had experienced was fine when there were no men around, but inappropriate in a two-sexed world.”

revolutionary movement. What makes it such a formidable task is that these two elemental human drives are in fact in conflict. Someone who spends her life putting the needs of others ahead of her own forgoes an autonomy that is the bedrock of power. "Love, of man's life, is but a thing apart," said Lord Byron. "'Tis woman's whole existence."

To say that women are not really interested in power, that it is a "male trip" unworthy of a sex that is in its essence loving and nurturing, not only reflects the time-honored idea of the proper spheres of men and women, but perpetuates them. The women in *Rosie the Riveter* were told that the autonomy and pride in their work that they had

experienced was fine when there were no men around but inappropriate in a two-sexed world.

We are still a long way from resolving the contradiction presented to us with such immediacy and emotion by the five women in this film. But in this period of backlash, *Rosie the Riveter* comes to us as a timely reminder of what it is that we feminists are really about. ■

Kate Ellis is a member of the DSOC Feminist Task Force and a columnist for *In These Times*. For rental or sale information about the film, contact Clarity Educational Productions, Inc., P.O. Box 315, Franklin Lakes, N.J. 07417. (201) 891-8240.

Tired of Waiting, Office Workers Demand Change

By Joan Quinlan

WHEN MAUREEN O'CONNEL was a small girl, her father told her that hard work would always be rewarded. At the age of 29 she was still following her father's advice. A top level secretary at a small Boston college, she typed 110 words per minute, worked two hours overtime every day, and ran personal errands for her boss, all in the hope of getting ahead. After seven years she was starting to wonder. She earned \$9,000 a year, had limited benefits, and no career opportunity. Maureen called 9to5, Boston's organization for women office workers.

During her first visit with a 9to5 organizer Maureen clearly articulated the problems at her workplace, but firmly believed that "if management only knew" how bad things were, they would respond immediately. She and her co-workers maintained this belief despite the fact that when they asked to discuss their concerns with management they were told to contact the personnel office. There was no personnel office. When 9to5 asked what she thought about unions, Maureen blanched and said, "Oh, we don't need one of them here."

As it turned out, Maureen changed her mind. Shortly after her first meeting with 9to5, management caught wind of discontent and initiated a staff association. Maureen and her co-workers were thrilled. Management did listen. Rather than argue that the staff association was a management move to maintain control, 9to5 helped the clericals clarify their demands and formulate proposals on issues ranging from pay, to career development, to sexual harassment. As the group went through the process, members realized that management had no intention of implementing their proposals. They became frustrated and angry. Eventually they voted to be represented by Local 925 of

the Service Employees International Union (SEIU).

It took Maureen and her co-workers two years from the day they contacted 9to5 to vote the union in. This process was extremely rapid. With only 31 clericals, it was relatively easy for the differences between management and labor interests to become apparent. But for others, particularly the vast number of women employed in the nation's huge finance industries, such observations aren't so easily made, and when they are, the path to action is long and difficult.

Last year, at John Hancock's 7,000 person headquarters in Boston, a bonus system—in which word processors were paid a certain amount for every line of type produced—was taken away. This action resulted in a loss of one to two thousand dollars of income per year for each employee. Although they were furious, no one in the department uttered a word of protest until eight months later when 9to5 launched a major campaign against the company.

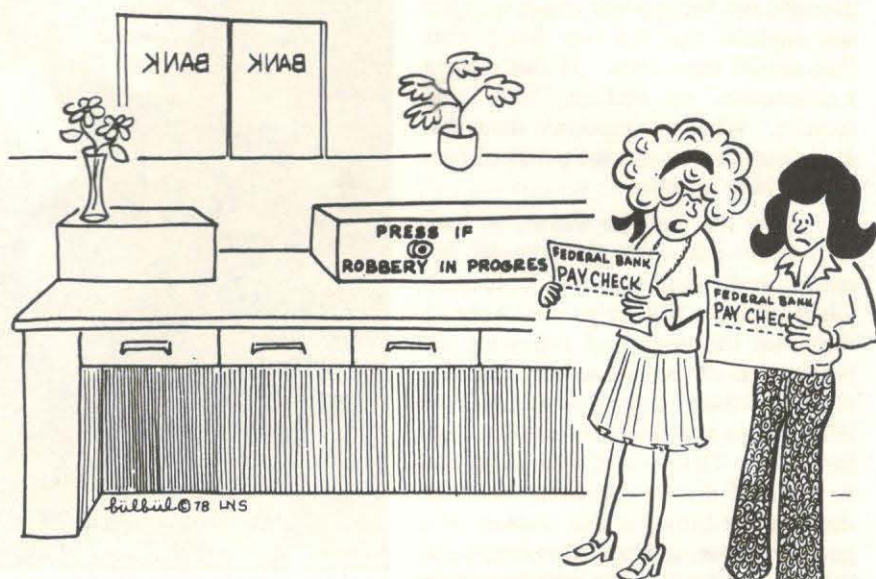
Why didn't the women at Hancock walk out? Why didn't they organize im-

mediately? The answers to these questions hold important implications for the future of the labor movement as it eyes the 20 percent of the American workforce employed as clericals.

First, many white-collar women still feel alienated from unions. Many still hold the stereotype that unions are for blue-collar men. Unfortunately, this image is sometimes reinforced when some unions send cigar chomping men to organize a workforce that is 90 percent female. Management encourages the perception that unions are for people who work on assembly lines, and are corrupt.

In addition, management's increasingly sophisticated anti-union tactics pervade the atmosphere, even at companies where the word "union" hasn't been uttered. Union busting has become a routine component of all lower and middle level management training. Those women at Hancock had been sufficiently intimidated to keep their mouths shut.

And finally, for most women, speaking up to the boss means shedding a lifetime of cultural training. We are taught that being assertive and taking control



"Let's press a button! This pay check is a robbery in progress!"

isn't nice. And that's what organizing is all about. Employers deftly manipulate the male-female, boss-clerical relationship to exert power and control. To some extent, they have been successful.

But things are changing. There is a new movement through which working women are becoming aware that they deserve rights and respect on the job. WORKING WOMEN, the national association of office workers, has 11 affiliates like 9to5 around the country. Jane Fonda's film *Nine to Five*, was the largest grossing film in the first six months of 1981 not only because it was funny, but because it touched a realization in women throughout the country that they are not alone in their frustration and anger on the job.

WORKING WOMEN's organizing style is similar to that of many community organizations across the country. Its programs are designed to win concrete victories in the workplace through direct action. The victories are used to help overcome the overwhelming sense of powerlessness women like the clericals at Hancock felt in facing the boss, and to demonstrate that change can only come by working together. The campaigns are usually targeted against the major employers in an urban area, and thus have a ripple effect across the city in creating consciousness and momentum. Leaders are developed within the workforce and an infrastructure is put in place for future organizing.

