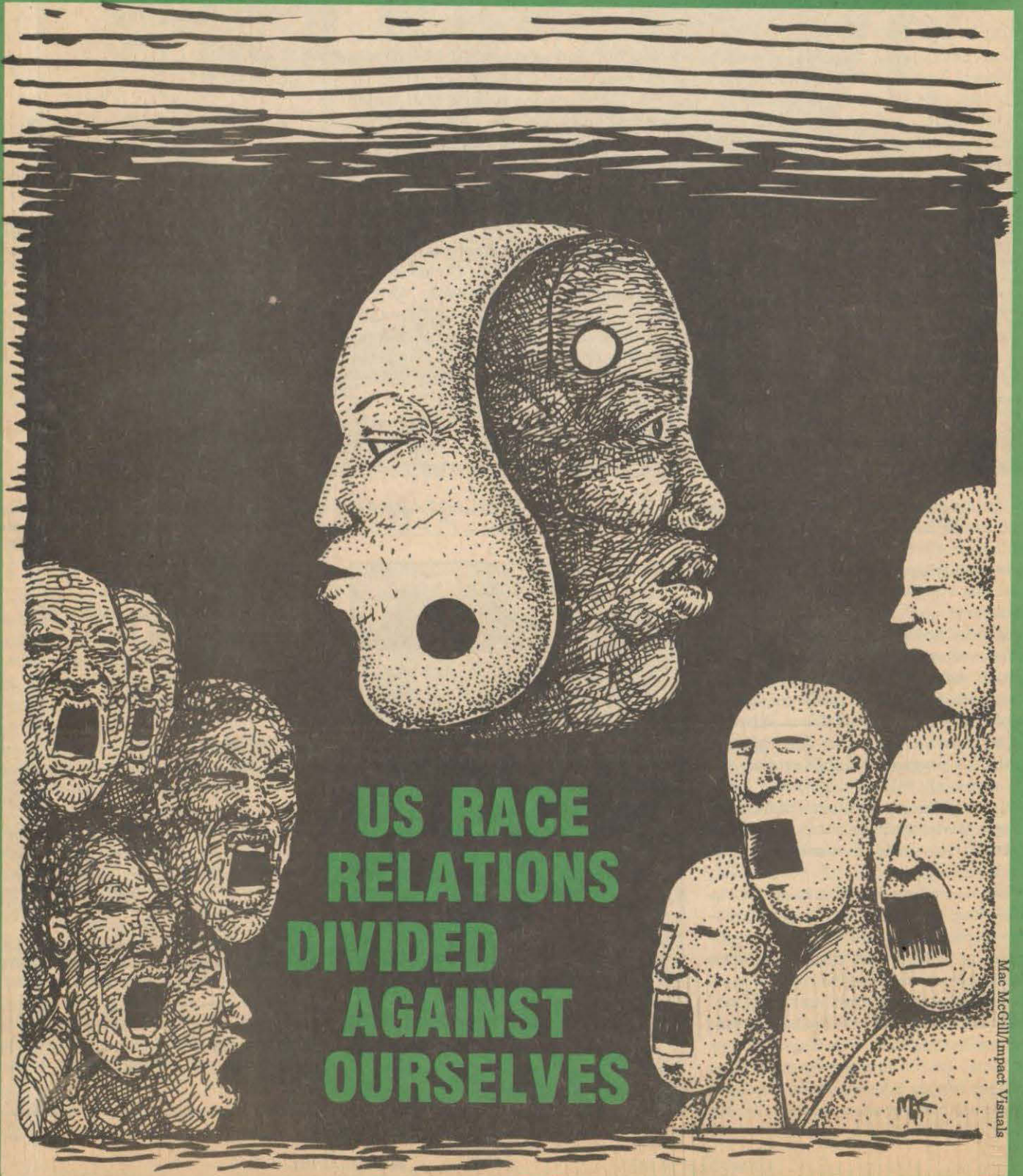


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**US RACE
RELATIONS
DIVIDED
AGAINST
OURSELVES**

Mac McGill/Impact Visuals

EDITORIAL

DEADLINES

SATURDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 23, 1991. Another deadline for Saddam Hussein's withdrawal from Kuwait slips by. He jeers at another ultimatum and slams another Scud into Israel. And now legions of allied tanks roll across Iraqi and Kuwaiti borders, marking the start of another phase in the Persian Gulf War. No one knows how long this phase will last, how many more deadlines will be drawn up and ultimatums spurned, how many tons of napalm will blaze, how many children of a dozen nation states will grieve before the killing stops.

This much, however, we do know: When George Bush abandoned a strategy of sanctions last fall, he threw away a precious opportunity to test a system of collective security for the world. There's no way to prove that tough sanctions, fashioned by the United Nations and implemented by a multinational force, would have prevented war in the Gulf region. There's no guarantee that a successful strategy of sanctions would have created a precedent for resolving other conflicts without bloodshed. But opportunities to promote world peace don't come along everyday. It was certainly worth a better try.

We also know this: The most decisive military victory for the United States-led coalition will be worthless in a few years unless someone calls off the arms race in the Middle East. One Saddam Hussein after another will threaten the region as long as it's plagued by lopsided distributions of wealth, lack of democratic traditions, humiliations (real and perceived), and superpower machinations. Arming the Saddams of this world constitutes geopolitical insanity.

But curtailing weapons trade in the Middle East won't be a snap. *The Economist* (Feb. 9, 1991) points out with depressing clarity that no less than three arms races poison the region: Iran versus Iraq, Saudi Arabia versus Iran and Iraq, and Israel versus all Arabs. The sales patterns have a sickening logic. The United States, the Soviet Union, and European nations arm Arab friends of the moment, hoping to neutralize a current enemy's clout. Then a

friend becomes the enemy (or the friend of the enemy), and suddenly the hardware is in the wrong hands. Meanwhile, some four million Israelis want to be armed better than any likely coalition of hostile Arabs (who number over 100 million in the region). Israel's fire power threatens the individual Arab states, so they clamor for weapons parity. And the merchants always comply.

This year's war is eating up large stores of weaponry, which means the cooks will soon be shopping for new supplies. Anyone hoping to prevent the next war knows the arms bazaars must be shut down. Anyone hoping for decent standards of living in the Third World, sustained democracy in Eastern Europe, and social justice in the United States knows that vast resources must be redeployed. Time is running out. This is the real deadline.

-- by JOANNE BARKAN

WANTED:

SOCIALIST YOUTH ORGANIZER

Dinah Leventhal, our current youth organizer, finishes her term in June, 1991, and we are now engaged in a search for her successor. We need someone who is energetic, committed to democratic socialist politics and to student organizing.

S/he should have organizing experience, excellent public speaking and writing as well as administrative skills. Our organizer travels all over the country talking to young activists about democratic socialism. Women and people of color are encouraged to apply. Interested candidates should send resume and cover letter to Dinah at the DSA office by March 15.

Table of Contents

Race & Progressive Politics

by Judith Stein

Page 4

Interview:

Eleanor Holmes Norton

Page 5

Progressive Race Theory

by Michael Eric Dyson

Page 7

The Economics Beyond Race

by Jim Sleeper

Page 9

Profile:

Socialist Singer Anne Feeney

by Fred Gustofson

Page 10

Jimmy Higgins Reports

Page 20

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Donna Binder/Impact Visuals

Race Relations: The War at Home

The Gulf War rages; we work for peace. But when the fighting is over, what kind of country will the troops come home to? This issue of Democratic Left features a special section on the experience and theory of race and class in the United States with an eye toward reviving the historic progressive white/black coalition. This coalition can form a foundation for multiracial politics that challenges racism and economic injustice.

The Gulf War gives new urgency to the need for this movement. The "economic draft" (a.k.a. the all-volunteer army) has created a military disproportionately African-American and Latino. The lack of non-military economic opportunities reveals how racism and capitalism underdevelop these communities. As socialists, we make the connections between anti-war organizing and domestic social problems in part by seeing how the effects of the war undermine social justice, while the costs of the war defund the welfare state for another generation.

Many troops returning to civilian life will not be able to find jobs as their neigh-

borhoods are decimated by drug abuse, AIDS, and chronic poverty. Their children will not get a useful education in underfunded schools with drop-out rates of over fifty percent. As AIDS treatment overwhelms community hospitals, big pharmaceutical companies and the federal health bureaucracy ignore the needs of women and children with AIDS. The troops will return to a country whose conservative courts refuse to enforce civil rights, while the Bush Administration vetoes legislation intended to guarantee equal opportunity.

The unfair burden felt by people of color as they or their friends and relatives serve in the Gulf War reflects a growing racial polarization between blacks and whites, and between people of all races. Attacks on Arab-Americans have intensified as the war progresses. Anti-Semitism is also on the rise. These racial antagonisms are often rooted in economic disparities. In New York City when some African-American activists organized a boycott of a grocery store over the alleged assault of a Haitian customer by the Korean owner (since acquitted), the protestors came to demand

that blacks support black businesses instead of Korean shops. Yet, the lack of alternative economic development models, such as cooperatives and lending societies akin to those of Korean or Chinese immigrants, undermine that demand.

As socialists, we need to participate in multicultural coalitions that can address the economic and social roots of poverty and racism. This movement would demand equal opportunity not only through civil rights legislation but more fundamentally through popular participation in the economic and social decisions that determine people's lives. This movement would create an atmosphere of respect for and pride in different cultures. Individuals would receive respect by having the right to speak truth, to dialogue, and to disagree without regard to skin color. We can and must hold the society as a whole responsible for the degradation of the lives of poor and working-class people by demanding truly respectful human relations and fully democratic economic development. ●

-- by Michael Lighty

Race and Progressive Politics

by Judith Stein

In the United States, discussions of race and politics have been dominated by concerns over symptoms. Demagogues like Al Sharpton and Louis Farrakhan, murders of blacks in white communities like Howard Beach and Bensonhurst, and black crime have dominated the debate. Behind them is an analytic framework, adopted by conservatives, liberals, and radicals that accepts race as the motor driving politics. The way American culture has formulated racial questions has become a barrier to resolving them.

