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The Welfare State: Where Do We Go From Here?

*by Michael Walzer, Frances Fox Piven,
Jean Bethke Elshtain, Joseph Schwartz, Margaret Weir*



Plus: Social charter Update • Brazil Elections • Reviews of *Whose Keeper* and *Roger and Me* • The Eastern Airlines Strike

EDITORIAL

Democracy First, Economic Relations Later

All across Eastern Europe, from the Baltic to the Bosphorus, the buzz words are now "democracy," "pluralism," "market economy." Other words enter the political discourse, but their use seems to depend more on how many months have passed since the great thaw ending the Stalinist ice age has reached the particular country in question. As time passes, "communism with a human face" tends to give way to "socialism," and that in turn to "social democracy" or just plain "democracy."

The semantic changes express a real shift in the perspectives of the classes and strata struggling to meet their pressing social and economic needs and to find the symbols and policies appropriate to them. The "new class" of the party and state bureaucracy is desperately shaken but still very much in power in the economies and the governments of the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, and more dubiously in Czechoslovakia and East Germany. It seeks to camouflage its rule by a selective adoption of parts of the new phraseology, while it bides its time in the hope that the tides of reform will run themselves out on the shoals of deteriorating economic realities or smash themselves to bits on the rocks of national hatreds.

The new mass movements (political, labor, ecological, economic, cultural) shy away from the term "socialist" -- which they identify with the system they are trying to leave behind. To seek to persuade them that their recent masters distorted and devalued this word, among such other words as "comrade," "fascism," "democracy," and "equality" -- all of which once had distinct and useful meanings -- is a waste of effort. Worse, such an exercise can only raise an artificial barrier between social forces and movements there and here, forces which desperately need to understand and help each other in this shrinking world.

Similarly, let's not argue with our

brothers and sisters in Eastern Europe about whether it is really capitalism they want. That's something they are going to have to find out for themselves. They understand the evils from which they flee far better than the ones which await them. Life has taught them to disbelieve anything they are told by their rulers and to believe almost anything told them by those rulers' opponents and enemies. They know that there is unemployment, poverty, crime, and homelessness in the West, and that the rich and powerful dominate the media and the politics dependent on them. They just underestimate the significance of these facts and processes, and expect them to be much easier to bear than the hopelessness of their present lives. For most, the pressing issue is to solidify, to institutionalize their new democracy; the details of their economic relations can wait till later.

Of course, we should warn them against excessive optimism about what they can reasonably count on from the "West" -- and especially from our U.S. government and capitalists. That's not only because many of them tend to have wildly exaggerated hopes -- and we owe them frankness as their allies -- but because unrealistic expectations of help from abroad can translate into passivity, and perhaps to demoralization.

Our greatest contribution to their struggle right now is to open to them the widest possible access to the information we take for granted. The *Voice of America* must be supplemented by magazines, newspapers, and books which reflect the ideas, critiques, analysis, and programs of everything to the left of center in our intellectual, political, and social life. We must also try to supplement that with material aid -- anything which they can use to strengthen the reach of their fledgling movements.

The broader question of what the flight from "socialism" in Eastern Europe means for the prospects of the socialist idea -- as we understand it --

will have to await further developments. They, out of their unique historic experience, have something to teach us, as we have something to teach them. It seems that the socialization of our economy and society has turned out to be a far more complex and drawn-out process than many of us had hoped. But to paraphrase Churchill's remark about democracy: democratic socialism is the worst possible goal, except when you consider the alternatives.

-- Gordon Haskell

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The American Welfare State: Where Do We Go from Here?

by Michael Walzer

Twenty years ago, democratic leftists (like me) were writing articles called "Beyond the Welfare State." The word beyond in those titles meant that we already had a welfare state, or that the essential political work of creating a welfare state had been accomplished (all that was left was administration), or at least that we knew what political work had to be done and only needed to build or finish building the coalition that would do it. And beyond also meant that the welfare state lay somewhere on the way to democratic socialism but that the high achievement, the really exciting and important tasks came afterwards, further on down the road.

But this notion of a road, with stations along the way, turns out to be a misconception, a bad metaphor. We should now recognize, I think, that a political community seriously committed to the welfare of all its members, and providing for its members in ways that don't degrade the neediest among them, would already be a democratic socialist community. Other things would still need doing, of course, but the other things don't lie beyond this one; there is no necessary sequence, no historical road-map to set our tasks in order. Political struggles are not fought and definitively won (so that we can move on to the next in line). They are at best partially won, or settled by compromise, and then they are endlessly refought.

So with the welfare state: the compromises and partial victories have given rise to unforeseen problems and new patterns of criticism and opposition. There is now a leftist argument, force-



Marilyn Humphries/Impact Visuals

fully represented here by Jean Elsh-tain, which sometimes seems to suggest that the welfare state was and is a deadend for socialists. Because of the bureaucracy it breeds and the clientage and passivity it generates, there is no way forward from welfare to any version of democracy. But deadend is no more helpful that waystation in understanding where we are today. We don't have a location in a world-historical process but a problem that arises in a set of concrete political circumstances. The welfare state is a necessary but flawed democratic construction, and it needs to be reconstructed. The work is especially difficult because, as Margaret Wier and Joseph Schwartz argue, the partial success of the welfare state has fragmented the alliance that made it possible. Those most in need have fewest allies. Socially and politically isolated, largely incapable of self-help (until they are helped to help themselves), they are mostly the targets of state programs in whose design they have little part. These days the programs are as often punitive as beneficial -- a sign that the communal solidarity upon which any set of welfare programs must ultimately rest has eroded.

In a sense, the democratic social-

ism that we once located beyond the welfare state is the precondition of a decent welfare state. Mutual concern, institutionalized cooperation, an active and engaged citizenry: all this is necessary before we can establish a society whose members are committed to help, and actually do help, one another. But this before is also wrong, since we are unlikely to create the mutuality, cooperation, and engagement except in the course of a political struggle for welfare. Hence the starting point of Frances Fox Piven's article: however much the arguments have changed, this is a familiar struggle, against enemies that we have seen before.

The three essays that follow are centrally concerned with this struggle and with the strategies that it requires. Radically new approaches or more and better of what we have? A focus on benefits or a focus on jobs? There are no certainties here and no correct ideological position. But the very openness of the debate and the new interest in experimentation are good signs -- of an intellectual if not yet political revival on the left. ●

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The Welfare State: Program for Reform

by Frances Fox Piven

Not so long ago, nearly everyone on the left agreed that welfare state programs had to be understood in terms of class politics. The programs originated in class conflict, and once established, had consequences for power of workers on the one side, and employers on the other. There was still a good deal to argue about, of course, including whether on balance the programs helped workers or capital more and, in a similar vein, about just which class forces should be credited or blamed for them. But for all of the wordy and often heated disputes, one premise was not much disputed, at least on the left: the welfare state was somehow forged in the vortex of class conflict. Programs which provided nonmarket income or services to the old or the unemployed or the ill were either the achievements of the working class or they were evidence of the machinations of the capitalist class or, perhaps more reasonably, they were both. Explanations in the capitalist state genre made a similar albeit indirect argument, positing that welfare state programs legitimated a class society, and thus could be understood as a stratagem to avert or submerge class conflict.

During the late 1960s and early 1970s these debates flourished in part because the workings of class forces in American politics were in fact murky. On the one side, popular pressures for welfare state expansion came less from the obvious organs of the traditional working class than from the black movement. On the other side, the notion of the capitalist class as a political actor seemed hypothetical and strained. Real business interests were divided, their policies were often ad hoc, when they had any policies at all. They did not look



The Food Plus program, which serves low-income families, is in Tucson, Arizona.

or act like an empirically observable class. What one could see instead were myriad special interests, most of them ready to buy influence from both sides of the aisle, and without much of a program that looked beyond the short run profitability of particular firms or industries. Certainly, the politics we could observe provided a profusion of actors and events to nourish the disputes on the left about the role of classes in the historical development of the welfare state.

As the 1970s wore on, however, American capitalists did begin to look like a political class. Corporate leaders began to organize, developed a political program for the nation, and set about implementing it with missionary zeal. The reorganization of welfare state programs was clearly high on their agenda.

The main outlines of these developments are familiar. Prodded by declining profitability and economic uncertainty in the early 1970s, American

business set about trying to shore up profits by lowering wage costs and public expenditures. To that end, top corporate executives organized new vehicles to promote the business outlook and program, funded think tanks to provide intellectual foundations for their agenda, revived near dormant trade associations, and worked to modernize the Republican party. The results of business class politics could be seen first in the workplace, in hardened employer resistance to wage and workplace demands, and in escalated union-busting efforts. By 1978, business lobbyists were firmly in command in the congress, where they defeated labor law reform and most social program initiatives. And after the election of 1980, a business-backed Republican regime slashed taxes, raised military expenditures, deregulated business, attacked unions, and hammered away at welfare state programs. When the dust settled, housing programs had been virtually eliminated,

and the unemployment and means tested programs were badly mangled, partly because public support for them was weaker, but also because they were singled out for the budget axe.

Of course, none of this was done under the banner of the capitalist class, but under the banner of democratic public opinion. And as always before in history, a ruling class in command of propaganda did in fact sway segments of the population, and at the very least was able to generate a good deal of popular confusion and misperception. Public approval of the means-tested programs in the United States, which had always trailed behind Western Europe, dipped in the late 1970s, although it recovered after 1981.

These developments were awesome. For the intellectual left, however, they ought to have been an opportunity for evaluating debates about the welfare state. Finally, after years of theoretical dispute, the capitalist class had emerged as the clear antagonist of the welfare state. Here was an historic opportunity to test theory, and even to learn from events something about the bearing of particular programs on business interests, thus perhaps gaining a specificity which earlier debates had sorely lacked. Which programs were targeted by the right, and where specifically was the initiative coming from? Was there resistance, and just who was mounting it? And what were the effects over time of program cutbacks on class relations, and particularly on labor power?

However, the revelatory moment

appears to have come too late. Discussions of the welfare state no longer focus on class conflict. No matter the currents of the real world, the irresistible currents of intellectual fashion have already carried a good many left intellectuals up and away into the esoteric realms of post-modernist discourse. For those who remain to interpret public policy, the relentless attack on welfare state programs appears to have been disorienting. The left critics who had argued that the programs functioned to legitimate capitalist relations clearly had some explaining to do. And if it was true that the programs lacked popular support, so did those who had insisted the welfare state was a working class gain. Where once we argued about achievements and failures, now there was a profound loss of confidence, a sense that the flaws in state provision were profound and inherent.