These campaigns against major employers are catching fire around the country as more and more women continue to pour into the workforce in low level clerical jobs. Fully one third of all women who work are clericals. With the introduction of automation, the work promises to become more highly routinized, controlled and dead-end. The combined forces of increasing expectations and shrinking opportunity could produce dynamite reactions. Karen Nussbaum, president of WORKING WOMEN has said, "The 1980s could be for clerical workers what the 1930s were for industrial workers."

A WORKING WOMEN campaign, such as that against the massive John Hancock, combines both community and union organizing tactics. A committee of 9to5 members who work at John Hancock as well as other companies, carries out the campaign. A network is formed within the company by

“ For most women, speaking up to the boss means shedding a lifetime of cultural training. We are taught that being assertive and taking control isn't nice. And that's what organizing is all about. ”

surveying employees, and by leafleting with a bi-monthly employee newsletter. Public pressure is applied by: forming a support committee of concerned community leaders; putting the chairman of the board on the spot in the annual policy holder meeting; doing outreach to policy holders at large; staging colorful demonstrations such as presenting the president with the annual "Scrooge of the Year" Award at Christmas time; and by gathering the support of major investors in the company, such as unions and churches.

And the "corporate campaigns" win real changes. At Hancock the campaign has so far resulted in \$19,000 back pay for those word processors; a re-evaluation of career training; a cleanup of asbestos in a file clerk area; and a company donation of \$100,000 to local child care centers. Although substantive, the changes don't radically alter everyday working conditions. But they do give women a new sense of hope and power. The boss can be made to respond. And in the process women learn the skills they need for future activity.

As the industrial base of the U.S. economy shrinks, and the service sector grows, it is obvious that women are the future of the labor movement. WORKING WOMEN and the Service Em-



ployees International Union recently entered into an agreement which they hope will make that future a reality. The two organizations launched a joint clerical organizing project. In doing so SEIU created a new nationwide clerical organizing unit called District 925. The union also created a Women's Division, for which WORKING WOMEN will design programs. WORKING WOMEN's expertise will also be utilized in devising a clerical organizing strategy.

Maureen O'Connell discovered that hard work and a good union can go a long way towards fulfilling her father's predictions. Hundreds of thousands of women like her are punching keyboards and sorting files throughout the country. When they mobilize, the changes, not only in the workplace, but in the political arena, will be marked. Unions, women's groups, and working women's organizations have a lot of hard work ahead of them. They expect it to be rewarded. ■

Joan Quinlan is director of 925 in Boston and is active in Boston DSOC.

COMPUTER DELAYS

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Meidner on Politics of Worker Control Plan

By John D. Stephens

IN ORDER TO MAKE MORE MONEY available for investment, the U.S. Congress this summer passed a tax cut bill considered heretical even by many conservative economists. It will certainly fatten the bank accounts of the rich and well-to-do, but carries no guarantee that the money "freed" for investment will go into new enterprises. That it could become law underlines the lack of alternative ideas in this country. We are not alone. Debate over strategies for capital formation and its use is heated throughout the world. In Sweden, a proposal for the establishment of "wage earner funds," a system of mutual funds collectively owned by Swedish employees who would gradually come to own the vast majority of shares in Swedish business, has also provoked a political controversy sharper than that first brought on by the Reagan tax plan.

The chief author of the wage earner fund plan, economist Rudolf Meidner, was at the Eurosocialism conference this past winter. Because democratic socialists often look to Sweden for new ideas, DEMOCRATIC LEFT asked him to describe the rationale for the plan and the pitfalls it has encountered.

As Meidner has often emphasized, the proposal, though clearly a departure from past policy, was rooted in problems generated in part by those policies. The central thrust of the postwar economic policy of the Swedish labor movement was full employment, and Swedish achievements in this area have been impressive: unemployment in Sweden averaged 1-2 percent in the fifties and sixties and slightly more than 2-3 percent in the seventies. Given these levels of employment, the Swedish inflation rate is also impressive: 4-6 percent in the earlier period and 10-12 percent more recently. To achieve this, Meidner stressed,

one must go beyond general measures to stimulate the economy: "First you need, of course, Keynesian expansive policy. But, second, you also need an active manpower policy." The Swedish active labor market policy includes job retraining programs, provision of unemployment benefits, subsidized moving costs to increase labor mobility, a national employment service to match job seekers and employment policies, and public works jobs. It includes selective policies aimed at target groups such as workers displaced by structural changes in the economy, older workers, handicapped workers, and new entrants, largely women and youth, pro-

cies and the selective ones were intended not only to reduce unemployment but also to reduce the unemployment inflation trade off. Had the policies been successful on this account? Meidner responded that since both inflation and unemployment were higher in Sweden now than in the sixties one would have to say they were not. I pointed out that this had occurred in all industrial countries and that relatively speaking Sweden was doing better than most other countries. He agreed that the relative success of the Swedish economy in terms of its inflation and unemployment ratios could be attributed to the labor movement's policies.

“If the capitalists are not doing the job that they are traditionally supposed to do; raising capital, investing capital, and so on; well, it's natural that employees will demand influence, if they are ready to abstain from potential wage increases for capital formation.”

viding subsidies to employers to take on new employees, particularly from these target groups, and subsidies to industries hit by industrial dislocation. These have gained greater importance in the seventies due to the onset of stagflation and structural changes in the Swedish economy. Some people have been critical of such measures but Meidner disagrees.

"If you are retraining people, giving them better chances to readjust (to changes in the economy) . . . it's better than being outside the labor force. . . . Between 70 and 75 percent of people in retraining courses do get new jobs within nine months."

Both the general labor market poli-

Another key economic policy of the Swedish labor movement has been the "solidaristic wage policy," and it is this policy that provides the crucial links of past policy to the development of the wage earner funds. In pursuing a "solidaristic principle," LO (the central organization of blue-collar unions) has demanded equal pay for equal work across the economy regardless of the companies' ability to pay. Although some companies would be forced out of business, the workers could be taken care of by the active labor market policy. By moving workers from low wage-low productivity sectors to high wage-high productivity sectors, the overall level of productivity

and wages in the Swedish economy would be upgraded. But there was a negative consequence which troubled Swedish unionists deeply. The solidaristic wage policy favored profitable firms with an unused capacity to pay higher wages—resulting either in increasing wealth for shareholders or in wage drift, that is, local wage increases above the national agreement in these industries. Both alternatives were undesirable from a union point of view—the first because it increased the concentration of wealth and the second because it undermined the solidaristic aims of the wage policy itself.

