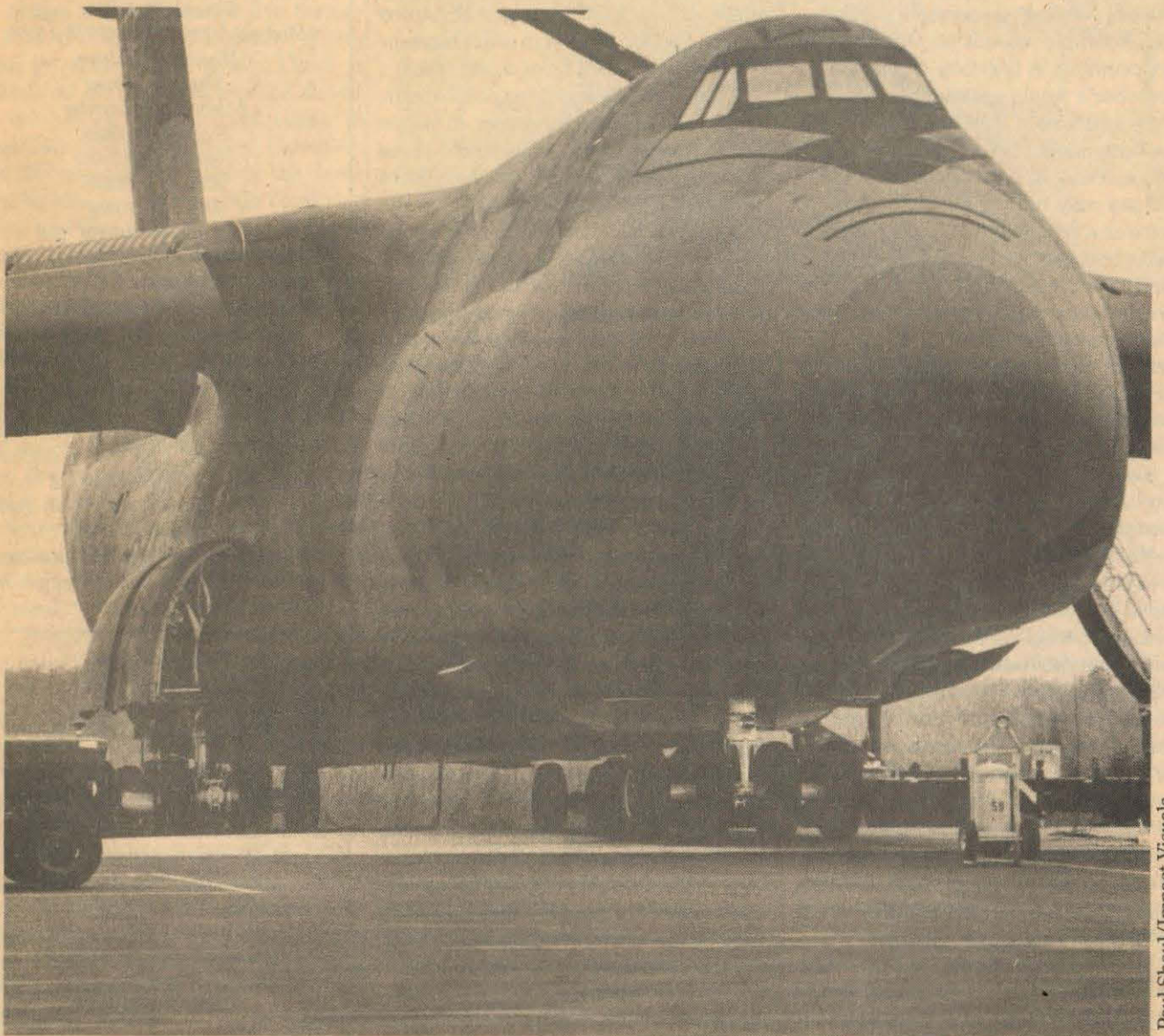


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# DEMOCRATIC Left

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**The Peace Dividend: Let's Give Peace a Chance**  
*by Ronald V. Dellums*



Paul Shoul/Impact Visuals

**Plus Book Reviews by Maurice Isserman and Manning Marable**

# EDITORIAL

## Thatcher's Tax: Lessons for the Left

History may record that Margaret Thatcher's decade of power in Britain was brought to an abrupt end by the single issue of the poll tax; if so, there will be a lot of justice in that record. For the poll tax -- the flat-rate per capita tax currently being introduced to replace property taxes as the basis of local government funding -- represents a lot more than a simple assault on the progressive principle in taxation. It stands for Thatcher's whole philosophy and style of government. Of course, the poll tax is a designedly regressive tax: a single person living in a forty-room mansion will pay only half as much in absolute terms as a couple living in a low-income public housing project. But equally important is the fact that the poll tax has been imposed rapidly and against overwhelming public opposition by the brute force of the conservative Parliamentary majority, a majority gained on a mere 42 percent of the popular vote in the 1987 election. Worse, the tax was imposed first in a kind of punitive trial run on Scotland, where the Conservatives pulled only 24 percent in the last election. Finally, along with the poll tax have come drastic limits on the traditional freedoms of British cities and counties to engage in the kind of wealth redistribution and other forms of social policy that state governments in our federal system can still take for granted. Not only what local government spends on, but how much it spends, is now being manipulated directly from the center. Even Labour-controlled cities which delivered overwhelming electoral rebuffs to the Tories at their last elections are essentially now being governed by their worst political enemies.

It is this concentration and centralization of power, as much as the principles of progressive taxation, that triggered the riots and disorders we saw on our televisions in early April. Denied Parliamentary means of expression, denied the fruits of their votes in local elections, denied even the voice

which George Bush's pollster advisers would give public opinion, popular frustration has mounted to the point of explosion. Of course, the looting of shops and the throwing of stones is mostly the work of politically-marginal anarchists and pseudo-revolutionaries. But more typical voters are willing to stand by and watch with a little sympathy, even join into actions which in other circumstances they would have condemned.

There are lessons here, for Labour, and for us. If Labour returns to power at the next election, which must come before June 1992, it will not only have to come up with an alternative to the poll tax, but it will also have to enunciate an alternative style of government. Both tasks will be difficult. It will not suffice to restore the old property taxes: though attractive as one of the few means of assessing not only income but capital, property taxes were easier to levy in days when home-ownership was less widely diffused in Britain than it is now. Other systems of progressive taxation -- local income tax, for instance -- aren't much more popular, as Americans know too well. Labour has not, as yet, committed itself to an alternative, shrewdly but evasively aware that the concrete horror of the poll tax makes vagueness look good. But it will be even harder for socialist parties in the post-Reagan/Thatcher era to learn the other lessons. Parties of the left employed almost equally overbearing, over-centralized methods in building up the welfare state that Thatcherite ruthlessness then dismantled. In thinking about how to rebuild and relegitimate a genuinely "kinder, gentler" society, both American and British socialists need to examine carefully these centralist traditions. Democracy needs to be reinstated as a value, a means as well as an end. That will entail a real devolution of authority to localities and communities, even those controlled by our political antagonists. "States' rights" has, for good reasons, not been a slogan

of the left since the Second World War. But Thatcher's poll tax debacle should suggest to us, as to the Labour party, that calls for local autonomy can't always be dismissed as expressions of reaction: that "empowerment" means giving people power to dissent, even from "truth." How to rebalance the polity -- weighing local empowerment against national policy in an increasingly globalized economy -- may be the toughest task for the next left.