So, back to the drawing boards! One of the main problems is said to be that state provision of welfare activities intrudes on and smothers the institutions of civil society. In more familiar language, unresponsive government bureaucracies displace the mutual aid activities of families and communities. This oft-repeated charge has long been a favorite of contemporary conservatives from Nathan Glazer to Jesse Helms. Now, however, the problem of state bureaucracy has moved to the forefront of left concerns as well. And a sloganized problem has produced a sloganized solution: we should decentralize the programs, and incorporate schemes for

community participation in their administration.

To begin to consider this sort of solution, it is useful to distinguish between income transfers and the provision of services, because any scheme for decentralization or participation would likely affect them quite differently. Most of the noisy criticism and most of the budget cuts have focussed on the means-tested income transfer programs. But the problems in these programs -- of inadequate benefits and demeaning treatment -- are surely not likely to be solved by decentralization or community participation. To me, the very proposal evokes images of the local and private tyranny that bedeviled poor relief programs before they were at least partially nationalized in the 1930s. Moreover, state and local governments are even more vulnerable to business pressures in the form of capital strike than is the national government, and most of the time, state and local tax laws and social policies are shaped by that vulnerability. It is at least cautionary to notice that the Reagan administration advanced proposals for the decentralization of the AFDC and Food Stamp programs.

In fact, rather than decentralizing these cash transfer programs, I would propose more of the bureaucracy that is said to be at the root of the trouble. Experience suggests that state and local options with regard to benefit levels or administration work out badly for the poor. Federal income maintenance programs tend to be more equitable and less susceptible to local business pressures or to the nasty politics of working class resentment generated by regressive state taxes. So, maybe we should advocate more centralization, especially in the AFDC and unemployment benefit programs. And instead of relaxing bureaucratic regulation, we ought to bind agencies responsible for these disbursements by rules, albeit simple and straightforward rules, so as to reduce the arbitrariness of agency decisions, especially in determining eligibility.

Well, if it is hazardous as it surely is

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The hungry gather outside Our Daily Bread soup kitchen in Baltimore.

Martha Tabor/Impact Visuals

What's Wrong with Welfare?

by Jean Bethke Elshtain

What's wrong with welfare? Or perhaps better put, what has gone wrong with welfare? Everyone agrees that the welfare state is in trouble. Consider the following:

● The welfare state is much better at generating jobs for middle-class administrators and welfare-purveyors than it is at delivering services to those most in need.

● The welfare state has failed to eliminate the problems it was designed to confront. For example, social inequalities have not been reduced since the inception of the American welfare state.

● The welfare state, in the words of David T. Ellwood in his book, *Poor Support*, "offers modest benefits while imposing a ridiculous array of rules that rob recipients of security and self-esteem."

● The welfare state, as part of a huge bureaucratic apparatus, offers benefits that are "system-conforming," according to socialist feminist Nancy Fraser. By this she means that programs like

AFDC institutionalize the feminization of poverty and reinforce basic structural inequalities.

The indictments above are no right-wing lament. Many of the harshest criticisms of the welfare state these days come from feminists and the left. It is no longer possible, if it ever was, to dismiss criticism of welfare as a lack of compassion for the less fortunate. To be sure, Ronald Reagan has no ideas about dealing with poverty, and during his eight-year reign, liberals could reasonably claim that nouveau-conservatives were so busy spending their waking hours in the greed business that they had little time for those who were trapped where nothing ever trickled down. In recent years, however, more commentators from the left have criticized liberal welfare-state programs, the ways in which aid is delivered, the state-controlled aid apparatuses, and the fact that funds are transferred increasingly not from the rich to the poor but to the middle class (which garners a disproportionate amount of benefits in all welfare state systems.)

Such is the conclusion reached by Alan Wolfe in his recent important book,

Whose Keeper? Wolfe argues that the educated middle classes are in a better position to take advantage of government provided services. Middle-class welfare providers (over 70 percent of them women in health and human services) and middle-class beneficiaries reinforce one another while another generation of non-middle-class welfare "clients" remains stuck in lousy housing, collapsing neighborhoods, and terrible cycles of crime, drugs, and soaring out-of-wedlock births.

An adequate account of welfare today must explain this bourgeoisification of many state benefits and programs. It must also account for widespread disaffection from the welfare state by the very groups targeted for benefits. It must come to grips with the following harsh indictment from Sheldon Wolin, a political theorist who identifies himself as a radical democrat:

They [welfare state recipients] are "targeted" by specialized programs that, in effect, fragment their lives. One agency handles medical assistance, another job training, a third food stamps, and so on *ad infinitum*. If a person's life is first flounced by bureaucrats whose questionnaires probe every detail of it, and that life is reorganized into categories corresponding to public programs that are the means of one's existence, the person becomes totally disabled as a political being... This is because he or she has been deprived of the most elemental totality of all, the self.

If Wolin is right, and I think he is, how did things go so wrong? Wolin would argue that they didn't go wrong; instead the welfare-state from its inception was as much about controlling the poor and marginal as helping them.



A welfare center in New York City.

Whatever one's position on that controversial question, the vexing issue now is: How can the poor be empowered to help themselves? We recognize that help is required in order for self-help to be achieved. Only an empowered poor will be able to break out of the political and social disenfranchisement currently perpetuated by agencies, managers, social workers, and other welfare-state providers.

Genuine empowerment would involve such policies as tenant control and management of public housing, an idea that has been turned into successful practice in a number of cities (although it involves a terrific fight against entrenched welfare bureaucracies). We must generate experiments in self-help on the local level that incorporate the principles set forth in the U.S. Catholic Bishops' Pastoral Economic Justice for All: Every perspective on economic life that is human, moral and Christian must be shaped by three questions: What does the economy do for people? What does it do to people? And how do people participate in it?

Substitute "welfare state" for "economy" in the Bishops' declaration, and you get a sense of what is required to establish a situation in which welfare-state clients can do for themselves in ways that generate and sustain self-respect.

To pursue this matter further, it is necessary to identify the different groups that exist within the broad category of "the poor." Ellwood names three major groups: 1) families "in which the adults are already doing a great deal for themselves," that is, people are working yet go under because they "receive no medical protection or additional support." They then fall into a welfare system "that penalizes their work, imposes extra demands on them, and stigmatizes them; 2) those who are suffering temporary difficulties as a result of a job loss. They need enough help to get back on their feet; 3) those who cannot find work on their own and need long-term support. This latter group, which includes single mothers, has been caught in a cycle of depend-



Martha Tabor/Impact Visuals

A demonstration in Washington, DC.

ency for several generations that corrodes self-respect.

Both Ellwood and Fraser end up endorsing something along the lines of a "family wage" as one way to keep families (two-parent or single-parent) above the poverty line. The availability of such a wage would also help prevent family disintegration. Today, a full-time job at the minimum wage doesn't come close to providing a minimum standard of living. Low wages are a primary cause of poverty and the descent into welfare clientage of a permanent or semi-permanent sort. Alternatives are emergency assistance, "insurance" provision (such as medical aid), and a program of tax relief or child subsidies generous enough to provide real assistance to families with dependent children.

Fraser gives this entire subject a feminist cast. Drawing on the work of radical social theorist, Jurgen Habermas, Fraser exposes the underlying gender norms of our welfare system and shows how its administrative practices "preemptively define women's needs." Women have no say over this "politics of need interpretation." The benefits they receive are "system-conforming ones which reinforce rather than challenge basic structural inequalities. Thus, feminists cannot simply support existing social-welfare programs" -- because those programs have given rise to a "juridical-administra-

tive-therapeutic state apparatus," a world in which "professional expertise" supplants individual or familial autonomy and empowerment.

By failing to facilitate either childcare or job training, the welfare state, Fraser argues, constructs single women with children exclusively as mothers. But rather than honoring these women, "it stigmatizes, humiliates, and harasses them."

And even the "best part" of the U.S. social-welfare system -- those programs geared more to men who are seen as potential wage-earners, rather than to women who are "familialized" and seen as non-productive -- leads to a "degraded and depoliticized" form of "passive citizenship in which the state preempts the power to define and satisfy people's needs."

There is no easy menu-option to choose as a panacea for such ills. But a precondition for any change is a recognition on the part of the democratic left that defense of welfare-as-usual (with more programs, more providers, more of what we already have) only perpetuates a situation that degrades tens of thousands of citizens in the name of helping them. Instead we might advocate a children's allowance (a program which is simple and easy to universalize, unlike expensive professionalized day-care, which is not the option preferred by poor and lower middle-class women.) We might advocate an economy that generates full-time jobs that can guarantee a "real measure of independence" (Ellwood's phrase). Not everyone can succeed in America, but the standard liberal, welfare solution is no solution at all.

To conclude with a programmatic "rule of thumb," we might look again to the Bishops: "Every economic decision and institution must be judged in light of whether it protects or undermines the dignity of the human person." Is an "amen" in order? ●

Jean Bethke Elshtain is a Centennial professor of Political Science at Vanderbilt University. Her most recent book is Women and War.

Rebuilding Social Solidarity

by Margaret Weir and
Joseph Schwartz

Despite growing recognition that many Americans cannot personally afford decent health care, education, housing, and child care, expansion of social programs in the United States is not yet seriously on the political agenda. The immediate obstacle is the federal budget deficit bequeathed by the perverse military Keynesian "recovery" of the Reagan years, which could be readily solved by restoring progressive taxation and a rational defense budget. But the resistance to expanded public programs has a deeper ideological basis. Most Americans have grown suspicious of social expenditure and cynical about the possibility of quality public provision.