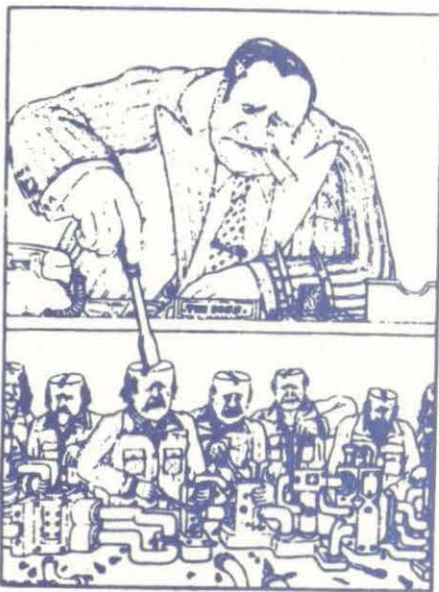
For decades, LO leaders and economists (including Meidner himself) searched unsuccessfully for solutions to this problem. A turning point came at the historic 1971 LO congress, which launched the Swedish labor movement's drive to increase employee decision making rights at work. At the suggestion of the Metalworkers union, the LO executive appointed a working group headed by Meidner to study the problem. The central directive given to the Meidner group was to develop a proposal to complement the solidaristic wage policy in a way which would counteract the concentration of wealth and increase employee influence in the enterprise. The report published in 1978, which came to be known as the Meidner Plan, called for the development of a system of "wage earner funds." Twenty percent of companies' pretax profit in the form of newly issued shares of stock should be transferred to the employees as a collectivity. The shares would be collectively, not individually, owned and could not be sold. Thus the employee owned portion of stocks would constantly grow relative to the individually held shares of stock. And, since the voting rights to the employee held shares would be shared by the employees in the firm and representatives of employees in other firms, control of industry would also gradually shift from private stockholders to democratically elected representatives of employees. In short, the groups proposed a plan for gradual transition to a democratically owned and controlled economy.

The proposal generated a very heated debate in Sweden. It has been modified by LO and the Social Democratic Parties several times, and recently the emphasis in the debate has shifted to the question of capital formation. In the current eco-

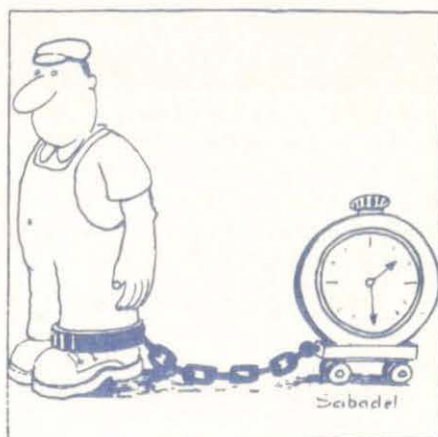
nomie situation, increasing pressure has come on the unions to accept freezes or even rollbacks in consumption to allow for new sources of reinvestment. LO has insisted that if employees are to restrain wages they must be given a share in the new capital created by their restraint. The best way to do this, they argue, is through the institution of wage earner funds. Most of our conversation focused on the reasons for this shift in emphasis and the possibilities for passage of legislation instituting some type of wage earner funds.

"There was nothing on capital formation (in the original directive) . . . [I]n the beginning there were three motives (wage policy, wealth concentration, employee influence in decision making). These were the union motives. The (Social Democratic) party has added a fourth motive (capital formation) and the unions have adjusted to it."

Reducing capital flight is one way that the funds could be expected to increase reinvestment in Sweden: "We could expect that if union people have more influence they would work for using the capital which is already in the hands of the companies for investment in productive purposes in Sweden. We have experienced a large outflow of capital to subsidiaries of Swedish multinationals in other countries both in Europe and outside Europe. . . . Former Prime Minister Tage Erlander said, 'Well, you can be critical of the idea



Modern Times/cpl



cpl

of wage earner funds, but one thing is sure, they couldn't be exported to Lichtenstein.' That is a real point . . . the outflow of capital would probably not be as high as it is now."

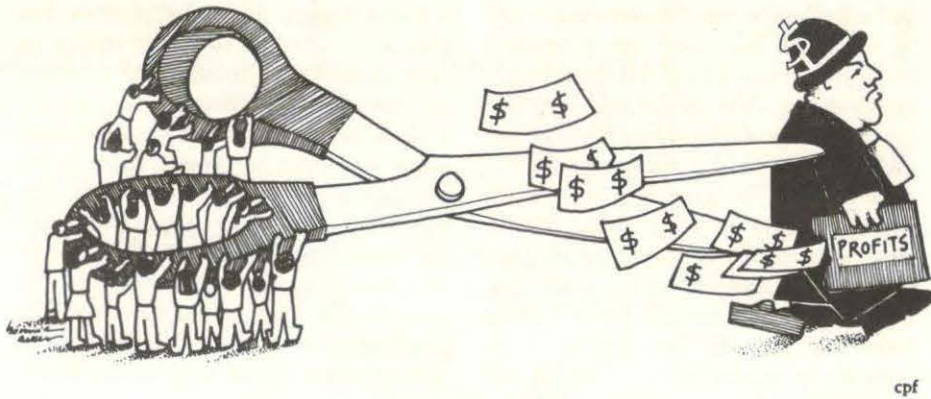
I drew a parallel to American trade union pension funds; they could be used to slow the export of capital from the U.S. and from union to nonunion plants. "Exactly. A professional economist would probably say . . . 'You are protectionist, you are hampering the flow of capital in the United States, from the North to the South, to the Sunbelt . . . capital should move to cheap labor.' We have heard such remarks from our professionals in Sweden.

"There is a tendency (in the discussion of wage earner funds) to more and more emphasis on capital formation. . . . It's more acceptable from the point of view of the nonsocialist parties because capital formation is normally for them a very positive thing. Also, the situation in Sweden has changed. We started in 1973 (and) delivered the report in 1975. That was a period when lack of capital was not an issue. There was no severe structural change (in the economy). As many of the TCO (the white-collar trade union central organization) people and some of the LO people are saying, . . . the problem ahead now (is) to readjust our economy from our earlier basic industries . . . iron ore, steel, shipbuilding, and so on . . . (for this) process of reconstructing, we will need a great deal of capital . . . and our old capitalists are obviously not prepared to invest their capital. So it's natural that the unions say, 'OK we will take some responsibility (i.e., wage restraint to create new reinvestment) but we want to have more influence (in decision making

in the enterprise) in that case. It's logical even from a nonsocialist point of view. If the capitalists are not doing the job that they are traditionally supposed to do; raising capital, investing capital, and so on; well it's natural that employees will demand influence, if they are ready to abstain from potential wage increases for capital formation.

