



SPECIAL CONVENTION ISSUE

Report on Convention 2003

David Bonior calls for a North American Parliament

and

DSA Organizer reports from Miami

Delegates report from the Socialist International Congress

Resolution on the Occupation of Iraq

The prosecution of the War in Iraq and the subsequent occupation of Iraq completely validate the objections raised by those who opposed this war. Only the speedy restoration of Iraqi sovereignty to an independent and legitimate Iraqi government can end this quagmire.

To facilitate this, Democratic Socialists of America calls for the immediate withdrawal of the U.S.-British "coalition" forces from Iraq and simultaneous transfer of administration of Iraq to the United Nations, including the appointment of a U.N. High Commissioner. A U.N.-controlled peacekeeping force should maintain security during the period of U.N. administration while an Iraqi force is being developed and sovereignty is restored.

The Bush administration has failed to provide for even the most minimal needs of the Iraqi population. While corporations such as Halliburton and Bechtel are profiteering from no-bid contracts, U.S. citizens are paying for an old-fashioned colonial occupation in which U.S. troops—assigned to state-building duties for which they have no training—are being routinely killed. Iraqi civilians, too, are being killed in armed attacks by U.S. soldiers, by insurgents, and by common criminals taking advantage of the breakdown in social order. The Iraqi people are also suffering and dying due to their lack of sufficient clean water, electricity, and medical care. Its infrastructure destroyed, Iraq is being ravaged, and ethno-nationalist and reactionary Islamist forces are on the rise. DSA condemns the wholesale privatization of the Iraqi economy carried out unilaterally by the U.S. occupying forces. Only a sovereign and democratic Iraqi government can implement legitimate structural and economic reforms. DSA supports the efforts of organizations such as U.S. Labor Against the War that seek to protect workers' rights and support an independent trade union movement in Iraq.

The Bush administration called for the creation of a U.N.-endorsed multilateral military force to join the U.S. occupation force in Iraq, to be commanded by an American and accountable to the Pentagon's strategic control. As Phyllis Bennis of the Institute for Policy Studies noted, the plan did "not envision Washington even sharing authority and decision-making with the U.N. itself or with the governments sending international contingents, let alone ending its occupation and turning over full authority to the U.N. to oversee a rapid return to Iraqi independence." We reject the administration's arrogance.

We further demand that the U.S. and British meet their moral and legal responsibilities under international law by providing for the humanitarian costs of their unilateral intervention. Washington and London must pay the continuing costs of Iraq's reconstruction, including much of the cost of U.N. humanitarian and peacekeeping deployments. The Bush administration must immediately make public a realistic estimate for the cost of reconstruction in Iraq and turn over funds to U.N. authority, beginning with the \$87 billion dollars allegedly appropriated for reconstruction (but the majority of which is aimed at supporting the military costs of United States occupation). Reconstruction funds would be far cheaper than the costs incurred by continuing the inhumane and counter-productive United States unilateral occupation of Iraq.

Adopted by the DSA National Convention, November 16, 2003.

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Editorial Committee:

Jeffrey Gold, Bill Mosley, Kathy Quinn,
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Democratic Socialists of America share a vision of a humane international social order based on equitable distribution of resources, meaningful work, a healthy environment, sustainable growth, gender and racial equality, and non-oppressive relationships. Equality, solidarity, and democracy can only be achieved through international political and social cooperation aimed at ensuring that economic institutions benefit all people. We are dedicated to building truly international social movements - of unionists, environmentalists, feminists, and people of color - which together can elevate global justice over brutalizing global competition.

DSA NATIONAL OFFICE
180 Varick Street, 12th Floor
New York, NY 10014
212-727-8610
<http://www.dsausa.org>

The Road to Boston

The results from the DSA (PAC) on-line presidential sample ballots and issue polls have remained remarkably consistent. The polls were intended to measure the attitude of progressive voters on the most important issues and on the prospective candidates. Anyone identifying himself or herself as a progressive voter *intending to vote in the 2004 presidential primaries and general election* could participate in this poll.

More than 96 percent of the respondents agreed that Bush and the Republicans favored the rich and were too quick to use American military power. Ninety-three percent agreed that the corporations got everything they wanted from the Bush Administration. The respondents were not too kind to the Democrats, either: Eighty-eight percent agreed that the Democrats had not been effective opponents of the Administration. Still, 81.5 percent agreed that the most important thing in the 2004 elections was to defeat Bush.

Respondents were then asked to express a preference for one of the candidates seeking the Democratic nomination. Respondents were drawn



overwhelmingly to candidates who were clearly opposed to the war in Iraq. In the first poll, Ohio Congressman Dennis Kucinich narrowly edged out former Vermont Governor Howard Dean 37.9 percent to 33.1 percent. Former general Wesley Clark was a distant third with 9.4 percent. Five percent of the respondents chose "none of the above," presumably indicating support for a third-party candidate or a Democrat who has not entered the race. Subsequent polls with fewer participants have seen slight increases in support for Dean and Clark and a slight decline for Kucinich.

A poll that was mailed to DSA members demonstrated similar results. Members were asked to list up to three candidates that they could support from the list of those running. Again, Dean and Kucinich did the best, listed on 67 and 59 percent of the ballots respectively. In this poll, however, Senator John Kerry came in third, appearing on 22 percent of the ballots, while Clark dropped to fourth at 18 percent. Congressman Richard Gephardt edged out former Senator Carol Moseley Braun 14 percent to 13 percent. John Edwards, Al Sharpton and "none of the above" tied at 5 percent, just above Senators Joseph Lieberman and Bob Graham at 2 percent each.

In part because of the divided loyalties of our members, DSA (PAC) has made no formal endorsement. DSA is planning to be very active at the Democratic Convention in Boston and we need to know which members will be attending the convention and in what capacity. Any DSA members running for delegate should let the national office know. The simplest way is to email the National Director at fllewellyn@dsausa.org, but a regular letter, phone call or postcard will do the trick. And, if you will be in Boston as staff or protestor July 26-29, let us know that, too!

