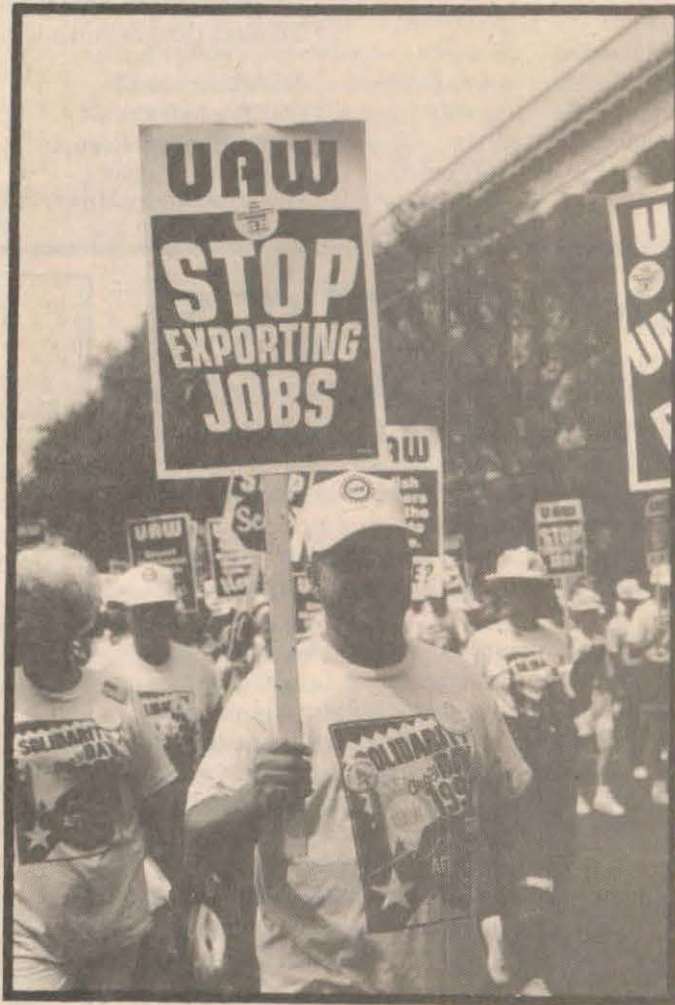


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DEMOCRATIC Left

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Solidarity Day '91

"...an upsurge of social commitment."

INSIDE DEMOCRATIC LEFT

A Call For Social Idealism

by Irving Howe . . . 3

Opportunity Knocking: Will the Democrats and Labor Rise to the Challenge of National Health Care?

by Susan Cowell . . . 5

Universal Health Care In One State? A Report On Health Care Organizing In Maine

by Mike Cavanaugh and Kit St. John . . . 6

Labor Fights Back: Unions Struggle Against Tremendous Obstacles

by Laura McClure . . . 9

Protecting the Right to Strike

by John G. Kinloch . . . 13

The Fiscal Crisis of the States

An Interview With Mark Levinson . . . 14

Bucking the Trend: COSATU Prepares for a Democratic Socialist Economy

by Dorothee Benz . . . 18

Organizing the Lesbian and Gay Labor Network

An Interview With Desma Holcomb . . . 29

Defeating Scab Culture

Remarks by Richard L. Trumka, President of the United Mine Workers of America . . . 32

Film Review: Jo-Ann Mort reviews Barbara Kopple's "American Dream" . . . 45

Book Review: Rafael PiRomán reviews

Thomas Goeghegan's *Which Side Are You On?* . . . 46

DSAction . . . 23

On The Left . . . 24

Janie Higgins Reports . . . 48

Cover photo by Hilary Marcus/Impact Visuals

Solidarity Day Greetings

Remarks by George J. Kourpias at Solidarity Day '91

Our message today, to both the powerful few and to their victims, the countless millions, is simple. It is the same message once delivered by Franklin Roosevelt. Roosevelt said in 1936, "We have always known that heedless self-interest was bad morals; we know now that it is also bad economics." That thought was translated into action. The self interest of the Twenties was finally strangled. Now we are here to bid farewell to the greed of the Eighties.

We are here to remember that it was in this reckless political climate of greed and self interest that the money changer Frank Lorenzo was able to literally, but legally, steal one of the nation's largest and most respected airlines -- Eastern -- and in four short years send it crashing to earth with no survivors. In so doing, he left tens of thousands of Machinists, pilots, and other loyal employees and their families without jobs. We are here to tell the money changers and the politicians they control that never--not ever--again will we allow another Frank Lorenzo.

We will win adoption of the anti-scab bill. So that never again will we as American workers have to hang our heads when the world points its finger at us and tells us "shame." "Shame that you, the world's biggest democracy, is the world's only democracy that allows workers forced to strike to lose their jobs."

We respond today by crying: Shame on a government that cynically tells us that you can't be fired, but you can be replaced permanently. And to those elected officials who aided and abetted Lorenzo we say "shame." Your days at the buffet of greed are numbered. We will have a November surprise for you next year on Election Day 1992.

George J. Kourpias is International President of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers.

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A Call For Social Idealism

By Irving Howe

On May 22, 1991, the Sidney Hillman Foundation of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU) presented DSA Honorary Chair Irving Howe with the Special Award for Lifetime Public Service in recognition of Howe's work for a more just society. It seems most fitting in this Labor Day issue of DEMOCRATIC LEFT to present the brief remarks Irving Howe made upon accepting the award. Yes, they reiterate the multiple adversities faced by the U.S. labor movement today, but they also eloquently sum up both labor's inspirational role in the struggle for a better world and the need to pursue that struggle.

I grew up in an atmosphere where labor unions were accepted as a necessary part of life, no more to be questioned than the virtues of lettuce-and-tomato salad or the need for a card at the public library. In this atmosphere, out of which ACTWU President Jack Sheinkman also, I think, emerged, unions were seen as a good in themselves, easing the lot of our mothers and fathers in the shops, but also as one agency, not always the most crucial agency, in the struggle for a better world. Well, those days are gone, seemingly forever, and nostalgia, alluring though it may be, is no substitute for thought.