The sources of this erosion in a popular commitment to social solidarity are myriad: growing middle class dissatisfaction with public education and other public services; the increased isolation of the poor, particularly the African-American poor, from the rest of society; the ideological misperception that most social welfare expenditure is for the "undeserving poor" (although over two-thirds of social welfare expenditure is devoted to Social Security and Medicare); and the prevailing economic wisdom that we cannot afford generous social policies in an internationally competitive world. There is evidence, however, that popular belief in the neoconservative nostrums of the 1980s is receding as the costs of the Reaganite "free market" become increasingly evident (for example, the savings and loan crises; rampant financial speculation; homelessness). The enlightened wing of corporate capital publicly acknowledges that the erosion of public

education, health care, and job training weakens productivity and "competitiveness." Yet such concern could yield social policies further benefiting the middle class through tax credits for child care and educational expenditures. Whether growing concern for the "health" of our society will engender social policies that enhance opportunities for all depends on reintroducing the value of social solidarity into an increasingly atomized and fragmented culture. If not, the United States is likely to evolve into a nation more divided along lines of race, gender, and class than when the Kerner Commission issued its warning in 1968.

The American Welfare State

Most Western welfare states in the late 1970s and 1980s witnessed "populist" revolts of middle income taxpayers (including secure sectors of the working class) against public provision, with their wrath focused on increasingly marginalized -- often ethnic minorities -- poor populations. Yet most welfare states weathered the conservative attack better than did the United States. While Social Security and Medicaid were unscathed, the Reagan period witnessed 15 percent real cuts in AFDC, 11 percent in food stamps, 90 percent in public housing expenditures,

and a serious erosion of the purchasing power of the working poor.

This vulnerability of the American welfare state is due largely to two unique features of American social policy: its lack of universal principles for organizing public social provision and the sharp disjuncture between social and economic policy. To comprehend this uniqueness one needs to abandon the traditional left view of the welfare state as a uniform institution shaped by the functional needs of capitalism for steady economic demand and social stability. The nature of a given welfare state results from a complex history of political struggle, economic development, and state policy.

Since the New Deal, the United States has equivocated between a top tier of social insurance for those regularly employed (Social Security and Medicare) and a bottom level of less generous, means-tested public assistance programs for those whose participation in the labor force is more sporadic. These public policies have been supplemented by employer provision of private benefits, such as medical insurance, for those with "good" jobs.

This pattern of public and private policy has promoted a sharp societal division that, not surprisingly, has cut along lines of race and gender. The jobs



A day care center in Washington, DC.

Rick Reinhard/Impact Visuals

that qualify citizens for upper-tier programs and private insurance have traditionally been the prerogatives of white males. The core of the American welfare state, the Social Security Act of 1935, which created unemployment insurance, old age pensions, and aid to dependent children, largely excluded blacks (as it did not cover agricultural and domestic workers). The program was founded on the model of a nuclear family, in which the father had steady employment and insurance programs stepped in to help with emergencies. Even though the barriers that have kept members of racial minorities and women in inferior labor market positions have relaxed in the past two decades, they remain at a disadvantage in this divided world of social policy.

Means Testing and Vulnerability

The second key feature of American social provision is the disjuncture between economic and social policy. In Western Europe social democrats have tried (though not always successfully) to integrate social welfare policy with broader labor market and economic strategies (aiming to tighten labor markets and upgrade low-wage jobs). The failure of the progressive economists around Franklin Roosevelt to make social policy an important complement to economic goals meant that the United States never coherently linked employment policy to social welfare policy. Instead, in traditional American political discourse the two realms are conceived to be separate and often competing. Thus, social policy can only be expanded when it can be "afforded." In the prosperous 1960s such reasoning facilitated a limited "war on poverty"; by the late 1970s, social policy was seen as an unaffordable luxury. The Reagan administration extended the Carter administration's neoliberal rhetoric of an "age of limits" into a neoconservative attack on social provision as undermining economic productivity because it sapped individual initiative.

This historic failure to link social policy to broader economic policy contributed to unemployment and poverty



Susan Tannenbaum/Impact Visuals

being viewed as a problem of individual character and culture rather than of economic structure and policy. The antipoverty programs of the 1960s were created as separate, remedial programs, targeted to the poor (particularly black poor). The failure to integrate such programs as AFDC, food stamps, and Medicaid with a collective rationale (based on universal entitlements to job training and an economic minimum) rendered them vulnerable to the racial backlash of the economically stagnant 1970s. Those who attribute most of the erosion of support for the welfare state in the 1980s to a corporate ideological offensive downplay hostility toward welfare among blue-collar and lower-middle-class constituencies. But hostility towards taxation and "big government" partly arises from misplaced hostility to means-tested programs.

Three key factors contributed to the U.S. welfare state: the fragmented and localized nature of the American state, a relatively weak labor movement, and severe racial division. These factors interacted historically to make it difficult to construct an American counterpart to the much more centralized, solidaristic types of welfare states in Europe. Although strengthening forms of collective solidarity, such as unions and neighborhood associations, will be integral to revitalizing popular belief in social solidarity, in an increasingly transient society a consumer-based appeal

to middle- and working-class voters concerned with quality health care, education, and child care may be central to a strategy of expanded social provision. The women's movement's growing emphasis on issues of economic equality and child care has already helped revitalize support for public provision. Increasing numbers of Americans comprehend how radical transformation of the American family must reshape our conceptions of child rearing.

Fighting Right-Wing Myths

The divided and limited character of the American welfare state -- if it can be called that -- has meant that liberals have had neither the political nor the programmatic base to defend, much less to extend, social policy. The organization of American social policy has done little to promote the commonality necessary for generous social provision. Instead, it has exacerbated the division between the poor and the rest of society. The consequences have been particularly devastating for the African-American poor, who are increasingly seen as "other" by white Americans. Thus in current policy debates, the problem of the black poor is "the behavior" of "the underclass" (a nondifferentiated term used to characterize a diverse group of poor people) and the solution is coercive programs that change their behavior. Little attention is paid to changing the structures of employment and social

opportunities that would improve the lives of all low-income Americans (including the two-thirds of the poor who are white). For women, policy solutions have been narrowed to enforcing child support and workfare programs, whose ability to prepare women for nonpoverty jobs is extremely doubtful. Job training for skilled jobs, child care support for women across income lines, and income support for part-time workers with young children are all deemed "impractical."

As doubts about the "success" of Reaganism grow, the left needs to seize the opportunity to debunk popular myths about the welfare state. For example, we need to reiterate that the major victims of Reagan's upwardly redistributive tax policies were the working poor. On the other hand, the left needs to shape proposals for reform of social provision that speak to political and social reality. Social welfare policy can no longer be predicated on the assumption that a typical family consists of a male breadwinner and a wife at home with children. Although funding limits may preclude fully universal policies (such as equal child benefit levels, which would be progressively taxed), new programs should be based on broad, inclusionary principles to ensure popular support. Universal programs need not imply uniform benefit levels. For example, although a child-support program should ensure an adequate minimum benefit level for poor women, such a program should also aim to provide some benefits to middle-income families. Workfare proposals that coerce clients without providing real training or access to jobs that pay above poverty wages should be opposed, and alternative policies should be designed that prepare people to be productive members of society through real job training, education and productive public jobs, if necessary. Finally, wage and benefit policies should be set so that single parents joining the workforce no longer confront a "poverty trap," where leaving AFDC means the loss of health care benefits or child support.

To say that we support strong social protections based on universal prin-

ciples does not mean we favor top-down, bureaucratic state provision. Any attractive set of policies would include community involvement in the institutions of social provision -- schools, child-care co-ops, health clinics, public transit -- integral to a democratic and egalitarian society. But to believe that all these goods could be adequately provided by a strong family wage and adequate child allowances is to ignore how inequalities in income combined with private, decentralized provision create intolerable inequalities in social provision. Nor will the market magically provide an adequate family wage; such a goal would involve active state labor market and tax policies aimed at a more equitable distribution of job opportuni-

Strong welfare protections need not be top-down.

ties and income. State policy will have a great influence on what type of associational life is possible for citizens within the institutions of civil society. George Bush's "thousand points of light" should not be counterposed to the state funding essential to ensuring all citizens equal access to communal goods.

The Politics of Social Solidarity

Policies based on moral principles that speak to the needs of all people need not benefit each person uniformly. But programs that provide some benefits to all will inevitably garner more support than strictly means-tested programs. Despite the popularity of such programs as Social Security and Medicare, however, the right has convinced many citizens that social welfare programs inherently create dependency and preclude social reliance. One of the left's major tasks is to demonstrate how democratic public provision enhances each member's ability to contribute to society. If the obligation of each citizen to the community is ignored and social programs are simply conceived of as "automatic" entitlements, then support for public provision will rapidly erode among those who see themselves as contributing members of society.

Some "new social movement" advocates fear that strong public provision will inevitably enforce a male, bureaucratic model of social organization upon its citizens. Such an argument ignores the choices involved in how we structure social provision, whether it be provided by the state or community institutions in civil society. Even a society with a strong family wage will debate how to construct its helping institutions. Citizenship need not be a "homogenizing" category that reduces all to the pursuit of the same interests and needs. Rather, if human beings and the particular communities to which they belong are to be accorded equal respect, they need to live in a society that guarantees those social rights necessary for each member to fulfill his or her human potential. The ending of the cold war already has produced growing public recognition that economic strength is more central to a nation's well-being than military hardware. If the left can intervene to transform the elite discourse of "human capital" development into a cross-class concern for the development of each of our citizens, then the 1990s may well be a decade of social reform. ●

Margaret Weir, a DSAer, teaches sociology at Harvard. Joseph Schwartz, a DSAer, teaches political science at Temple University.

PIVEN

Continued from page 5

to decentralize income programs, maybe we should explore decentralization and participation in the provision of services, whether education or health care or child protection. Indeed, perhaps service delivery should even be contracted out to nongovernmental organizations, so as to encourage some diversity and competition in the dreary welfare state. However, while I think we should experiment, we should also be forewarned that there are no simple solutions here either.

It is not that there is much reason
Continued on page 14.

DSA ACTION

UPCOMING

* DSA's **Labor Commission** is planning a working retreat for DSAers active in the labor movement April 27-29 at the 4-H Center in Washington, D.C. For more details, contact Mike Schippani at home (313) 665-0175 or Jo-Ann Mort at work (212) 242-0700. If you know of unionists who should be informed of this meeting, send their names and addresses to the DSA office at 15 Dutch Street, Suite 500, New York, NY 10038.

* **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.

**Beyond Communism and
Capitalism: The Democratic
Socialist Alternative**
DSA's fourth annual
Leadership Retreat.

June 29 through July 1
Poughkeepsie, NY.

Panels on the collapse of communism; the crisis of capitalism; limits and possibilities for social democracy; plus plenty of time for socialist socializing. Call the DSA office at (212) 962-0390 for more information.