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Cover Photo: Cornel West speaking at the Saturday night outreach event at the 2003 National Convention.

Convention 2003

A Welcoming City

Detroit proved to be a superb site for DSA's 2003 National Convention, both for its civic history and for the hard work and broad

hall of historic United Auto Workers Local 600, which represents the workers at River Rouge. The event honored four people: Julie Hurwitz, the Executive Director of the



David Green, chair of Detroit DSA, welcomes guests to the annual Douglass-Debs awards dinner

political connections of its DSA local.

Before the convention itself began in earnest, early arrivals took a tour of labor landmarks in the city, including the Federal Screw factory, site of an early sit-down strike and of intense battles between strikers and police; the building once owned by the Detroit Socialist Party, busted in 1919 during the Palmer Raids; and Ford's massive River Rouge Plant, where Ford thugs brutally beat UAW organizers and, later, union members in the 1930s.

Through all the labor wars, the people of the city came to the aid of the unionists—and that feeling was still visible today, in the huge labor monument (built with money raised by the unions) standing in the center of the waterfront. It was also present in the receptivity shown to today's visiting socialists (and respect and thanks given to Detroit DSA) by union members and government officials.

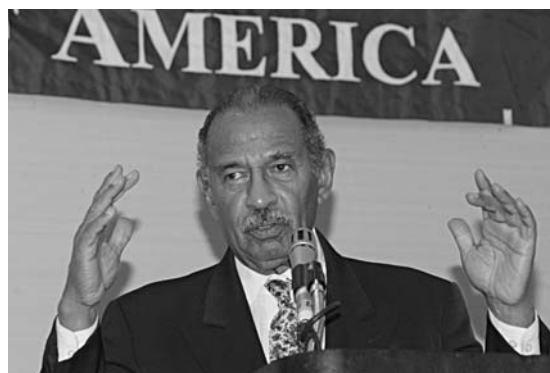
On Friday evening, the Convention delegates attended Detroit DSA's annual Frederick Douglass-Eugene V. Debs Dinner. The event was held at the union

National Lawyers Guild/Maurice & Jane Sugar Law Center for Economic and Social Justice; Philip Schloop, the business manager of the International Union of Operating Engineers, who, along with the AFT's David Hecker, brought Detroit DSA into the Metro AFL-CIO Labor Council-led living wage campaign; longtime DSA member and union activist Carl Shier, who helped found the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee, one of the forerunners of DSA; and life-long socialist Oskar Paskal, who worked for much of his life in labor education through the UAW and is an activist in the fight for single-payer healthcare.

The keynote speaker was journalist, political commentator and DSA Vice Chair Harold Meyerson. After paying tribute to the UAW's contribution to "every progressive social movement," he went on to describe the new organizing challenges facing labor in the time of

Wal-Mart (the subject of one of DSA's campaigns under its Low-Wage Justice Project). While automaking started out with Henry Ford committed to paying his workers enough to buy his products, today Wal-Mart's strategy is to pay its workers so little that they have to shop at Wal-Mart. Wal-Mart's economic clout, in turn, guarantees that its wage policies exert downward pressure on the entire labor market. To counter this, unions must keep organizing and reorganizing workers.

In addition to the DSA Convention delegates, approximately 200 Detroit-area union and political activists were present at the dinner, testifying to the impressive relations Detroit DSA has developed with other organizations. UAW International Vice President Dick Shoemaker, a DSA member and awards presenter, noted that "without the socialist movement and people like Carl [Schier] and Oskar [Paskal], labor and social justice progress would



Congressman John Conyers speaking at the Saturday night outreach event

never have happened."

Entertainment was provided by Canadian folk-singer and accordionist Len Wallace, who closed the evening with a rousing rendition of the "Internationale"—accompanied, of course, by the DSA Convention Delegates Choir.

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Towards a North American Parliamentary Union

By David Bonior

The Saturday afternoon plenary session was devoted to a panel on the global economy featuring author Holly Sklar, former Congressman David Bonior (now a professor of labor studies at Wayne State University) and Canadian Joe CoMartin, member of Parliament from the Windsor area from the New Democratic Party. The panel was moderated by Wayne State University professor of labor history Linda Housch Collins. The following are excerpts from David Bonior's presentation.



Good morning. It's good to be with you this morning. To Holly and Joe, it's really wonderful to be on the panel with you. And to David Green and all the leaders, thank you for what you do. This organization has been just absolutely tremendous in the Detroit area in [the] living wage campaign's great, great success—they have been one of the stalwarts in it—fighting for a single-payer healthcare plan, and, of course, global justice. And I couldn't be more thrilled to be here with you today and to be associated and to make some comments....

...Harold Meyerson*...put the global context of this issue very well last night when he said [that] a hundred years ago, roughly a hundred years ago, Henry Ford decided [that] the model for the economy was: The workers have got to make enough money to buy the product they're producing. And that was adopted eventually—through lots of struggle, of course—by the major automobile makers. And General Motors adopted that philosophy as well. So you pay people decently, you give them good benefits, so they can buy the product that they're making and live a decent middle-income life. Today, Wal-Mart has turned that on its head. General Motors used to be the biggest corporation in the world in terms of employment. Today, in this country, Wal-Mart hires 1.4 million workers and has flipped that philosophy around. And their philosophy is basically, you pay people as little as you can so they have to shop at Wal-Mart. It's just the reverse of what we had, moving people into the middle class....

Monday, November 17, is an anniversary day. It's the 10-year anniversary of the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement, which I had the honor of leading the fight against and which we came very close to defeating...and it's wreaked havoc, as you've just heard from Linda, and as you will continue to hear through the FTAA meetings coming up this week in Miami. So it's a serious, serious problem.