Today -- this will hardly come as news to you -- American unionism is in great trouble, largely because of assault from without, in one of the most reactionary periods of twentieth century history graced by the names of Reagan and Bush, but also because of uncertainty, confusion, and inertia within. I assume you have all read Steven Fraser's remarkable biography of Sidney Hillman, which is not only a study of a major figure in the labor movement but also a social history of the United States before and during the New Deal years. Fraser

shows how shrewd Hillman was in recognizing that the semiwelfare state initiated under Franklin Roosevelt could be an arena for struggle, one in which social conflict became explicitly politicized, so that many trade union objectives, previously seen as achievable only through negotiation or strikes, would now be reached, or frustrated, in the workings of the state bureaucracy. Hillman took on the dual role -- inevitably -- of leader of the CIO in its great upsurge of organizing during the mid-1930s and of labor's representative to various governmental agencies. In doing this, he was, I think, right -- as against old-line "pure and simple" unionists and

*There has to be a
shared desire for
an upsurge of
social commitment.*

the more doctrinaire Socialists who felt, for conflicting reasons, that labor should confine itself to traditional modes of struggle, or at least should not get entangled with bureaucratic governmental agencies. But Fraser also shows how often Hillman was thwarted and frustrated in Washington, how often the power of corporate America asserted itself through a thousand crude and subtle ways in the in-fighting of the government, and how finally Hillman had to retreat from Washington, disappointed and baffled.

Fraser leaves the problem open at the end of his book -- it is our problem, or more precisely, yours. What is the role of the union movement in an increasingly bureaucratized society, one in which government and business (despite the cant of "the free market") become increasingly intertwined? What, especially, can the unions do in an ideo-

logical atmosphere where some of the worst aspects of 1920s "rugged individualism" often a fancy name for union-busting, have returned in full force? And what can be done at a time when significant segments of the labor leadership seem as sunk in conservative inertia as their equivalents were sixty years ago?

I wish I could cheer you with predictions of a second wave of mass organization like that of the CIO in the 1930s; but I doubt it. Things are harder today. What should be disturbing the labor leadership in Washington is something that seems to me indisputable: that very few young people today look to labor as a source of social innovation or inspiration -- certainly not in the way we did during the 1930s, when hordes of young leftists became organizers for the new industrial unions. I know there are still some equivalents today, bravely struggling in small towns and cities throughout the county, trying to organize workers, speaking for labor solidarity. But the truth is that, for the young, the glow of labor -- labor as an idea, as a movement, as a hope -- is largely gone, above all, labor as the agency that can bind together a range of particular interests and constituencies.

Renewal is on the agenda, and if I had a formula for renewal I wouldn't withhold it. But before we can even think of the means, we must first desire the end. There has to be a shared desire for an upsurge of social commitment and idealism. God knows, there's plenty wrong in this country that needs mending and reforming, there are plenty of injustices to right, plenty of humane values to assert. And it should be the objective of unions like ACTWU to try, hard as that may be -- and I know how hard it is -- to raise again the call for social idealism. And I know you've been trying. What I really want to say is: don't stop. There are still some of us on the outside who admire what you've done, and who stand together with you. ♦



Working People Demand a Voice!

That's why UAW members (above) picketed the Democratic Leadership Conference earlier this year in Cleveland, Ohio. We believe that one Republican Party is enough--and that the Democrats need labor's support and labor's program to win in 1992.

That program includes support for:

H.R. 5 and S. 55, anti-scab legislation that protects our right to strike; the Civil Rights bill; national health care reform; child care and family medical leave legislation; extended unemployment benefits; a progressive tax policy that places the burden on the wealthy and their corporations; a fair trade policy that protects our jobs; an end to U.S. military aid to El Salvador; and a national industrial plan to rebuild America. It includes opposition to the Bush Administration's Free Trade Agreement with Mexico--which threatens the jobs, wages, working conditions, and environment of workers on both sides of the border.

In short, working people demand a Democratic campaign based on jobs, workers' rights, and social justice. That's the ticket that will win in 1992!

International Union, UAW

Owen Bieber
President



Bill Casstevens
Secretary-Treasurer

Opportunity Knocking

Will the Democrats and Labor Rise to the Challenge of National Health Care?

by Susan Cowell

The health care crisis in the United States offers an unprecedented opportunity for progressives, labor, and the Democratic Party to seize an issue that has the potential to be genuinely popular -- and to change the way Americans think about government. Yet in parallel debates within the Democratic Party and the AFL-CIO, this opportunity risks being lost.

The debate is between a single-payer plan like the Canadian system, which would create a tax-supported fund as the payer for all health care bills, and a multiple-payer plan, which would leave our employment-based system and private insurance companies in place, supplemented by a public pool for the uninsured.

While the single-payer solution requires taking on the powerful special interests -- both the providers (the American Medical Association and the hospital industry) and the payers (the insurance industry) -- it offers the potential of providing truly universal coverage at a lower cost to individuals, employers, and society. For patients, single-payer also means very practical liberation from growing out-of-pocket costs and from the burden of filling out incomprehensible forms and waiting to be reimbursed (or denied reimbursement) for bills already paid.

In contrast, the supposedly prag-

matic multiple-payer solution has the political liability of levying new taxes on the middle and working class to benefit only the uninsured, without really solving the health care crisis. The well-intentioned catastrophic health care program -- which union and middle class retirees revolted

ranks of the uninsured. Those most likely to get sick are most likely to be uninsured; they put off medical treatment until it is too late. When they do end up in the hospital, the costs get shifted again -- to the public or to private insurers.

The single-payer solution not only treats everyone equally -- by ensuring that all people get the health care they need, not the health care they can afford -- but actually solves the problems of cost-shifting and excessive administrative costs that are threatening the U.S. system.