-- Peter Mandler

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# Let's Give Peace a Chance

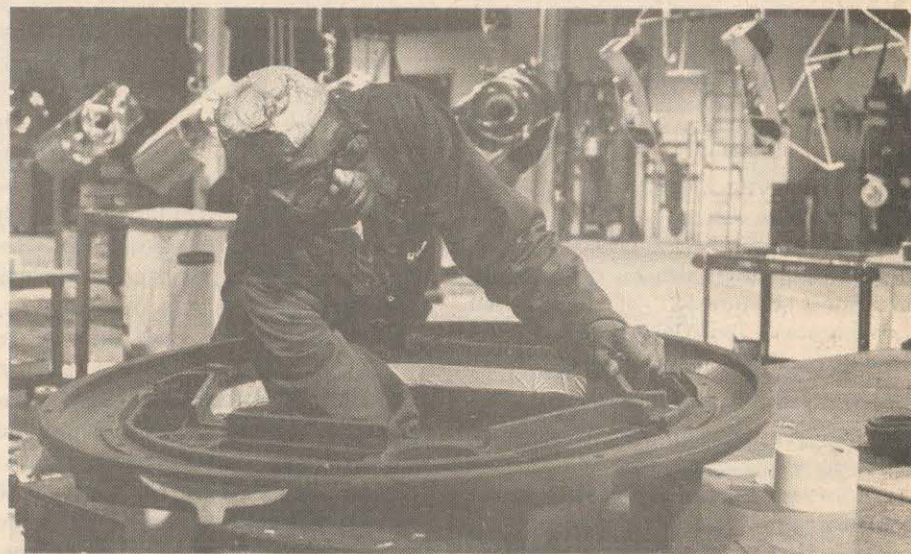
by Ronald V. Dellums

On December 5, 1980, at the invitation of my friend, Michael Harrington, I addressed the Eurosocialism conference here in Washington. Speaking to an audience that included five former or future progressive heads of European governments, I said: "There is little doubt that the 1980 election should be viewed as a watershed event in American political history. However, the 1980 election may also be the dawn of a totally new era in this country's social and economic history...."

Six weeks later and six days before Mr. Reagan's inauguration I challenged the fundamental precepts of Reaganism, saying: "How are you going to balance the budget, cut taxes, expand the military budget at such an incredible rate (\$300 billion per year by 1985), and still save the cities of this country, save the human potential of our young people and our senior citizens who need an opportunity for expanded lives and opportunities? How are you going to do it? You cannot do it in the manner he proposes."

The political, social, and economic history of the past decade is, in many respects, the unfolding and unraveling of Reaganism and Reaganomics at home and abroad. For Reagan and the Reaganauts it was "morning in America" -- but it soon became "mourning in America" for the vast majority of America's poor and middle classes.

The Reaganaut evisceration of education, housing, and human needs programs made a mockery of this nation's constitutional commitment "to promote the general welfare." Its dedicated effort to undermine already existing laws and Supreme Court decisions upholding equal opportunity for all, regardless of race, gender, or age was a deliberate effort to deny application of the Bill of Rights to all our citizens. Its willful defiance of



Jim West/Impact Visuals

An Army's tank plant in Michigan that is scheduled to close in June, 1992.

the Constitution, international law, and Congressional mandates in the conduct of covert wars in Nicaragua and Angola demonstrated its determination to rule without law -- or in spite of it.

## Arms Escalation

The most adverse impact of Reaganism was occasioned by its massive escalation of the arms race, both nuclear and conventional. With the constructive exception of the INF Treaty, his administration witnessed an exacerbation of Cold War tensions, the fraying of the NATO alliance, coupled with vicious military interventions, in the internal affairs of Third World nations. During the decade of the 1980s the Reagan administration and its surrogate successor spent almost three trillion dollars on the arms race, including arms sales and transfers to client states, especially those in the Middle East and the Third World. This massive military spending spree was subsidized at the expense of American taxpayers, current and future, through the tripling of our national debt.

However, during the past year the peoples of oppressed nations have spo-

ken out and risen up against tyrants around the world, in the process transforming the global political landscape. Citizens of conscience can only applaud the triumph of democratic and human rights ideals throughout Eastern Europe, most of which were achieved without violence. The hope is that this will be replicated in other countries such as South Africa, El Salvador, and China.

It is in this context that our government -- both Administration and Congress -- must begin a thorough reassessment of what ought to constitute a legitimate, long-range national security policy. The Cold War is over; as a consequence the United States and the Soviet Union now face a moral imperative to conclude substantive reductions in nuclear and conventional forces, so that the superpowers can reallocate scarce resources that will work to improve the quality of life for all the planet's people.

Our forthcoming national security budgets ought to reflect these realities, starting in FY 1991. An integral part of this reallocation of resources should include the economic conversion program that I have championed for the past decade in the Congressional Black

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Caucus Budget Alternative and the Dellums Military Budget. These proposals built upon the pathbreaking efforts of committed progressives in the Congress, such as Robert F. Wagner of New York and James E. Murray of Montana, concerned economists such as Robert C. Weaver and Leon H. Keyserling, and academics such as Seymour Melman. In the wake of the Second World War they sought constructive long-term economic conversion programs as a necessary transition to a full employment peace-time economy. Their efforts were rebuffed in the march to madness that masqueraded as U.S. foreign policy during the Cold War era.

The economic conversion program that I have advocated for the past decade is predicated on two fundamental propositions: First, every U.S. resident

is entitled to a job as a basic human right. Second, once Congress makes a decision adversely affecting a local economy, it has a moral obligation to ease the economic, social, and psychic dislocation caused, in this instance, by significant reductions in spending and personnel levels in the Pentagon budget. Local communities and their resident taxpayers ought not to be economically punished because of the closing down of weapons production plants, or military bases in their areas.

To compensate for these closures, the Dellums and CBC budget proposals would provide economic conversion assistance funds, high-level job training programs for conversion employment opportunities, and monetary assistance and health care services to families and individuals who cannot secure immediate employment in a new permanent peace economy. We would also work with corporate management in the civilian sector of the economy to provide equitable pension accrual benefits for those military personnel, especially among the enlisted ranks, who would be phased out of the active-duty military before they meet the requirements for retirement pension benefits.

## Full Economic Conversion

The CBC FY 1991 budget proposal provides the funds necessary to implement a full economic conversion program, through the termination of all first-strike, destabilizing nuclear weapons systems such as S.D.I., MX and Midgetman missiles, and the B-2 (Stealth) bomber, and a 10 percent first-year reduction in active-duty military personnel. Of the more than \$28 billion in outlay savings achieved in the first year alone by these cuts, \$5 billion this year and an additional \$12 billion over the next two years will be allocated to put a comprehensive economic conversion program in place. Our preliminary research indicates that, if enacted, our economic conversion package would provide at least 300,000 new jobs during the first year of implementation, with even greater numbers of additional new jobs created in the "out" years.

The potential for creating additional new jobs is also enhanced by the fact that our conversion proposal also includes additional funding for toxic-waste

clean-ups at weapons production plants and military bases slated for closing or reduced activity.

This legislative initiative for economic conversion is part of our ongoing commitment to the belief that full political democracy in this country cannot be achieved until we promote, struggle for, and achieve full economic democracy. This fundamental transformation in our national economic thinking can then become the foundation for establishing a true Economic Bill of Rights for all Americans -- including the right to a useful and productive job,



Hazel Hankin/Impact Visuals

the right to adequate food, housing, health care, and energy at affordable prices; the right of every family farmer to earn a decent living, free from the clutches of corporate agribusiness; the right of every individual and family to be free from the fear and potential privatization resulting from old age, sickness, accident, or unemployment; and the right to quality education that stresses the worth of every individual to reach his or her potential in a truly non-racial, discrimination-free society.

Economic conversion is a legislative first step towards certifying the end of the Cold War and Reaganomics and the social and economic injustices that they created and perpetuated for the vast majority of America's middle classes and working poor. We have the opportunity of our lifetimes to make a better America for all Americans. Let us seize this moment in history to make the most of it, especially for our children and our children's children. ●

*Rodald Dellums, DSA vice chair, co-chairs the House Armed Services Committee Subcommittee on Research and Development and is chair of the Congressional Black Caucus.*

# The Mexicanization of Europe?

by Steve Max

(Steve Max made the following remarks when he received an award from the NY DSA local on March 21, 1990.)