* The Annual DSA Mid-Atlantic Retreat will take place June 1-3 at the Claggett Retreat Center, Maryland. \$87 for the entire weekend, but you must put down a \$10 deposit by March 1. Send checks made payable to DC/MD/NOVA DSA, P.O. Box 1721, Reston, VA 22090. For more information, call Bobbe Robbins at (703) 742-9450.

INTERNATIONAL

* Canadian socialists are taking feminism seriously. Audrey McLaughlin was

elected leader of the New Democratic Party to succeed Ed Broadbent, the first female leader of a major political party in that country. She moved from Toronto to the Yukon in 1979, and in 1987 captured the Yukon seat in the federal Parliament in what was formerly a Tory stronghold. In addition the NDP elected as its Federal president Sandy Mitchell, a mother of six, and a partner in a Saskatchewan law firm specializing in labor and family law...And in British Columbia, NDPer Elizabeth Cull gave the BC NDP its sixth straight by-election victory by capturing the Oak Bay-Gordon Head seat for the first time.

REPORTS

* DSAer Judy Deutsch reports that thirty-nine participants from twelve countries - including members of Parliament from Poland's Solidarity, Sweden and Costa Rica - exchanged views about the world division between haves and have nots at the International League of Religious Socialists Seminar in Stockholm last fall. The next ILRS seminar will be in 1991.

RESOURCES

* Three new videos are available from the Institute for Democratic Socialism: 1) **Changes in World Politics - East and West.** An examination of changes in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and the move towards Unification of Europe in 1992. Bogdan Denitch and Joanne Barkan. (For rental only. Send \$5.00 a tape plus \$2.50 postage and handling. Please give ample notice of when you will need the tape.) 2) **Towards the Nineties: Openings for the Democratic Left.** Barbara Ehrenreich's keynote address to the 1989 Convention of the Democratic Socialists of America. (For rental only. Send \$5.00 a tape plus \$2.50 postage and handling. Please give ample

notice of when you will need the tape.) 3) **Michael Harrington: A Tribute to his Life.** This video of the September, 1989 memorial service for Michael Harrington features such speakers as Irving Howe, DSA Honorary Chair and DSA members David Dinkins, Mayor of New York and Ruth Messinger, Manhattan Borough President. (\$25.00 a tape plus \$2.50 postage and handling.) Order the videos from IDS, 15 Dutch Street, Suite 500, New York, NY 10038-3779 (212) 962-0390.

* The January issue of **Labor Voice** carries articles on "Millions see and hear DSA words, message on C-Span," "How we can get Labor Reform," "The Union Breakthrough at Harvard," "Third Way Changes in Eastern Europe," "British Labor Party is up in the Polls," and many other articles. Subs are available at \$10 per year from DSA Labor Commission, PO Box 28408, Washington, DC 20036.

* The winter issue of **Our Struggle/Nuestra Lucha** is now available. Articles on Panama, El Salvador, Latino Voting Rights, and Puerto Rico. To subscribe send \$15 to DSA, Box 162394, Sacramento, CA 95816.

* The winter issue of **Religious Socialism** features articles on Christian socialism in the international arena, Michael Harrington, and a review of *Empire and the Word*. For a regular subscription, send \$7.50 to Religious Socialism, P.O. Box 80 Camp Hill, PA 17001-0080.

* **European Unity and Democratic Socialism After the Cold War** has contributions by DSA members Bogdan Denitch, Joanne Barkan, and Harold Meyerson. This new literature piece can be purchased through the DSA office for 50 cents a copy, or 20 cents a copy when buying twenty or more copies.

* **Unilateral Reciprocated Nuclear Disarmament**, a policy paper by DSAer Robert Delson, is now available from the DSA office for only 50 cents.

ON THE LEFT



by HARRY FLEISCHMAN

California

Charles P. (Chuck) Sohner, formerly of Los Angeles DSA and now of Lexington, Kentucky DSA, will receive the Ben Rust Award for outstanding teacher union commitment from the California Federation of Teachers in March. One of Chuck's accomplishments was founding the Community College Council, representing over one third of the CFT members in the state. Los Angeles DSA held a forum February 4 on "Revolution in Eastern Europe" with Joseph Nyomarkay, USC Political Science Department; Karel Kovanda, active in 1968 in the Czechoslovakia student movement; and John Gerlach, born in Yugoslavia and a veteran of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. The Justice for Pittston Miners benefit in Los Angeles January 19 was transformed into a victory celebration. The Los Angeles DSA Reproductive Rights Task Force viewed a video of "Abortion for Survival," while the Health Care Task Force met February 8 to discuss DSA involvement in the movement for a national health care system. A *Los Angeles Times* article on "After the Wall" stressed the views of DSA members Harold Meyerson and Bogdan Denitch....Valley DSA met January 22 to honor Dr. Estelle Lit, who spoke on "Energizing the Grass Roots for Peace and Nuclear Safety."...Palo Alto DSA is organizing a panel on sex discrimination, with DSA Youth Organizer Dinah Leventhal as one of the speakers. They will also be showing the DSA Convention video tape of Bogdan Denitch and Joanne Barkan addressing international politics.

District of Columbia

The Metro DC Coalition for Choice, with which DSA is a member, celebrated the anniversary of Roe v. Wade Jan. 22. The DC/MD/NOVA Labor committee met in February to make plans for the 1990s. The topic of the February membership meeting was "The Unfolding Events in Eastern Europe." The local continues its work on developing a progressive agenda for DC to be used in the 1990 elections.

Kentucky

Central Kentucky DSA met in Lexington January 9 to view a slideshow on Eastern Europe and hear from recent visitors to that area.

Massachusetts

Boston DSA's school held a successful five-week course on "Introduction to Democratic Socialism," with Tom Gallagher, Howard Zinn, Diane Balsler and Paul Joseph as speakers. Jim Braude, director of the Tax Equity Alliance of Massachusetts, and Judy Meredith spoke on the Massachusetts fiscal crisis at a DSA meeting in January. The Yankee Radical notes that a DSA weekly cable series included tapes of the DSA convention. Although four of the six candidates and referendums endorsed by the DSA Political Action Committee were victorious, the biggest DSPAC effort was also the toughest defeat -- the mayor's race in Somerville. There DSPAC-backed John Buonomo was defeated by Mike Capuano in the closest election in city history, losing by 363 votes. In other DSPAC-endorsed campaigns, Rosario Salerno and David Scondras were reelected to the Boston City Council, the Tax Equity Alliance of Massachusetts (TEAM) has secured ballot status for their tax reform referendum next November, and the Cambridge anti-rent control Proposition 1-2-3 went down to a crushing defeat.

Michigan

Ann Arbor DSA viewed a videotape of Michael Harrington on "The Next Left" at its January meeting and one by Bogdan Benitch and Joanne Barkan on the situation in Eastern Europe on February 7...The local DSA Youth Section joined with others to form the University of Michigan Coalition for Choice. It placed two substantial opinion pieces in *The Michigan Daily*....Detroit DSA heard DSA Vice Chair Bogdan Denitch speak on "Change in Europe: The Socialist Ideal in the Era of Gorbachev and Thatcher," at Wayne State University in Detroit. DSA Vice Chair Mildred Jeffrey, who is a member of the Wayne State University Board of Governors, was on a twenty-woman team of elected public officials and education leaders who visited the Soviet Union last fall under the sponsorship of the Women's Peace Initiative and Women for Meaningful Summits.

New York

Ithaca DSA and its Cornell youth section held its annual retreat January 27 to explore the implications of the changes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, the direction of national DSA, and local priorities in the coming year....Lynn Turgeon, Hofstra University economics professor, spoke to Nassau DSA January 27 on "What's Happening in East Germany?"...Local New York DSA will give its Eugene Debs/Norman Thomas award March 21 at a dinner honoring David Livingston, president of UAW's District 65. Speakers will include UAW International President Owen Bieber and Manhattan Borough President Ruth Messinger. Also to be honored is Steve Max, Curriculum Director at the Midwest Academy, who will receive the first Paul DuBrul Award for his critical role in developing the political strategies of the citizen action movement. The New

York City local will host its first progressive policy conference March 24. It will consider various alternative ways to deal with the city's mounting problems of crime, drugs, health care, the homeless, housing and budget constraints. Nearly 200 people attended a DSA dialogue between Robert Heilbroner and Bogdan Denitch on Eastern Europe. A collection to support striking workers brought in over \$200. The January 3 edition of Newsday carried an op-ed piece by Frank Llewellyn, entitled "Rally Around the Rainbow." It defended the Dinkins' administration and pointed to possible directions for the coalition that helped elect him...The Workers Defense League presented its David Clendenin award at a dinner honoring Lynn Williams, President of the United Steelworkers of America. Speakers included Leon Lynch, WDL President and Vice President of the Steelworkers, and Harry Fleischman, WDL Chairman.

Pennsylvania

The third annual International Women's Day awards party is being organized by the Pittsburgh DSA local. The event will honor Pittsburgh women who have contributed to improving women's lives during 1989....Philadelphia DSA will host a visit by DSA Vice Chair Bogdan Denitch speaking on Eastern Europe.

Texas

A rally and fund raiser for returning DSAer Judge Ben G. Levy to the 14th Court of Appeals was held in Houston January 26.

Washington

Chris Riddiough, DSA vice chair, spoke to Seattle DSA on "Socialist Feminism." A DSA general meeting heard Doctors Dan Erikson and Susan Doederlin, who were in El Salvador last fall, and Wayne Iverson of Seattle CISPES, speak about new efforts to oppose US intervention in that country.

Remembering Hector Oqueli -- 1944-1990

by *Patrick Lacefield*

Death was no stranger to Hector Oqueli. As a leader in El Salvador's Democratic Revolutionary Front and the democratic socialist National Revolutionary Movement, Hector had more than ample opportunity to suffer coworkers and comrades detained, tortured, and killed by the army and death squads that in Salvador protect the interests of the few who have much against the many who have so little. When Hector resigned his cabinet post in the failed reformist junta of 1980, the Salvadoran right passed a death sentence on him. Hector carried it as a badge of honor -- and as a necessary risk for partisans of the democratic left in his country.