Competition is creating the crisis in the health care system; insurance companies must be socialized to restore their proper function -- spreading risk as widely as possible. Government (whether in Canada or in the U.S. under Medicare) is vastly more cost-efficient than the private market. Unlike many other social programs, from housing to

child care, universal access to health care would cost less, not more.

The Democratic leadership is already fumbling the opportunity to embrace real reform. In June, Senators Edward Kennedy (D-MA) and George Mitchell (D-ME) introduced multiple-payer reform legislation (also called "play or pay" because employers would have to insure their workers or pay a tax). Their proposal, HealthAmerica, got media fanfare but little real sup-

continued next page

International Unions Supporting the Russo Bill

- Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU)
- American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)
- American Postal Workers Union (APWU)
- Communications Workers of America (CWA)
- International Association of Machinists (IAM)
- International Ladies' Garment Workers Union (I.L.G.W.U.)
- Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers (OCAW)
- United Auto Workers (UAW)
- United Electrical Workers of America (UIE)
- United Mine Workers of America (UMWA)

against because they saw in it a new tax with no real benefit to themselves -- may be repeated.

Under the current multiple-payer system, when Medicare tries to control costs, the providers respond by increasing rates to private insurers. When insurance companies hike the premiums charged to firms, employers try to pass the costs on to their workers, putting the burden of cost containment on the patient, not the doctor, and pushing more workers into the

Universal Health Care In One State?

by Mike Cavanaugh and Kit St. John

Labor and other progressive activists in Maine have put together a successful coalition to fight for universal health care at both the state and national levels. The latest victory of the Consumers for Affordable Health Care Coalition was legislative approval of a commission to study feasibility of a statewide universal health insurance plan.

The Coalition's success reflects wide support for universal health insurance, as well as persistent organizing by groups such as labor unions, senior citizen lobbies, women's groups, civil rights organizations, and health and disability rights organizations. Nearly fifty organizations have joined the Coalition to support health care for all Maine citizens and the development of a single-payer universal health insurance system.

Labor participation in the Coalition has grown since the 1989 Maine AFL-CIO Convention voted to support national health insurance and establish a statewide health care task force. These actions came in the wake of a seventeen-week strike by the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) and the Communications Workers of America (CWA) against NYNEX-- a strike fought largely over the issue of health insurance. State leaders of the International Association of Machinists (IAM), the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU), the building trades, and other unions are members of the Labor task force and the Coalition.

Consumers for Affordable Health Care has provided a focus for grassroots activism and legislative lobbying -- and has celebrated many victories over the past year. In 1990, Coalition forces and legislative allies won passage of the Maine Health Program, a state health insurance plan for the working poor uninsured through their jobs, but ineligible for Medicaid. Although most union members were not directly affected, we were able to win broad support from labor unions, hospitals, and key business groups by drama-

tizing the impact of uncompensated care on the insured population as a back door tax. A high profile public fight with the Governor's office over an attempt to delay implementation of the plan brought increased public awareness of both the plan, and the Coalition -- and demonstrated broad public support for health insurance reform. We continued the battle in 1991 by working to save the program from the budget axe.

Last year, a relatively unknown state representative, Neil Rolde, drew forty percent of the vote for U.S. Senate -- by campaigning for Canadian-style national health care -- against Bill Cohen, a popular incumbent. This spring the state legislature passed our central piece of legislation -- calling for a legislative committee to study the feasibility of statewide health insurance. The Republican governor has so far refused to sign the legislation, alleging that the study would inevitably call for a Canadian-style system. However, the Coalition will organize for public hearings on the issue, which may proceed despite the Governor's opposition.

We have a particular responsibility to press our Congressional delegation, especially Senate Majority leader George Mitchell (D-ME), to advocate universal health care on a national basis. The AFL-CIO Task Force and the Coalition have held meetings with Mitchell to express our view of the limitations of his HealthAmerica National Health Insurance reform legislation.

The Coalition's activist approach, the successes we've won so far, and the growing campaign for a state health insurance plan have strengthened the progressive political coalition in Maine. There are differences among Coalition members -- keeping everyone working together isn't always easy. Yet the solidarity among labor and other progressive groups may be the seeds of a new democratic left in Maine. ♦

DSA member Mike Cavanaugh is Chair of the Maine AFL-CIO Committee on Health Care, and is International Representative for ACTWU. Kit St. John is a member of the Executive Committee of Consumers for Affordable Health Care, and a member of District 65, United Auto Workers.

port -- no trade union endorsed the plan.

The HealthAmerica bill had many flaws, but the most glaring was its lack of cost containment. In fact, the complexity of the proposal would increase administrative overhead, while failing to impose mandatory cost controls on the health care industry. On the day before Congress's August recess, Senator Paul Simon (D-IL)

amended HealthAmerica to include mandatory cost containment in the hopes of getting broader support, especially from labor, and Rep. Rostenkowski offered a House leadership bill with similar cost containment.

While the stronger cost controls should garner additional support, the problem remains: the Democrats are calling for higher taxes on the middle class for a program which will primar-

ily help the poor and unemployed. Moreover, enforcing cost containment in a multiple-payer system would require an additional layer of government bureaucracy in a system already choking on excess paperwork and would leave in place the system that created the crisis in the first place.

The single-payer Russo bill (H.R. 1300) got off to a good start with support from ten international unions

(see box) and now has fifty-two co-sponsors. However, with the leadership in both houses opting for multiple-payer, the Russo bill is likely to be sidelined. The Democrats are eager for a bill that can be an issue in the 1992 Presidential election, and the leadership will try to steamroll any efforts to promote single-payer legislation. Unfortunately for the Democrats, the current leadership bill is more likely to give President Bush an issue -- higher taxes for another bureaucracy-laden welfare program!

The labor movement, which has supported a single-payer national health insurance system for over forty years, should now be the leading advocate for universal health care. Unions were the first to be hit by the current crisis. Unfortunately, the labor movement is uncertain of how to proceed in the face of internal disagreements. After a long period of study, the AFL-CIO's Health Care Committee remains divided between single-payer and multiple-payer supporters. The debate has been more over strategy than goals: some unions want to follow the Democratic leadership strategy of passing compromise

legislation quickly, while others argue for a longer-term battle for a universal, single-payer plan.