Many life long socialists, now baffled by the current orgy of free market self-congratulation, can no longer see beyond next week and think that the world has now settled down to a century of free market capitalism.

What lies beyond next week is, as usual, clearly laid out in the business section of *The New York Times*. Under the headline, "High Technology In Plants Abroad," *The Times* explains that transnational corporations including General Motors, Chrysler, Ford, and General Electric are rapidly expanding their foreign operations, but creating fewer and fewer new jobs. The secret is heavy investment in high technology, high automation plants, with Mexico being a case in point. In Mexico, G. M. workers have achieved U. S. quality and production levels at three dollars an hour. This, says *The Times* "is helping to erode the old idea that the big industrial powers have a corner on state-of-the-art production because their technicians and workers have the necessary skills."

General Electric leads in using technology to cut labor. G.E. has expanded production in Japan, South Korea, Spain, Mexico, and Hungary, while cutting ten thousand foreign workers off the payroll. In the same edition, *The Times* reports a new General Motors deal to build its third East European auto plant. So far G.M. has operations in East Germany, Hungary, and Yugoslavia.

Here's the question: Are we to believe that G.M. and the transnational companies now expanding in Eastern Europe will build plants of lower quality than those in Mexico and will install less efficient equipment, so that they can pay more people to do higher cost work? Not likely. It seems that what they have in mind is to recreate Mexico



Leipzig, East German, where West German products are prevalent.

in Eastern Europe, with efficient automated plants based on cheap labor. Some of that new production will be sold in the East, but much is already earmarked for Western Europe where it will pull down Western wages, just as Mexican production pulls down American wages.

The hope of Eastern Europeans is that they will enjoy a German, or American, or even Italian living standard, not that they remain in low wage economies. But that is where many will end up if they take instruction from the West. Already in the countries with high Western held debt such as Hungary and Poland, the International Monetary Fund is insisting on its Central America "solution" and issuing orders for the people to consume as little as possible, in order to export as much as possible -- to the West.

We have only seen the first round in Eastern Europe. The free market program of the transnational corporations will not long remain unchallenged. Many political philosophies will contend for power, some of them not so pleasant, but among them are and will be forms of democratic socialism and militant trade unionism. What happens in Eastern Europe is part of a larger global contest. As we enter a world of international markets and production, the tendency is for competition from the low wage areas to pull down the living standard of the high wage areas. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the Business Round Table have been outspoken on the need for American wages to sink

to Third World levels. Pitted against that policy are those who use political and trade union action to defend the quality of life of working people. Equally as important, we must try to reshape U.S. foreign policy so that Third World living standards can rise toward ours, which is our only long term defense.

In this global economy it matters where the countries of Eastern Europe enter the scene. It matters how many come in as part of the West and how many come in as part of the Third World. Whether what develops in Eastern Europe is Third World low wage production for Western markets, or European high wage production that the people themselves can afford to purchase is a political issue inside and outside of Eastern Europe -- the outcome of which depends on the success of democratic socialism and trade unions. Anyone who thinks the 90s marks the end of ideology, or the end of history, or the end of class struggle, or the end of democratic socialism is either nuts, or they don't read *The New York Times*.

Democratic socialism is needed today as it has never been needed before because we are the people who know that the economy can operate on shared values and not the blind laws of the market. Said the Book of Proverbs, "Where there is no vision the people perish." Democratic socialism brings vision and hope for justice in our time. ●

Steve Max, a DSA vice chair, is the training director for Midwest Academy.

## Books and Literature Available through the DSA Office

### Books

Socialism: Past and Future, by Michael Harrington. Argues that democratic socialism is the only alternative for 21st century. <i>Remaking Love: The Feminization of Sex</i> , by Barbara Ehrenreich, Elizabeth Hess, & Gloria Jacobs. Published at \$15.95.	\$19.00
The Long-Distance Runner, by Michael Harrington. An autobiography that spans the past two decades. Published at \$19.95	\$ 12.00
Fear of Falling: The Inner life of the Middle Class, by Barbara Ehrenreich.	\$17.00
The New American Poverty, by Michael Harrington. Paperback.	\$19.00
Why Americans Don't Vote by Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward. Paperback.	\$7.00
The Mean Season: The Attack on the Welfare State by Fred Block, Richard Cloward, Barbara Ehrenreich, and Frances Fox Piven. Paperback.	\$9.00
A Margin of Hope: An Intellectual Autobiography by Irving Howe. Paperback.	\$7.00
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The American Evasion of Philosophy: A Genealogy of Pragmatism by Cornel West. Paperback.	\$5.00
The Next Left: The History of a Future by Michael Harrington. Paperback.	\$18.00
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A Socialist Perspective on the Politics of Poverty by Michael Harrington, with contributions by Barbara Ehrenreich, William Julius Wilson, and Mark Levinson. Special bulk rate: \$.20/copy for orders of 20 or more.	\$1.00
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Labor Voice, the Publication of the DSA Labor Commission. Most recent issue available.	\$.50
Religious Socialism, the publication of the DSA Religion and Socialism Commission. One year subscription.	\$5.00
Not Far Enough, the newsletter of the DSA Feminist Commission. One year subscription included with annual Commission dues.	\$10.00
Nuestra Lucha/Our Struggle, the newsletter of the DSA Latino, Anti-Racism, and Afro-American Commissions.	\$.50
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# DS ACTION

## INTERNATIONAL

\* Following a propaganda blitzkrieg by West Germany's Christian Democratic government, East Germany voted heavily for the three-party conservative Alliance for Germany. The Christian Democrats received 44 percent of the vote, and the Social Democrats only 22 percent. Nevertheless, the Social Democrats have agreed to join in a grand coalition government. Three weeks after the country's first free elections, Lothar de Maiziere, the next Prime Minister, announced an accord by which his three-party conservative alliance would get fourteen ministries in a twenty-four-member Cabinet. The Social Democrats would get seven ministries, including the Foreign Ministry, Finance, Trade, and Labor, and the centrist Liberals three. Interestingly, de Maiziere, reports the *Dallas Morning News*, is a "committed socialist" and "last November, after he was named the new head of his party," he was "still advocating support of strong socialist principles," saying, "Socialism is a beautiful vision. We simply haven't tried it yet."

\* The Austrian Socialist Government was returned to power for the fourth consecutive time in a narrow victory.

\* The conservative Greek New Democracy Party won 150 of the 300 seats in Parliament in the recent election and picked up support from a right-wing independent to give the conservative party a one-seat majority. The Pan Hellenic Socialist Movement of former Prime Minister Andreas Papandreu won 123 seats, and nineteen went to an alliance of leftists and communists.

\* In Peru, the favorite to win the presidency, Mario Vargas Llosa, a novelist, who proposed a free-market "shock" for Peru's economy, won only 31 percent of the vote, while a centrist newcomer of Japanese descent, Alberto

Fujimori, won 29 percent. The ruling left-of-center party, APRA, won only 16 percent for its candidate, Luis Alva Castro, but has intimated that it would support Fujimori in the run-off.

## RESOURCES

\* Two new books are now available through the DSA office: **The Socialist Debate** and **The End of the Cold War: European Unity, Socialism, and the Shift in Global Power**. Both books are by DSA Vice Chair Bogdan Denitch. **The End of the Cold War**, available through the DSA office for \$10.00 plus postage and handling, charts the unique opportunities and potential pitfalls that accompany the increased economic and political integration of the European community. **The Socialist Debate**, available for \$20.00 plus postage and handling, looks at the nature and history of socialism in the twentieth century, assessing the possibilities for socialism in the future.