Race is a useful concept to conservatives because it affirms dominant institutions by isolating poverty and class suffering, and by sometimes blaming the victim. Many radicals and liberals focus on race for legitimate reasons: many suffering Americans, for example, are black. But many radicals assume that African-Americans are the *natural* leaders of progressive politics. Likewise, many liberals believe that the situation of African-Americans can be addressed discretely. Both assumptions are false.

Racism as an ideology is used to justify class oppression. Its modern American form was constructed to support slavery and the cotton agriculture post-bellum labor systems in the South. In 1876, a U.S. congressman investigating racial violence in South Carolina asked a local black Republican why the planters oppressed blacks. The man responded: "In case I was rich, and all colored men was rich, how would he get his labor? . . . His interest is in keeping me poor, so that I will have to hire to someone else."

The economic motive for Southern racism ended with the demise of labor-intensive agriculture after World War II. The civil rights movement of the 1960s destroyed the political and social shields of Southern racism -- dis-

franchisement and Jim Crow. Yet some of the descendants of that agricultural system remain affected by it. The roots of the contemporary crisis are dual: the expulsion of untrained blacks from the rural South and the restructuring of American industry during the 1960s and 1970s. The malign neglect of the Reagan administration toward problems of blacks worsened the effects of these underlying trends.

At first, the situation was masked by the postwar boom, which offered factory jobs to people who had limited formal education. But rising black unemployment in the 1950s and early 1960s led President Kennedy to ask Labor Secretary Willard Wirtz, to analyze the causes of high rates of black joblessness. Wirtz gave three explanations, in the following order of importance: disappearance of jobs for those with minimal training; poor education and training necessary for other jobs; and racial discrimination. To deal with the third, Wirtz testified on behalf of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. For a brief period, under the Manpower Training Act, Elementary and Secondary School Act, and the War on Poverty legislation, some effort was made to improve training. To address the most important point, Wirtz endorsed the Kennedy program for expanded economic growth -- accelerated public works and investment

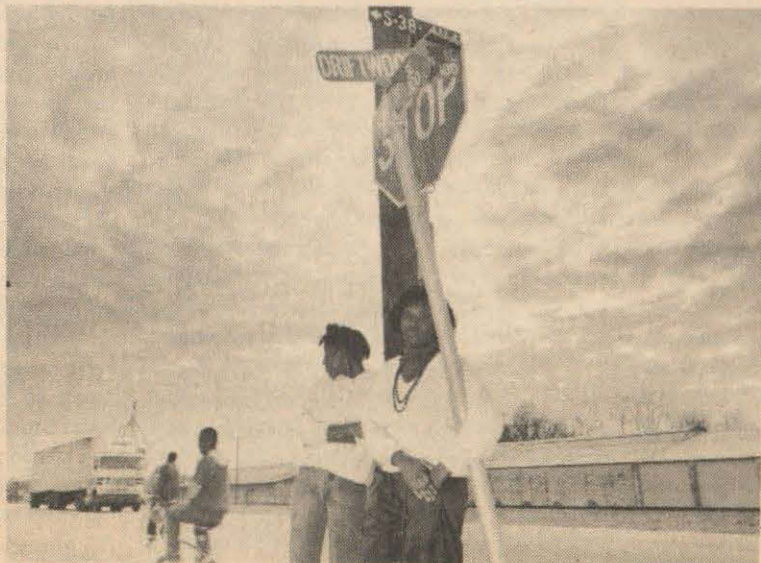
tax credits. He assumed that an expanding economy was essential to assure jobs for all workers. Indeed, the growing white-collar industries, prodded by government agencies, opened up many new jobs for blacks, the source of the new black middle class.

But in key industries for black employment -- steel, automobiles, meatpacking -- jobs continued to disappear. The recession and industrial crisis of the 1970s followed by the economic policies of the 1980s, destroyed the prospects for millions of workers. For the many whites and blacks who lacked education the economic realignment beginning in the 1960s was disastrous.

Some liberals focus on the racial component of unemployment and underemployment. Thus, Stephen Steinberg has argued that the nation owes more to blacks than to the immigrant-descended workers of the Rust Belt. Steinberg's advice may be entertained in New York, which lacks a steel industry, but the blacks of industrial towns like Gary, Indiana and Birmingham, Alabama might be puzzled by their regional obliteration. Such attempts at reparation are sterile because blacks do not occupy distinctive economic places. These efforts at amelioration are also undesirable because they encourage competitive suffering, which undermines popular challenges to economic policy in this country. Whatever the status of their grandfather, people deserve an education and a job.

Steinberg's argument, and the many variants of it, is particularly insidious when today the major barriers facing blacks are class problems -- lack of jobs, education, and training. Further, in today's political climate the promotion of difference -- cultural and statistical -- has been most fruitfully used by conservatives and some liberals who use the term "underclass." Isolating a set of behavioral traits and placing them on

Continued on page 16



Sunset in a small South Carolina town.

Adam Taylor/Impact Visuals

On Prospects for Black / White Coalitions

An Interview with Eleanor Holmes Norton

Democratic Left recently interviewed Eleanor Holmes Norton on the prospects for black-white coalitions in Congress and in the Democratic Party. Norton was chair of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in the Carter Administration and is now the newly elected nonvoting delegate to Congress from the District of Columbia.

DL: *Could you comment on how the onslaught against affirmative action launched by the Reagan administration has taken its toll on the American public?*

EHN: The impact, it seems to me, was clear with some fallout of overtly racist acts. There were many reasons for those acts, but surely the anti-civil rights rhetoric Reagan and his agents had something to do with them. For example, the great flurry of racist, anti-Semitic, homophobic, and generally bigoted attacks on college campuses was one fallout.

The official fallout one sees in the veto of the 1990 Civil Rights Act. The President assumed that the veto was something he could get away with. That, it seems to me, is



George Cohen/Impact Visuals

Affirmative action: Bringing qualified, excluded people into jobs previously denied them.

DL: *We've seen the vote for David Duke and against Harvey Gantt. Gantt has said recently that he wished he had taken on the quota issue more vigorously and that liberals must get a handle on how to deal with it as an issue in campaigns.*

EHN: Not so much a handle on the language, but what the reality of affirmative action, what affirmative action really is.

The notion that you could take three hundred and fifty years of slavery and discrimination and sexism and get rid of them in twenty-five years and change everybody's attitudes and practices is, at best, naive and at worst dangerous, because it means people have no sense of the degree of struggle necessary to overturn ingrained injustice.

the culmination of the Reagan years. A president who used to be more moderate than Reagan takes the notion of quotas, which had been around for fifteen years, and raises it a notch -- a large notch -- so that it became a rallying cry for certain sectors of the population who had noted it before, but never had it as a cause to rally around until Bush made it the focus of resistance to the 1990 act.

The public has identified affirmative action with race, not sex. That is a denial of the reality of how in fact affirmative action has worked. It is a tool for bringing qualified, excluded people into jobs previously denied them. Those people with good life chances are the only people that can profit from affirmative action -- white women. First, they have been discriminated against, and

therefore fit the protected category of affirmative action, and second, their life chances have been virtually equal with those of men; after all, they came from the same households. Therefore, all that was necessary for white women was to change the lane in which they traveled and affirmative action was there to pick them up if they did that, whereas for many blacks it is a two-step process: one, get in the right lane, and two, get to the point where you are competing for nontraditional jobs where affirmative action might be useful to you.

DL: *There was quite a bit more activity, when you were a government official, regarding affirmative action tools like plant-wide seniority. Do you think that people have forgotten what affirmative action accomplished for everyone?*

EHN: People who were not part of a movement don't have in their memory a before and after that makes them appreciate what discrimination was like. Plant-wide seniority is an excellent example of how civil rights has benefited the entire country. One of the reasons it was so easy to sell plant-wide seniority was that it was very important to the majority of people in the plant, who did not want to lose their senior-

ity when they switched to another line of work within the same factory. It was civil rights laws, similarly, that mandated that all jobs be posted. Who did that help? To be sure, it helped women and minorities, but it helped the majority of the people in a factory who were not insiders and therefore couldn't compete openly for jobs. Unless you were there when that changeover occurred, you may not appreciate what happened, or if you were there and had accepted or heard the rhetoric of preference and quotas you may forget that you too profited from these changes.

DL: A recent poll on white attitudes released by the Urban League revealed that seventy-seven percent of whites believed African-Americans were more likely to be lazy and prefer living on welfare. Whole generations of young white people have grown up believing that a color-blind standard is enough. After what you've been through, do you find these developments daunting? Are they reversible?

EHN: What these results do is tell us something about the dynamic of fundamental change. The notion that you could take three hundred and fifty years of slavery and discrimination and sexism and get rid of them in twenty-five years and change everybody's attitudes and practices is, at best, naive and at worst dangerous, because it means people have no sense of the degree of struggle necessary to overturn ingrained injustice. But it's very American. America has the shortest attention span for anything, not just correcting injustice, of any people in the world. We're a quick change people, and quickly move on to the next thing. That's probably a part of the American character that comes with people having come as immigrants and indeed wanting to forget. The best example is the European immigrants who came in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, who wanted to quickly forget the old world because the only way to succeed was to become very American. So your first experience in the country is forgetting the past and moving onto the future, and not necessarily building into the future a sense of history. That Americans would have little appreciation of the peaceful revolution of the last thirty-five to forty years is not surprising. It does put a burden on those of us who purport to understand how history oper-

ates, however, to find vehicles for keeping this history and its effect on the present in the consciousness of the American people.