On January 12, Hector and Guatemalan Democratic Socialist party activist Gilda Flores were abducted by unarmed men in civilian clothes. Hector was in Guatemala to secure a U.S. visa and was in route to Socialist International gatherings in Managua and Quito, Ecuador. On getting word of the kidnapping, I called the State Department's El Salvador desk. No answer -- a nonresponse that says much about the state of U.S. policy in Salvador. Later, word came that the bodies of Hector and Gilda Flores

were discovered near the Salvadoran border. They had been tortured before being shot to death. Links between the Salvadoran and Guatemalan far rights date back to the early Eighties.

Hector was a friend of mine and of many in our movement. At memorial meetings in New York and Washington, Guillermo Ungo spoke of Hector's courage in working in El Salvador, "swimming in a sea full of sharks." Hector, a democrat and a revolutionary in the best sense of both words, sought to tame those sharks only to fall victim to their deadly attentions.

We pay tribute to Hector by redoubling our own efforts to promote a negotiated political settlement to the war in El Salvador that has claimed 70,000 lives over ten years. "How many deaths will it take 'til we know," goes the tune, "that too many people have died?" That's a damned good question. Until we Americans can provide an answer just as good, Hector Oqueli -- husband, son, patriot, democratic socialist -- will not rest easy. Nor should we. ●

Patrick Lacefield, DSA's Organizational Director, lived in El Salvador from 1985-1987.

Dissent

Special issue of
DISSENT on

The European Revolutions

with contributions by

Daniel Bell ● James Tobin ● Jerzy Surdykowski
Mitchell Cohen ● Bogdan Denitch ● Robert Dahl
Vladimir Tismaneanu ● Paul Joseph
Gorden Haskell ● Josephine Woll ● Lewis Coser

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JOB OPENING

DSA is searching for one or two director-level positions

RESPONSIBILITIES: Directors are responsible for editing and production of *Democratic Left*; internal political education; literature development; fundraising; administration; conference organizing and meeting planning; staff supervision; public relations and public speaking. Candidates should be familiar and in substantial agreement with DSA and its activities. Experience with movement organizations or campaigns a plus.

AVAILABILITY: Position(s) will be open this summer.

COMPENSATION: Mid-twenties, plus benefits.

TO APPLY: Send resume and a letter to: DSA Personnel Committee, 15 Dutch Street, #500, New York, NY 10038. Affirmative action employer. Applications due by April 15.

PIVEN

Continued from page 10.

to be satisfied with delivery of social services in the United States. There isn't. Indeed, in some areas the neglect and abuse of people is truly horrifying. But most of these services are already decentralized, although they may, thankfully, be somewhat constrained by federal or state guidelines. And many of the very worst services are delivered by private agencies under contract to government, as is the case in foster care for the young, or nursing homes for the old. Federal or state oversight is not what distorts these agencies; it is what keeps them from being even more abusive in their dealings with people too vulnerable to defend themselves, such as the very old, or the disabled, or children, or the retarded.

Another much talked about remedy takes an entirely different tack. It is not addressed to the problem of an encroaching state, but to weak political support, particularly for the means-tested programs. The solution, we are told, is to eliminate programs that single out the needy in favor of programs that embrace virtually everyone, and which will therefore presumably be supported by virtually everyone. This call for "universalism" is actually a longstanding favorite among social welfare experts, who often base their faith on the experience with children's allowances in Western Europe.

Universalism is more incantation

than solution too, for it is absurd to think that children's allowances, or any other universal program, would provide benefits at a level sufficient to meet the needs of poor families. The costs would be astronomical. And the notion that benefits to the better off could be recouped with progressive taxes is, at least for now, quixotic. Moreover, universalism is no easy cure for the problems in service delivery either, because ostensibly universal services are typically subverted by the actual politics of implementation. Our supposedly "universal" school system is a good example.

What then is left to be said about reform of the welfare state? I think the most important steps are very obvious.

We need to fight for the restoration of benefits to the most vulnerable people, especially women and children. And if we succeed in restoring benefits, we will have to fight to raise them more, for they were abysmally low even before they began their downward slide in the 1970s. We should also experiment with service delivery arrangements, perhaps adding innovative neighborhood or recipient-run services to the new existing basic structure of services, thus reducing the risks of local and private tyranny. And while universalism is often touted mindlessly, the idea that programs create constituencies, and broader programs create broader constituencies, does suggest that the consolidation of programs is a useful direction for reform efforts. The American poor would be better able to defend themselves if they were not divided up among the contemporary alphabet agencies -- AFDC, or GA, or SSI, or UE -- according to largely irrelevant criteria.

All of which is to say the welfare state requires that we be sufficiently tough minded and discriminating not only to attack the welfare state for its failures, but to defend it for what it achieves, and prepared to fight for even modest reforms.

Frances Fox Piven, a DSA Vice Chair, teaches political science at the CUNY.

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Elections in Brazil: A Victory for More of the Same

by Donald Ramos

At a time when the collapse of communist rule in Eastern Europe dominates the media and European parties trip over themselves removing the word "communist" from their names and its symbol from their flags, it seems shocking that in Brazil's recent presidential elections a major candidate used the red star as his symbol. More remarkable is that the candidate, Luiz Inacio da Silva, better known by his legally adopted nickname Lula, came within a few percentage points of winning the elections against an attractive and extremely well financed candidate, Fernando Collor de Mello.

In the December 17 runoff Collor won 43 percent of the nearly 83 million votes cast to Lula's 38 percent. The remaining 19 percent was divided between abstentions and nullified votes. The reasons for Lula's defeat are varied. The final days of the campaign were dirty with Lula being accused of illiteracy -- a clear reference to his working class background. In addition to attacking Lula's personal life, Collor invoked images of social chaos if Lula were to win -- images of land seizures and needless strikes. These appeals to the profoundly classist nature of Brazilian society plainly worked, as Lula was defeated soundly in the nation's traditional areas and, paradoxically, in Lula's home state of Sao Paulo.

But also a problem was the nature of the left alliance led by Lula's Labor Party. After the November elections had narrowed the field to Lula and Collor, Lula was able to build a coalition of the left -- but it was unstable and failed to overcome the personal and ideological differences among its various parties and personalities. Moreover the negotiations which produced the coalition



Lula speaks to supporters prior to the election.

Cindy Reiman/Impact Visuals

opened Lula to criticism for making deals and shifting from his original platform. Not an insignificant factor was anticommunism, which has been a part of Brazil's scene almost as long as it has in the United States. Lastly, a major reason for Collor's narrow victory was the support he enjoyed from Brazil's major media, especially the Globo group with which he has personal ties.

A Status Quo Victory?

On the surface the election appeared to be a repudiation of the past. In November's balloting, the ruling party candidate, Ulysses Guimar, an octogenarian veteran of Brazil's political wars, garnered no more than 10 percent of the votes cast -- clearly a repudiation of the political leadership of President Jose Sarney.

But viewed more closely, the victory of Collor really reflected a victory for the status quo. Collor's political career has been tied to pro-military groups: first as the government appointed mayor of Maceind then as a federal deputy in an appointment from another pro-military party. In 1984's indirect presidential elections, he voted against the popular anti-military candidate, Tancredo Neves. While Collor's

presidential campaign focused on the system's corruption and inability to govern effectively, it was not a repudiation of the system itself. Collor represents the modernized face of a traditional political elite. One Brazilian commentator described the situation as Sarneyism against Sarney.

In fact, the circumstances of his election ensure that Collor must rely upon the old guard. He will take office in March without a clear mandate and without a political base. The party whose standard he carried, the National Reconstruction Party (PRN), has only a small representation in Congress. As with so many other parties, Lula's PT being a notable exception, the PRN is a creation of the moment's political necessities. Collor's own political career suggests the weak hold that parties have: in ten years, he was a member of no less than five different parties.

To govern effectively, Collor must forge a congressional base of support. His search for support can only take him to the right and center-right parties and individuals in congress. There is little doubt that it is within that bloc that he will create a working majority for many of his programs. But it will be a temporary victory unless he can achieve

results in the economy. It was the deteriorating economy that reduced President Sarney to a cipher. Each failed economic package produced greater and greater cynicism and discontent. Collor and his advisors have made many promises including the affirmation that in thirteen months, he will have reduced the monthly inflation rate to 5 percent from a rate that about 50 percent in February.

A Working Class Mandate

To achieve real progress in economic matters will require a social pact that cuts across class interests. The traditional path of resolving the economic crisis on the backs of workers and the poor has its limits, even in Brazil. But at this point an enduring, broadly based social pact seems unlikely. A significant part of the Catholic Church supported Lula, while Collor received the support of Brazil's growing Pentecostal groups. While key elements of the Catholic Church called for cooperation in the days after the election, they again emphasized the centrality of land reform, social justice, and redistribution of wealth. Collor campaigned as the champion of the poor and the church has already announced that it will monitor Collor's administration to ensure that he carries out his campaign promises. By the same token, the PT's real base of support is the labor movement, which Lula helped forge into a major force. The Central Unico de Trabalhadores (CUT) includes some 1,600 unions with eighteen million members. Collor had the support of the much smaller Confederaal dos Trabalhadores (CGT), whose leader, Antonio Rogerio Magri, is not able to speak for organized labor and has said he would have no objection to appointing a non-union figure as Minister of Labor.

And there are other obstacles to such a social pact. Brazil is one of the most inequitable societies in the world. The current economic disaster -- 1,765 percent inflation in 1989, a foreign debt of over \$110 billion, and a domestic debt equal to 15 percent of the GNP -- has only exacerbated the problems inherent in Brazil's historical development. Despite the escalating nature of the economic crisis, Collor has rejected the opportunity to take office ahead of

the March 15 inauguration date, preferring to let the economy further deteriorate, no doubt in hopes of winning support for a series of measures he promises to reveal only then. It appears that his solution to the problem will be the standard International Monetary Fund prescription -- austerity, deficit reduction, privatization, and inducement to foreign investment. Many of the changes Collor has already proposed are either cosmetic or will create more social conflict: reducing the number of ministries from twenty-three to twelve, thus endangering the jobs of most federal employees; privatizing state-owned money-losing enterprises and risking increased unemployment; decentralizing environmental control, thus turning power over to many who profit from ecological destruction; encouraging foreign invest-

To achieve real progress will require a pact that cuts across class interests.

ment only to hurt many of Brazil's non-competitive industries. Furthermore, a key problem for Brazil is land reform. Collor has promised to provide land for 500,000 families within five years. The key will be whether he will resettle these people on good land, supported by credit and services, or simply push them into unusable areas.