*Referring to Harold Meyerson's keynote address at the Detroit DSA Douglass-Debs Dinner.

In June of this year, in France, President Bush went and he pressed his case in his fight against terrorism, and Chirac turned the conversation around, or tried to, by trying to get at the underlying problems which feed hopelessness and feed violence and feed terrorism. He argued that we should be helping underdeveloped nations and countries address their desperate needs in education and in healthcare and access to clean water and agriculture. He basically was talking about the concept of "commons," which Jonathan Rowe and others have really elevated nationally here, that there are some things that are common to us as a people—as a species—that ought to be off limits to globalization. Well, last fall, in Cancun, they met again to try to push their agenda a little bit further, and they were rejected again because they were met with opposition. And, of course, they are trying to do the same thing this coming week in Miami.

I was at a conference five years ago at the University of California-Berkeley, and we had the leaders of the hemisphere there at that time. Then-Governor Vicente Fox was there; Adolfo Aguilar Zinser,** who became the head of the Mexican delegation at the United Nations; and Jorge Castaneda, who became the foreign minister. And these were people who were in academia—Fox was the governor of a small state—they became the power structure in Mexico. But at that conference, I remember vividly and [was] pleasantly surprised to hear Vicente Fox advocate turning the North American Free Trade Agreement into a European-style common market, which has as its central theme—these

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**Adolfo Aguilar Zinser stepped down as Mexico's UN Ambassador on Thursday, November 20, saying it was impossible to remain after comments he made sparked a diplomatic flap. Aguilar Zinser told university students in Mexico City that ``unfortunately, the understanding that the political and intellectual class of the United States has of Mexico is a country whose position is that of a back yard.''

Hemispheric Trade Troubles

By Lucas Shapiro



Lucas Shapiro tabling for DSA in Miami

The Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) ministerial meetings this past November in Miami ended a day early without the binding comprehensive agreement Jeb and George Bush had hoped for. The resulting “FTAA a la carte” would allow governments to opt out of key provisions such as mandatory liberalization of foreign investment, intellectual property and competition policy.

The diverse array of protesters who had massed in the militarized streets of downtown Miami witnessed a conditional victory for the global justice movement. The limited success of this public display of opposition came at a cost. The now familiar loose coalition of trade unionists, advocacy NGOs, activist youngsters and local social justice organizations faced heavy and sometimes violent police repression. All in all, Miami had spent an obscene \$600 per protester on security for the FTAA ministerial.

Negotiations in Miami failed not because of direct action protesters “shutting down” the FTAA ministerial. Rather, the most recent trade deal impasse was a result of the Bush Administration’s uncompromising arrogance on the one

hand and the increasing confidence of Latin American nations, led by Brazil, to buck the “Washington Consensus” on the other.

Bush’s unilateralism, it must be remembered, extends beyond the realm of foreign military endeavors. With developing countries exercising increasing collective bargaining power, the Bush administration is more likely to achieve its strategic aims by pursuing nation-to-nation and regional trade agreements with weaker, more compliant countries. Coming out of Miami, the U.S. had already announced plans to negotiate bilateral Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with Bolivia, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Panama and Peru. With many of the smaller nations in Latin America and the Caribbean locked into FTAs, the U.S. can more effectively employ carrot-and-stick measures to further pry open and structurally adjust the prize economies of Brazil, Argentina and oil-rich Venezuela.

This U.S.-led “coalition of the willing” approach to trade conducted outside the nominally multilateral institutional framework of the WTO, IMF and World Bank (let alone the UN) succeeded with the recently concluded Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) negotiations between the U.S., El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua.

With CAFTA’s tentative passage, U.S. Trade Representative Robert Zoellick expressed a renewed confidence in the U.S.-dominated capitalist globalization project: “step by step, country by country, region by region, the United States is opening markets with top-notch, comprehensive FTAs that set the standard.”

CAFTA, like other “free trade” deals, is largely an investors’ rights agreement complete with corporate protectionist patent regulations (which can prohibit states from producing life-saving cheap generic drugs) and other affronts to democratic self-governance and economic policy-making. According to the U.S. Trade Representative official press release, CAFTA will grant the U.S. “new access to government procurement contracts” with signatory Central American countries yielding “market access across their entire services regime, subject to very few exceptions.” Such measures, in effect, will pave the way for the pri-



Crowds of protesters fill the streets of Miami

vatization of publicly run industries, utilities and social services.

FTAs are inherently unfair, as they do not adequately take into account the gaping power differential between small developing nations with fragile domestic markets and the behemoth U.S. economy driven by powerful multinational corporations, a huge consumer base and market-distorting agribusiness subsidies. With such an unequal basis for economic integration, it’s no wonder many citizens across the Americas dismiss the lofty Bush/Zoellick promises of “economic freedom and opportunity for all peoples” as farcical.

Lucas Shapiro is currently DSA’s Youth Organizer and was in Miami for the FTAA protests.

A Journey to São Paulo

At the XXII Congress of the Socialist International

By Kathy Quinn and Frank Llewellyn

The 22nd Congress of the Socialist International met in São Paulo, Brazil, at the invitation of the Brazilian Workers Party and Brazil's new president Luiz Ignacio Lula da Silva. The meetings were timed to coincide with the first anniversary

Many delegates to the Congress hoped that the meeting in Brazil would signal the beginning of the joining of the political forces represented by the Social Forum, which the Workers Party helped to create, and the parties of the

Sustainable Development.

International trade negotiation—particularly the recent WTO talks in Cancun and the upcoming negotiations for the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) in Miami, were clearly on everyone's mind at the



Two views of Sao Paulo. Left: An amusement park takes up the center of a luxury shopping center. Right: Down the street, slums still stand.

of Lula's election. The theme of the Congress was globalization—an issue made even more important by the recent failure of the Cancun Summit and highlighted by the state of the Brazilian economy.