Other changes have occurred too. Now there is less emphasis on the solidaristic wage policy. But the core element, a gradual shift to democratic ownership and control of Swedish industry, still stands. The most recent proposals "give the voting rights of the (employee owned) shares in the shareholders meetings . . . (to) the employees in the company up to 20 percent" (of the total shares in the company). The rest would be voted by the boards of regional funds. Meidner indicated there was some difference of opinion in the labor movement as to how these boards should be elected. "It seems to me that the (Social Democratic) party favors a general election . . . at which each person that is covered by the pension scheme and that it, I would say, practically 90 percent of the Swedish people, would be allowed to vote. The unions favor wage earner voting. That is not so much a matter of percentage since 80 or 90 percent of Swedes are wage earners. It is really a matter of principal. The party program says that the productive capital should be transferred into the hands of the people. It's part of our democratic commitment. The unions think, OK, of course, the primacy of the government must be respected. We are not corporatists or neo-corporatists. But the control of these funds should remain with the wage earners because it is their deferred wages which were put into the funds and (it is) their problems, in the firm, in the workplace, how to organize work, how to produce, and so on. But even there I can see some kind of compromise, with the wage earners electing the board but . . . also . . . (with some representatives from the government. These questions can be solved between the unions and the party."

The critical question now is the political one: can LO and the Social Democrats muster enough support for the idea of wage earner funds to push them through. The role of TCO, whose support on workers control legislation in



“It would be impossible to bring the unions to a position where they accept continuous decreases of their real wages for investments, savings, higher profits without some kind of arrangement which gives them part of that capital to which they already contribute.”

the early and mid seventies was decisive in getting it passed, is crucial. Meidner noted that the TCO leadership had supported the concept of wage earner funds but had backed away because its members, most of whom vote for the non-socialist parties, were not with them. Meidner seemed pessimistic on this account, and his pessimism has since been borne out. The Swedish Industry Employee's Union (SIF), the largest TCO affiliate in the private sector, has come out against the funds and TCO has decided to remain neutral on the issue. Given the difficulty of the political battle ahead on this issue, I asked Meidner if he saw any other option for the labor movement. Did he see any way of getting the unions to hold down wages to increase reinvestment now deemed necessary by everyone, without compensating labor with increased influence in the enterprise?

"No, no, impossible. . . . There is not a chance of convincing, persuading or forcing the strong Swedish labor movement, which is totally intact after four years (of nonsocialist rule) to do that. There are no signs of distraction or retreat. On the contrary, they had a conflict last year (the general strike and lockout of May, 1980), you know. It was a clear victory for the unions. The employers said there is nothing here, zero (for wage increases). The unions demanded 9 percent and they got 7 percent, a clear vic-

toyr. It would be impossible to bring the unions to a position where they accept continuous decreases of their real wages for investments, savings, higher profits without . . . some kind of arrangement which gives them part of that capital to which they already contribute. I am fully convinced of that."

We returned again to the theme of the political struggle and Meidner expressed somewhat more optimism when it came to the long run chance for legislation or some form of wage earner funds: "There is a political process in a country like Sweden, it's a democracy. It (the legislation) must be politically acceptable not only to the activists within the unions, within the Social Democratic Party. It really must be accepted by a majority of the Swedish people. That is democracy. . . . I feel very confident that something will happen in this field. . . . In Sweden, a decision made by an LO congress and by an SAP congress can not be neglected. It's impossible because, at the next congress, there would be people who would ask 'What have you done, you have promised to develop these things, to start a campaign . . . tell us what you have done.' And the party executive and the LO executive really have to answer these questions. And they will be asked, I am quite sure."

John Stephens is the author of The Transition from Capitalism to Socialism.

ON THE LEFT

By Harry Fleischman

DID YOU KNOW THAT BOTH LABOR DAY AND MAY Day were initiated by a socialist trade unionist? Peter J. McGuire, first general secretary of the Brotherhood of Carpenters and first secretary of the American Federation of Labor, is generally credited with being the first to propose both holidays. He also served on the executive board of the Social Democratic Party more than a century ago and developed a devotion to socialism that remained with him all his life.

■ ■ ■
DSOC MEMBER Lillian Roberts, a top official of District Council 37 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, has now been sworn in as New York State Industrial Commissioner (the equivalent of Secretary of Labor). The post has not been filled by a woman since the early 1930s when it was held by Frances Perkins, later F. D. Roosevelt's Secretary of Labor. Never, until now, has it been held by a black. . . . SLAPPING REAGAN'S NONSENSE on deregulation of business squarely in the face, economist and DSOC member Ruth Ruttenger has written a devastating reply in *Working Papers*, "Regulation is the Mother of Invention." Her article clearly demonstrates that government regulation "is a major stimulus for new markets, new jobs, and basic innovation." Reprints are available, while the supply lasts, from *UAW Washington Report*, 1757 N Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

■ ■ ■
THE AFL-CIO LEGISLATIVE ALERT reminds us that business tax cuts were passed on the theory that they would free up cash for productive investment capacity. The *Dallas Times-Herald* gives us an example of what to expect with the headline "How Suite It Is." The story tells us that the "Diamond Shamrock Corp. bought a coveted 35-yard-line suite at Texas Stadium for an unprecedented \$600,000 cash, part of a total \$1.1 million transaction that one insider said was made to boost the firm's prestige in Dallas. For its \$600,000, Diamond Shamrock purchased a suite with mirrors on the back walls, a bar paneled in dark wood, with wooden beams in the ceiling and upholstered leather and suede seats that match the chocolate and beige carpeting. Measuring 16 feet by 16 feet, the box cost the company \$2,343 a square foot."

■ ■ ■
ALASKA DSOC recently sponsored a film presentation and discussion forum on "Peace-Keeping in El Salvador—What Are Our Options?" at the University of Alaska. . . . The Central District Committee of the state Democratic party passed a resolution urging the state to construct its own oil refinery for state agency fuel needs and for sale to Alaska consumers. . . . Judy MacLean recently led a discussion at San Francisco DSOC on "How Democratic Socialists Should Relate to the Women's Movement." . . . *Downstate Left*, published by the *Champaign-Urbana, Ill.* local, reports that local activism has led to progressive Democratic dominance in Urbana. . . . DSOC at *Michigan State University* in East Lansing heard Ray Funk, a Canadian New Democratic Party member, speak on "The Problems With Third Parties." . . .

The local supported a statewide rally at the Capitol in Lansing on reproductive freedom rights. . . . *Portland, Maine* DSOC held a forum on "Progressive Politics in Augusta" with Pat McTeague of Maine AFL-CIO, Tom Andrews of the Safe Energy Political Action Committee, Chris Hastedt of Pine Tree Legal Aid and Jackie Potter of the Maine Women's Commission. . . . L.D. 1100, an act to create a Municipal Power District Enabling Act, was committed to a study by the Legislature's public utilities committee, thus keeping the bill alive for further consideration.