In spite of the pressure for a multiple-payer solution in Congress, single-payer advocates are optimistic for the long term. Health care reform, even in the compromise HealthAmerica bill, will not survive a Bush veto. And, if it did pass, it would not solve our health care crisis.

The health care crisis is so deep and the vested interests so strong that a solution will require grassroots mobilization to put real pressure on politicians. That mobilization requires education and activism -- something many unions are already undertaking at the local and national level.

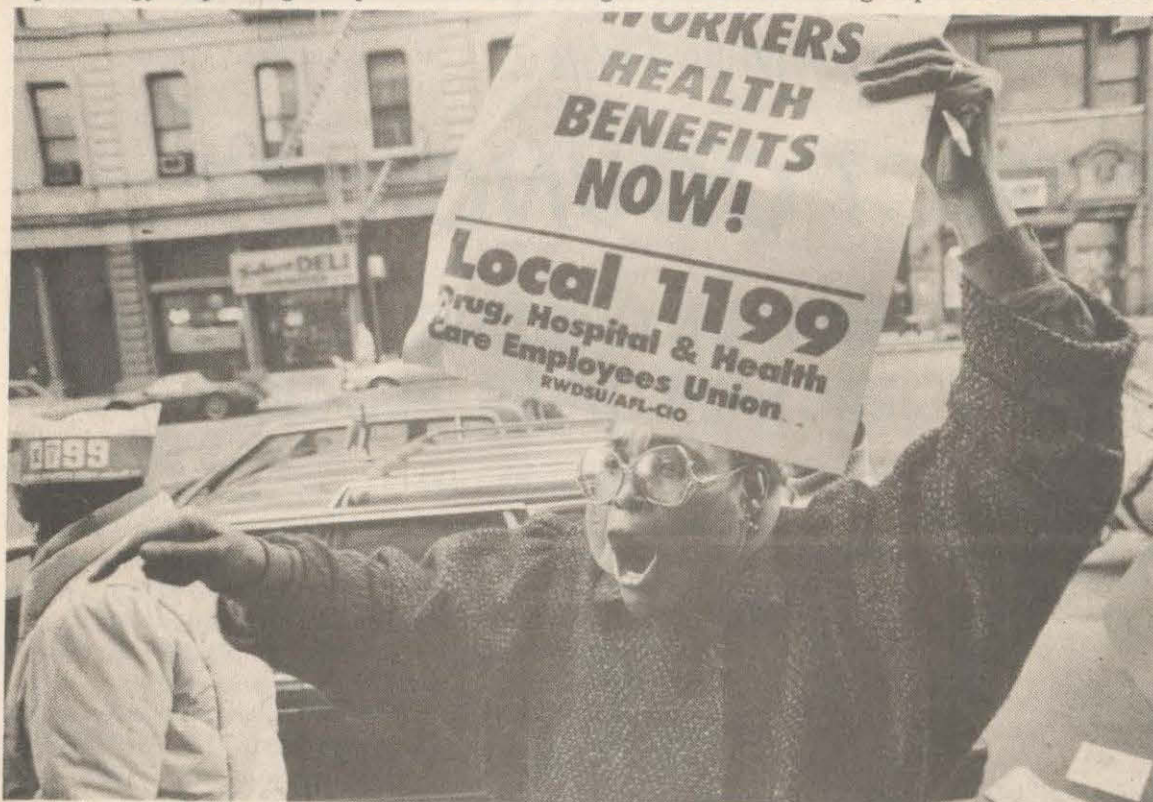
Within the labor movement, as well as among such allies as Citizen Action and Physicians for a National Health Plan, the focus is increasingly at the state level. State single-payer bills -- currently introduced or about to be introduced in twenty states -- are joining the Russo bill as the vehicles for grassroots campaigns in states from Maine to California. Jobs with Justice and other labor-community coalitions are taking the lead in building sup-

port at the local level for health care reform.

The state route will remain controversial among progressives -- some (like Rep. Bernie Sanders) endorse it as the preferred approach guaranteeing decentralization and local creativity. Most unions support state bills as vehicles to build toward national legislation. Many fear that a single-payer state would be a magnet for sick people and a target for budgetcutting state governments hit by recession.

Grassroots education and mobilization efforts are the key to any real solution to the health care crisis -- and to the revival of a strong labor movement and a viable progressive political force in this country. Health care is an issue with urgent appeal to workers, retirees, the poor and the middle class. The health care crisis offers a rare opportunity for progressives to shed the "tax and spend" label and rebuild a constituency for public programs. It's an opportunity we can't afford to pass up.

DSA member Susan Cowell is a vice president of the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union.



A member of Local 1199, Health Care Workers Union, demonstrating for national health care.

*International Association
of Machinists
and Aerospace Workers,
AFL-CIO*

Labor Day, 1991...

continuing the bonds
of friendship, trust and
understanding with
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and equality for all
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Labor Fights Back

Unions Struggle Against Tremendous Obstacles

by *Laura McClure*

Life on the job is not getting any better for most Americans. This fairly observable fact was confirmed by a recent Roper poll, which found that discontent at work is at a fifteen-year high. Workers aren't happy with their pay, benefits or job security, nor do they find their work sufficiently fulfilling. Roper concluded that all this unhappiness and desire for change could stir up "a nascent spirit of populism among working Americans."

In some cases, unions have been able to tap into public discontent and help spur change -- even in this difficult year. National healthcare reform, an unemployment compensation overhaul, and tax reform have all finally made it onto the public agenda, partly thanks to a push from unions.

Hours Up, Wages Down

Much of the grief workers have been feeling is economic: real average gross weekly earnings this year are almost twenty percent lower than they were in 1972. Wage increases continued to lag behind inflation this year. In April, the nation's poorest workers got the second mandated increase in the federal minimum wage -- from \$3.80 to \$4.25 an hour. Raising the minimum wage to its pre-Reagan inflation-adjusted level would have made it \$5.15.