Redistribution of wealth is badly needed in Brazil, which has an extremely large gap between rich and poor—a gap that is glaringly evident in São Paulo itself. With 17 million people, São Paulo is one of the largest cities in the world, and it is rapidly growing. Construction is everywhere. Tall office buildings, luxury hotels, and high-end shopping centers rise up right next to slums and even shantytowns. Many of the office buildings bear the names of well-known multinational corporations such as Microsoft, Schering-Plough, Barclays Bank and Citibank. There is even a Sam's Club.

Socialist International. The SI and the Workers Party signed a Cooperation Agreement pledging to work together against the neo-liberal agenda. This agreement should be a harbinger of even closer cooperation in the future.

The main business of the Congress was the adoption of an 86-page statement entitled "Governance in a Global Society: the Social Democratic Approach." Though short on details, the document, which was three years in the making, is a truly international attempt, by people who are actually involved in government, to outline an alternative to corporate-dominated globalization. Central to that agenda are major changes in international economic and political organizations, including expansion of the Security Council and the creation of a Council for

Congress. Lula's opening speech to the Congress largely rehearsed his position in the trade talks. Brazil, backed by most other Latin American governments, was instrumental in the lack of agreement both in Cancun and in Miami.

The effect of Al-Queda's attack on the United States and the ensuing military actions by the U.S. was evident both in the draft of "Governance in a Global Society" and in the agenda of the Congress. The need to accommodate the real security concerns of people in both the developed and the developing world—along with the traditional economic and social issues featured in socialist politics—was clearly a major consideration.

But the Bush Administration's claim of a unilateral right to act pre-

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São Paulo and the World

Opening Speech at the the XXII Congress of the Socialist International

By Marta Suplicy, Mayor of São Paulo, Brazil

I welcome you all to the city of São Paulo.

First of all, I would like to thank the organization committee for having chosen the city of São Paulo to host this congress.

We are very proud that São Paulo will be the stage for important discussions during the next three days. In this case, it is not only a great and important congress but much more than that. We are experiencing a happening. Here today there are party leaders from hundreds of countries committed to the struggle for social justice. We are facing a historical event in Brazil and a decisive moment for Latin America and the world.

I would say that this SI Congress shall find the answers to the new challenges imposed by globalization which has neo-liberalism as an hegemonic force. Thus, what is at stake are not only the strategies to defeat it, but also and most of all, the building and consolidation of new ways for a globalization accepted by all peoples.

We need rules that put public interest in its right place, social justice, the battle against the unacceptable inequality that divides the world in such a cruel way, and above all, the relentless fight for peace and against hunger.

Neo-liberalism caused us to defend ourselves and to delay our historic fight against the logic of wealth appropriation by an [infinitesimal] minority, leaving the majority of the population in absolute poverty. But it was not able to keep us from our utopia.

Modern socialism continues to be an instrument to reach this utopia: a democratic world free from exploitation and oppression of workers and people.

We are experiencing a moment of expectations and hopes, despite all the great difficulties. And Lula's victory for the presidency of Brazil is certainly one of the symbols of these new times.

New challenges, because the social and environmental problems that shake the world urgently call for global governance, built from local parties and the people's sovereignty.

And it is an opportunity because, after all, socialist parties were the first ones to raise the flag of internationalism, ever since its origin, in the middle of the 19th century, with a great spirit of human solidarity instead of predatory competition.

I have no doubt that everyone present here will agree that the battle for social justice requires strong international activity. We [face] market forces that, while creating new wealth and technology, tend to accelerate social and economic inequalities when they

are free from the regulating action of the State. The demand is more than ever for social rules that control the market and correct inequalities.

The neo-liberal globalization created a world in which civilization and barbarism do not exclude one another, but live side by side, especially in big metropolises.

Against this, we must propose and build a world order in which political will is present. Nothing is more appropriate, therefore, as the chosen title of this congress: *"The Return of Politics: For just and responsible global governance - For globalization governed by the people"*

For a globalization governed by the people in defense of a depolarized world, where wild economic competition will give place to interdependency and collaboration among countries.

This also implies sharing our access to existing technology and knowledge needed to quickly solve the most outrageous problems of humanity, such as hunger and precarious housing.

The existing multilateral structures simply cannot handle this challenge. I do not believe that the imposition of politics will occur through the armed forces or occupation of countries alleging a supposed crusade for freedom.

The battle against terrorism, religious fanaticism, racism and xenophobia constitutes a bigger priority of our time. However, if the disastrous invasion in Iraq could teach the world a lesson, it would, exactly in the sense that it is necessary to accomplish a vast reform of the United Nations system and the rejection of unilateralism as a condition for true democracy in international relations.

Similarly, the failure of the WTO negotiations in Cancun shows how much we still have to make progress in the direction of a world system in which values such as fair trade, solidarity and humanism prevail.

In this sense, the responsibility of this Congress is not a small one. We must take into consideration an accumulated experience here and also consider the political will to move on in this direction. Thus, we will be certain that this Congress not only should, but will,



help the search for new ways encompassing the issues proposed to the debate that in fact are central topics for today's world.

In this battle, SI is no longer alone and can make use of the debates held in the form of World Social Forums organized in Porto Alegre for the past years and which next year will be held in Bombay, India.

Undoubtedly, there's an open field to articulate even more the energy that spurs from social movements and from progressive political parties. This demands to break away from any ambiguity and situate the SI's combat in the new field of questioning the unjust order, abandoning any social-liberal intention, which is nothing more than a pure and simple adaptation to the neo-liberal order.

The transition from the model we have to the one we want, and that the most desperate population aspires to, goes through not only the formulation of national projects internationally articulated, but also demands an enormous participation of local authorities.