■ ■ ■
THE NEW DSOC LOCAL IN HOWARD COUNTY, MD. SPONSORED a booth at the Columbia Birthday Fair, distributing and selling hundreds of leaflets, books, bumper stickers, and buttons. . . . Charting a pioneer course among the nation's cities, the St. Paul, Minn. City Council voted unanimously to develop a publicly-owned cable television system. . . . The *Minnesota Leader*, published by the Farmer-Labor Association, features an article by DSOCer Harry Boyte and John de Graaf on "Citizen Power," reporting how this new movement is tapping old traditions of community self-help and control. . . . The New Haven, Conn. Local raised \$100 for striking Harco workers with a benefit showing of "With Babies and Banners." The Harco Laboratories workers, almost all women, charge the defense contractor with exploitation on the basis of sex and other anti-labor practices.

■ ■ ■
THE ALBANY LOCAL WILL SERVE AS LEGISLATIVE CENTER for all New York locals. . . . Local Nassau was active with the Progressive Coalition in creating a Progressive Caucus of the Nassau Democratic Party with more than 60 committeemen and women among its initiators. The N.Y.C. Upper West Side branch has started an ambitious drive to rally support for the West Side Urban Renewal Area, whose sites will be coming before the Board of Estimate for approval soon. . . . The Albany local is waging a campaign to elect DSOCer Gene Damm to the Common Council. The local publishes a newsletter, *Albany Anvil*, which noted that the Coalition for Fair Rents demonstration induced Mayor Corning to endorse Albany's inclusion in the NYS Emergency Tenant Protection Act. . . . Ithaca DSOC members were active in the victory of the United Auto Workers among service and maintenance workers at Cornell University. The local now publishes a regular newsletter.

■ ■ ■
DSOC has been active in organizing *Oregon Progressive Agenda*, a network of labor, community, feminist and Democratic party activists. OPA publishes a regular newsletter listing progressive priorities in the 1981 legislative session. . . . At the spring *Seattle, Wash.* march and rally against U.S. intervention in El Salvador, DSOCers carried signs saying "USA—Hands Off El Salvador; USSR—Hands Off Poland." Most demonstrators approved the slogan and many asked for "Solidarnosc" buttons. . . . Fred Small, who sang at the recent DSOC convention, has just released a stereo 45 rpm record, *For El Salvador*, including "No More Vietnams" and "Tarde

Obrera." Copies are available at \$2.85 from Mobilization for Survival, 13 Sellers Street, Cambridge, Mass. 02139.

■ ■ ■

THE YELLOW ROSE OF TEXAS ISN'T ABOUT TO TURN INTO THE red rose of socialism, but leftists were heartened by the explicit democratic socialist presence at a meeting in Austin of liberal and left-of-liberal democrats organized and led by Billie Carr of Houston. Featured speaker of the day-long conference was Norman Birnbaum, Georgetown University professor and member of DSOC's National Advisory Committee. Four members of the Austin DSOC local staffed a literature table that drew favorable attention. *Behind the Cotton Curtain*, newsletter of southern democratic socialists, reports that the meeting was conceived as a first step toward the goal of rebuilding Texas Democrats as a cohesive statewide political force. There will be three more quarterly meetings to work on issues and

■ ■ ■

HEARINGS THIS SUMMER BY THE GOVERNMENT'S COMMISSION on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians again focused attention on the racist policy that led to the mass internment of people of Japanese descent during World War II. "Did anyone go to the President and say, 'This is legally and morally wrong?'" asks Commission member Arthur Goldber. The answer is "Yes." The Japanese American Citizens League reminds us that Norman Thomas "was the first American of national prominence to question the constitutionality of the evacuation of persons of Japanese ancestry from the western states," and "he was the first to urge, in the spring of 1942, government compensation of losses suffered by the evacuees." At that time I was national secretary of the Socialist party, which of course backed Thomas's views. The only other

groups that then opposed the relocation program were the American Friends Service Committee, the Workers Defense League and the Post War World Council. The Communists, who were then pressing for a "second front" to aid Russia, wanted no agitation on this subject. On at least one occasion they tried to break up a meeting on the Japanese Americans chaired by Norman Thomas, because "it hampered the war effort." The question now, some 40 years later, is what restitution the U.S. will make. Certainly money can never adequately compensate for the vicious assault on the civil rights and liberties of the evacuees, but it will at least remind us that our nation was guilty and is willing, in some small way, to try to rectify its violation of American ideals.

■ ■ ■

THE TACTICS THAT WORKED WELL in the campaign to unionize J. P. Stevens are being tried in another campaign to stop runaway shops in the airline industry. Chief target in the corporate campaign headed by Ray Rogers is Texas International Airlines, which recently set up nonunion New York Air as a competitor in the New York market. Pilots flying for NY Air average \$30,000 a year and put in more flying time. Unionized pilots at TIA average \$52,000 and argue that NY Air's pilots should come under the same contract. The corporate campaign seeks to isolate a company by putting pressure on its customers and business associates. The Airline Pilots Association has targeted 11 firms tied to Texas International by investments or other relationships. It will examine whether union pension funds have large investments in any of these firms. ALPA members also picket New York Air during peak customer hours, stressing possible safety problems associated with NY Air's less restrictive work rules. The AFL-CIO has endorsed a boycott of NY Air.

WHAT'S LEFT TO READ, from page 9

that the first quarter of the 20th century was not only the epoch of scientific management and assembly line production, but one in "which the alternative of placing the factory under the collective direction of its operatives, clerks and technicians was vigorously and creatively supported by millions of workers in all those countries." In the Machinists' union, he shows, shop floor conflict between management prerogative and workers' control undermined the class cooperation advanced by the National Civil Federation corporate liberals, and produced the demand by workers for a "truly scientific" reorganization of society on a collectivist basis. The management's demand for top down control was met by the workers with their own plans "for the reorganization of work relations from below."

When he discusses the New Deal, obvious differences with Brody's interpretation surface. Reflecting on the accomplishments of New Deal labor legislation, Montgomery writes:

This governmental activity was simultaneously liberating and cooptive for the workers. Lifting the suffocating burden of absolute managerial control from the working lives of Americans . . . was one of the greatest chapters in the historic struggle for human liberties in this country. Both the action at the base and the deeds of the government contributed toward that result. On the other hand, the government's intervention also opened a new avenue through which the rank and file could in time be tamed and the newly powerful unions be subjected to tight legal and political control.