Even more threatening is the continued employer assault on benefits, particularly health care. More and more workers are finding themselves without any benefits at all, as employers replace full-time, full-benefit

workers with "contingent" workers -- part-time, temporary or contract employees. Earlier this year, the General Accounting Office released a study, "Workers at Risk," suggesting that workers may become "a permanent underclass" in this country.

Ironically, many people are gladly turning to "contingent" employment because it gives them the flexibility to care for their children. In years past, many more families were able to sur-

Unions have been able to tap into public discontent and help spur change... even in this difficult year.

vive on the earnings of one worker; now they can't get by without two wage-earners. And so many parents, especially mothers, turn to low-wage, low-benefit, insecure part-time or temporary jobs. The economic squeeze has also forced full-time workers to work more hours. The average worker is on the job 1700 hours per year now, compared to 1600 in 1979. That adds up to two-and-a-half additional weeks of work per year.

And working conditions are not getting any better either. Job-related injury and illness rates have been going up steadily -- some of which is attributable to weakened government enforcement. According to a report released earlier this year by the Rand Institute for Civil Justice, one in six

Americans suffer from a non-fatal, work-related accidental injury each year.

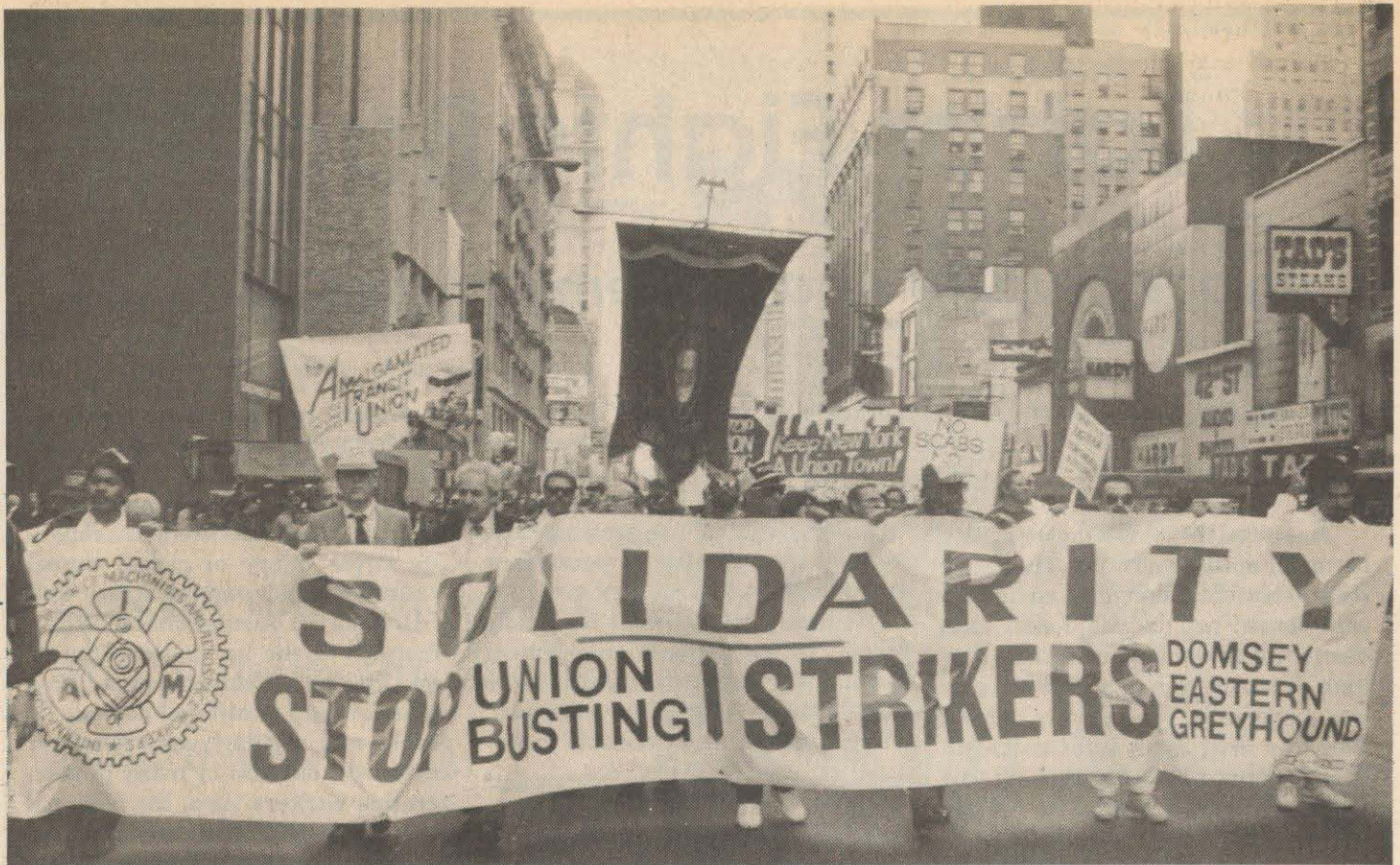
As of 1988, "cumulative trauma disorder," otherwise known as repetitive stress injury or carpal tunnel syndrome, accounted for almost half of all reported occupational illnesses, according to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. This painful injury is suffered not only by people who regularly use computer keyboards, but also by many production line workers. Also, the National Safe Workplace Institute reported last Labor Day that as many as 95,000 workers had died the year before of work-related ailments, a figure the Institute called "a national disgrace."

Then There's the Recession

The new bad news is, of course, the recession. Layoffs hit thousands of workers this year -- particularly people in construction, retail, wholesale trade, finance, and real estate. The official unemployment rate rose from 5.5 percent in July 1990 to seven percent in June 1991; but this statistic doesn't tell the whole story. In a July statement, economists from the Federal Reserve noted that in this recession "an unusual proportion of people who lost jobs subsequently dropped out of the labor force and thus were no longer counted as unemployed."