Especially for being close to suffering and insecurity caused by injustice, several important experiences emerged from local authorities' fight for social inclusion.

As the mayor of the largest city in Latin America, elected by the Workers Party in a vast front of democratic and progressive forces, I follow what I consider democratic and reforming values.

To transform a city like São Paulo into a better place to live, change has to reach everyone, especially the ones left aside up to now.

This is not only an enormous challenge to humanity, but above all, an obligation of public power, which should accept the responsibility to fight against this situation.

Our administration has accomplished an investment never seen before in social inclusion, at the same time redirecting this expenditure to the population of lower income brackets. And to do this in a metropolis like São Paulo has been to promote a total inversion of priorities relative to previous governments.

To recover the social function of the metropolis promoting infrastructure development, we stimulate popular participation in public policies and we have created integrated social inclusion policies.

Our action is directed to citizen integration and to guarantee the rights of excluded sectors of society. It is not only important to manage well, but to know whom we are directing our efforts and scarce resources to.

This is why São Paulo has built the largest income distribution program ever adopted by a single city. Social programs have benefited today, more than 288 thousand families or 1.2 million people. Of every two poor families, one has already benefited by programs of income supplementation.

We have proved the thesis that social investments, besides being a moral obligation, can also sustain a pol-

icy of economic growth.

But what I see as the greatest contribution is the investment in the future, in education. We make education a tool to reduce inequalities. We are building and concluding in the outskirts of the city the Unified Educational Centers, which are schools with quality public equipment such as theaters, libraries, Internet rooms, swimming pools, sports areas, open to the local communities. We are transforming our municipal education network, not only to keep children at school, but to guarantee high quality education.

This promising experience also brings a large improvement in the self-esteem of needy people, which stimulates the participation of the benefited ones. Without them, no transforming process is possible. In

To transform a city like São Paulo into a better place to live, change has to reach everyone, especially the ones left aside up to now.

fact, in my experience, the participation of the population has been an essential factor.

Next year the city of São Paulo will celebrate its 450th anniversary. The celebrations will have their peak on January 25th, which is the official date, but they will also be extended through the rest of the year. Not only in celebrations for the population and cultural activities, but also with international events to discuss the subjects that we think are priorities.

Among these, I would like to highlight the World Forum for Education, to be held next year in São Paulo; the World Forum for Culture, and URBIS 2004 — which is a Fair and International Congress of Cities to be held in the scope of the IX UNCTAD [UN Council on Trade and Development], which will have as its subject "Metropolitan Regions and Megacities: Strategies for Development."

And last, I would like to wish you all an excellent Congress. I am certain that in the next three days there are going to be top quality debates, based on concrete experiences, with only one goal: to find creative and daring alternatives that will make living conditions more dignified.

This is why I would like to remind you of the words of the Latin-American writer Eduardo Galeano that described utopia as something that should always be present on our horizon:

When I walk two steps, it takes two steps back. I walk ten steps, and it is ten steps further away. What is Utopia for? It is for this, for walking.

Thank you very much, and a good walk for all of you!

Trip to São Paulo

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emptively against perceived future threats was condemned over and over again in speeches. The sentiment that the Bush Administration represents an unprecedented danger to the international environment was genuinely overwhelming. DSA's delegates to the Congress—National Director Frank Llewellyn, NPC member Kathy Quinn, and members Skip Roberts and Stan Gacek—were frequently questioned about the political situation in the U.S.

The other main business of this Congress was the continued expansion of the SI. Twenty-seven parties had their status upgraded or were admitted to the SI, bringing total membership to over 160.

Still, the SI remains concerned with three countries in which it lacks significant contact with elected officials—China, Russia, and, of course, the U.S. This situation represents an opportunity for DSA to help the SI reach out to genuine progressive elected officials in the United States. DSA's delegation came to this Congress with an agenda, which found genuine interest: to begin establishing a program of dialogues between progressive American elected officials and their counterparts around the world. The highlight of the trip was a short meeting with Lula to pitch the project. DSA delegates also worked to develop international support for U.S. SEIU workers fighting Wackenhut, a European multinational corporation, for the right to be in a union. Many delegates signed a letter to the corporation protesting their stance.

The world is dominated by the economy of the United States and threatened by its foreign policy. The SI is far from a perfect institution, but it represents a pole of opposition to the direction coming from Washington and we were glad to be a part of it.

The Situation in Iraq: An interview

In October, I flew to São Paulo, Brazil, to attend the triennial Congress of Socialist International-Women (SIW) and the opening day of the Congress of the Socialist International (SI). I went as the representative of Democratic Socialists of America.

The theme of the this year's triennial convention of Socialist International Women (SIW) was "Women and Human Security," emphasizing the need for attention to the specific concerns of women and to women's views in all aspects of conflict prevention, peace negotiations and post-conflict restructuring. The keynote panel on the theme included women from such conflict-riven areas as the Balkans, Senegal and Iraq.

I was able to have a lengthy conversation with one of the panelists, Shanaz Rashid, a representative of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan of Iraq, who was involved with the rebuilding efforts and had recently toured the country. Rashid had dismayed many of the SIW delegates by failing to condemn the U.S. invasion of Iraq—she told me that she estimated that two-thirds of Iraqis thought the ouster of Hussein was worth the costs—but that didn't mean that she had no criticisms of the U.S. occupation. In fact, she found fault with the ways that both Iraqis and the occupying troops were treated.

In her view, the main problem with the occupation is that, despite the U.S.'s professed goal of establishing a democratic government in Iraq, occupation authorities are bypassing the Iraqis in many ways, exacerbating bad feelings. In the south, where damaged oil pipelines need repairs, contractors have been bringing in Indian and Pakistani workers rather than employing native Iraqis. Not surprisingly, this has also led to anti-immigrant feelings among the Iraqis, who are experiencing astronomical unemployment.