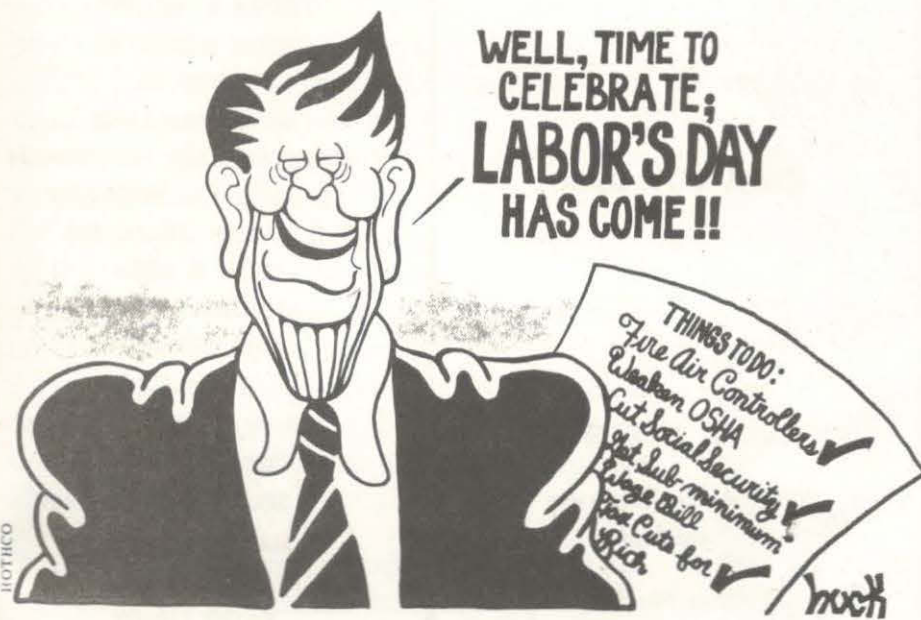
Indeed, it is Montgomery's thesis that the same New

Deal reforms that originally offered substantial benefits to workers have now become a restrictive quagmire from which workers are seeking escape. The New Deal formula for labor relations has broken down, he maintains, and he conjectures that workers are rising to break out of their isolation by two connected paths: "by producing a new socialist grouping of trade union activists and by generating new types of struggles at the base."

Praising the leadership of Machinists President William Winpisinger, Montgomery argues that "the Wimpy phenomenon exists only because of the rebellion at the base," an insurgency symbolized by the Sadlowski movement in the Steelworkers and the reform movement in the Teamsters—movements which he argues have produced new "indigenous forms of struggle." He concludes optimistically: "Both the consolidation of an articulate socialist leadership within the labor movement and the proliferation of broadly based grass roots struggles represent important alternatives" to the Meany-Kirkland policies. American workers, he claims, "will not much long be confined within its New Deal variant."

Brody provides essential background, while Montgomery, Green and Gutman, each in his own way, seek to delineate a hidden tradition that reveals "an aspiration" (as Montgomery calls it) by workers for control over their own lives. These books, then, are tools to help workers reclaim their own history and their heritage, tools that will help them articulate the strategies necessary to break out of the current impasse. ■

Reagan Strikes Back at Striking Air Controllers



By Ben Tafoya

A POPULAR EDITORIAL CARTOON shows a scene of workers demonstrating in a city square and a voice to the side yelling for army intervention, fines, and firings. The next scene shows an aide to Communist Party Chairman Brezhnev telling him he cannot take such brutal measures, after all, "this is not America." The overdrawn sarcasm of the cartoon serves to remind us of some of the tougher questions raised by the ongoing air traffic controllers strike.

The strike tests our notions of trade union solidarity. Progressives disapproved of the union's endorsing Reagan in last year's election campaign. An exchange of letters between the Profes-

sional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO) and the Reagan campaign seemed to show some kind of understanding regarding issues of concern to the controllers.

Moreover, the PATCO leadership was quite lax in its attempts to coordinate its actions with other unions. As a result, PATCO was already on strike and its members fired before other unions were brought into the fight.

Finally, the strike was illegal under federal statutes forbidding federal employees from engaging in any "job action," be it strike or slowdown, thus complicating others' attempts to provide support, honor picket lines, and organize boycotts.

Despite these factors, the controll-

ers' strike requires our full support. Apart from the validity of their demands, such as a shorter work week, twenty year retirement, better working conditions, and higher pay, the controllers' strike is significant for other reasons.

- It is a major test of the Reagan administration's resolve on labor-management relations. The negotiations with the postal unions that went beyond the strike deadline and almost blew apart at the last minute also showed that this administration does not respect the role of unions. If Reagan succeeds in breaking the controllers' union, then a tone is set in this country, and no union, in the public or private sector, is safe.

- Reagan's actions on budget, taxes, and his strikebreaking should be used to clear up doubts among union membership about which side Reagan is really on. The President is able to feign a certain sympathy with workers since he is a lifetime member of the Screen Actors Guild, AFL-CIO. But members of his union have moved to expel him. If that card is not withdrawn, then certainly it is tarnished. Happily, the Bricklayers have withdrawn an invitation for Reagan to speak at their convention.

- Finally, it should reinforce our resolve to change those laws that discriminate against unions public and private. The cartoon is right; would Brezhnev be justified in breaking Solidarity if he defined all workers as public employees? Of course not, and we should double our efforts to change restrictive laws in the U.S.

The lessons from this strike are being learned in the most bitter of ways. The number laid off in the airline industry have now surpassed the number of controllers fired. There is no sign of a settlement, no light at the end of this tunnel. It proves again why Solidarity must be the watchword for September, and every month thereafter. ■

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Yours for a Socialist Sunbelt
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Greetings from Jim Templeton

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With you in Solidarity always

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WARMEST GREETINGS

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6 North Michigan, Chicago, Ill. 60602

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1981 SPECIAL FUND APPEAL

Hundreds of DSOC members have responded generously to our 1981 Special Fund Appeal Letter. The initial response, far greater than expected, has brought us to 58% of our goal of \$21,000. While this figure is very heartening for this stage in the campaign, we still have a long way to go. Events are making this campaign ever more crucial to DSOC. Reagan's attempt to break the air controllers union has meant that several fundraising trips which were planned for this month had to be put off. At the same time, the first significant mass action against the Reagan cut-back program is being organized for Solidarity Day this September 19. DSOC will be there on the 19th and will be involved in the planning and execution of the follow-up activities for Solidarity Day. The costs for such activities are extensive. Simply printing extra copies of this issue, ordering signs and banners, and developing a special leaflet for Solidarity Day cost almost \$2000.

Because of these special expenses and the disruption to our established fundraising program, the only funds that DSOC can count on in the next six weeks will come from the response to the 1981 Special Appeal. We count on your generosity.



\$21,000

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Send to: DSOC, 853 Broadway, Rm. 801, New York, N.Y. 10003

Yes, count me in. Enclosed is my contribution to the 1981 Special Fund Drive.