\* "Home Care and Home Care Workers in Five Countries -- Britain, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Canada," a paper by Sumner Rosen, is available from the Center for Labor-Management Policy Studies, 120 West 44th Street, New York, NY 10036 (212) 391-0410.

\* The Spring issue of **Religious Socialism**, the newsletter of the Religion and Socialism Commission, is off the presses. Featured articles include: "DSA Delegate Challenges International League of Religious Socialists," and "Change in World Situation Requires Change in Socialist Thinking." To subscribe send \$7.50 for a regular subscription and \$15.00 for a sustaining subscription to the Institute for Democratic Socialism, P.O. Box 80, Camp Hill, PA 17001.

\* **The EcoSocialist Review**, the newsletter of the new DSA Environmental Commission, has a focus on Earth Day. The issue includes articles on: "Environmentalists Should be Socialists" and

"The Ecological Argument for Socialism." To order your copy send \$1.00 to Chicago DSA, 1608 N. Milwaukee, 4th Floor, Chicago, IL 60647. For a subscription, send \$8.00 to the same address.

## UPCOMING

\* **Beyond Communism and Capitalism: The Democratic Socialist Alternative**, DSA's fourth annual educational and leadership retreat, will take place June 29 - July 1 at Oakwood Friends School in Poughkeepsie, NY. Irving Howe, Frances Fox Piven, Joseph Schwartz, Joanne Barkan, and Jerry Watts will be among some of the speakers. Panels on such topics as: the collapse of communism, limits and possibilities for social democracy, and strategies for the left. Registration, which includes room, meals, and materials, is only \$110. Call the DSA office at (212) 962-0390 for more information.

\* The DSA Mid-Atlantic Retreat will take place June 1-3 at the Claggett Retreat Center, Maryland. The cost is \$87 for the weekend. For information, call Bobbe Robbins at (703) 742-9450.

\* **Building DSA's Agenda in the Heartland: A Conference on Organizing for the 90s** will take place Saturday, May 5 in Chicago, IL. All midwest DSAers are encouraged to attend. For more information, call Chicago DSA at (312) 752-3562.

\* The annual DSA Youth Section Summer Conference will take place August 16-19, 1990 at Allegheny college, Meadville, Pennsylvania. The summer conference is a time for skills-building, electing new leadership, and setting the Youth Section's political direction for the coming year. Conference registration is \$80. For more information, contact Dinah Leventhal at the DSA office.

# ON THE LEFT

by HARRY FLEISCHMAN

## California

DSA youth organizer Dinah Leventhal spoke last month at DSA local meetings in San Francisco, East Bay, Sacramento, and San Diego. She also spoke at campus meetings at Santa Cruz University, Mills College in Oakland, San Diego State, and San Francisco State. She received an enthusiastic response with the DSA exhibit at the national Campus Outreach Opportunity League annual conference attended by 3,000 student leaders....The California DSA Statewide Network is planning a Spring Retreat April 28-29 with discussions on "Toward a Democratic Socialism."...San Diego DSA showed the Michael Harrington videotape, "Socialism: Past and Future," on March 23....Los Angeles DSA held a birthday party in March for DSA *eminence grise* Harold Meyerson as he turned forty....LA DSA organized a forum on "Socialism at the Crossroads -- Crisis in Eastern Europe: What does it mean for the U.S. Left?" with Irwin Silber, co-editor of *Frontline* newspaper, and Cornel West, a member of DSA's National Political Committee. "Abortion for Survival," a videotape on the struggle around reproductive rights, was shown by the LA local in March....California DSAers participated in the March 24 marches in San Francisco and Los Angeles to commemorate Archbishop Romero, assassinated in El Salvador ten years ago.

## District of Columbia

The Washington, DC/NOVA/MD local held a pre-Earth Day environmental symposium. The Feminist branch continues to meet to strategize around making

women's issues a plank in the local's electoral policy platform.

## Illinois

Arthur Loevy, secretary-treasurer of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union, will be honored at Chicago DSA's 32nd Annual Debs-Thomas-Harrington Dinner May 4 at the Midland Hotel. Featured speaker will be Cecil Roberts, vice president of the United Mine Workers, who will talk on "Victory Over Pittston: Lessons and Strategies for Labor and the Progressive Movement in the 90s." "Crumbling Walls - Shifting Blocs" was discussed by DSA National Political Committee member Bogdan Denitch on January 25 in Chicago. The Chicago DSA PAC endorsed four candidates in the 1990 Democratic primary election, two of whom won: Miguel del Valle won reelection as the Democratic candidate to the State Senate from the 4th Senate District and David Orr won the Democratic nomination for County Clerk....The University of Chicago DSA chapter sponsored a talk on national health care by Dr. Christine Cassell, head of internal medicine at the University Hospitals and is president of Physicians for Social Responsibility. J. Hughes of Chicago University DSA spoke on "Socialist Democracy and European Integration," at the New World Resource Center.

## Kentucky

Central Kentucky and the University of Kentucky DSA heard Lisa Smith-Peters, a member of the American delegation of election observers, speak last month in Lexington on "The Nicaraguan Elections -- What Happened?" Central Kentucky DSA also heard Jim Embry speak on "America's Future: An African-American Perspective."...They are also making plans for their annual Spring retreat.

## Massachusetts

The Boston School for Democratic Socialism is holding four courses this Spring: "Introduction to Democratic Socialism;" "Housing in America: A Progressive Perspective;" "The Transformation of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union;" and "An Economic Course for the 90s." James Braude and Deborah Weinstein spoke to Boston DSA's March forum on the Massachusetts fiscal crisis. Daniel Singer, *Nation* correspondent, and Peter Mathern, Czechoslovakian student leader, addressed several forums in Boston as part of the DSA Eastern Europe tour.

## Missouri

DSA Organizational Director Patrick Laceyfield spoke to DSA groups in Columbia and St. Louis.

## New Jersey

Central New Jersey DSA organized a one-day conference on the environment in anticipation of Earth Day. Members from local environmental organizations, the labor movement, DSA, and other community groups attended. The local also sponsored a visit by Czech student union leader, Peter Mathern. Rhon Baiman, chair of the local, gave a lecture on "Socialism, Liberalism, and Ethical Humanism."

## New York

Nassau DSA Saturday Seminars heard Hofstra University economics professor R. Guttman discuss "The Social Security Tax Grab and other Tax Inequities" march 31; Trudy Goldberg, director, Adelphi University Center for Social Policy, on "It's Time for a 'New Deal'" on April 28; and will hear Marty Melkonian, economics professor at Hofstra, May 19 on "Economic Reconversion of L.I. Military Plants: Reversing our Shrinking Economy." DSAer Carol O'Cleireacain has been appointed Commissioner of Finance for New



## Eighth Socialist Scholars Conference a Success

by John Mason

Over 3,000 socialists from around the world gathered to examine the problems and prospects for radical politics in a post-communist world. The eighth annual Socialist Scholars Conference took place April 6-8 at the Borough of Manhattan Community College under the theme, "Democratic Revolutions and the End of the Cold War." The Conference brought academics, students, trade-union and community activists together with representatives of socialist and democratic movements from Europe and the Third World for three days. Some of the featured speakers at this year's conference included: Barbara Ehrenreich, DSA honorary chair; Boris Kargilitsky, the Russian democratic socialist and successful reform candidate; Ellen Willis, writer for the *Village Voice*; Daniel Singer, author of *Is Socialism Doomed?*; Todd Gitlin, professor at the University of California at Berkeley; Nomonde Ngubo, Representative of the South African Mineworkers Union; and Slavenska Drakulic, Yugoslav author.