DL: What do you think will be on the progressive agenda in Congress that will bring a black-white coalition into action this term?

EHN: We have a challenge to make the civil rights legislation H.R. 1 the broadly uniting legislation I think it should be. I think we can do that by stressing the extent to which American women are dependent on the eradication of discrimination at a time when two incomes are necessary, and when the growing number of single mothers and women have only one income.

Basically, the Democratic Party has always been held together as the people's party, and it's very hard to think of any other way to hold it together, with increasing disparities of income, than by focusing on the economically unifying issues. The Republicans have fastened onto essentially cultural issues to try to draw people to them. Many of those are quite polarizing issues without a basic unifying, underlying basis. So I expect, ultimately, improving the lives of ordinary people will be the way the Democrats will sustain the coalition.

DL: And health care...?

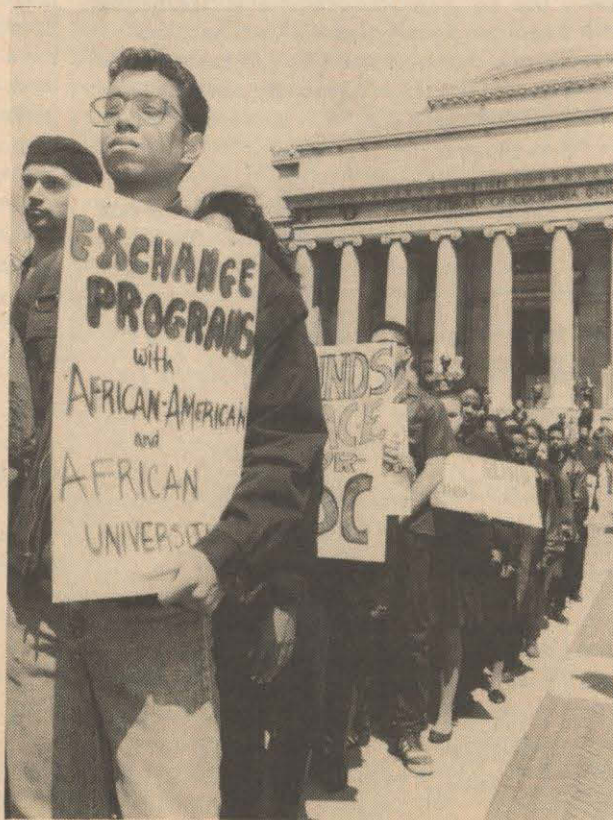
EHN: That's an example of an economic issue that really is patented by the Democrats, when you consider that it stretches from the very poor to the working poor to the middle classes to all but the very rich. If anyone's going to find a solution, it seems to me the Democrats are in a position to do so. The root of the problem, however, is not only money, but also the way the health care system is organized. I would hope the Democrats would at least move on that and look in a more comprehensive fashion at whether this is the best way to organize a health care system, not just filling in the gaps which we are sort of beginning to do anyway.

First, we have to get a consensus on the way a health care system should be organized. One thing is sure -- this is not the way it should be organized. But if you agree for example on certain principles: that there should be a minimum level of universal access, that administrative costs should be consolidated so as to save money rather than replicating the administrative mechanisms that are so costly.... There are points of consensus that could be reached with the Democratic leadership because that issue does cut across class lines up to the very wealthy, and that ought to be the natural constituency of the Democrats and progressives.

DL: As the nonvoting delegate, you've pledged to work on achieving statehood for the District of Columbia. Has the receptivity on the Hill to statehood changed since the Gulf war vote, where the inability of D.C. residents to affect their lives was so graphically demonstrated?

EHN: To some extent, the Gulf War with the large per capita participation of District residents -- the fourth largest per capita of any state -- has been a wakeup call on statehood. Now we have to convert that to votes. There were people who didn't respond to taxation without representation -- but the same people have responded more favorably to the injustice of sending people to war without any say in the matter. So there's some hope. ●

Interviewed by Suzanne Crowell, a member of the DSA National Political Committee and active in the DC/NOVA/MD DSA local.



Columbia University students participate in national campaign, April 1989.

F.M. Kearney/Impact Visuals

Toward a Progressive Theory of Race

by Michael Eric Dyson

Contemporary race relations are mired in the bog of a torturous irony: the liberal passion and vision whose intent it was to vanquish the obvious and vile manifestations of racial animosity are now at the service of those who conceal the abated but transformed expressions of racism. The constellation of metaphors once marshaled to resist racism's polyvalent assault -- from racism as disease, racism as loss of vision, racism as conscience spoiled and turned against its best and highest ends -- now suffer a blasphemous reversal of fortune.

Indeed, these metaphors are part of a larger complex of forsaken ideas whose rejection symbolizes the changed nature of American race relations: the front line of progressive resistance to racism has temporarily lost the battle of language, conceding the prerogative to narrate the most crucial features of American race relations to the right. Also, we have endured the quite unnatural disaster of a continental shift along the fault lines of definition, description, and explanation of the state of race in our culture. And the presumption that a collective American conscience would be the seconding vote to poignant, if sometimes sloppy, justifications of resistive action has now shed its moral innocence. The fate of racial progress is thrust into the lion's den of so called "rational" argument and "logical" persuasion.

More glumly, our dire times are crisscrossed by the varied evidences of race hatred's predictable revival. A decade ago, Eric Foner warned that in our day, as in the nineteenth century, a period of radical change, followed by a desire for stability, would give way to an explicit attack on the very achievements believed to be irreversibly established by Federal law and the Constitution. More subtly, on elite college campuses the implications of differ-

ence, diversity, and pluralism are heatedly debated, but their hard lessons are mostly avoided or dissolved in the discourse of merit, objectivity, neutrality, or standards.

In the face of such attacks, all usual roads of response falter in resolving the conundrum of persistent racism. Liberalism and neoliberalism continue to publish a laundry list of ancient racial indignities made new by today's news, but instantly old again by a burdensome loyalty to a social analysis bereft of appreciation for structural impediments to racial progress. This approach promises certain defeat of its goal of full integration of blacks into American society. Neonationalism continues to spin a

defeat. They infuse this language, but the spirit is all wrong. Hence we have the spectacle of phrases like "racial fairness" and "equal playing ground," lifted straight from the transcript of liberal resistance to racism, newly and perversely employed to buttress the worst possible meanings of ideals like justice and equality.

The lesson that progressives should learn from all this is that racial meanings must be perennially contested, constantly redefined in an interpretive warfare rooted in a liberating vision of society, politics, economics, and culture. Thus an ad hoc, improvisatory, and anti-essentialist conception of racial identity is the best foot forward for a progressive theory of race, which must



Literature from New York City's anti-racism campaign

Andrew Lichtenstein/Impact Visuals

contradictory ideological web whose sometimes abrasive threads of racial pride, economic enhancement, and cultural achievement produce, at best, brilliant but diminished cultural expression, and at worse, self-defeating catharsis and impotent political windbagging.

Contemporary neoconservatism is drawn like a vulture to the linguistic carcasses of the liberal race rhetoric it helped

seek its balance on rocky terrain.

Progressive race theory must historicize the story of American racial history, emphasizing both its achievements and failures. We have witnessed the marginalization of an understanding of racial history that provides a sense of the heights scaled, of obstacles overcome, and of remaining roadblocks to the achievement of real racial liberation. The prevailing myth of racial

history absorbs all racial complexities and contradictions into a narrative of uncomplicated linear progress, smoothing all racial mountains into a vast hinterland of unexplored possibility. This yarn of racial history, most often spun under the auspices of contemporary neoconservatism, deviously obscures its complicity in opposing the racial progress. In such a truncated narrative, racial meanings are often severed from their historical context, alienated from the nexus of social relations and catastrophes.

A progressive race theory must relentlessly historicize the development and genealogy of American race relations, meet-

action was instituted to eradicate actual past harm, and did not begin with LBJ, but with FDR in 1941. It took the construction of Presidential Executive Orders from Roosevelt, Eisenhower, Truman, and Kennedy to pave the way for Johnson's Executive Order No. 11246, and to realize in greater scope the ideals of fairness and equality only dimly and tentatively prefigured in previous executive actions.

Progressive racial theory must also highlight the strengths of liberalism, neoneationalism and conservatism, even as it avoids their weaknesses in reconceiving racial destiny. It must agree with liberals that the goal of full and meaningful participation in

must understand responsibility against the background of social options, cultural resources, and economic conditions that form the immediate environment within which people must live and make choices. In short, a theory of responsible moral agency must account for the conditions of possibility for such agency to be meaningfully exercised. Progressive race theory must also draw attention to the wide prevalence of destructive and narrow messages about black identity, and the social forces which mystify the persistent obstacles to racial mobility even when high degrees of motivation, talent, and skill are in place.

A progressive race theory must understand that neoneationalism's appeal is that it intuitively and exploits the genius of racial particularity, and grounds its vision of the world in a racial *Weltanschauung* that stresses pride in culture. But progressive race theory must point to the ideological insularity that obscures the role of extraracial factors such as gender and class in determining one's life situation. Such an understanding contains the possibility, for example, of splintering the hermetic fideism of black nationalist ideology into shafts of powerful and liberating insights that yield greater understanding about its most desperate constituency, the postindustrial urban black poor.

At its best, progressive race theory understands the specific social, political, economic, ideological, and cultural factors which create and reproduce oppression in



Kirk Condyles/Impact Visuals

ing the prevailing racial ideology blow-for-blow in contesting its whitewashed history of race. For instance, affirmative action, a shibboleth of conservative disdain and a keyword in liberal race theory, is often seen to begin with LBJ, to devolve into inequitable preferential treatment for minorities, and to become ideologically debased as a thin veil for quotas, particularly in education and employment. A progressive race theory must admit that affirmative action has by and large only catalyzed the important but narrow amelioration of middle class, professional, and well-educated blacks and women.