Currently only about a third of the jobless receive benefits; others are shut out by rules that have become increasingly stringent during the Carter, Reagan, and Bush administrations. Regular unemployment benefits run out after twenty-six weeks, leaving the long-term unemployed

continued next page



Trade unionists march to oppose the hiring of replacement workers.

ployed without protection. In years past, workers could collect up to sixty-five weeks of benefits, and seventy percent of workers were eligible.

The recession has focused public attention on the crisis in the unemployment compensation system. In New York, a group of unemployed people, union members, and community activists formed the New York Unemployed Organizing Committee and began agitating for meaningful reform of the system. The group mobilized grassroots pressure for passage of the Unemployment Insurance Reform Act, a bill introduced in Congress by Representative Robert Downey (D-NY). The committee continues to push for reform beyond the immediate unemployment benefit relief passed by Congress this summer.

Another issue that trade unions have forced to the legislative front burner this year is national health care reform. The need for some kind of reform is by now impossible for anyone to deny, even the medical estab-

lishment. The question has become: what kind of reform? This has been a much debated issue within organized labor. Some union leaders have advocated reforms that would expand the current employer-based system of health care insurance. Others have endorsed reform modeled on the Canadian system, in which the private insurance industry is replaced by a "single payer" -- the government. Supporters of a Canadian-style health care plan argue that health care dollars should not be spent to support the profits and administrative costs of the nation's 1550 private health insurance companies.

Facing Fiscal Crises

Labor has been hit across the board by state and municipal budget cutting. In response, some unions have successfully raised one of the most basic issues facing workers: regressive tax systems that prey on working people and let the wealthy and corporations off the hook. In the

face of devastating New York City budget cuts, Communications Workers of America (CWA) Local 1180 came up with a plan to benefit not only their own members, but all the city's working people. The plan called for an overhaul of the city's tax system -- proposing that New York City raise taxes on incomes over \$100,000, tax business services (such as legal, financial and advertising services), tax private universities, eliminate sales taxes on necessities, and cut out some of the incentives and abatements granted to developers. The union organized protests and lobby days to press for these reforms, and now parts of the plan have been adopted by a broad spectrum of progressive groups.

Labor activists in New Jersey responded to the fiscal crisis there with a direct challenge to the politicians. When Democratic legislators and the Democratic governor that unionists had helped elect threatened deep pay cuts and layoffs of state workers, a CWA-led union coalition fielded six-

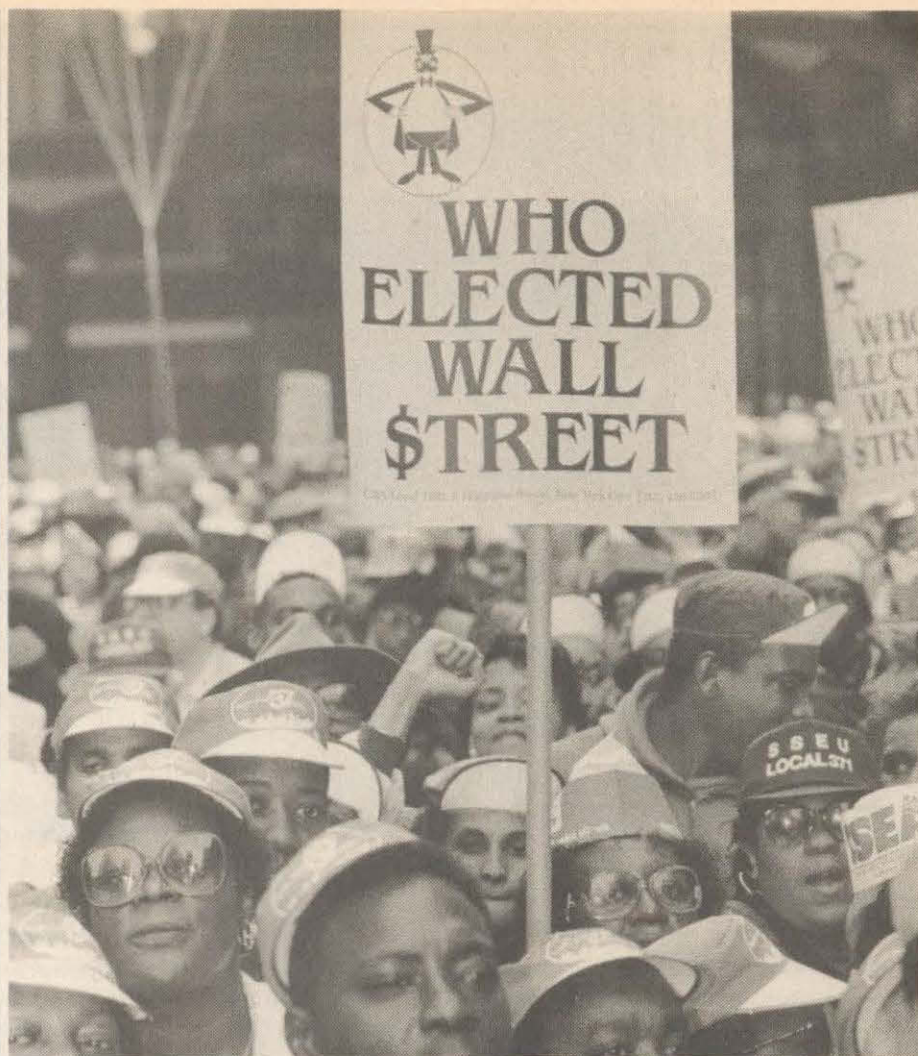
teen of its own candidates to run for the legislature. Alarmed, Democrats suddenly became much more receptive to compromise. An agreement was reached, and the union-backed candidates withdrew.

Shrinking Numbers

Despite victories such as these, organized labor has less political clout than it used partly because it represents a shrinking percentage of the workforce. As of last year, the figure was down to sixteen percent. In 1954, nearly thirty-five of U.S. workers belonged to unions. (By comparison, in Canada, where economic conditions are in many ways comparable, the rate is now thirty-six percent.) The number of union elections conducted through the National Labor Relations Board is dropping, and so is the number of union organizing victories.