Over one hundred and twenty workshops and panels covered such topics as: Black politics in America; Reproductive Rights; the Future of Socialism; Democratic Movements in Post-Com-

munist Societies; the Debt Crisis; Community-Labor Relations; the Future of Gorbachev's Reforms; and the Drug Crisis. The Democratic Socialists of America held a successful reception during the Conference. Over 300 people crowded in to hear Barbara Ehrenreich, Nomonde Ngubo, and DSA National Political Committee member Joseph Schwartz talk about DSA.

The Conference was revived in 1983 after a hiatus by the City University of New York branch of the Democratic Socialists of America, under the leadership of DSA Vice Chair Bogdan Denitch. It is cosponsored by an array of organizations and journals.

The Conference took on special significance this year when much of the press has declared that the collapse of communist authoritarianism marks the collapse of socialism as an alternative to "free-market" policies throughout the world. The gathering of three thousand socialists reminded the world that the end of the Cold War does not mean the end of the socialist movements, but rather may mark the beginning of its recovery world-wide. ●

*John Mason, a member of the CUNY DSA branch, helped organize the Socialist Scholars Conference*

York City....New York DSA held a conference March 24 on "Charting a New Course: Progressive Policies for the 90s." Areas included: housing, welfare, the budget, race, crime, economic development, health care, and the environment. The Religion and Socialism branch discussed the "Inside Scoop on Soup Kitchens." The New York DSA Housing Task Force is considering ways to be involved in tenant activism.

### Ohio

Bogdan Denitch, DSA vice chair, spoke on Eastern Europe to over 150 people at Oberlin College February 22, sponsored by Oberlin DSA....The DSA Youth Section at Dayton University included free condoms in St. Valentine's Day holiday cards reading "Love Safely." The cards also had phone numbers for organizations offering information on birth control, and AIDS. The socialists gave out more than 1,000 condoms at the Catholic institution.

### Pennsylvania

Patrick Lacefield spoke March 25 at Central Pennsylvania DSA's annual dinner in Harrisburg on DSA priorities. Gordon A. Chapman, a former CIA officer and now a DSA member, spoke on why covert activities are not good intelligence and harm our nation's security....Pittsburgh DSA held a tribute to Michael Harrington, which included a viewing of his video on "The Next Left" and discussion by several speakers....Reading-Berks DSA is organizing the fifth annual Maurer-Stump award dinner. The award recipients are Maggie Kuhn, convener of the Gray Panthers, and Bogdan Denitch, DSA vice chair and author of *The End of the Cold War*....Philadelphia DSA hosted *Nation* correspondent Daniel Singer for several public forums, as well as Peter Mathern, in conjunction with the DSA speaking tour on Eastern Europe.

## DSA Sponsors Eastern European Tour

The Democratic Socialists of America, as part of its on going international solidarity work, sponsored a twelve-city tour with Eastern European activists. Peter Mathern, Czechoslovakian student leader, Daniel Singer, correspondent with the *Nation*, and Mitja Jager, leader of the Slovenian Reform Communists spoke at campuses and in communities across the northeast and midwest. They made stops at such colleges as Ithaca College, Bates College, Washington University, Princeton University, Columbia University, Swathmore College, Harvard University, and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, addressing students and community members at each stop.

Alex Harrington, a member of the DSA Youth Section and organizer of the tour, claims that, "Student activists here were inspired by the ability of Eastern European student movements and organizations, such as the Czechoslovakian Student Union, to play such a major role in the transformation of their societies." The speakers shared with their audiences the state of the political climate in Eastern Europe and the struggle for change, as well as the prospects for democratic socialism movements in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. They stressed the importance of maintaining on-going contact with like-minded activists in the West.

# Struggle in South Africa

by *The New York Committee Against Apartheid*

**T**he release of Nelson Mandela on February 11 was a day of jubilation from Cape Town, South Africa, to Harlem, New York. It marked a hard-won victory for the anti-apartheid movement and an enormous concession by the apartheid government.

It appears that South Africa's rulers have finally recognized that apartheid cannot be sustained or cosmetically reformed. They now comprehend that a process of transformation must begin, based on negotiations with the democratic forces. And so South Africa is moving from a period of defiance against apartheid to a period defining the terms of power and participation in a post-apartheid society.

Several questions must now be answered: How much power will the white minority give up? Over what will the majority rule? How far will conditions of inequality change? The chasm between present-day apartheid and a unified, democratic, nonracial South Africa is vast.

## How Far

President DeKlerk's order to release Mandela was dramatic. He simultaneously ended the banning of the African National Congress, the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania, the South African Communist party, and thirty-three other organizations. He limited detention under the State of Emergency decrees, released certain political prisoners, suspended political executions, and partially lifted censorship.

But DeKlerk did not end the State of Emergency or renounce coercive government laws. In fact, demonstrations are still being brutally suppressed and activists still face violence and arrest.

DeKlerk did not release all detainees nor the 2,500 political prisoners who remain in apartheid's jails. He did not stop political trials or end the occupation of black townships by government security forces.

These steps, outlined in the ANC's Harare Declaration, are important preconditions for negotiations to begin. The democratic organizations insist that they cannot start negotiations until there is freedom of political activity.

The ability to participate without threat of repression is crucial to mobilizing the majority behind a democratic platform for change. It is equally necessary for DeKlerk to demonstrate that he can deliver on his promises, control the police and army, and isolate the fanatical white right-wing.

## Why Now?

While the road to negotiations is rocky, there are also some powerful reasons why the process is going forward. The most compelling one is the depth of crisis in South African society, both politically and economically.

South Africa's rulers face an opposition that has grown organizationally strong and militant in the past five years. The State of Emergency did not suppress activism, but instead generated protracted conflict with the regime at the grassroots level, in workplaces, churches, schools, townships, and homelands.

The growth of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the labor movement to over one million members across the country has been particularly decisive. When the United Democratic Front was banned, COSATU unions stepped forward to help UDF organize the Mass Democratic Movement and last year's Defiance Campaign. When white South Africans voted in their elections last September, more than three million black South Africans



Impact Visuals

staged a two-day national protest strike.

Nelson Mandela saluted this work as he was released in Cape Town, saying, "I extend my greetings to the working class of our country. Your organized stance is the pride of our movement. You remain the most dependable force in the struggle to end exploitation."

The government's State of Emergency has been enforced at rising costs internationally as well. The worldwide movement behind sanctions has been gaining ground, as have citizen campaigns in Europe and the United States to pressure multinational corporations to disinvest from South Africa. The impact of sanctions and disinvestment has been estimated in billions of dollars, but just as important has been the chill

*Continued on page 16.*

# Youth Section Conference Biggest Ever

by Ginny Coughlin

The fifteenth annual DSA Youth Section winter conference was held at Barnard College in New York City February 16-19 in the shadow of democratic revolutions in Eastern Europe and the release of Nelson Mandela in South Africa. Nearly three hundred people from all over the country participated in the intense three days of discussion, debate, and fun.

At the opening plenary on Friday night, Victor Mahsabela, a representative of the African National Congress, celebrated the release of Nelson Mandela with conference participants. "This is a victory for all of us around the world who love freedom, dignity, and peace," he said. He applauded DSA Youth Section activists for their anti-apartheid work, saying that from this victory they should derive confidence in mass struggle and renewed energy to continue the fight for a free South Africa.

Conference attendees were reminded of the successful movements of youth around the world. "As young people, we have seen a lot of other young people go out into the streets and change their governments," said Dinah Leventhal, DSA youth organizer, speaking at the opening plenary. That image of successful social change gave the conference a sense of optimism.

There was also a sense of urgency concerning United States politics. Strategies for change, especially the possibility of capturing a part of the peace dividend, were hotly debated. DSA Honorary Chair Barbara Ehrenreich captured the urgency activists felt when, referring to the Cold War, she said, "The War is over, let the revolution begin."