An Opening for the Left

While the PT lost the runoff election, its showing was impressive. It aggressively defined its position in ways that are impossible in the United States. It campaigned on a platform that included suspending payment on the debt, land reform, raising wages while freezing prices to restore real purchasing power, and placing a civilian at the head of a reorganized defense department. During the campaign Lula hammered away at the horrendous social inequities gnawing at the soul of the country. He saw the election as a means of politicizing the people, especially the poor. He argued for redistribution of wealth, for an end to decapitalization and speculation, and for a society based on fairness. In such a polarized campaign and with his opponent in control of so many resources, Lula's showing

must be seen as impressive.

From the perspective of the PT, this election was a part of a longer process of creating a political opening in Brazil. It was not seen as an attempt to implement socialism, but rather as a phase in a process of "accumulating forces." The PT viewed the existing political context as dominated by "pseudo-liberalism" -- a political ideology devoid of coherence and without serious possibilities of producing real development. From this perspective, an electoral victory by any of the "left" candidates would have been seen as positive, with a victory by Lula being seen as creating the greatest opening.

Such a victory would have been seen as a watershed on par, albeit in a significantly different way, with the revolution of 1930 or the military counter-revolution of 1964. It did not happen, but what emerged was a fragile coalition of the left, and a cooperative relationship with key elements of a Catholic Church which, unusually, sees supporters of the theology of liberation in ascendancy at the moment.

The strategy of the PT also called for an alliance of the working classes (classes populares) and the middle class. While clearly concerned with the immediate election, the PT sought to construct a political platform that would woo the middle class by offering a longterm process of restructuring leading to a pluralistic and democratic society. Pending a close examination of the election returns, it appears that this coalition failed to evolve sufficiently. The PT will now have to evaluate its platform and determine whether it should smooth the edges of a polarizing ideology and join with the broad left or continue to go it alone. At the moment, it appears that the left coalition may survive the political reshuffling that Collor's victory is producing.

For Collor, the problems are just beginning. Having won the election, he now must find a way to govern. Failure to resolve Brazil's problems in a fair way will produce turmoil and even more cynicism. The difficulties facing Fernando Collor de Mello are daunting ones. ●

Donald Ramos teaches history at Cleveland State University.

Update on the Social Charter

by Vania Del Borgo

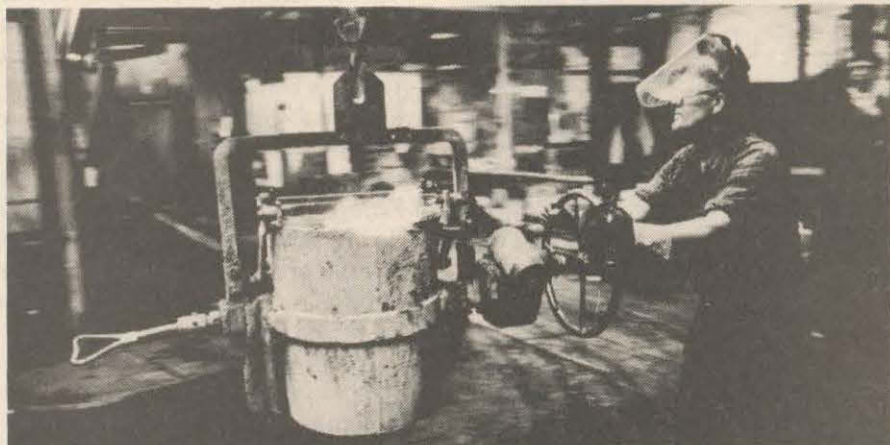
In the grand scheme of things occurring in the final weeks of the decade, the adoption by the European Community of the Charter of Fundamental Social Rights may rank as a historical footnote and no more. Yet coming as it does on the heels of momentous change in the postwar panorama it deserves a closer look.

The Charter was passed in December at the Strasbourg summit of the European Council, the E.C.'s highest decision-making body, by eleven votes to one, with Margaret Thatcher casting the minority vote. A modest document, it is conceived of as a launching pad for future E.C. legislation to protect wages, working conditions, social security, collective bargaining, and the right to strike in the unified European market of 1993 and beyond.

In the year leading up to the summit the Charter had been at the center of a well-publicized battle between Margaret Thatcher and Jacques Delors, the European Commissioner, over Europe's future complexion: Thatcher played Adam Smith to Delors' Lord Keynes.

Thatcher's argument, famously articulated at the College d' Europe in Bruges Belgium, in September 1988, and fiercely reiterated since, is that the Charter's provisions would add inflexibility to the labor market and aggravate unemployment. She served up her deregulatory message in terms of national sovereignty, evoking a pan-European bogeyman: "We have not rolled back the frontiers of the state successfully in Britain, only to see them re-imposed at a European level, with a European superstate exercising a new dominance from Brussels," she spat in Bruges.

Delors, a clever tactician and oldtime



Worker at a steel factory in England.

French socialist, cut a quietly charismatic figure as the ghost of Europe's Christmas past, with his talk of fair wages, workers' control, and a people's Europe. The masterstroke of his campaign for the Charter was his speech to the British Trade Union Council (TUC) at the end of 1988, asking for labor's support in building a "Social Europe," in effect an appeal to labor as a transnational social force.

The TUC and the Labor party had on the whole been hostile or indifferent to the 1992 project and to the E.C. generally, partly as the result of a longstanding aversion to things European (read "Continental") that cuts across party lines in Britain. It's only in the last year that the Labor party dropped its platform plank calling for British withdrawal from the E.C. On the left wing of the party, opposition to the Community was compounded by a conception of the E.C. as simply a rich man's club with a cut-and-dried free market agenda and no progressive potential. (While the Labor left's analysis has its merits, it has proved in the here and now to be a recipe for disengagement and paralysis.)

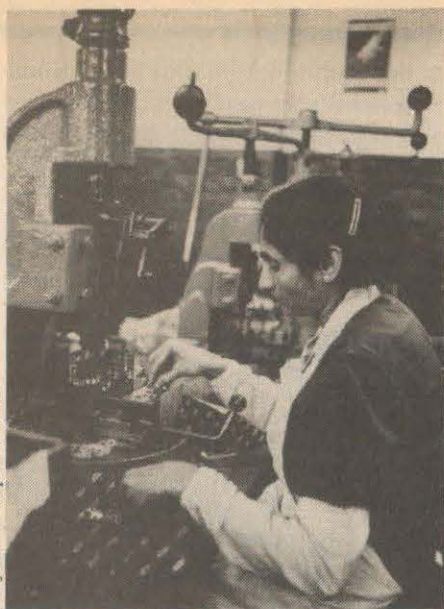
If Delors' appeal to the British labor movement didn't move segments of

the Labor left, it went a long way toward winning the support of the mainstream of the TUC and of Neil Kinnock's Labor party, who, seeing in it a window of electoral opportunity, promptly set about lambasting Thatcher's intransigence on the Social Charter. In short, Delors succeeded in animating Thatcher's domestic opposition, undermining her position in her own home turf. (We can expect to see more of this kind of maneuvering as the Commission struggles to put some flesh onto the bare bones of the Charter.)

But the battle was not won on tactics alone. Britain's position on the Social Charter, as on a good many other E.C. matters, is in a minority of one. And given the united front of the eleven and, perhaps more important, the strong backing of France and Germany, whose alliance is decisive in Community policy-making, the adoption of the document in some form was a foregone conclusion.

So the E.C. has a Social Charter. What does this mean? Is it an unqualified victory for the forces of good in Europe? Or did Thatcher ultimately win? The answer is a contradictory one. The Charter does represent an affirmation by the E.C. of Europe's progressive

Roy Peters/Impact Visuals



A worker at an engineering company in England.

heritage and a rebuff to Thatcherism, and is therefore a small victory for the left. On the other hand, it is nothing more than a declaration of intent on the part of the member states. Likewise, many of its more radical aspects, such as a commitment to the participation of workers in company decision-making, were attenuated in the negotiating process. Most of the Charter's advocates within and outside the E.C. are deeply disappointed by the final draft.

In view of this some have been tempted to hand victory to Thatcher after all: From a position of weakness, they argue, she managed to win concessions in tone that enfeebled the Charter, with Delors paying a meek visit to 10 Downing Street days before the summit. And better still, after the document had been suitably amended, she got away with withholding her vote, thereby depriving the document of the legal standing that unanimity would have conferred on it.

Although Thatcher did play her hand well, her crusade against the Charter is widely viewed as part of a generally defensive British posture vis a vis the E.C. that is likely to characterize future negotiations on social policy. The notion of a two-tier Europe with a core of member states moving ahead to higher levels of integration, leaving Britain behind, has been used to great effect in recent years to force cooperation from

Thatcher. She is under considerable pressure from British finance capital, a pillar of the modern Conservative party, to make concessions to policies she disagrees with in order to stay in the game. British high finance sees the E.C., and particularly the plans for monetary union, as essential to its survival after 1992, and is thus particularly vulnerable to suggestions of two tiers.

In the end the most useful view of the Charter is that it is no more than a first salvo in the campaign for Social Europe -- a warning signal to progressive forces to get in on what up till now has been largely the domain of elites. Much of the work of developing a body of Europe-wide social policy has yet to begin. In this connection, the first real standoff is around the corner, when debate on the European Commission's social action program, a series of legislative proposals derived from the Charter, begins in earnest in the next weeks and months.

The agenda of Social Europe is further complicated by events in Eastern Europe. For instance, the Social Charter was in part meant to avert "social dumping," the shift of manufacturing jobs to Spain, Portugal, and Greece where unionization and wage levels are low. It imposes no controls on say, German manufacturers moving their plants to East Germany where workers are not only cheap and German-speaking but widely anti-union. The E.C. may resolve this by reconciling a reunited Germany within an enlarged Community, a possibility that is not discounted by the carefully-worded endorsement of German "unity" issued by the twelve at Strasbourg. It may also make arrangements to absorb the rest of Eastern Europe after 1992, but for the moment those are open questions.

Yet to the extent that developments East of Brussels have broadened the parameters of the possible across the Continent, the work of Social Europe may well be facilitated. The sheer speed of events there has thrown the Community to the center of an entirely changed geopolitical reality. It is now conceivable that the Europe of the twelve could become the Europe of the nineteen, or the twenty-two, or the thirty-eight. With such dramatic reconfigurations within the realm of the possible in the next

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decade, the field is wide open for shaping the post-postwar world along entirely new lines.