\$25 \$50 \$100 \$250 \$500 Other \$ _____

Here is an extra contribution of \$ _____ to help offset the costs of DSOC's participation in Solidarity Day.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

(Remember, a portion of your contribution to the Special Fund Drive will be shared with your local.)

Greetings from

DISTRICT 65
United Automobile Workers
AFL-CIO

13 Astor Place
New York, N.Y. 10003

Greetings from

District 1199
National Union of Hospital
and Health Care Employees
RWDSU/AFL-CIO

Leon J. Davis, *President*

Greetings from
THE WASHINGTON TEACHERS' UNION

William H. Simons, *President*

Today, the workers have more to lose than their chains
But they still have a world to win!

Greetings from Tim Sears

IN MEMORY OF HARRY CHAPIN

Jim and Diana Chapin



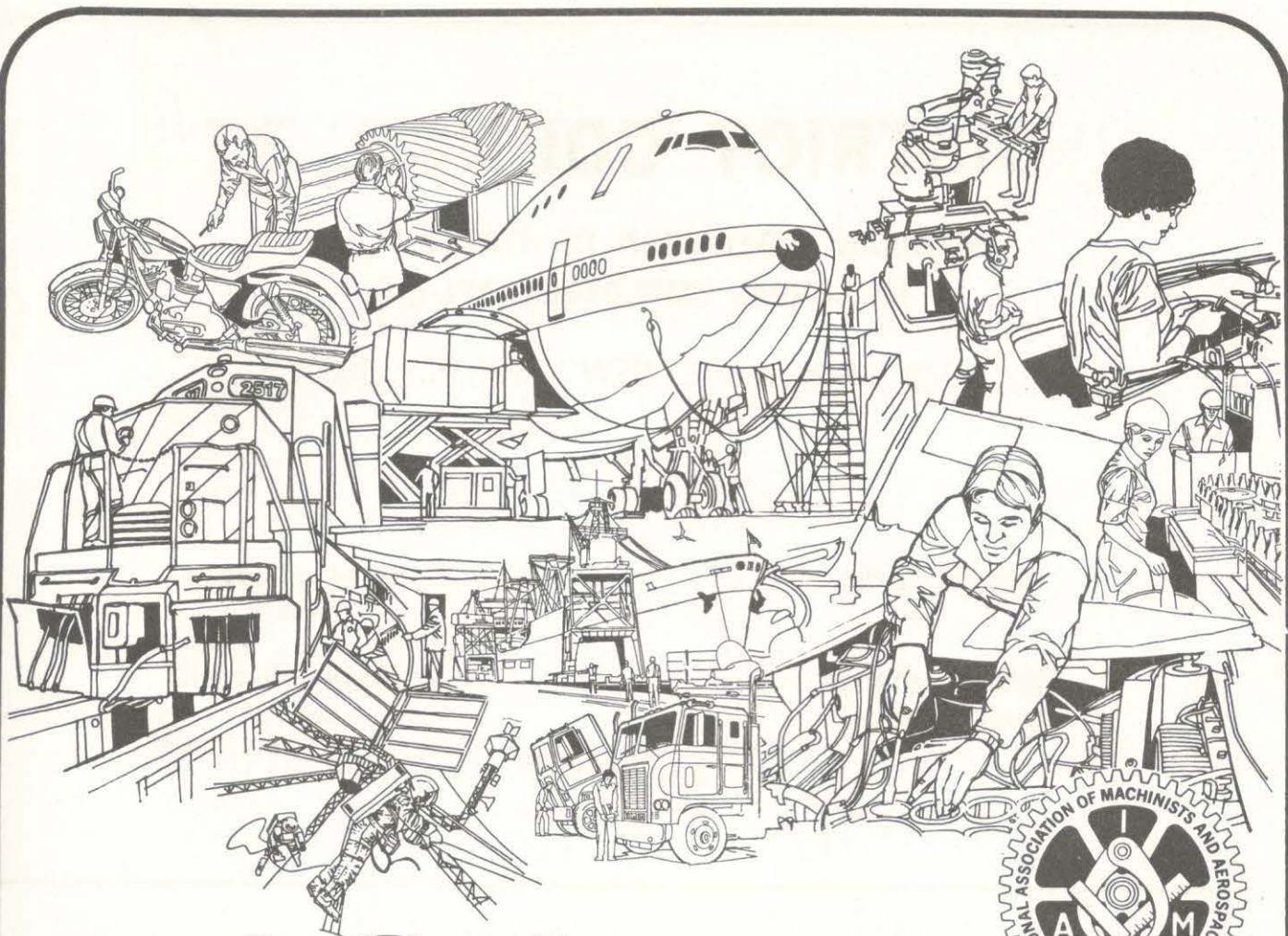
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CONTINUE THE FIGHT
FOR JUSTICE, FREEDOM, AND FULL EMPLOYMENT
WE SHALL OVERCOME

ACTWU Local 169
Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union



A Salute...

To

Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee

From the union that brings you the best

**INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MACHINISTS
AND AEROSPACE WORKERS**

William W. Winpisinger
International President

Eugene D. Glover
General Secretary-Treasurer



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DISTRICT COUNCIL 37

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF STATE, COUNTY &
MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES, AFL-CIO

140 PARK PLACE, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10007

Joseph Zurlo
President

Arthur Tibaldi
Treasurer

Victor Gotbaum
Executive Director

Elaine Espeut
Secretary

Stanley Hill
Associate Director

The Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union Joins with the Democratic Left And Others in this Great Struggle

A factory is a thing of stone and steel. A corporation is a legal fiction and a balance sheet. But a union is flesh and blood and spirit and determination. We can and will prevail.

MURRAY H. FINLEY
President

JACOB SHEINKMAN
Secretary-Treasurer

SOL STETIN
Senior Executive Vice President

SCOTT M. HOYMAN
Executive Vice President

Workers in the Western World
have never asked of an
economic system only that it
enable them to stay alive:
They have always asked in
various ways that it permit,
even encourage them to find
in their working environments
a reflection of the dignity
and value which their
religious and social heritage
has taught them they are
entitled to as human beings.

International Union of Bricklayers
and Allied Craftsmen

John J. Joyce, *President*
Edward M. Bellucci, *Secretary*
L. Gerald Carlisle, *Treasurer*
James F. Richardson, *First Vice President*

BEST WISHES



UAW SOUTHEASTERN MICHIGAN COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM (SEMCAP)

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Perry Johnson, Director	Region 1
Robert Battle, III, Director	Region 1A
Ken Morris, Director	Region 1B
Bard Young, Director	Region 1E

DOUGLAS A. FRASER, President

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A TIME TO FIGHT BACK

Labor Day 1981 and the massive Solidarity Day demonstration in Washington Sept. 19 mark a spirited renewal of the movement for jobs and justice at home, and peace and human rights abroad.