At the second plenary, Bogdan Denitch, DSA vice chair, encouraged conference participants to look at Eastern Europe as leftists, as activists, and as students, and see "how rapidly reality changes." He argued that changes



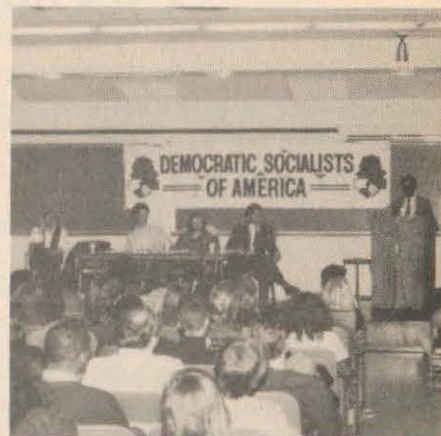
Dinah Leventhal, Youth Section organizer (left); Friday night opening plenary.

in Eastern Europe will significantly change politics in the United States.

One of the most intense conference debates surrounded the "war on drugs" and socialist alternatives. At the second plenary, Jefferson Morley, a writer for the *Nation*, introduced a socialist version of drug legalization. Morley's concept, which he calls "normalization" of drugs was attacked at a later workshop. Advocates and opponents of drug legalization crowded into the workshop room. Terri Burgess of Cleveland DSA argued that the residents of drug-ridden neighborhoods are opposed to legalization. "The answer must come from the communities themselves," she said.

At the third plenary, Socialist Strategy and Vision for the 1990s, Joseph Schwartz, chair of the Philadelphia local, challenged activists to develop their capability to defend the socialist vision. "We have an ideological role to play as democratic socialists," he insisted, stressing the need to fully understand democratic theory in order to defend our vision of democracy.

Popular workshop topics included socialist-feminism, Eastern Europe, housing policy, gay and lesbian politics, the U.S. labor movement, electoral politics, and the Cold War. In addition to regional caucuses there was a women's caucus, a people of color caucus, and a gay/lesbian/bisexual caucus.



Dorothy Benz

The Youth Section welcomed at least two new chapters at the conference, Purdue and Villanova, bringing the total number of Youth Section chapters to more than forty, with contacts on hundreds more. "It was reassuring to meet so many DSA activists and it was helpful to see what people are doing at other campuses," said Monica McDermott, of the Villanova chapter.

Thirty new members were recruited at the conference. "I am attracted to DSA's work in electoral politics and the way they use the system to change the system," said Mike Coccia, a Greenpeace activist who decided at the conference to join DSA.

The closing plenary asked the question, "Is this the end of history?" The answer, of course, was that it is not. Activists were called by Todd Gitlin to give a restart to a history that ended in 1914, the history of *democratic* socialism.

Activists left the conference with a deeper sense of the life-long commitment many people have made to democratic socialism. Irving Howe, DSA honorary chair, asked people to join the long and difficult struggle for a better world, saying "there is nothing more worthy of serious human beings." ●

Ginny Coughlin is a student at Temple University and a member of the Philadelphia DSA Steering Committee.

# REVIEWS

## Sixties Sell-Out A Myth

BEYOND THE BARRICADES: THE SIXTIES GENERATION GROWS UP by Jack Whalen and Richard Flacks, Temple University Press: 1989.

by Maurice Isserman

**T**wenty years ago this May American campuses were in upheaval. President Nixon's decision to invade Cambodia on April 30, 1970, and the subsequent deaths on May 4 of four Kent State students at the hands of Ohio National Guardsmen sparked a national student strike of unprecedented proportions. By mid-May protests had taken place at over 700 colleges and universities. 1800 students had been arrested nationwide. Although ROTC buildings (a symbol of university complicity with the war) were destroyed on a number of campuses, non-violent protests were more common. At the University of Connecticut, for example, students occupied the ROTC building and converted it into a day-care center. On hundreds of campuses students vowed to continue the struggle past the end of the school year through lobbying, voter registration, and electoral mobilization. The President's Commission on Campus Unrest, appointed to investigate the causes and consequences of the events of May 1970, warned the nation that the national student strike represented the triumph -- perhaps even the permanent institutionalization -- of Sixties radicalism:

Although all this nonviolent political activity indicated that the moderates had generally prevailed over extremists on the question of tactics, it is clear in retrospect that, on the question of ends, it was the radicals who were victorious. For years, radicals had been working to politicize universities, and in May 1970 entire universities were...mobilized against the policies of the present national administration....Students did not strike against their universities; they succeeded in making their universities strike against national policy.

In more distant retrospect, it is clear that the spring of 1970, rather than marking "the beginning of the flood" -- in the words that novelist John Dos Passos once used to describe the spring of 1919, another season of radical exultation and illusion -- marked instead "the beginning of the ebb." Within a few years little that could remotely be considered an organized new left existed on most campuses; by the end of the 70s some symbols of Sixties rebelliousness, notably Yippie leader Jerry Rubin, had made their personal peace with the capitalist system they once professed to despise.

"Where do young revolutionaries go when the revolution



Maury Englander/Impact Visuals

A young man burning his draft card in Central Park in 1967.

doesn't happen?" Jack Whalen and Richard Flacks ask in the preface to *Beyond the Barricades*. In the United States, they suggest, there is a popular presumption that political radicalism and personal immaturity are virtually synonymous: (T)he fact that youth ask questions and challenge authority may be tolerated and even welcomed, but it is assumed that "radical" protest and "idealistic" commitment are developmental phases that precede adulthood.

So far as the mainstream media and popular memory are concerned, the history of the new left's decline and fall confirms this theory. Sixties radicals are almost universally believed to have:

"sold out," "gave up," or "settled down." Such images have become key elements in pervasive cynicism, depoliticization, and privatism. Images of sustained commitment...rarely enter popular discourse, and the processes by which people struggle to sustain and fulfill their aspirations for autonomous and socially responsible lives are rarely studied.

Flacks, a sociologist at the University of Santa Barbara (UCSB), a founder of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) in the early 1960s, and a current DSA member, and Whalen, a former UCSB graduate student who is presently a sociologist at the University of Oregon, challenge these common assumptions about human nature and about the history of the new left. They do so by means of an in-depth case study of the political evolution of a small group of UCSB radical activists from the spring of 1970 up to the present. If the subjects of *Beyond the Barricades* are representative of the new left cohort as a whole (and similar studies such as

Doug McAdams' *Freedom Summer* suggest they might well be), then such media darlings as Jerry Rubin should be seen as the exception and not the rule in future discussions of the fate of Sixties activism.

In the Sixties most of the violence associated with new left protests actually consisted of students being beaten by police. On the evening of February 15, 1970 a crowd of UCSB students turned the tables, charging into a police line in the streets of the "student ghetto" of Isla Vista. To the astonishment of both sides, the police fell back in disorganized retreat. Later that night, the Bank of America building in Isla Vista was burned to the ground by unknown arsonists as thousands of students stood by and cheered. A mixture of causes had drawn students into the street that night -- turf battles with police, resentment over the trial of the Chicago 8, ill-feelings towards the University for the recent firing of a popular professor -- none of which had much to do with the Bank of America. But the bank's fate was sealed because it had long been resented as a symbol of Vietnam war profiteering, the less-than-enlightened labor policies of the California agribusiness, and the rapacious reputation of Isla Vista landlords. As a student told Flacks (then a junior faculty member at UCBS) soon after the event, the bank burned because "it was the biggest capitalist thing around."