Meanwhile, aid money is being funneled through various international organizations rather than going directly to Iraqis or Iraqi groups and, at this point, the average Iraqi doesn't seem to be getting much benefit. Some of the programs seem almost nonsensical. Rashid's favorite example is a group that was given money to set up bakeries in Iraq. Iraqis traditionally bake their own bread and, in any case, with curfews in place, it would be difficult for them to get to a bakery. Handing out flour would seem more useful. The Iraqis, who routinely hear that billions are being spent on aid, can't understand where it is going.

She said flatly that she "felt sorry" for the American troops who are living in crowded conditions, cut off for security reasons from the Iraqi populace, many of whom don't seem very grateful for U.S. assistance. It is not surprising that some among the troops are developing anti-Iraqi feeling. The division between the occupation forces and the Iraqis even extends to areas in which the benefits of cooperation would seem to be obvious. For instance, although there are now plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables to be had in the markets of Iraq, none of these find their way to American soldiers who are kept on a diet of unappetizing MREs (Meals Ready to Eat). The soldiers themselves cannot go to the markets and the military command had not made any arrangements to get supplies from the markets to the soldiers, even though such an arrangement would help both the soldiers and Iraqi merchants.

There have been some successes. The steep raises in pay for government employees have helped a significant number of people. The neighborhood councils hold promise for self-help. However, overall, the picture painted by Rashid is of an occupying force that doesn't seem to know how to (or, perhaps, wish to) engage the people of the country in the rebuilding effort.

—Kathy Quinn

Convention 2003

continued from page 4

A Spirit of Cooperation

The business sessions of the Detroit convention were characterized by cooperation, a sense of everyone working together on projects. Most of the discussion dealt with the 2004 presidential election and the urgency of getting George W. Bush out of the White House. While DSA members are working for various Democratic candidates (especially Howard Dean and Dennis Kucinich), the general consensus was that our organizational priority must be supporting any reasonable candidate against Bush, while at the same time helping to build a broad progressive coalition that can pressure the next president to address our issues.

Other priorities for the next two years include continuing and expanding DSA's Low Wage Justice

campaign; using our international connections to promote much needed dialogue between progressive elected officials in the U.S. and abroad around how best to build a democratic, multilateral alternative to unilateralist United States foreign policy; and strengthening DSA internally by improving the effectiveness of our communication and outreach, forming closer ties between our youth section and the national and locals, conducting more internal political education, and continuing the work of the Local Development Committee.

The Convention also passed resolutions calling for electoral reform and an end to the U.S. occupation of Iraq (*see page 2*), adopting a working mission statement



Holly Sklar speaking on Saturday night

for DSA, and calling for National DSA to start a strategic planning process. The National Office and the Boston local were charged to organize a public socialist event in connection with the 2004 Democratic National Convention.

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 RALF FUECKS: For a Democratic Alliance
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Convention 2003

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Delegates also elected a new National Political Committee (NPC) to direct DSA's work over the next two years. Since 2001 the DSA Constitution has required that the NPC have sixteen members, at least eight of whom must be women and at least six of whom must be people of color. Owing to a lack of female and minority candidates, the new NPC consists of eight men and three women, only one of whom is a person of color. One of the first and most important tasks of this

off from the 2001 Convention at the last moment due to health problems, but who was present for most of this Convention, attending workshops and plenary sessions as well as addressing the delegates.

Maryann Mahaffee, President of Detroit City Council and longtime DSA member, welcomed the delegates to the city. She said that "socialism—what the world, the earth, gives to us being equally available to everybody—just makes sense." Delegates also received a

American antipathy toward social programs.

Saturday's plenary session was "The Left Response to the Global Economy," with author Holly Sklar (*Raising the Floor*), Bonior and CoMartin. Sklar provided a wealth of figures on the current results of corporate-dominated globalization. A notable moment was when Bonior outlined the proposal for a North American Parliamentary Union with a parliamentary body elected by all citizens in NAFTA countries—a project he has been promoting along with Mexican legislator Carlos Heredia (*see Bonior's speech, page 5*).

Saturday evening's outreach event featured West, Conyers, Sklar and DSA Vice Chair Harold Meyerson, Editor At-Large of the *American Prospect* and *Washington Post* columnist, speaking on "Progressive Politics, the Left and the 2004 Elections." Conyers opened by saying that "with a crypto-fascist administration, there's no singular purpose more important than unelecting the unelected president"—a point that formed the focus of much of the discussion over the weekend as well as that evening.

The Convention's final plenary session on Sunday morning on "The Quest for American Empire" featured Greater Philadelphia DSA Co-chair Kathy Quinn along with professors Fran Shor from Wayne State University and Vrasad Venugopel from the Physics University of Detroit.

The Convention also featured a variety of issue, skill-building and discussion workshops, including one on universal health care that drew as many delegates as most of the plenary sessions. Detroit DSA members especially are to be commended for their hard work on organizing the Convention and the fine results.



From left to right: John Conyers, Cornel West, Harold Meyerson and Holly Sklar pose together after speaking at Saturday night's outreach event

committee will be recruiting members to fill the vacant seats.

A Great Program

Largely due to the excellent connections of Detroit DSA, plenary sessions at the convention featured an exceptional number of elected officials, including Congressman John Conyers (D-MI), former Congressman David Bonior and Canadian MP Joe CoMartin of the New Democratic Party. Other notable speakers included DSA Honorary Chair and Princeton professor Cornel West, who had to beg

surprise welcome from Congressman Conyers, who wasn't scheduled to speak until the next evening.