But it must also insist that affirmative

America has been frustrated, but it must move beyond immigrant analogies, cultural pathology, and psychological reductionism in seeking helpful explanations of black failure to integrate. Progressive race theory must highlight the specific conditions under which minorities have been oppressed, and then link an analysis of those conditions to enabling forms of social theory which attend to structural, root causes that reproduce oppression over space and time.

Progressive race theory must agree with neoconservatives who claim that moral responsibility is a crucial ingredient to self-respect, and an indispensable motivation for rising from the pits of poverty. But it

our contemporary historical moment. But it also creates equal space for, and the demand of, transracial coalitions that pay attention to how race, class, gender, age, sex, and geography all play a crucial role in shaping the conditions of existence in our society. Only with such a progressive understanding of race can we hope to advance beyond the seemingly interminable ideological impasse that has been situated and defined as the state of contemporary race relations.

Michael Eric Dyson, a member of DSA, is a cultural critic and writer who teaches ethics and philosophy at Chicago Theological Seminary.

The Economics Beyond Race

by Jim Sleeper

What can democratic socialists do to counter racism and the economic injustices that spawn it? I have argued that economic injustice, not racism, is our foremost enemy and that a politics based on appeals to racial solidarity (such as black nationalism) or on highlighting racial grievances hasn't a chance in America. I believe that frontal assaults on racism -- be they political or legal -- will never dissolve racism.

Anyone who reads the paper knows that so many white working people are in such desperate straits that any "civil rights" agenda that seems to redistribute jobs and income from them to hard-pressed blacks has been politically foreclosed; it can be done only through court-imposed ends runs around electoral democracy, and these will surely backfire in the 1992 presidential race: another Republican president, more conservative judges.

Writing off these aggrieved voters as incorrigibly racist would be easy, offensive, and wrong. Moreover -- and the left has been slow in facing this -- it isn't only whites who resent political appeals to race. Cubans in Miami and Asians in New York City are registering as Republicans because they think Democrats indulge racial preferences for African-Americans.

That's not necessarily retaliatory parochialism; the drift of black middle-class voters to Republican ranks, too, reflects the principled discomfort many Americans feel about our national retreat from the early civil rights movement's promise of a citizenship transcending color.

The power to do anything serious about economic justice can come only from hard-pressed people of all colors working together. Those who think that racial manipulators will forever foreclose that possibility should study the interracial, church-based groups of working-poor people organized by the Industrial Areas Foundation in Baltimore, Brooklyn, the South Bronx, Texas, and California.

Working from core values, they reweave the civic culture in churches and homes and learn to confront established power with disciplined probity, not psychodramas. They

wrest from it, piece by piece, the resources to build better housing and schools. Even when they're predominantly black, they never speak of "black power." They win by roping in latino and white ethnic parishes.

Secular models of interracial organizing that are closer to the left's experience include the work of the Hospital Workers Union, Local 1199, in New York and the "Don't Buy Where You Can't Work" campaign in Harlem during the 1930s.

To be sure, African-Americans have internal communal agendas to pursue. These include redefining their relationship to the larger American experiment, their terms of entry into an overwhelmingly nonblack society that they can never dominate and from which they can never secede.

In the public arena only interracial struggles against economic injustice -- not against an ever more elastically defined racism -- can create a society worth joining on any terms. Anything else -- nationalism, the flakier forms of multiculturalism -- tends inevitably toward the chaos of a Beirut.

Here, then, are a few modest propositions for the left: First, we must insist on candor about how and why black moral influence has waned. No movement for racial justice can trade on lies, vilifying innocent parties, dehumanizing opponents, or intimidating allies with legitimate differences of opinion. Yet that is precisely what now passes for racial politics, from the Tawana Brawley and Central Park Jogger cases through Mayor Marion Barry's trail, from the more acrimonious demands for "Afrocentric" education through the worst rhetoric about the civil rights bill.

It's dangerously wrong for proponents of multiracial politics to gloss these events on the grounds that their excesses don't represent most African-Americans. Of course they don't. Yet any black New Yorker who doubted publicly the wisdom of the Brawley psychodrama was almost universally condemned by the city's black weekly newspapers and talk shows. The politics of paroxysm has foreclosed effective, race-based organizing for the time being.

Second, we must reexamine white racism. In reviewing my book, *The Closest of Strangers*, Salim Muwakkil, a black-activist writer for *In These Times*, described his

torments as a black man whose presence in Chicago's loop after dark prompts sickeningly predictable responses by purse-clutching women and hostile cops. Then he added something black writers seldom do:

But what about the indignities forced on those frightened by my approach? Their fear is a demanding burden. But it's a fear confirmed by crime statistics. If not experience. The police, to whom I fit a "profile," certainly are playing the odds when they stop me The tensions produced by these differing, though equally valid perceptions are unravelling the civic culture.

Muwakkil thus introduced my own claim that much of what looks like racism isn't the ancient poison that lathered into the foundations of the Republic. The civil rights revolution really was revolutionary. It "converted" enough whites to create the swing vote for social justice.

Muwakkil is acknowledging that -- Willie Horton to the contrary notwithstanding -- recent dropouts from this swing group weren't driven by racism but by valid fear. Some on the left find the prospect of retracing these people's steps so threatening that they'd sooner cede angry whites to David Duke than acknowledge their own mistakes in approaching them.

Third, we must reassess positions and policies based in the belief that all angry whites are racists. In the latter's experience of encroaching minority crime and social disintegration, compounded by real estate exploitation and naive government interventions in their neighborhoods constitute extortions of gains they won by following the strict disciplines of an upward mobility to which some of them were ready to help admit blacks until the late 1960s.

That these "extortions" reached their peak just as inflation and new forms of investment undermined whites' upward mobility only compounded their desperation; but it also underscores the truth that something other than eternal racism drove them to vote as they do. They were moved by what the sociologist Jonathan Rieder calls "indignation, and emotion born of the perception of injustice" done them by both

continued on page 19

The Fist Holds a Wild Irish Rose: ANNE FEENEY

by Fred Gustofson

Democratic socialist songstress Anne Feeney dragged deep on one of the cigarettes she avoided in a recent four-month attempt to quit and shook her head. On the table before her were orders for hundreds of copies of her new tape of labor songs, "United We Bargain, Divided We Beg." Her recording career has been a struggle to define a voice.

But it is history which defines us first, and Anne's reaches far back into the Irish Catholic roots of the modern American labor movement in the coal mines of eastern Pennsylvania. It was led by an Irish Catholic nationalist and machinist named Terrence V. Powderly, who lived and organized in the anthracite fields around Scranton, where he held positions in the Irish Land League and the Green Back Labor Party. According to labor historian Eric Foner, the Irish Land League in Eastern Pennsylvania "functioned as a kind of surrogate for the Knights of Labor," a national labor federation which Powderly ultimately served as national leader.

The Irish gradually worked westward over the Allegheny Mountains, where their sheer numbers overwhelmed the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians who had predecessors, who identified with the success of industrial magnate Andrew Carnegie. Carnegie left the threadbare Irishman unimpressed, and they defended their place in the coal-and-steel towns, often in skull-cracking brawls. Their organizers built the basis for

the modern labor movement.

One such organizer was a fiddle-player named William Patrick Feeney. On at least one occasion, company thugs "invited" him to leave the Mon Valley. He stayed, fathering nine children. One of them was Edward Feeney, a chemist who became lace-curtain enough to move to Brookline but stayed shanty enough to spend many an evening regaling his daughter Anne with bedtime stories of the coal-field wars.

"My dad talked about John L. Lewis the way other people talked about the pope," Anne says. But Anne didn't become a rebel immediately. Once dubbed "Finky Feeney" by her classmates at Resurrection School, she describes the time as "cataclysmically lonely." But her fortunes improved as a high school student at the Catholic Fontbonne Academy, an all-female milieu that encouraged habits of independent-thinking her public school contemporaries did not develop.

By 1969 and freshman year at the University of Pittsburgh, Anne was an aspiring folksinger who took the stage at an antiwar teach-in to belt out "Draft-Dodger Rag." Bohemian years in New York led her back to Pittsburgh, a commune, and marriage to leftist lawyer Ron Berlin in 1977.

Feeney ultimately took a law degree herself, representing women in custody and support cases, but her abiding passion was music. From the breakup of her first band, Cucumber Rapids, in 1977, to her private 1986 recording to "The Great Peace March" tape, she divided her time between law, music and the care to two children: Daniel, now eleven, and Amy, now nine.

The "Great Peace March" tape was pivotal. Recorded with and ad hoc chorus dubbed Wild Women for Peace, the work outstripped her expectations by selling a respectable six thousand copies

world-wide. She soon decided to close her law practice and pursue music full-time.

Her father's death in 1987 may have been a catalyst. On uneasy terms since the antiwar years, daughter joined father at bedside in his final days to share the poetry and Irish songs he'd once sang to her as a child. Many of those songs wound up on Feeney's ode to the Ould Sod that year: the "Grafton Street" tape.

From drinking and "roving" songs like "Whiskey in the Jar" and "Wild Colonial Boy" to traditional rebel tunes like "Rising of the Moon" and modern Irish left anthems like "Hey, Ronnie Reagan," "Grafton Street" percolated with a Celtic sensibility which offered an acoustic counterpoint to that of the Pogues' punk. But it's cultural imprisonment in the "lads" framework of traditional Irish music placed it a pole apart from the purist feminism of "The Great Peace March."