Over a five year period from the late 1970s through the mid 1980s Whalen and Flacks tracked down, interviewed, and repeatedly re-interviewed eighteen former UCSB activists who had been indicted in 1970 either for the burning of the bank or for an earlier violent protest. They also interviewed a control group of sixteen "nonactivists" -- members of UCSB fraternities, sororities, and the football team, who had either been uninvolved with or actively opposed to the radical protests of 1970. Activists and nonactivists made very different life and political choices in subsequent decades. The activists led less conventional personal lives (marrying later, for example), chose less lucrative careers (often in the public service field) and remained significantly more radical in their political views than their peers in the nonactivist control group. Of the eighteen activists, Whalen and Flacks described five as "persisters" (including one member of DSA), "still radical or left-liberal in their political attitudes and still very active politically," three as "disengaged radicals...leftists in their political convictions but no longer...as active in politics," seven as "left-liberals," and three as "nonpersisters," the only members of the group who "show a willingness to embrace at least some conservative...views."

That's the good news. The bad news, not surprisingly, is that the two decades since the spring of 1970 have not been easy ones for would-be activists. As the apocalyptic expectations of 1970 faded, as the organized new left continued the trend towards sectarian preoccupations that had begun within SDS several years earlier, as the right rose to power and redefined the political landscape, even the "persisters" in Whalen and Flacks' sample found it hard to find ways of sustaining active and meaningful political involvement. "Very little in either the experience or the social theories of the Sixties generation of activists had prepared them for the stalemates, stagnation, and ambiguities of public life during the last fifteen years," the authors write. Despite this, local

radical activism survived throughout the 1970s and 1980s, as both a continuation of and also an alternative to the more visible national protests and organizations of the 1960s. Though organizations of the socialist left atrophied, the feminist, gay rights, and environmental movements flourished. "Even movements focussing on such issues as the arms race, U.S. involvement in Central America, and world hunger are rooted in community action and education at the local level," the authors write. As Flacks has argued elsewhere, that tendency towards locally-based activism can be seen as a strength, not a weakness of post-Sixties radicalism. But *Beyond the Barricades* also establishes the need for an on-going, nationally organized socialist project. As Whalen and Flacks note, in the aftermath of the 1960s the lack of a "national organizational framework" left many former new leftists feeling adrift, with no available vehicle for expressing their continuing commitment to radical politics:

[V]eterans of student protest in western Europe were typically able to find such an organizational structure, either by working within established Left parties...or by forming new parties, of which the German Greens are the most successful example. The sense of drift and fragmentation, of failure and irrelevance that many post-sixties activists feel is rooted, not in the withdrawal from politics on their part, but in the absence of national political structures to provide direction, connection, and national visibility for local activism.

Todd Gitlin's *The Sixties*, James Miller's *Democracy is in the Streets*, and other recent works focusing on SDS have given us a complex and nuanced history of America radicalism from 1960 through 1969. *Beyond the Barricades* is the first book to offer the same kind of sophisticated treatment of the post-SDS history of the new left. It is a welcome addition to the literature of the movement, with lessons to teach both historians and political activists. ●

*Maurice Isserman teaches American history at Williams College. His book Dorothy Healey Remembers: A Life in the American Communist Party, co-authored with DSA vice-chair Dorothy Healey, will be published next month.*

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# REVIEWS

## Eurocentrism vs. Afrocentrism: The Impasse of Racial Politics

by Manning Marable

**THE AFROCENTRIC IDEA** by Molefi Asante, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987.

Since the Black Power movement of more than two decades ago, the dialogue between white and black intellectuals and activists on theories of social change has been at best fragmentary, and at times, nonexistent. The racial bifurcation of protest movements in the sixties and seventies created a bitter political impasse. The result: a chasm of silence.

As blacks shifted their concerns from the civil rights movement to questions of empowerment within the African-American community, whites who had previously been an integral part of the desegregation struggles gravitated to the anti-Vietnam War mobilizations or to the nascent feminist movement. Animosity simmered between traditional allies (such as black Americans and the Jewish community) over a range of domestic and international issues. As the seventies progressed, blacks came to believe that efforts to empower their community conflicted with the interests of many white liberal and labor constituencies. As neoliberal intellectuals and Democratic party politicians disavowed progressive policies, African-Americans felt increasingly isolated.

Tensions deepened after Ronald Reagan's victories in 1980 and 1984. The Reagan administration was at odds with virtually every major public policy position favored by the vast majority of blacks. While massive reductions in health care, public housing, federal jobs programs, and affirmative action enforcement certainly hurt whites, they devastated African-American and Hispanic neighborhoods. Millions of black families never recovered from the 1982 recession, when blacks' median income compared to that of whites plummeted. Inspired by the President's hostile attitude toward minorities, racist groups became active. This intensified the sense of isolation among blacks. They watched a Republican administration invade Grenada, pursue "constructive engagement" with apartheid South Africa, and carry-out policies of urban destruction that promoted widespread poverty, drug dependency, and black-on-black violence. They looked to the Democratic party for progressive leadership -- and found an aging liberal shell with an increasingly Reaganized content. With the exception of Jesse Jackson and few other left-liberals, Democrats had ceased to function as an opposition party. Desperation and anger among blacks rose.

Historically, black nationalist ideologies and protest movements gain strength at the juncture of these factors: the rejection of racial equality and black empowerment by both major political parties; racial hostility in the criminal justice



Farrakhan's guards at the funeral of Yusef Hawkins, whose murder was racially motivated.

system; economic expansion in which blacks' gains lag behind those of the white middle-class majority; an increase in racial vigilantism and overt discrimination against people of color; and, finally, the failure of established, middle-class, black leaders to articulate the grievances of African-Americans who are impatient with the pace of change.

Black nationalism -- which includes a belief in the cultural integrity and heritage of people of African descent, criticism of black-white alliances, an emphasis on all-black economic, educational, and political institution-building, and the advocacy of value systems drawn solely from the African/African-American historical experience -- arose in the 1850s, a period of crisis characterized by the factors mentioned above. New leaders, such as Martin Delany, Henry Highland Garnet, and Mary Ann Shadd Cary, challenged the integrationist and liberal political assumptions of abolitionist Frederick Douglass. In the 1920s, the same factors produced the black nationalist movement of Marcus Garvey. Garveyism rejected white-black alliances, favored limited emigration of African-Americans back to Africa, and opposed the desegregationist agenda of W.E.B. Du Bois and the NAACP.

History repeats itself once again in the late 1980s and early 1990s. As white capitalist America congratulates itself on the collapse of communism and distorts the failed legacy of Stalinism to undermine the promise of democratic socialism, scholars of color increasingly look away from the models of Soviet communism and Western capitalism. Historical conditions and a sense of racial crisis have convinced them that any hope of salvation for the black masses must be found in the reconstruction of an African consciousness around which a separatist political agenda is developed. European and American social systems are fatally flawed, the argument goes, because of "Eurocentrism" -- a perception of a world in which white values dominate nonwhite people.

Tom McKitterick/Impact Visuals

Molefi Kete Asante, director of the most important African-American studies department in the United States, located at Temple University, is today the most articulate advocate of "Afrocentrism." An impressive scholar, Asante has mastered the history of African and black American social protest and culture. Consequently his critique of western discourse and the biased empirical foundations of Eurocentric scholarship is highly persuasive. His suggestions for addressing the intellectual and political dilemmas of black scholarship and activism, however, lend themselves to a black nationalist orientation which could aggravate the alienation of black working-class people.

In Asante's *The Afrocentric Idea*, all social and political theories drawn from a Eurocentric context are dismissed as irrelevant for people of African descent. "Marxism is not helpful in developing Afrocentric consciousness that excludes the historical and cultural perspectives of Africa," Asante argues. "Because it emerged from the Western consciousness, Marxism is mechanistic in its approach to social understanding and development, and it has often adopted forms of social Darwinism when explaining cultural and social phenomena." Much of what Asante asserts is certainly true. Both European social democracy and Stalinism were inclined toward economic determinism, failing to take into account the independent and dynamic role of social factors such as race, gender, and ethnicity in the evolution of social formations. But if Marxism is taken not as a religion with an economic catechism, but rather as a method of social analysis recognizing that values, culture, and ideology are of central importance to the development of both social classes and communities, such criticisms no longer appear valid.