At the Convention's first plenary panel presentation on "Defending the Social Wage," Michigan AFL-CIO Secretary Tina Abbot called Bush "the most dangerous president of modern times," whose policies are costing 60,000-100,000 jobs a month. Discussing the low levels of social solidarity in the U.S., NPC member and Temple Professor Joe Schwartz stressed that racism is behind much of

North American Parliamentary Union

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are his own words—"human development and prosperity to all." To my delight, Fox went on to suggest that market forces will never, in undeveloped countries, be the guiding positive force we need. Now, this is coming from a conservative president of Mexico from the PAN party.... I was really surprised. And he concluded in his observations that the European Common Market countries had dedicated one-third of their total market budget, 35 billion in U.S. dollars, to narrowing the gap between the less developed and the more prosperous European countries. ...[A]ll of this comes

from human intelligence, from human action and, he said again, not from the market. ...

Last year, at another conference, I was in Mexico with a fellow by the name of Carlos Heredia, who was a member of their parliament, and we came up with an idea: How do we democratize this globalization argument?... And one of the ideas we came up with was forming a North American Parliamentary Union. A North America Parliament, with Mexico, Canada and the United States, with people—probably first appointed, but eventually elected like they are in the European Parliament—so we can begin to raise these issues of human rights, civil rights and labor rights and immigration, which never get talked about here.

The proposed North American Parliamentary Union would be a democratic structure to enfranchise all citizens—farmers, laborers, small business, environmentalists, consumer advocates and others—in the NAFTA countries, as well as, hopefully, Central America. It will broaden the players, expand

the playing field, so that the best democratic values will be incorporated into our social, political and economic decisions.

We live in a global world where the key decisions are made by a self-selected group of elites, often in nontransparent circumstances. NAPU—short for North American Parliamentary Union—is an attempt to create a structure

The proposed North American Parliamentary Union would be a democratic structure to enfranchise all citizens in the NAFTA countries

where there is wider participation in this decision-making....

Now I can't imagine that there are very many people who would disagree with Fox's idea of a common market designed for human development and prosperity for all. Not unless you're from the complete, unfettered, unrestricted survival-of-the-fittest school of economic injustice. They do exist.... And truth be told, isn't that exactly what we have going on right now in our relationship with Mexico and with countries in Central America? We see an unholy relationship forged out of a long, often bloody history of exploitation and our recent neoliberal trade regime, which in many ways codifies the brutal course of the past. ...Jeff Faux in a thoughtful article in last January's *American Prospect* said it well. He said, "NAFTA is a thousand-page blueprint of a continental society that recognizes only one class of citizenship—the multinational corporation."

But we have it. We can't put the toothpaste back into the tube, but we can shape it to reflect our

values. Right now NAFTA represents the most extreme example of the so-called neoliberal model, to which I have referred, in which supranational rules liberate private corporate investors from the constraints of democratic public values. It is now the governing economic instrument of North America—our economic constitution, if you will. What we need is a bill of rights.... We ought to think of trying to sell what we're about here in those kinds of terms.

NAFTA gave extraordinary powers to corporations and purposely denied them to individuals. ...I'll give you just one [example], that's Chapter 11 of NAFTA, which grants corporations the power to sue the other two nations and overturn laws that might be construed as interfering

with corporate profits. You know, astonishingly enough, under NAFTA, UPS is suing Canada. And the reason it is suing Canada is that Canada believes that you should have control over your postal system. A real radical idea. And, of course, UPS does not [believe this].

NAFTA also guarantees corporations the right to invest, produce and sell anywhere in all three countries, and the governments are prevented from restricting the flow of repatriated profits. Governments are also barred from favoring their own citizens for government contracts. Disputes are settled by secret tribunals—experts, many of whom are lawyers and consultants for these very same multinational corporations. Individuals have no legal status under NAFTA. As I said, human rights and labor rights and environmental protection, public health, were deliberately excluded....

So, the problems go on and on and on. And private corporations liberated from the constraints of

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Boston DSA Forum: Women and Globalization

About 25 people slogged through the aftermath of a blizzard to attend Boston DSA's December 8 forum on "Women and Globalization."

DSA member and Brandeis scholar Dr. Ellen Israel Rosen outlined the overall economic picture, focusing on her research into the development of sweatshops both here and abroad and how they tend to particularly exploit the labor of poor women. She also discussed the global role of the world's largest corporation, Wal-Mart, ranging from charges of discrimination against women in its First World workforce to its use of its tremendous market power to drive down wages in manufacturing worldwide.

DSA member Dr. Elaine Bernard, director of Harvard Law School's Labor and Workplace Program and a former provincial president of Canada's New

Democratic Party, outlined a socialist analysis focusing on the concept of Commonwealth. Socialism, she argued, is not just about redistribution, but about creation of wealth. But the wealth we strive to create is the kind that can be commonly held, and so enriches everybody in society: free universal health care, child care and education, for example. Neo-liberal analysis, on the other hand, denies the value of any "good" that can't be privately owned, bought and sold for a profit. Much of the labor traditionally performed by women throughout the world has typically taken place outside of a market framework. Their work is therefore devalued in the capitalist/neo-liberal rubric; thus women are devalued as workers, which helps set the cultural framework for their exploitation.

She also discussed the double standard in global labor migration,

in which middle-class professionals like herself have relative freedom to relocate, as she did from Canada to the United States, while people who migrate for low-wage jobs are more likely to be subjected to further exploitation through their "illegal" status. She suggested that most of the issues regarding immigration would resolve themselves if we instead addressed the issue of subsisting wage jobs, both here and abroad, that drive "economic refugees" to migrate.

Finally, Maria Aguiar, Global Program Director of Grassroots International, focused mainly on case histories of the partner organizations she works with, particularly in Latin America. These are primarily agrarian mass organizations, very socialist in outlook, which are developing a high level of organizing skills as they struggle to counter the devastating effects of neo-liberal globalization on their communities. Tellingly, an increasing number of these are developing strong women leaders; in a recent partner meeting Grassroots held in the United States, three out of five delegates were women. One of the organizations she described has a policy that the leadership at every level must consist of one man and one woman.