But these events are not an end; they are a beginning. If we are to succeed in turning back the latest assault on American workers, we will need more determination and demonstrations. More lobbying and legislative initiatives. More organizing and outreach.

Not since the 1920s has the average American faced such major attacks. Billions of dollars are being transferred from the incomes of workers to the coffers of corporate business. Long-standing programs like Social Security are being chipped away. While Reagan slashes aid to education and unemployment assistance with one hand, he gives Big Oil a new \$3.3-billion subsidy and hikes the Pentagon budget by \$55 billion with the other.

To fight back and defeat such policies requires strong coalitions and a united movement. The 1.5 million members of the UAW stand ready to work shoulder-to-shoulder with other trade-unionists, senior citizens, women, Blacks, Latinos, and all those who share our dream for a democratic America.

Among our immediate goals must be to:

- **SAVE SOCIAL SECURITY** from Reagan's cruel cutbacks.
- **STOP HEALTH-AND-SAFETY CUTBACKS** in the workplace by resisting Reagan's program to dismantle key programs of the Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA).
- **STEM THE OUTFLOW OF CAPITAL** by American corporations eager to exploit low-wage workers abroad, by enacting local-content laws at home. Such laws would encourage corporations to build here what they sell here.
- **PRESERVE PEACE & CALM WORLD TENSIONS** by working for disarmament and ending U.S. assistance to repressive regimes in South Africa, Latin America, and Asia.
- **DEFEND WORKERS' RIGHTS** by supporting struggles like that of the air traffic controllers, and challenging the anti-union forces seeking to prevent workers from organizing.
- **STRENGTHEN HUMAN RIGHTS** by defending the Voting Rights Act, affirmative action, and ERA.

These are some of the goals to which we dedicate ourselves in the coming months. The UAW salutes Democratic Left on this Labor Day, and we stand ready to work with all organizations and groups that share our vision of the American Dream. All together, we can win.



International Union, UAW

8000 E. Jefferson

Detroit, MI 48214

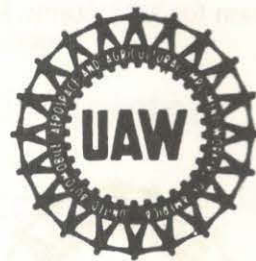
Fraternal Greetings

FROM

UAW-CAP Councils

of

Regions 9 & 9A



EDWARD F. GRAY
Director, Region 9, UAW

E. W. "TED" BARRETT
Director, Region 9A, UAW

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Democratic Left

Milton Glaser



"It is true, indeed, that they can execute the body, but they cannot execute the idea which is bound to live."

Nicola Sacco

IMAGES OF LABOR

Introduction by Irving Howe

Preface by Joan Mondale

IMAGES OF LABOR is a unique and beautiful book honoring American working people and their history. It contains thirty-two full-color reproductions of specially commissioned works by American artists such as *Paul Davis, Ralph Fasanella, Judy Chicago, Alice Neel, and Benny Andrews*. Each illustration is accompanied by an appropriate quotation about American labor.

"The true voices of working men and women—the backbone of our society—and the art inspired by their daily work are fused in an eloquent and profoundly moving way in this terribly important book."

Studs Terkel

"Working people have never before been presented with such artistic force. This book is wonderful testimony to the major role that women have played in shaping American history."

—*Joyce Miller*

May Stevens



"We are the slaves of slaves. We are exploited more ruthlessly than men."

Lucy Parsons

IMAGES OF LABOR is a joint project of District 1199's Bread and Roses Project and The Pilgrim Press.

____ YES, please rush me _____ copies of *IMAGES OF LABOR* at the special price of \$12 per copy. (Please add .36¢ postage and 50¢ handling for each copy for a total of \$13.36).

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JIMMY HIGGINS REPORTS



see a day of coordinated labor organizing activity to promote union membership. . . .

THE MESSAGE OF Solidarity Day should not be directed only toward Reagan, but to our so-called "Democrats" as well. When David Stockman proposed \$520 million worth of cuts to the federal budget for Aid to Families with Dependent Children, the Democratic House of Representatives responded with cuts of over \$1 billion. In an effort called the Lexington Group, the party is signing up young business executives at \$5000 a piece and will groom them as candidates for office. One executive quoted party officials as promising a role for Lexington Group members in shaping party policy in a more conservative direction. Just what we need. . . .

PRECISELY THE "RIGHT" SORT OF DEMOCRAT has emerged in this year's gubernatorial race in Virginia. He is Chuck Robb, the current lieutenant governor, who actively campaigned to avoid labor support. Prior to the state AFL-CIO's endorsement vote, Robb distributed a letter pledging support for Virginia's right-to-work (for less) law and opposing collective bargaining rights for public employees. Robb, not so incidentally, is the son-in-law of the late President Lyndon Johnson. Let's hope voters reject this pandering to business and make Robb a negative example for others who would follow similar paths.

SOME OF US THOUGHT that the air traffic controllers were striking against the Federal Aviation Administration. According to President Reagan, they were fired for a strike "against the American people." Frankly,

we're shocked at this collectivist rhetoric and the equating of the convenience of a handful of top-level federal officials with the needs and aspirations of the people as a whole. Oh, well, the burden of the government has been lifted from the backs of some of the people. After all, the President signed his bipartisan tax giveaways to the rich the same day he justified firing workers without due process.

CRITICISM OF THE LABOR MOVEMENT for insufficient support of the PATCO strikers has appeared in the daily press. One wonders how vociferous these same reporters would be in defense of workers fired for honoring picket lines the Administration has ruled illegal. To be sure, there are problems in the level of solidarity with this strike. The controllers are blessed and cursed with the attributes of skilled workers. Blessed with a bracing sense of their own strength and indispensability, cursed with the "go it alone" mentality. Public relations strategies have been nonexistent; appeals to other unions for help have been late and clumsy. Yet, the central importance of the strike and the inspiring militance of these strikers is winning support. The UAW and other major unions have grounded their staffs; a defense fund is being built with substantial and numerous contributions from the local level up. An August 15 rally at New York's Kennedy airport drew representatives from more than 30 unions on very short notice. Public support can make a difference. Write your senator and U.S. representative opposing Reagan's union-busting.

CONOCO ILLUSTRATES SUPPLY-SIDE economics in action once again this summer. Remove the fetters of government from the inventive and creative investing class, and the wonders of increased production and greater wealth for all will soon follow. And so, after weeks of suspense and offers, counteroffers, bidding wars involving Seagram, Mobil and DuPont, the wonders of capitalism were seen again. DuPont spent \$7.5 billion without creating a single job or causing one brick to be laid atop another. If you believe we will all be enriched by DuPont's taking over the ninth largest oil company and the nation's leading coal producer, wait a couple of months. Santa is coming to town.

DEMOCRATIC LEFT

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