"If I Can't Dance It's Not My Revolution" was Feeney's first conscious attempt to link Irish heritage to feminist aspiration. There was a generous sample of traditional folk numbers: Woody Guthrie's "Do-Re-Mi," Peggy Seeger's "I'm Gonna Be an Engineer," and Don Lange's "Here's to You Rounders." But two of the most compelling pieces resulted from collaborations with bandmate D.C. Fitzgerald. Feeney bowed to her Irish roots in a Fitzgerald arrangement of the Dr. Seuss-inspired "Too Many Daves," sung to the tune of "The Limerick Rake." A Fitzgerald-arranged medley of "Sheik of Araby/The Blues My Sweetie Gave Me" was sexy and funny. The tape began with a cover of Chuck Berry's "Monkey Business" and ended with an anti-nuke reggae titled "Take Them Down," which was intriguing but underdeveloped.

Season after season she carried her unique meld of Irish-Appalachian labor music to the bars and union-halls of the Pittsburgh proletariat and beyond. Her career took a quantum jump when in three short weeks she went from a St. Patrick's Day gig at the Poor House in industrial Carnegie to opening for Kristen Lems at the 1989 March for Women's Lives in Washington, D.C. She brought scores of thousands to their feet

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with the final verse of "Ms. Ogyny," a song she'd written about Pittsburgh attorney Barbara Wolvowitz, who'd been denied the right to be called Ms. while litigating a sex-discrimination case before a Pittsburgh judge. Feeney issued a tongue-in-cheek warning that politics doesn't stop when one casts a ballot:

So next time that you to vote there's that pesky fly in the ointment you're not just electing a president but all of his appointments Once they're in, they're only out on high crimes and misdemeanors And with George Bush in the White House we're looking at some real wieners!

"Ms. Ogyny" was a breakthrough. It brought Anne victory at the 1989 Kerrville, Texas, Folk Festival. After innumerable gigs, including seven hundred unpaid appearances at various rallies sponsored by progressives, Anne could finally demand union scale. She also fought for recognition for the local musician's union, sponsoring a seminar for labor songwriters at the Manchester Craftsmen's Guild.

The labor heritage permeates her most recent tape, "United We Bargain, Divided We Beg," released this past summer. Along with blue-and-pink-collar tunes by Charlie King, Bernice Johnson Reagon and Harry Stamper, Feeney includes her own tribute to Pittsburgh's martyred union organizer "Fannie Sellins."

Anne is also pinning high hopes on her concurrently released tape, "There's More of Us than They Think." She predicts: "The labor tape will sell five times as many copies, but this tape could reach a much wider audience." It is obvious that her concern to avoid being typecast as a "labor songwriter" equals her earlier unease over the "Irish Folksinger" tag many applied when she released "Grafton Street."

She discussed the opening cut on "More of Us" with me over coffee in her Wilk-

insburg home, which is also base of operations for Anne Feeney and Friends: "I wrote 'I married a Hero's a reaction against the testosterone-laden Irish music I do in bars." She even predicts a modest sale for "More of Us" in Europe, particularly Ireland, in part due to the subject matter of "Hero," sung from the viewpoint of a resistance-fighter's wife, "Hero" is described by Anne with reference to a cut from "Grafton Street" She says, "This is a song about the women behind 'The Men Behind the Wire.'"

The rest of the tape weaves themes of liberation and peace in cover songs ranging from Peggy Seeger's "B Side" to Erik Idle's whimsical "Galaxy Song." Most important, Side One is all original material. There are two standout cuts by D.C. Fitzgerald, "Oak Tree" and a fine commentary on the upheaval of 1989 titled "All the Way Around." Jan Boyd offers a poignant vision of life as a homeless woman in "Queen Mary." Feeney renders "Ms. Ogyny" and "I Married a Hero" with authority, but the nicest surprise is a remixed version of "Take Them Down." Anne is convincing when she cries over the skank rhythm: "Take them down, we demand it/ In the name of the planet/ Take them down/ In the name of mother earth."

Anne's Irish millworker melange was always suffused with a basic feminist sensibility. But with the synthesis she achieves on "More of Us," her heritage and aspirations fuse with new and breathtaking certainty.

Not for nothing has Anne's singing been compared to Patsy Cline's. One *Pittsburgh Press* writer called hers a "brash whiskey voice." In a technicolor shawl and slinky black dress, Feeney in her best moments does leave you with the same psychic ambiguity Cline could sometimes elicit: You're not sure whether to dab a tear,



cheer, or ask to buy her a drink. But the similarity with Cline stops at the vocal cords. Anne is no victim wailing about "Faded Love."

Before a packed midnight crowd at the Penn Cafe, Feeney launches into "Terra Nova." She sings about the mayor of a small California town who takes his job as judge of a high school beauty pageant seriously enough to bring a tape-measure to the contest. But the tables are turned when Anne's coed protagonist produces her own tape-measure and challenges Hizzoner to "show us the length of your cock"

The crowd, male and female alike, roars in appreciation. Anne's Irish eyes are smiling, but that doesn't stop her from leveling a critical gaze at the world's deficiencies. ●

DSAer Fred Gustafson works, studies, and writes in Pittsburgh. Anne Feeney and Friends inhabit much of 202 Dewey Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15218. Union discounts on tapes available.

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RESOURCES

The latest issue of *Religious Socialism*, published by DSA's Religion and Socialism Commission, features Paul Buhle's "Ecology and Spirituality: An Old Story Made New;" Mev Puelo's "Creation Is To Be Shared;" "Good Listening: Key to Communicating" by Gordon Chapman, a DSAer who served four years in Military Intelligence and fourteen years as a CIA officer; and "God and Man in Pittsburgh" by Fred Gustafson, a review of the life of Catholic Priest Charles Owen Rice. Subs are available: \$7.50/year from *Religious Socialism*, P.O. Box 80, Camp Hill, PA 17001-0080.

Charge it! Contributions to DSA and the Institute for Democratic Socialism can now be made on Mastercard/VISA. You can also purchase books, literature, and merchandise by credit card. Just call DSA at 212-962-0390 and ask for Dominic Chan to phone in your order or contribution. The lines are open 10a.m. - 6p.m. Monday-Friday.

IN MEMORIAM

DSAers are saddened by the death in November of William Kemsley, who died at the age of eighty-two in Burlington, Vermont after a long illness. A long-time DSAer, he organized for the United Auto Workers in Detroit during the Depression. After World War II, he went to Berlin to help rebuild unions there. In 1950, he was education director of the 650,000 member Michigan CIO Council. From 1961 to 1954, he served with the Marshall Plan in Paris as head of the labor training section. He became the United Nations representative of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions and its New York office director. After retiring to Vermont in 1961, he as a member of the Vermont Labor Relations Board for eighteen years, and was an active member of DSA's Labor Commission.

Edith Perlmutter of Santa Monica, a veteran DSA member, died in January after a long illness. Edith was very active on peace and conversion issues, mainly through the Unitarian Church in Santa Monica. She was instrumental in the campaign to con-

vince the Santa Monica City council to establish a Peace and Ecology Commission.

EVENTS

DSA's Commission on Religion and Socialism and its publication, *Religious Socialism*, will sponsor an ecumenical conference "New Visions for the Religious Left" in Washington May 31 -- June 2, at the Hotel Harrington. For information contact Jack Spooner, P.O. Box 80, Camp Hill, PA 17001-0080, or phone (717) 766-2114.

Chicago's annual Debs-Thomas-Harrington dinner will be held on Saturday, May 11 at the Congress hotel. It will honor labor stalwarts Steve Culen, Executive Director of Council 31, AFSCME, and Kathy Devine, Labor editor and Co-Coordinator of the Illinois Labor Network Against Apartheid. Demma Strainville, Chair of the Ontario NDP Parliament Caucus will speak at the dinner.

DSA Commission Fights Racism

Having sponsored a successful conference in November, "Racial Politics in the 1990's: Developing New Strategies," the DSA Anti-Racism Commission is poised for another year of activity. The Commission will continue to publish *Our Struggle/Nuestra Lucha*, the newsletter of the Anti-Racism, Latino and Afro-American Commissions, while also serving the Native American and Asian Pacific constituencies in DSA until they organize separate commissions. Commission activists are working on the Socialists of Color conference scheduled for the Bay Area in April, 1991 and are developing a tour to Puerto Rico and Cuba. For more information, to subscribe to *Our Struggle*, and to join the Anti-Racism Commission contact Duane Campbell at P.O. Box 162394, Sacramento, CA 95816, (916) 361-9072.

Resolution on the Gulf

Democratic Socialists of America re-affirms its resolution on the Gulf adopted on September 16. It calls for:

- An immediate cease fire and a declaration that the United States seeks no permanent bases in the Middle East and that U.S. troops will not remain in the region. Whatever U.S. naval and air forces remain to enforce sanctions must be under direct UN control. U.S. ground troops must be withdrawn.
- DSA condemns the Iraqi attacks on Israel and Saudi Arabia. We condemn all bombings of civilians in this conflict by Iraq and we condemn the bombing of Iraqi civilians by the U.S. led alliance.
- DSA calls for the immediate withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait to be followed by UN supervised elections. The Iraqi-Kuwaiti territorial dispute including the claims against Kuwait for misappropriation of oil should be settled by the World Court.

This resolution was considered at the DSA National Political Committee meeting on February 3 and forwarded to the National Interim Committee for editorial changes.

On the Anti-War Front . . .

by Alec Harrington

A hundred and fifty members of DSA and over two hundred DSA Youth Section members attended the January 26th anti-war march on Washington, while one hundred DSAers marched that day in San Francisco. Many DSAers carried placards demanding "U.S. out of the Gulf, Iraq out of Kuwait." DSA distributed over eight thousand leaflets headlined "End the War, Let Sanctions Work!" describing the organization's anti-war position. After the march, activists interested in DSA swarmed the literature table, while DSA members and friends attended a reception hosted by D.C. Council member Hilda Mason, a DSA Vice-Chair.