If the cold war can, in part, be blamed for hampering the development of democratic socialism in Europe and elsewhere, then surely its demise heralds renewed opportunities. In this context, the battle for Social Europe, East and West, may be fought in a far more favorable political and intellectual climate than we have known, and the small victory at Strasbourg may be more a piece of Europe's future than a tribute to its past. ●

Vania DelBorgo, a DSAer, is studying at the London School of Economics.

One Year of Struggle on the Eastern Airlines Picket Line

by Paul Baicich

When the Eastern strike began in March, 1989, many observers thought it would be over quickly. That was not to be the case.

Within the first days of the strike, Eastern Airlines was crippled and virtually shut down. Some 8,000 International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM), joined by the Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA) and the flight attendants' Transport Workers Union (TWU), responded to Frank Lorenzo's corporate greed, worker abuse, and the looting of the airline's assets in an impressive show of solidarity. Although the strikers were denied a quick victory, they simply would not cave in and disappear. The IAM lines continue to remain solid, with only a smattering of members crossing the line.

But by filing for protection under Chapter 11 of the bankruptcy code within a week after the strike began, Lorenzo succeeded in sidelining the unions' plans. Although it was not to be that easy, the bankruptcy proceedings do not tolerate room for workers' rights nor labor's arguments. Bankruptcy exists to mediate between rival business interests. The unions were locked out of the process, except in the role of "another creditor." In addition, the judiciary's bias was also exhibited by the way it handled the possibility of secondary strikes and restricted other labor activity.

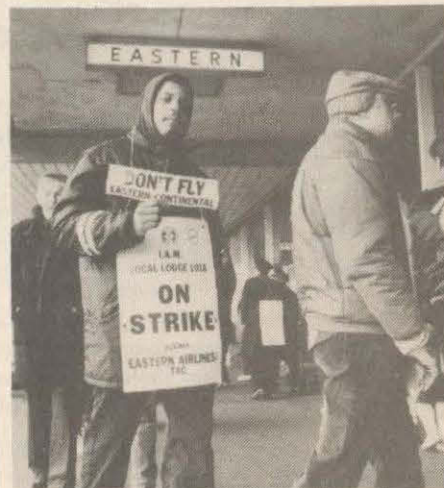
The executive branch of the government was even more inhospitable. While turning a deaf ear to the Eastern workers, President Bush heaped praise on the courageous workers in Eastern Europe. The executive branch was influenced by Lorenzo's cronies (whether in the Department of Transportation,

or the White House staff itself) in behavior that would otherwise shame a government pretending to be "fair and equitable."

The legislative branch has been exceedingly slow to provide succor for the strikers. After the Congress finally passed a mild bill to "investigate and make recommendations" on the Eastern Airlines situation, Bush vetoed it at Thanksgiving. (This move prompted ALPA and TWU to drop their sympathy strike. To this date, neither union has any of its sympathy strikers back to work.) This important veto override is scheduled for a House vote in early March.

Labor solidarity, both between the unions and from the community, was impressive at first. Solidarity, however, was not enough. While the call of "No more PATCOs" reverberated throughout the labor movement at the beginning of the strike, the cry grew dimmer as the months passed and no easy solution was devised.

Fortunately for the strikers, Lorenzo has fared even worse. Eastern is finally being brought to the breaking point. Lorenzo loses between one million and three million dollars a day, with 1989 losses exceeding \$850 million. Having first secured the loyalty of the creditors by pledging to repay 100 percent of the debts owed, Lorenzo recently readjusted his promise to a mere 10 percent up front and another 70 percent by the end of the century, with no interest. The creditors committee and the preferred shareholders have now lost confidence to the point that they have abandoned Lorenzo's corner and have started to explore the possibility of liquidation or sale. The unions are hoping for sale of the airline to someone they can work with. What sacrifices the workers might have to make with a new owner, and



Ellen Neipris/Impact Visuals

whether securing a new owner will happen in time to save the airline, remain unanswered questions.

Other questions plague the labor movement. What if another "Lorenzo" pulled off a similar situation? After all, Lorenzo himself had practically done it all once before with Continental Airlines, though admittedly the Eastern Airlines' unions were able to drag him down to slow-motion speed. Would labor and its supporters be more prepared to take on the battle "next time?"

These lessons, experiences, and questions are not only for labor to consider, but for labor's supporters as well. The real culprit is not Lorenzo, but the frustrating system of American labor relations and anti-labor bias fostered in this country. American labor relations fail to hold a candle to policies deemed commonplace in Western Europe. It is time to enter the 1990s with an approach to labor struggles appropriate to the demands of the decade. Perhaps the place to start is still Eastern. ●

Paul Baicich, a member of DSA, has been an IAM worker for over thirteen years in the airline industry.

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REVIEWS

Where Sociology Meets Politics

by Neil McLaughlin

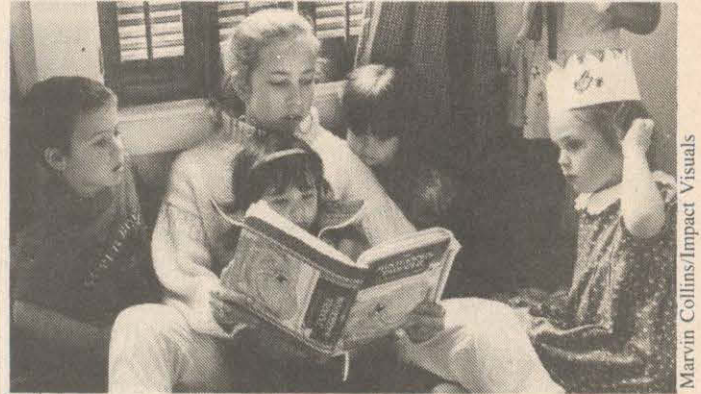
WHOSE KEEPER? SOCIAL SCIENCE AND MORAL OBLIGATION by Alan Wolfe, University of California Press: 1989.

The collapse of Stalinism in Eastern Europe has opened up new space for dealing with the problems of our society. The 1990s are likely to be a decade with more debate about the nature of the "good society" than any in recent memory. Discussions about the proper balance between market, state, and civil society are going to be center stage. For these reasons, Alan Wolfe's book on civil society, *Whose Keeper?*, is one of the more important books to be published in quite some time.

Wolfe makes two major points as he grapples with the dilemma contemporary liberal democrats face when they try to balance the competing moral claims of self, family, large scale-society, and future generations. First, Wolfe argues for the importance of strengthening civil society -- that is, family, neighborhood, and social institutions such as voluntary organizations and churches. In what can be read as a warning to those "free market" ideologues who look to the collapse of communism as an unequivocal victory for market capitalism, Wolfe reminds us that classical theorists of market society did not believe society could operate without human interaction and moral reasoning. The Adam Smith of *The Wealth of Nations* was, Wolfe reminds us, also the author of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*.

Smith would have been horrified by a society that operated solely by market processes. Yet Smith's followers in the "Chicago school" of economics have taken idolatry of the market to an extreme. Wolfe offers a scathing critique of the Chicago "rational choice" approach -- a perspective that interprets all social behavior in economic terms. In an analysis similar to that outlined in Michael Walzer's seminal work *Spheres of Justice*, Wolfe argues that values appropriate for certain market exchanges have disastrous consequences if allowed to govern other human activities. One Chicago school theorist explains suicide as the point in someone's life "when the total discounted lifetime utility remaining...reaches zero." Another argues that the "best solution to the problem of surrogate mothering is to allow parents to contract freely on the market."

Wolfe has written a brilliant critique of contemporary American society, a society where public policy is dominated by market values. These market relations, Wolfe argues, erode social solidarity between generations; they promote a



Bilingual day care center in San Francisco.

Marvin Collins/Impact Visuals

"possessive individualism" that gives rise to social isolation, epidemics of crime and drugs, teen suicides, and many of the other indicators of social disintegration.

The second and perhaps more innovative argument in *Whose Keeper?* is Wolfe's assertion that "social scientists are moral philosophers in disguise." With the collapse of religion as the unifying moral language of modern society, as well as what Wolfe sees as the bankruptcy of the dominant political ideologies of both the left and right, modern social science remains the sole repository of moral reasoning. Wolfe convincingly argues that the dominance of economics and political science in contemporary social science has resulted in the undue privileging of both the market and the state. Wolfe argues that "modern liberal democrats" should ally with the better traditions of sociology in order to identify the ways in which ordinary people socially construct "moral rules through everyday interaction with others."

Wolfe's concern with the value of social institutions brings him to what is probably the most controversial part of his book: an extended analysis of the social democratic states of Scandinavia. While the United States has relied too heavily on the market, Wolfe argues, the social democratic nations have erred in the opposite direction by allowing the state to take over more and more aspects of social life. What Wolfe calls the generation of the "golden age" -- those who built the welfare states and are now nearing retirement -- lived a life characterized by both material satisfaction and a social solidarity born of a common purpose and struggle. For Wolfe, this social democratic culture has been eroded by an over reliance on "statist" solutions to social problems. Contemporary social democracy has replaced the moral energy of its early days with a bureaucratic approach. The younger generations now lack a commitment to the values that made the welfare state possible in the first place.

Some early negative responses to *Whose Keeper?* focused

Continued on page 23

REVIEWS

Roger and Me: Corporate Critique Minus the Collective Action

by Paul Garver

If you are a typical *Democratic Left* reader, you've probably seen *Roger and Me*, or at least read about it. An obscure left-wing documentary reborn for the suburban mall cinema as a boffo comedy, it brilliantly succeeds in both genres.

The narrative thread of the film is the quixotic quest of actor/director Michael Moore to bring General Motors chair Roger Smith to view the devastation brought to Flint when GM relocates. Swiftly and deftly, Moore blends his own coming-of-age in the GM-flagship company town Flint with the story of the city itself, from its heyday to its current demise. Along the way we encounter morally bankrupt celebrities with practiced grins assuring us that all will be well, wild-eyed boosters of expensive and doomed schemes for economic revitalization, and a series of security guards and bureaucratic surrogates for the elusive Mr. Smith. These scenes are interspersed with interviews with dazed victims and plucky survivors, sometimes in the very process of being evicted from their premises. In a stunning juxtaposition, one family is evicted on Christmas Eve, while Roger Smith sanctimoniously invokes the Dickensian spirit of Christmas.