A vigorous audience discussion, moderated by newly elected DSA Vice Chair Ed Clark, followed the presentation. Finally, the local raffled off two autographed copies of the book *Global Woman*, which had been graciously donated by one of the books' co-editors, DSA Honorary Chair Barbara Ehrenreich.

An audio recording of the program will be available for purchase. Interested parties should contact Boston DSA at speakers@dsaboston.org or (617) 354-5078.

Twin Cities DSA Hosts TransAfrica Head



At an event in Minneapolis on October 30, 2003, sponsored by Twin Cities DSA, Bill Fletcher (third from right), President of TransAfrica Forum in Washington, DC, discussed the war on Iraq and U.S. policy towards the developing world

NA Parliamentary Union

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democratic decisions make vulnerable the future of all the hard-won battles that took place over the last hundred years. The fact that we *have* child labor laws, that we *have* overtime pay, that we *have* good wages and benefits and healthcare, and many of these other things that really took a tremendous struggle and battle in this country...they are all threatened.

So, the NAFTA experience has not been a very good one. And here in Michigan we have seen now in the last three years, since Bush has become president, 130,000 manufacturing jobs leave. And, as Holly has said, yeah, they're going to Mexico, but they're also leaving from Mexico. Harley Shaiken, an economist from the University of California-Berkeley...pointed out that since January of 2001 the *maquiladora*, particularly along the border, lost 250,000 jobs. These are jobs that were paying only \$1.00 an hour. You know, they paid \$1.00 an hour back when we were arguing NAFTA back in '93. They still pay \$1.00 an hour. They have a 100 percent turnover rate in their facilities down there. And now they're losing—they're losing to China. Harold Meyerson laid it out really well yesterday. He pointed out that the Wal-Mart phenomenon—you couple Wal-Mart in the private sector and China in the public sector, they're working together—they're going to drive a million jobs out of Bangladesh and other countries. And they're going to go to China. ...

... The Europeans have about 400, in a very short time, 450 million people, and they've overcome many of their problems, economically, socially, politically. They talked to each other. They raised the standards of those trying to get into the European Union. Ireland, Greece, Spain—their standards were raised economically and socially, politically.... It was required that they raise their standards and they put a pot of money together to do that—\$35 million in one year. Now Eastern European countries are joining and that same kind of formula is going to apply.

We tried to do NAFTA on the cheap, without spending any money, and as a result there have been terrible consequences: no immigration policy, no labor rights, environmental disaster along the border.... Our political institutions really need to be looked at.

So anyway, I wanted to offer that alternative today. I think the chances of this happening in the short run are not very good, but in the long run...we have a chance of forming a North American parliament, and with that, I think, the dialogue on these issues that we all struggle with and are frustrated with will have a place in which they can surface and hopefully we can move forward.

Special Gifts

We gratefully acknowledge a special gift to Democratic Socialists of America from the estate of Bari Rolfe, who died in October of 2002. Bari Rolfe spent her life in the performing arts, first as a dancer and later as a practitioner of mime. She was one of the founders of the Older Women's League.

We also acknowledge with thanks a special gift to the Democratic Socialists of America Fund from the estate of Earl and Honorine Bourdon, who were part of DSA's founding generation. Earl Bourdon died in June of 1993; Honorine Bourdon died this past August at the age of 83.

And we are deeply saddened to report the death of Paul Simon, a retired automobile worker, who passed away last April after a long illness. We appreciate his passionate and generous support of DSA.

Planned gifts that support and build our movement past one's own existence are essential if socialism is to be any part of American political dialogue in the 21st century. Such planning is an integral part of our beliefs, but few of us bother to put them into practice. And the irony is that many of us have access to relatively simple means to make such gifts. All forms of life insurance, IRAs, 401(k) plans and other benefit programs make provisions for beneficiaries that can include organizations.

A bequest can be made in a dollar amount or as a percentage of the assets in an estate or trust. Estate planning does not have to be expensive and sound advice can usually be found from the lawyer or accountant you trust to prepare your tax return. DSA can facilitate estate planning for members who do not have access to a professional in their own communities. Anyone interested in such assistance should contact DSA National Director Frank Llewellyn at DSA's National Office in New York.

DSA is privileged to be the recipient of these generous gifts as well as of the faith and confidence represented by the gifts.

Resolution in support of UFCW Strike

Whereas grocery workers of Southern California have been on strike against Vons and Pavilions, subsidiaries of Safeway Inc., and have been locked out of Albertsons Inc. and Ralphs, a subsidiary of Kroger Company, since October 11, 2003, and

Whereas the main issue in the strike/lockout is the employers' attempt to drastically cut back on health benefits and pensions, and

Whereas the employers blame competition from Wal-Mart as the reason they are attempting to convert their jobs into Wal-Mart-style poverty-level jobs, and

Whereas leaders of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW) from Locals all across the U.S., plus national AFL leaders including President John J. Sweeney, met in Los Angeles on December 16, and

Whereas UFCW President Doug Dority declared at that meeting: "If we lose here, it will set off a corporate tidal wave that will sweep away benefits in contracts in all industries," and

Whereas Dority further declared that there would be national mobilizations at Safeway, the parent company of Vons and Pavilions,

Therefore

Democratic Socialists of America urges its members, friends and allies not to shop at Safeway stores until the strike/lockout is settled and workers have returned to their jobs, and

DSA further resolves to give all possible support to the striking grocery workers in their effort to achieve a fair contract, including publicizing, supporting and participating in any national mobilizations at Safeway stores.

We further resolve to actively communicate this intention to DSA members and locals around the U.S. and urge every DSA member to participate in these efforts.

*Adopted by the DSA Steering Committee
December 17, 2003*

- Yes, I want to join the Democratic Socialists of America. Enclosed are my dues (includes a subscription to *Democratic Left*) of:
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