During the rally, many speakers articulated opposition, not only to the war, but to Saddam Hussein and his brutal attacks on Kuwait and Israel. DSA honorary chair, Barbara Ehrenreich, emphasized that supporters of Israel should oppose this war which has put Israel in such grave danger. Rev. Jesse Jackson made the point that the principles of human rights and self-determination should be applied to all peoples, including the Kuwaiti, Israeli, and Palestinian people.

Locals that sent contingents to the marches included Nassau, Rochester, Tallahassee, Baltimore, Central Jersey, D.C./Maryland/Nova, New York, Ithaca, Central Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Santa Cruz, East Bay, and San Francisco. The Los Angeles local sent a large contingent to that city's anti-war rally. Among the Youth Section Chap-

ters represented in Washington were Vassar, Old Dominion, Columbus, Ohio University, SUNY Geneseo, Virginia Commonwealth, SUNY Binghamton, Bates, University Of Chicago, Columbia, Oberlin, Dayton, Temple, Cleveland State, Merimack, Villa Nova, University Of Missouri, Princeton, Swarthmore, Harvard, and Yale.

DSA Youth Section chapters have also been organizing campus events. A representative sample includes: the University of

DSA chapter at Old Dominion University has been organizing a regional coalition, they sponsored a peace vigil on January 15th, and attracted local press to a speak-out against the war. A forum on the peace movement was organized by the Philadelphia local and the Temple University chapter, attracting two hundred and fifty people. One of the leading forces in the Athens Ohio Peace Coalition is Ohio University DSA, which has been organizing bi-weekly marches, civil disobedience and political theatre.

The DSA-YS co-sponsored the February 21 Student and Youth Day of action against the war called by the Student and Youth Campaign. In order to help activists out with their local efforts we have set up a Speakers Bureau including Barbara Ehrenreich, Bogdan Denitch, Frances Fox Piven, Cornel West, Todd Gitlin, Joanne Barkan, Shakoor Aljuwani, Steve Max, Harold Meyerson, and Israeli novelist and



Teenage women prepare for serving in the Gulf, Fort Dix.

Chicago chapter organized a teach-in featuring David Moberg of *In These Times* as well as organizing a debate, in which DSA activist J. Hughes trounced a representative from the College Republicans. The chapter at SUNY Geneseo has been regularly organizing demonstrations and attracting media attention. On February 7th they held a "Love the Troops! Stop The War!" demonstration, marching under the American flag and uttering confusing pro-war counter-demonstrators. The Columbia University chapter is participating in a campus coalition and has had DSAers Barbara Ehrenreich, Alec Harrington, and Shakoor Aljuwani speak at rallies. The

peace activist Matti Meged.

The DSA-YS is an endorsing organization of the National Student and Youth Campaign and sits on the steering committee. National DSA sits on the steering committee of the National Campaign for Peace in the Middle East.

DSA is now one of the most prominent groups in the anti-war movement voicing a reasoned opposition to the war. As a result, many new members have joined DSA. ●

Alec Harrington is on the Youth Section Executive Committee and is on staff as DSA Anti-War Coordinator.

ON THE LEFT



by Harry Fleischman

Alaska

Father Steve Charleston, priest at the Episcopal Church of Holy Trinity/St. Anskar and professor at Luther-Northwestern seminary in Minnesota's Twin Cities has accepted an appointment as Episcopal Church Bishop in Alaska. Charleston, a Native American of the Choctaw people and a self-avowed revolutionary Christian, was instrumental in reviving the DSA local in the Twin Cities.

California

DSAers Jay Johnson and Bob Niemann were elected to the Santa Monica Rent Control Board, which now has all the seats, five, belonging to Santa Monicans for Renters' Rights... DSA gained over 150 new members in the last six months in the Los Angeles metropolitan area, bringing the LA membership to over 500... DSA joined the January 26 rally in LA against the war in the Persian Gulf and also participated in the February 2 conference on "Winds of Change" to unite the left/progressive community in the area... The Labor/Community Strategy Center held a forum January 4 to consider how to deal with the issue of racism which has divided the progressive movement... Professor Will Forthman spoke to the Valley DSA January 28 on the War in the Middle East. His talk was followed by a film on CIA activity in the early fifties when the CIA helped overthrow the Iranian government of Mohammed Mossadegh... Valley DSA joined in the King Day Coalition Against Hate Crimes in a candlelight march and rally January 21... Valley DSA showed the film, "Roger and Me" February 8... San Diego DSA joined the Candlelight Demonstration and March for Peace in the Middle East January 14... Barbara Ehrenreich's talk on December 12 was one of the most successful San Diego DSA events ever... Dolores Huerta, DSA honorary chair and vice-president of the United Farm Workers, will receive \$825,000 in a settlement

approved by the San Francisco police commission, for injuries inflicted on her by police during a rally September 14, 1988. Huerta, sixty-seven, and other UFW members picketed Westin's St. Frances Hotel to protest then Vice-President George Bush's stand on the unions nationwide grape boycott. Huerta, who suffered six broken ribs and a ruptured spleen, underwent numerous blood transfusions.

Washington, DC

DSAer John Herling has formally ceased publication of the *John Herling Labor Letter*, which started February 18, 1950. Herling, dean of the labor press, has been an active socialist for more than sixty years, and his final footnote said that "Through all the years, we have remained confident that a free, democratic labor movement is the single most effective force in the fight to bring to birth a better world for all."

Illinois

Chicago DSA/PAC voted to endorse Danny Davis for Mayor in the February 26 Democratic Primary. It also endorsed DSAer Ron Sable for reelection to the City Council... Northern Illinois University DSA in Dekalb, joined an anti-war rally January 17. Some 200 students gathered in the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Commons to express their outrage, with signs such as "Support Our Troops -- Stop the War!" and "If Only Kuwait Exported Broccoli." NIU DSA publishes *Our Times* weekly.

Winter Youth Conference

The DSA Youth Section held its annual winter conference February 15-17, 1991, at Columbia University in New York City. A diversity of speakers including DSA Honorary Chairs Cornel West and Barbara Ehrenreich, as well as other prominent DSAers like Steve Max, Francis Fox Piven, Jo-Ann Mort, Joanne Barkan, Jose Laluz, and Jerry Watts gave presentations which were well-received by the 150 student activists who came to discuss the theme "Beyond the War: Forging a Just World Order."

The Persian Gulf War was a major topic of discussion for the activists, many of whom have been involved in local anti-war activities. A panel discussion which was followed by small group meetings looked at the fight against racism and strategies for building multicultural coalitions. Other panels addressed environmental politics, national health care, and the future of the socialist idea.

Iowa

The December, 1990 issue of *The Prairie Progressive*, journal of Iowa City DSA, listed its honor roll for 1990, including Paul Zimmer, director of the University of Iowa Press, who turned down a \$12,000 grant from the National Endowment of the Arts because its grant restrictions violated the First Amendment; Father Norm White, who resigned from the Private Industry Council to protest its awarding federal job training funds to Iowa Beef Processors, which paid workers only five dollars an hour, "not a living wage"; and Jean Jew as the "classiest winner of the year," who won her sexual harassment case against the University of Iowa, but then voiced concern for the victims of harassment who have neither the money nor the tenure to risk lengthy court battles... *The Daily Iowan* carried a long story on the election of socialist Bernie Sanders to the House of Representatives from Vermont, citing the views of DSAer Jeffrey Cox, UI History professor, who said that support for socialized medicine and employee rights has never been higher.

Kentucky

Liz Natter of the Kentucky Resource Council spoke at Central KY DSA's January meeting on environmental issues... The local's potluck and video night in January featured "The Handmaid's Tale." CKDSA applied to the Lexington city-county government to "adopt a spot," picking up trash along several city streets to clean up the neighborhood and fund-raising at the same time. The city pays a nominal amount for the service but rejected DSA's application because of the word "socialism" in DSA's name.

Maryland

DSAers Ruth Wiencek and Harry Fleischman spoke at a February seminar on democratic socialism at St. Mary's College.

Michigan

Detroit DSA held a well-attended public forum in December on the "New Democratic Party Victory in Ontario, Canada," with NDP member of Parliament, Steven Langdon, and Mickey Warner of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 82 as speakers.

Minnesota

The Twin Cities DSA local put most of its time and energy last fall into Paul Wellstone's successful campaign for the U.S. Senate and called him "explicitly democratic

-- socialist in orientation." The Twin Cities local is having a series of discussion groups at the Meridel LeSueur Center for Peace and Justice on the history and policies of democratic socialism.

Montana

More than 2,000 people crowded the University of Montana campus for an anti-war rally on Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday, January 15, and 500 more crammed into the state capitol in Helena. DSAer Marshall Mayer, Catholic priest Jerry Lowney, Rep. Mark O'Keefe and others spoke vigorously for peace. Among the speakers were combat veterans, Native American tribal leaders, ministers, and peace activists.

New York

Ithaca DSA held its annual retreat January 19 to plan priorities for the coming year. Following extensive research on local and national taxes, DSA called for abolition of the payroll tax, making the income tax more progressive in the higher brackets and substituting a more progressive form of taxation for the local property tax, which is a harsh burden on lower income people. The Tompkins/Cortland Labor Coalition and the Building Trades Council urged the Tompkins County Board of Representatives to adopt a new jobs policy which would require contractors bidding on county projects to hire fifty percent of its workers from Tompkins County, have a certified New York State apprenticeship training program, pay prevailing wage rates, and document approved past work and health and safety records. Karen Scharff, co-director, Citizen Action of New York, spoke on "Health Care and Taxes: A Progressive Coalition." DSA vice-chair, Frances Fox Piven, spoke on "The Impoverishment of U.S. Society" at the Five Towns Forum in Hewlett February 8. . . . The New York Labor Committee in Support of Democracy and Human Rights in El Salvador

held its International Labor Rights Award Dinner February 27, honoring Stanley Hill, Dan Kane, Ida Torres and Dave Dyson. . . The Workers Defense League will present its David Clendenin Award at its annual dinner May 13 to Richard Trumka, President of the United Mine Workers of America.