The film seduces the viewer from the outset with its wit and verve, and delicately balances laughter, savage satire, and empathy for the workers and community tossed on the scrapheap by corporate decision-makers. Moore becomes a kind of shambling, goofy prophet, wielding his microphone like Diogenes his lantern, asking someone to take personal responsibility for the cataclysm. As an artist, this first-time filmmaker, financed by makeshift expedients like bingo games, has more than fulfilled his share of responsibility.

Much of the criticism of *Roger and Me* (by Harlan Jacobson in *Film Comment* and by Pauline Kael in the *New Yorker*) has concentrated on its failures as a historically accurate documentary. Moore defends as artistically necessary his compression of time and chronological inversion of events. While these devices exaggerate the suddenness of the layoffs and closings and make the civic boosterism appear more ridiculous than it actually was, they do not mar the integrity of the film. I also disagree with Pauline Kael's charge that the film allows audiences to "laugh at ordinary working people and still feel they are taking a politically correct position." If Moore was more unfair to celebrities and official spokespeople -- well, that's satire.

What concerns me more are the film's implications for



UAW worker holding a sign referring to GM's 1983 profits.

action. I saw *Roger and Me* at its opening at the New York Film Festival, where the audience gave Moore and his crew a five-minute standing ovation. In his post-film interview, as in many subsequent discussions, Moore stressed his concern that the viewer take responsibility for action. But there was something disquieting about the reactions of this audience, including my own. We escape too easily, feel too smug at the end of the film. We seem to feel self-righteous anger at the villains pilloried on the screen, but we do not assume any moral responsibility. I fear that the most likely action taken, at least by that audience, will be to discover another rationale for not buying a U.S.-made GM car, an accelerating consumer trend of little use to the remaining 50,000 autoworkers in Flint!

While it is unreasonable to demand of Moore a programmatic manifesto, we might expect hints of the type of appropriate measures that should have, or could be, taken. Unfortunately, by totally ignoring those limited efforts that were made to address the problems of Flint autoworkers, the film fails to address solutions to the situation it so trenchantly exposes. Perhaps, like Lorraine Gray's more standard but equally provocative film documentary, *Global Assembly Line*, *Roger and Me* would be most useful to activists with a guide.

My contribution to the hypothetical study guide includes three sections: collective action, legislation, and international labor solidarity.

The only collective action we see in the film are clips of

the original Flint sitdown strike in 1937, and a pathetic little march of four men on the day that plant closed. The United Auto Workers exists only to gladly give GM concessions, and comfortably share a bed with the company. Owen Bieber makes a cameo appearance as a surprised celebrity uttering into Moore's microphone. And yet in fact the union had done what it could within the limits of collective bargaining to protect jobs and incomes, and it continues to represent 50,000 Flint workers. Perhaps there were other strategies, other forms of struggle available (and Moore publicly supports the New Directions caucus), but the film itself projects no hope for collective activity, either at the workplace or in the community.

What of political action? Where else but in the realm of legislated public policy can there be effective measures to assist endangered communities and unemployed workers? Unions like the UAW and Machinists have tried for decades, with little interest from middle strata allies, to promote Swedish-style social policies for job training, industrial revitalization, aid to distressed communities, etc. Is the viewer of *Roger and Me* more likely to join such a coalition? The film contains no pointer in that direction.

The film suggests that the 30,000 jobs lost in Flint were shipped by GM to Mexico (This is somewhat misleading, since most current GM production in Mexico is in parts rather than assembly). Nevertheless, General Motors did recently surpass the national oil company as the largest employer in Mexico, and clearly has long-range plans to move much of their production to low-wage areas. Encouraged by favorable tax and tariff policies of both the United States and Mexican governments, this shift clearly indicates that GM will continue to place its bottomline over any imaginary concern for its Michigan origins. Such economic realities suggest that the only long-range strategy to protect the interests of U.S. workers must include assistance to genuinely independent workers' unions in Mexico, both to reduce the enormous disparity in wages and to encourage the growth of a domestic consumer market in Mexico.

In Flint, as in Krakow or Lille, an industrial machine, built at great human and environmental cost, is rusting. Though never well-balanced nor genuinely decent, industrial society did improve working-class living standards, and vibrant, bustling communities typically surrounded factories. Now in the new international division of labor, the creative destructiveness of global capitalism combines with the collapse of centrally planned "socialism" to devastate older industrial communities and the workers in them.

If we believe that the economy should serve the people, and not vice versa, we must build societies in which morality takes precedence over the workings of the free market. It is ultimately absurd to bring Roger Smith to Flint. Neither GM nor any government economic planning agency will ever have any real responsibility for the social consequences of their decisions. For them, economics are the end; people, merely the means. Michael Moore may not have solutions, but he sure as hell has his priorities in the right order. ●

Paul Garver, a DSA member, teaches labor history at Rutgers Labor Education Center.

WHOSE KEEPER?

Continued from page 21.

on this critique of social democracy. Some have argued that it is irresponsible to criticize the Scandinavian model when the U.S. welfare state is under attack. From this perspective, Wolfe is guilty of a simple-minded "plague on both your houses" approach that equates the sins of the market with those of the state. There is an element of truth here: In reading *Whose Keeper?*, one can forget that the left in the United States *must* relegitimize the need for a decent and universal welfare state.

Nonetheless, it would be wrong to dismiss this book so easily. Wolfe is careful to support the welfare state over the "free market." "There is little doubt," he writes, "that the welfare state does a better job than the market of organizing obligation to strangers." For Wolfe, the Scandinavian welfare states count among the few "success stories in 20th century politics." These states have "as close to the good life as is possible in any Western liberal democracy." Although criticizing the European welfare state is not the first task of American leftists, we should be confident enough in our support of the welfare state that we are not threatened by Wolfe's reservations.

My differences with Wolfe lie elsewhere. Viewed from within the walls of academia, Wolfe's book is a breath of fresh air -- a *tour de force* of scholarship and intellectual craftsmanship. Wolfe practices a sociology that deals with issues of consequence. He is a "public intellectual" in the tradition of the best American sociologists such as C. Wright Mills, David Riesman, and W.E.B. Du Bois. ← *Spicing*

But Wolfe gives the sociology profession too central a role. The kind of moral reasoning he seeks can become the dominant way of life in our society only as a result of massive structural changes brought about by political movements and parties. The social democratic parties of Western Europe need, as Wolfe suggests, a shot of idealism and renewed commitment to the values of their social movement origins. Wolfe's description of the problems of social democracy is similar to the analysis outlined in Michael Harrington's last book, *Socialism: Past and Future*, and in Bogdan Denitch's forthcoming book, *The Socialist Debate*. But Harrington and Denitch's solutions are more compelling than Wolfe's somewhat vague talk of civil society.

A revitalized social democratic movement, argue Harrington and Denitch, is the best hope for preserving the civil society Wolfe desires. Social democracy must, of course, do a better job of relating to the "new social movements" of feminism, ecology, and anti racism. And as the Cold War ends, what better source of moral idealism could there be than recommitting the socialist movement to a world economy that eliminates the massive poverty and economic insecurity of the Third World? Wolfe's "moral sociologist" is a valuable participant in this project. But, ultimately, politics -- not sociology -- is what is called for. ●

Neil McLaughlin, a member of DSA, is a graduate student of Sociology at the City University of New York.

Janie Higgins

LET'S PRAY FOR BETTER LABOR RELATIONS. Los Angeles Archbishop Roger Mahony still refuses to heed his cemetery workers' bid to representation by the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU). Last February, that's 1989, the 150 mostly Latino workers voted for ACTWU. Mahony, who seems to leave his progressive credentials aside when dealing with trouble in his own backyard, argued before the National Labor Relations Board that the cemetery workers were "religious workers" and not covered by labor law. When that didn't work, he set up a "company" union and hired a union-busting company. Now, after an impartial three-member panel validated the ACTWU win, the Archbishop has terminated negotiations and scheduled a new election without ACTWU's participation. Send the Archbishop a message by writing him at 1531 West 9th Street, Los Angeles, CA 90015. The message? Negotiate!

CZECH IT OUT. According to one poll, only three percent of Czechs favor capitalism. Forty-seven percent want their economy to remain state-controlled and another 43 percent opt for a mixed economy. "It's inevitable," says cosmetics heir Ronald Lauder on the prowl for Eastern European investment opportunities, that "in two, three years there will be a backlash against capitalist exploitation."

FULL EMPLOYMENT, EAST GERMAN-STYLE. East German's State Security employed 109,000 people as informants, say documents recently come to light. Of these, 1052 worked tapping telephones, 2100 opened other people's mail, and 5000 followed people around.

NO, TELL US WHAT YOU REALLY THINK. A Colonel Aguinaldo, running for office in the Philippines, ruminated on a more direct approach to clean government should he lose the election. "I'll send them (my opponents) floating down the river." Hmm. If that gives you pause, consider this from conservative columnist Patrick J. Buchanan, on the occasion of Nelson Mandela's release and the prospects for black majority rule. "To elevate 'majority rule' to the level of divine revelation is a heresy of the American idea...If a (black) majority chooses a communist ruler, the minority has a right to reverse the decision by force." So much for trusting in the people.

"END OF THE COLD WAR" BLUES. "If I signal to you there's no cold war, then you'll say 'Well, what are you doing with troops in Europe?'" insisted George Bush. "For forty years we had a very reliable enemy. Every time somebody wanted to cut the defense budget, he invaded somewhere," added John O'Brien, chairman of Grumman Corporation.

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Make checks payable to "Socialist Scholars Conference" and mail to: R.L. Norman, Jr. CUNY Democratic Socialists Club, Rm. 800 33 West 42nd St., New York, N.Y. 10036. Please Note that the conference schedule will be available at the door.

Pre-Registration _____ \$22.50 _____ \$12.50 (Student/low income) Regular Registration _____ \$30.00 _____ \$15.00 (Student/low income)

Where did you hear about the conference? _____ If in a publication, which one? _____

Professional childcare for toilet trained toddlers of 3 years and older on Saturday & Sunday daytime. Unfortunately, school insurance limitations do not permit younger children in child care facilities. I need childcare for _____ children. Ages _____, _____, _____

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