*The Afrocentric Idea* argues that "Afrocentrism" -- an identification with the creative culture, values, and rhetoric of people of African descent -- is the philosophical foundation for all important advances in the struggles of black people. Looking backward, Asante reconstructs black political history within this analytic framework. Examining the abolitionist controversies between the integrationist Frederick Douglass and the militant black nationalism of Henry Highland Garnet, Asante insists that there was a "fundamental cleavage in the black antislavery movement." Blacks who opposed Garnet's call for insurrection against slavery had "capitulated to a Eurocentric view of the struggle for black liberty. Fear of offending white political and social interests grasped the minds" of some black activists "in a political vise, tightened by the overwhelming cultural and image context of white Americans." This nationalist/integrationist dichotomy explains much about black politics, past and present, but it doesn't explain everything. It assumes that class divisions within the African-American community are either secondary or nonexistent; it suggests that blacks who are critical of racial separatism are simply "Eurocentric."

When the bulk of historical evidence doesn't confirm the Afrocentric model, Asante then selects details that do support the thesis. For example, he dedicates his book to Du Bois and attempts to project this monumental black socialist in seminationalist terms. Du Bois's famous quote of 1900 is praised as prophetic and Afrocentric: "The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line." Du Bois's

influential thesis of "double consciousness," advanced in his 1903 book, *The Souls of Black Folk*, stated:

"One ever feels twoness -- an American, a Negro; two thoughts, two unreconciled striving; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife... to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self."

For Asante, this passage indicates that Du Bois was responding to the issue of "white domination;" the concept of double consciousness describes how "the African looked at himself through someone else's eyes."

This interpretation is only partially correct. Actually Du Bois insisted that black Americans were African peoples -- and "American" -- committed to full participation within the institutions of a democratic society. Du Bois explains: "He would not Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa. He would not bleach his Negro soul in a flood of white Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American..." From a Du Boisian analysis, both "Eurocentrism" and "Afrocentrism" are incomplete paradigms for the construction of social theory and political engagement.

The problems confronting African-Americans are enormous, and our allies in the struggle seemingly are few. But we cannot find the analytical tools for the construction of theoretical and programmatic models for social transformation by resorting to an approach that separates us from constituencies that have also experienced the weight of oppression. In the American Southwest, Mexican-Americans have been the victims of racial discrimination, economic exploitation, and educational underdevelopment for generations. Native Americans know the meaning of political genocide; white working class people in the gutted industrial towns of Flint, Michigan and Youngstown, Ohio recognize the realities of hunger, unemployment, and poverty. Oppression may be manifested in a racial discourse, but it is fundamentally linked to the inequality of America's class structure and the domination of capital over working people.

Historical evidence indicates that white Americans of all social classes only rarely see beyond racial blinders to recognize the human needs that bind them to the demands of people of color. Asante's search for a philosophy grounded in his own culture is therefore a logical consequence of the realities of Eurocentric domination, of the left and right. The challenge for democratic socialists is to create a movement that truly values the unique cultural heritage, values, and political traditions of people of color. We must challenge racism in every form. When the left demonstrates the capacity for a humanistic and culturally pluralistic politics in the tradition of Du Bois, it may attract people of color as equal partners in struggles for democratic change. ●

*Dr. Manning Marable is Professor of Political Science at the University of Colorado. He is the author of a biography of W.E.B. Du Bois and is currently completing a political biography of black nationalist leader Malcolm X.*

# JANIE HIGGINS

**DIFFERENT WINDS A-BLOWING?** A mid-March poll by *Time* magazine and the Cable News Network seems to show that a little old-fashioned economic populism could go a long way. Families making \$70,000-\$150,000 a year pay income tax at a 33 percent rate at present. Family incomes over \$150,000 pay at only 28 percent. According to the poll 74 percent of Americans -- and 71 percent of Republicans -- want to raise the rate for the wealthiest taxpayers.

**CHEERS AND JEERS.** Cheers to the democratic movement in the Himalayan kingdom of Nepal, which forced the King to reinstate the pluralist democracy he ousted in 1960. The new prime minister is from the Congress party, a Socialist International affiliate. Cheers also for British actress Glenda Jackson, who'll stand for Parliament for the Labour party.

Jeers to George Bush, whose administration snubbed a recent visit to Washington by New Zealand Labor prime minister David Palmer to punish him for that country's policy banning U.S. nuclear ships. I guess it's OK to cozy up to the butchers of Tiananmen Square but not allied nations whose democracy isn't to our liking, huh?

A big cheer for New York City Mayor David Dinkins who is delivering on a campaign promise by asking the Defense Department to cancel plans for a Staten Island homeport for nuclear ships.

**INVESTMENT BE DAMNED.** "I haven't seen a corporate raider takeover yet where they increased research and development activities." -- William J. Spencer, executive vice-president of Xerox.

## South Africa

*Continued from page 10.*

effect on new investment and the isolation of South African corporations from global economic developments.

In fact, the South African economy has fared badly in the political crisis, faced with serious capital outflows and rising debts. As Alec Erwin, of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa points out, apartheid is growing increasingly unproductive.

Apartheid's low wage, forced labor system used to mean high short-term profits. But it has also produced a low skill workforce unable to compete in a global production system and unable to sustain an internal consumer market. Events in Eastern Europe have underscored fears that South Africa may be left behind as multinational capital pursues more enticing prospects.

The realization that apartheid is economically as well as politically untenable in the modern world has undoubtedly created pressure for change within the ruling white elites and precipitated DeKlerk's new policies. But if they now agree that apartheid has to go, they do not agree on what should replace it and how fast.

The coming weeks and months will spur organizing on both sides. DeKlerk will be consolidating support among business leaders, centrist whites in his National party, and liberal whites in the Democratic party, in order to meet

conditions for negotiation.

Organizations like the ANC, UDF, and COSATU will be developing their platforms and working to unify the black majority, reducing ethnic tensions, addressing the gulfs between urban townships and rural homelands, and organizing communities with quite disparate levels of economic sufficiency and political experience.

The immediate issues on the table will be repeal of the legal foundations of apartheid: the registration of people by race, the segregation of living areas and housing by race, the forced removal of blacks to artificial "homelands," the migrant labor system, and the security laws which give unchecked police powers to the government.

The fundamental issue will be majority rule and the key principle of one person, one vote on a common voters roll. Whites want to retain special political privileges; some even want to retain distinct white areas. The autonomy of the homelands is also in question, although recent uprisings in the Transkei, Ciskei, and Bophuthatswana make it clear there are strong forces that favor total reunification of the country under one democratic system.

While political rights are the first priority, issues of economic democracy are also on the table. Apartheid is not only a system of white political power, but also a system of white economic privilege. The result was described by Nelson Mandela after his release:

"My return to Soweto fills my heart with joy. At the same time, I also return with a deep sense of sadness -- sadness to learn that you are still suffering under an inhumane system. The housing shortage, the school crisis, unemployment and the crime rate still remain."

In fact, the days following Mandela's release saw major demonstrations by teachers seeking equal pay, nurses seeking desegregated hospital housing, and township residents seeking lower rents and electrical rates. And in recent months, labor conflicts have sharpened not lessened, especially in response to the repressive Labor Relations Act.

The labor movement will play a key role in defining labor rights under a new constitution, in building democratic structures for economic policy-making, and in proposing alternative approaches to human and industrial development. In the meantime, COSATU is reminding the international community that the struggle against apartheid is far from over. Like the ANC, the unions have called for increased sanctions pressure until all the people of South Africa can elect a constituent assembly to draft a new constitution. ●

*The New York Committee Against Apartheid produces Labor Against Apartheid. For more information about the Coalition, call (718) 768-1756.*