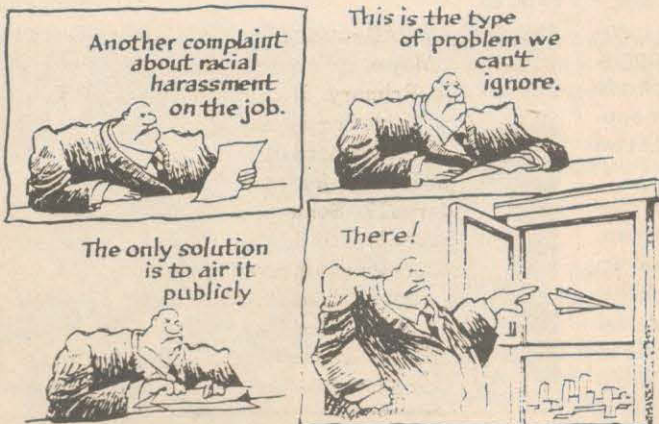
Pennsylvania

Philadelphia DSA held a potluck dinner and meeting February 3 to discuss "What's Ahead for the Peace Movement?" Speakers included Barbara Smith, Jobs With Peace; Beverly Kacher, WILPF; Joe Miller, Sane/Freeze; Marwan Kreidie; Arab-American Democratic Club; Lori Salem, Act for Peace in the Middle East; Carlis Numi, AFSC Peace Committee; and Bruce Haskin, DSA and Act for Peace. . . . *The Philadelphia Socialist* analysis of "Pro-Choice and the 1990 Pennsylvania Elections" reported that pro-choice membership in the Pennsylva-

board backed the idea and supported a campaign in behalf of a health care system in the United States similar to that in Canada. It was submitted by Rep. Marty Russo (D. IL). . . A phonathan for the *Allegheny Socialist* netted \$500, which was supplemented by an International Dinner which brought in \$200 more. DSAers are active in the drive of the United Faculty to organize teachers at the University of Pittsburgh, following a ruling by the Pennsylvania Labor Relations board that the faculty are professional employees rather than managers. A group of anti-hunger activists, led by Just Harvest, has won creation of a new Food Policy Commission by the city of Pittsburgh. In the last few years, nearly twenty supermarkets in low-income areas closed, resulting in increased hardships on people without cars. DSAers have been active in anti-war rallies in Pittsburgh. There have been large student

rallies at Indiana University, Johnstown and Morgantown, plus active participation from the families of servicemen and women stationed in the Gulf. .

The Reading Socialist reports that its chair, Bob Millar, has been appointed to a four year term on the Berks County Planning Commission. The Sixth Annual Maurer-Stump Award Dinner will be held in the Spring. . . An article on "The Opportunities for Social Democracy" by Ingvar Carlsson, Prime Minister of Sweden, appears in the local's bulletin. The bulletin



Carol Simpson/Impact Visuals

nia House increased by three, and that the Democratic Party chose pro-choice candidates for every open seat. It also carries articles on the Philadelphia municipal elections, organizing grassroots response to the city's financial crisis and the Metzenbaum-Gray bill in Congress to prohibit employers from "permanently replacing" strikers. . . Philadelphia DSA celebrates International Women's Day March 10 with a potluck dinner at the Summit Presbyterian Church. The program topic is "We Speak with Many Voices: Feminists as Socialists -- Socialists as Feminists." At the DSA national board meeting in San Francisco, Pittsburgh DSA called for the creation of a "Sister City Relationship" between DSA and the New Democratic Party of Canada. DSA locals would be paired with NDP locals in Canadian cities with similar social makeup. The

tin also features articles on Mideast peace and a Socialist vision of Reproductive Rights. A letter in Harrisburg's *Patriot News* by Curt Sanders, chair of Central Pennsylvania DSA, effectively challenges assumptions about socialism. . . The Indiana Univ. of Pennsylvania Center for the Study of Labor Relations and the Workers Defense League will co-sponsor a conference on shared work in Harrisburg March 7th.

Washington

Seattle DSA held a forum February 10 on "The Impact of the Middle East War in the United States: The Economy, Communities of Color, Health Care." Speakers included DSAer Steve Rose, economist and Juan Bocanegra, director, Downtown Human Services Council.

Correction: We regret that Dr. Sidel was not given an opportunity to review the edited version of his article which appeared in the January/February 1991 issue before printing.

Stein *continued from page 4*

black youths is to deny the very notion of class. Working-class people often have low expectations -- which are, in fact, realistic. Most perform the daily routines of their assigned lot, raise families, and remain invisible. Some, particularly young people, rebel and act in anti-social ways. Although conservatives, liberals, and radicals, like the southern planters, call them racial problems, they are class problems. That's class, not *underclass*.

This is why the model of the civil rights movement is inappropriate to confront today's problems. Like generals who fought the last war, many progressives attack contemporary problems with the ideology and tactics of the civil rights movement. Important legislation enacted during the 1960s removed racial barriers to citizenship and jobs. In economic terms the legislation increased the labor supply by including blacks in the labor pool and to some extent training many of them for jobs. But it did not -- and this was the failure of liberalism -- ensure a demand for labor, as well as a supply. And without a national policy to provide work, gains from increasing the labor supply were easily scuttled during the past two decades.

To believe that civil rights legislation can address these problems is utopian. Courts, government, unions, and racial organizations during the 1960s and 1970s successfully assaulted racial barriers and practices in the workplace on the basis of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. But the problem today with court-imposed solutions is that remedies are fashioned only on the basis of what courts can do, not what is genuinely needed. A judge may say that a certain number of craftsmen in a plant must be black. But courts cannot require companies to actually employ craftsmen -- as opposed to contracting work out, relocating, or even going out of business. And it is corporate prerogatives in these areas that are causing problems in black communities around the country. Today, even if the courts were more liberal they could not provide work any more than affirmative action can produce higher education. The criticism of the Bush administration's denial of college scholarships based upon race was swift, sure, and effective. But the deterioration of the urban, public universities which educate the vast majority of black students remained unaddressed.

Some fear that a class approach to black problems will only ignore blacks. But the record of the War on Poverty -- a color-

blind initiative -- proves that it will not. Today, there are astute politicians who work to protect black interests. But this approach alone is simply not a politically workable way to benefit blacks. Blacks are not the only groups suffering in this society and progressive politics must acknowledge this.

Today we address "racial problems" with symbolic politics, such as wars on crime and special schools for black males. As in earlier periods of popular retreat, numerous kinds of self-help proposals flourish. Such schemes advocate shuffling of resources within the black community (neo-Garveyism) or promote individualistic bromides of hard work (Shelby Steele). None of these are any better than a thousand points of light.

But what about "racist whites?" Because in some cities with high levels of black unemployment, like New York, the "crime" problem is a black problem, some whites will adopt racist explanations. But that will not stop whites from uniting with blacks on certain issues if it is in the *interests* of both to do so.



Linda Eber/Impact Visuals

What is the basis for such unity? Comparisons between blacks and whites are generally misleading. Statistical comparisons between whites and blacks falsely assume that the experiences of a Polish worker in Chicago are part of the same historical process as those of the descendants of the slaveholders of Virginia or the landed gentry of colonial New York. Today, unlike the past, millions of blacks and whites share workplaces and classrooms, confront similar problems, and possess common aspirations. Progressive politics will begin with them, not blacks and whites who share little.

City and state politics do not appear promising arenas in the short run. In periods of austerity, neighborhoods compete with each other for scarce resources. If

neighborhoods are ethnically homogeneous, the competition tends to exacerbate racial and ethnic conflict. The assaults against New Jersey Governor Jim Florio's attempt to direct funds to poor school districts point to the current limits of state politics. Because of the radical decline of federal aid, Florio has been forced to equalize school funding by shifting from the property tax to a small progressive income tax. Overall, the financing and goal are excellent although the initial political backlash was unpromising. It remains to be seen how much of the program will survive. Equalization of school funding should be a *national* responsibility.

Unions are better arenas for progressive politics than communities; they unite people who have common situations across racial and ethnic lines. Unions have been the historic instruments addressing issues of work -- our main problem now -- and the related needs of workers. Although not always successful with members, they also provide an educational and political forum for class politics. The decline of unions is

the most important source of the weakness of progressive politics.

Charting political alternatives when the population is suspicious of government, scornful of politicians, and unconvinced of the efficacy of politics is difficult. In the short run, the

situation is not promising. Radicals of any sort have flourished in the United States only when people have been mobilized. Today they are not. The function of radicals is to politicize and shape popular struggles. But radicals alone cannot create them. Activists will be most effective when the political arena is more promising. And they can help ensure this by working now in politics and institutions which have the potential of eventually producing majority coalitions which address the real causes of contemporary problems, not contemporary symbols.

Judith Stein is a professor of History at the City College of New York and the Graduate School of the City University of New York.

AGITPROP

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Socialism: Past and Future, by Michael Harrington.
In his last book, DSA founder and longtime co-chair the late Michael Harrington traces two centuries of socialist history and explores the possibility that socialist economic reform is necessary for political democracy to survive into the next century.
Arcade Publishing, 1989. Hardcover. 320 pp. Special discount \$15.00.

Socialism and America, by Irving Howe.
This book, by DSA Honorary Chair and noted literary critic Irving Howe explores the history of Socialism in America from the time of Eugene Debs to the present, and the uniquely American failure to build a large and enduring socialist movement.
Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977. Softcover. 218 pp. \$5.00.