Yet there are exciting organizing drives underway. Some of the most dynamic drives have taken place in the South, where union organizing often overlaps with local struggles for African American empowerment. A North Carolina-based group called Black Workers for Justice has been a base of support for a number of southern organizing drives. This year the group sent delegations of southern workers up north to talk to workers there about conditions in the South. One of the most active unions in the South is the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU), which conducted a drive to organize 7000 textile workers at Fieldcrest Cannon plants in North Carolina this year.

Another encouraging prospect for the labor movement is the upcoming election of top Teamsters officers. The December election will be the first time rank-and-file members are able to directly elect union officials. The election is part of an agreement signed by the Teamsters in 1989 to settle the U.S. government's civil racketeering suit against the union. At their June convention, three major candidates for Teamster president emerged. Two of them, R.V. Durham and Walter Shea, are Teamster vice



Robert Fox/Impact Visuals

Workers demand progressive taxation at a rally in New York City.

presidents with support from different factions of the union leadership. The third candidate, Ron Carey, a local union president from New York, is running as a reform candidate. He is backed by Teamsters for a Democratic Union, a rank-and-file group that has been organizing for reform in the union for fifteen years. In addition, delegates to the June convention voted to limit the pay of top union officials and sell off the union's fleet of jets.

But as their memberships decline, some unions are gaining power and visibility by linking up with new allies, such as environmentalists. A recently released survey by the Arthur D. Little management consulting firm asked consumers what corporate behaviors they found most odious. The number-one ranked offense was environmental damage. Number two was

worker health and safety violations. Labor-environmental coalitions to fight against corporate abuse and for labor-community control are a growing focus of struggle.

This year, the United Paperworkers International Union linked up with Greenpeace and other environmentalists in a campaign against International Paper, one of the world's biggest paper companies. The coalition is calling on IP -- and all paper companies -- to stop using chlorine, which poses a threat to workers and the environment.

Global Connections

With the increasing mobility of capital, the long-held dream of on-the-ground international labor solidarity becomes more pressing. This is especially the case with the U.S.-Mexico *continued next page*



Workers express pride and solidarity.

Free Trade Agreement (FTA) President Bush hopes to see approved as soon as possible. Trade unionists in the U.S. argue that the agreement could result in a mass exodus of U.S. companies to Mexico in search of low wages and lax health and safety standards. (Mexican industrial workers earn an average of \$1.57 an hour.) In addition, Mexican environmental laws are often weaker than U.S. standards. Canadian trade unionists have lost hundreds of thousands of jobs as a result of their country's Free Trade Agreement with the U.S., signed just last year.

While many mainstream Mexican unions support the FTA, progressive Mexican, U.S., and Canadian union activists have been meeting to develop a strategy of opposition to free trade. Meanwhile, an unprecedented coalition of sixty-two U.S. environmental, labor, religious and community groups are meeting to demand that U.S.-based transnational corporations operating in Mexico upgrade pay and working conditions at their plants and clean up their environmental act.

Back at home conditions continue to deteriorate for U.S. trade unionists. The number of major work stoppages has taken a dramatic plunge in the past fifteen years, from over 400 per year in the early 1970s to forty-five last year. One was the New York *Daily News* strike, a bitter fight between management and the paper's 2300 union workers. The strikers went after the paper's vital newsstand distribution system, using persuasion, boycotts and even violence. The paper's circulation fell dramatically as a result, and advertisers were forced to pull out. After five months of warfare and a belated corporate campaign by the unions, the *Daily News's* owner, the Chicago-based Tribune Company, agreed to sell the paper to British publisher Robert Maxwell. Maxwell negotiated an agreement with the workers involving significant layoffs, and the strike ended.

The Eastern Airlines strike officially ended in January, after the bankrupt airline ended its operations. The strike had lasted almost two years. However, another long-standing strike -- by Greyhound bus

drivers -- continues. Workers at the bus line, which is bankrupt but operating with scab labor, have been on strike since March of last year.

In Ravenswood, West Virginia, 1700 steelworkers are in their tenth month of lockout by the Ravenswood Aluminum Corporation. The United Steel Workers Union is conducting a corporate campaign to pressure the company into a settlement. Meanwhile, over 1000 scabs are in the plant, producing aluminum.

At the *Daily News*, Eastern, Greyhound and Ravenswood, employers engaged in what has become a common practice in labor disputes: they hired strikebreakers. The growing use of scabs is one reason so few workers are venturing to use what has always been considered to be labor's ultimate weapon -- the strike.

This year, the idea that there should be a ban on the use of permanent replacements in strikes became an issue for working Americans. Right-to-strike legislation was introduced in both houses of Congress. In July, the House passed the bill, but not by the two-thirds majority needed to override the expected Bush veto. (See box on opposite page.)

Demonstrating Solidarity

The need to demonstrate support for the striker replacement legislation is one reason the AFL-CIO organized "Solidarity Day '91" -- a march on Washington this past August 31. The national demonstration emphasized the need for health care reform and for passage of the Civil Rights Act. George Bush declined to sign this year. The march came ten years after the original Solidarity Day in 1981. That was the year newly elected President Ronald Reagan fired striking air traffic controllers, ushering in this difficult decade for working Americans. ♦

Laura McClure is a New York-based writer. Her last article for Democratic Left covered labor and the environment

Protecting the Right to Strike

by John G. Kinloch

In 1935, Congress passed and President Franklin Delano Roosevelt approved the National Labor Relations Act. That law guaranteed workers three basic rights: the right to organize, the right to bargain collectively, and the right to strike.