Fear of Falling: The Inner Life of the Middle Class, by Barbara Ehrenreich.
DSA Honorary Chair Barbara Ehrenreich dissects the inner life of the middle class -- from the liberal elite of the sixties to the yuppies of the eighties -- and reveals the enormous power it wields over our culture and our self-image as a people.
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The Next Left: The History of a Future, by Michael Harrington.
Harrington addresses here some of the most hotly debated issues of our time, including the deficit, tax reform, monetarist and supply-side economics, full employment, and the welfare state. He argues that a renewed possibility of political power for the left will arise not in decades, but in a matter of years.
Henry Holt and Company, 1986. Softcover. 194 pp. \$8.00.

The Socialist Debate, by Bogdan Denitch.
DSA Vice-Chair Bogdan Denitch examines the current crisis of socialism in the world and the possibility of a socialist renewal. Topics treated include Bloc socialism, Yugoslavian Socialism, third world socialism, socialism and the cold war in Western Europe, and present socialist strategy.
Pluto Press, 1990. Hardcover. 233 pp. \$20.00.

"The Question of Socialism," by Michael Harrington and Alec Nove.
This pamphlet contains two essays. Harrington's is entitled "Toward a New Socialism: Beyond the Limits of the Present." Nove's is entitled "Feasible Socialism: Some Social-Political assumptions."
Published by the Foundation for the Study of Independent Social Ideas, Inc. 1989. Pamphlet. 37 pp. \$2.00.

"Toward a Democratic Socialism: Theory, Strategy, and Vision," by Joseph Schwartz
DSA's theories and practices in a historical context.
Published by DSA. Pamphlet, 8 pp. \$1.00.

"Towards a New Socialism," by Michael Harrington.
Video. 60 minutes. \$25.00.

ECONOMICS

The Other America: Poverty in the United States, by Michael Harrington.
Harrington's classic portrait of America's poor caused a sensation in 1962, and is credited with providing much of the impetus for Lyndon Johnson's War On Poverty. It is now augmented by a new afterword, which examines the plight of the poor since the book's first edition.
Penguin, 1981. Softcover, 221 pp. \$7.95.

The New American Poverty, by Michael Harrington.
A study of the changes in American poverty since the nineteen-sixties, focusing on new problems such as the failure of the welfare state, homelessness, ethnic and immigrant poverty, single-parent families, and changes in government policy toward the poor.
Penguin, 1984. Softcover, 271 pp. \$7.00

The New American Poverty, by Michael Harrington.
Video, 60 minutes, \$25.00

The Mean Season: The Attack on the Welfare State, by Fred Block, Richard A. Cloward, Barbara Ehrenreich, and Frances Fox Piven.
The authors analyze Reagan's war on the poor and the welfare state to reveal its true beneficiaries, and its true targets. A healthy antidote to the neo-conservative, "blame the victim" rationale for cutting social programs.
Pantheon Books, 1987. Softcover, 205 pp. \$7.00

"The DSA Labor-Support Manual"
Published by DSA. Softcover. \$3.00.

"A Socialist Perspective on the Politics of Poverty," by Michael Harrington, Barbara Ehrenreich, William Julius Wilson, and Mark Levinson.
Published by DSA. Pamphlet. 6 pp. \$1.00

"The Politics of the Housing Crisis," by Peter Dreier.
Published by DSA. Pamphlet, 4 pp. \$5.00.

POLITICS

Why Americans Don't Vote, by Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward.
Shrewd and statistical analysis of who votes and who doesn't vote in America, drawing upon the history of voter registration and voting in the nineteenth century, the New-Deal era, and today. Demonstrates how our voting system is weighted in favor of more privileged voters.
Pantheon Books, 1988. Softcover, 325 pp. \$9.00.

The End of the Cold War, by Bogdan Denitch.
Denitch charts the unique opportunities and potential pitfalls that accompany the increased economic and political integration of the European Community, and the collapse of authoritarian regimes in Eastern Europe.
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The Worst Years of Our Lives: Irreverent Notes From a Decade of Greed, by Barbara Ehrenreich.
A collection of shorter pieces by DSA Honorary Chair Ehrenreich, on topics ranging from Oliver North to Wall Street to Yuppie Food Cultists. Serious but fun.
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RACE AND RACISM

"Socialist Perspectives on Race," by Jerry Watts and Cornel West.
An inquiry into the connections between Socialism and Antiracism by DSA Honorary Chair and Princeton Afro-American Studies program chair Cornel West with a companion article by Trinity College professor Jerry Watts on contemporary racial politics.
Published by Democratic Socialists of America. Pamphlet, 12 pp. \$1.00.

"The Black Church and Marxism: What Do They Have to Say to Each Other?" by James Cone
Published by the Institute for Democratic Socialism, 1980. Pamphlet, 13 pp. \$.50.

SEXUAL LIBERATION

Remaking Love: The Feminization of Sex, by Barabara Ehrenreich, Elizabeth Hess, and Gloria Jacobs

A study of the sexual revolution of the sixties and its later development, focusing on the role played in it by women, and its impact, both immediate and long-term, on women in particular and society in general.

Anchor Books, 1986. Softcover, 228 pp. \$12.00.

The Socialist Feminist Reader

A compilation of articles on Socialist feminist topics, including reproductive rights, feminist theory, women in the welfare state, violence against women, and union organizing in predominantly female trades.

Compiled and published by DSA, 1988. Softcover, 232 pp. 12.00.

Perspectives on Lesbian and Gay Liberation and Socialism, edited by Itala Rutter

A collection of essays on the connections between political and sexual liberation, and on connections between socialism and gay and lesbian liberation. Includes articles by Leo Casey, Martha Fourt, Hannah Frisch, Barry Freidman and Tom Stabnicki, Christine Riddiough, and Judy MacLean.

Published by the Gay and Lesbian Task Force of DSA's Feminist Commission. Softcover, 71 pp. \$2.00

"The DSA Reproductive Freedom Organizing Manual"

Published by DSA. Softcover. \$3.00

PHILOSOPHY

The American Evasion of Philosophy, by Cornel West.

Cornel West charts the development of American pragmatism in hopes that a reexamination of pragmatism may help inspire and instruct contemporary efforts to remake and reform American society and culture.

University of Wisconsin Press, 1989. Softcover, 279 pp. \$18.00

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

The Long-Distance Runner, by Michael Harrington.

Henry Holt, 1988. Hardcover, 260 pp. \$17.00

A Margin of Hope, by Irving Howe.

Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982. Softcover, 252 pp. \$7.95.

PERIODICALS

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Sleeper *continued from page 9*

minorities and governing elites.

That leads to a final proposition: The perceptions of injustice fueling these people's indignation may not always be accurate, but neither are the values they believe to be under assault always invalid. The left will never convince such whites to alter their perceptions if we don't share their core values. These center on the work ethic -- holding a steady job, however poorly it pays; on apportioning reward by initiative and merit; and on building families -- not having children one can't or won't support.

Yes, economic undertows and Republican go-go policies undermine these values as much as liberalism ever has. But too many liberals and leftists don't even pretend to have them, which is mildly ironic when one considers that only those who do defend them have ever mustered the discipline and faith necessary to advance eco-

nomie and social justice.

For twenty-five years, many on the left have cast these values as racist and sexist. Yet to affirm them is not necessarily to enthrone racism, sexism, and ethnocentricity. Liberals must learn to make the case that only our common legacy from the "patriarchal" European Enlightenment -- redeemed and expanded by brave women and people of color -- makes diversity possible. Minorities and feminists may have it tough here, but they can scarcely breathe anywhere else, whether it be Japan, China, Iran, Central Africa, or India. And with the collapse of communism, and America inundated by immigrants and refugees is the only truly international social experiment. It's time we figured this out. ●

Jim Sleeper, an editorial writer at New York Newsday, is the author of 'The Closest of Strangers: Liberalism and the Politics of Race in New York' (W.W. Norton & Co.)

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Jimmy Higgins Reports



IT TAKES ONE TO KNOW ONE. It seems Dan Quayle has found a new mentor: Spiro Agnew. Sixties vets will remember Agnew's vicious locutions against anti-war protesters, and the media. Not to be outdone, Danny boy put together this complete sentence: "Unfortunately, the media seem compelled to devote much more attention to those [anti-war] protests than they deserve." In a surprising response, *New York Post* Editor Jerry Nachman, who is used to testing the bounds of good taste, if not press freedom, said "One of the forgotten lessons of Vietnam is why the media grew so fractious. For months and years, U.S. government leaders -- military and civilian -- downright lied to the American people about the war." After the bunker bombing and continuing press censorship, it seems disinformation is also being re-run.

SURPRISE, SURPRISE. Employers have discovered what the AFL-CIO said all along about the sub-minimum wage -- it's not fair. In a survey of 167 fast-food restaurants, only three were using this wage, which ranges between \$3.35 and \$3.80 per hour. The managers expressed concern that paying some young employees less than others would be demoralizing and disruptive. Tell that to President Bush, who threatened to veto minimum wage legislation unless it contained this sub-minimum.

CAN SOCIALISTS KEEP A SECRET? No, says the *Washington Times* and Republican Whip Newt Gingrich. They're fuming because congressman Ron Dellums, a DSA vice-chair, has been appointed to the House Intelligence Committee, a move we feel strengthens the committee's IQ considerably. *Times* columnist Cal Thomas cites Dellums membership in DSA and then asks, will America's most important secrets be safe with Mr. Dellums? According to Gingrich, who himself barely won re-election, unless you agree with him politically, you cannot serve on the armed services, foreign affairs or intelligence committees, an interesting perspective for the *minority* whip. The White House has implied that they might not cooperate with this "too-liberal" committee. But as Speaker Foley said, "The ship of state leaks from the top."

THAT'S KOSHER WITH A "K." The State Department's Middle East experts really know their stuff, except when it comes to difficult things like cultural practices. At the start of a trip to urge Israeli restraint in the Gulf War, Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger ordered bacon and eggs at his hotel, the Jerusalem Hilton. Although officials told Eagleburger the hotel was kosher, he kept insisting on bacon. Boy those state department types sure are persistent.

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