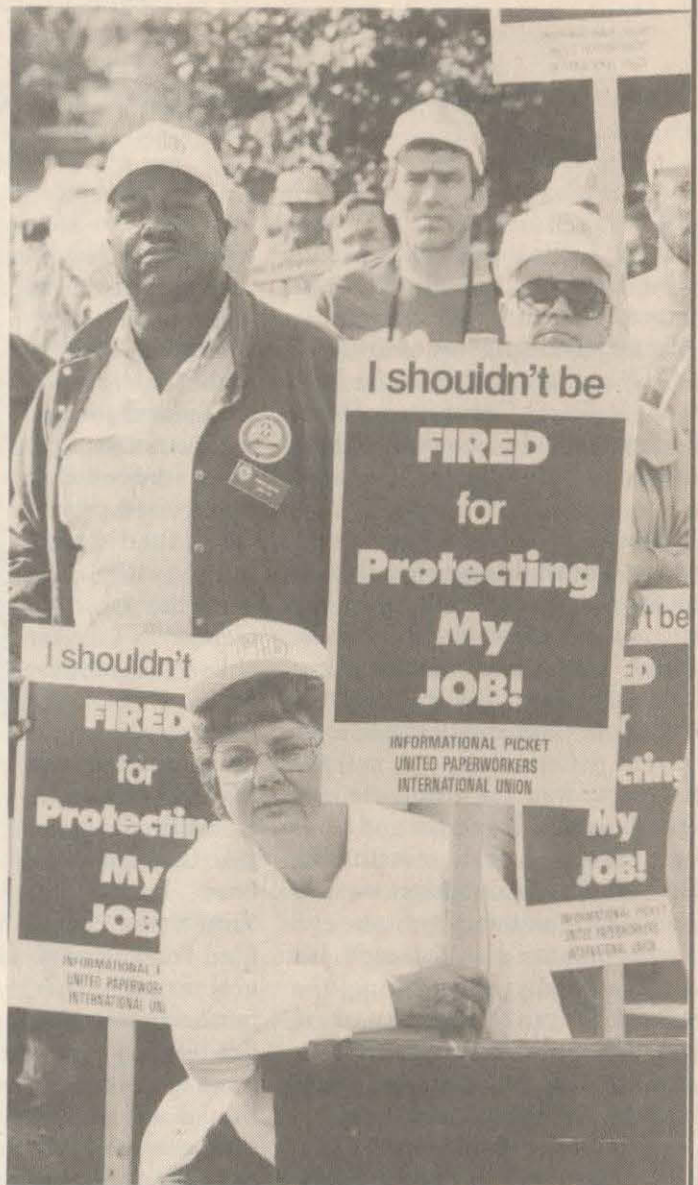
Three years later, however, the Supreme Court ruled in *National Labor Relations Board v. Mackay Radio* that while it is illegal for an employer to fire a worker for engaging in a legal strike, it is lawful for the employer to "permanently replace" such workers. Furthermore, the Court declared that after a strike is over, the employer is not required to rehire a striker if a replacement worker still holds his or her job. As a result of this decision, replacement workers have a stronger claim to strikers' jobs than the workers who first held the jobs. The bottom line is that replaced or fired workers may lose their jobs for exercising their rights.

For more than forty years after the *Mackay* decision, employers rarely used permanent replacement workers due to strong public disapproval. In 1981, however, the situation changed dramatically: President Reagan fired 12,000 striking air traffic controllers and authorized the hiring of permanent strikebreakers to take their jobs. This unprecedented action signaled a green light to private sector employers that it was OK to use permanent replacement workers during a strike.

As a consequence, the number of disputes in which strikebreakers were employed skyrocketed in the 1980s. Employers reported that they hired permanent replacements in about one-fourth of all work stoppages in 1989, according to a General Accounting Office report. That report also revealed that the number of strikes in the 1980s declined by about fifty percent since the decade before.

In 1989, the Supreme Court further eroded the right to strike. In *Trans World Airlines v. Independent Federation of Flight Attendants*, it ruled that employers could offer preferential benefits to entice strikers across picket lines and back to work. This decision allows managers to reward workers who scab on their brothers and sisters.

The disturbing new environment of labor-management relations encourages employers to convert disputes over the terms of a collective bargaining agreement into disputes over the collective bargaining relationship itself. Businesses have come to see collective bargaining not as a means of negotiating wages and



Union members picket in front of the White House.

working conditions, but as a means of recruiting a new and more docile workforce of permanent scabs.

Similarly, the bleak prospect of permanently losing a job is likely to chill workers' willingness to strike and weaken labor's position at the bargaining table. Consequently, organized labor has sent a loud and clear message to all lawmakers that we require not only passage of House Resolution 5 (HR5) but also Senate Bill 55 (S55), in order to ban the use of permanent replacement workers. A strike should mean an interruption of the labor-management relationship -- not the termination of it. ♦

John Kinloch is vice president of Local 1058 of the Communications Workers of America.

The Fiscal Crisis of the States

An Interview With Mark Levinson

Mark Levinson is Chief Economist for District Council 37 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME, AFL-CIO) and a member of the DSA National Political Committee. DEMOCRATIC LEFT talked to Levinson about the fiscal crisis of our states and cities.

DEMOCRATIC LEFT: Most people know that there's a severe fiscal crisis at the state and city level, but many people may not know why it is so bad.

Mark Levinson: The fiscal crisis for states and cities is a national phenomenon. Over thirty states have had record deficits this year, and the main reason was the dramatic cutbacks in federal aid to states and cities under Reagan. In fact, most of the 1981 cuts in Reagan's budget were in programs administered by state and local governments. For a decade, because the economy was growing, the effects of Reagan's cutbacks were hidden. But when the recession hit, the damage that was done ten years earlier was exposed for all to see.

D.L.: Many states responded to those federal cuts by cutting services and also raising taxes. What implications does this current crisis have for tax policy and for social services?

M.L.: Ultimately there is no solution to the fiscal crisis of the states and cities without a national plan to address those problems. However, at the state and local level there are things that can be done to minimize the damage. To the extent that states and cities must raise their own money, it should be done in a progressive way. That means a progressive income tax,

which is based on the idea that those who make more should pay slightly higher tax rates. If the federal government is not going to fund services that states need to provide, then states are confronted with the question of how to pay for these services. Since it was the very wealthy who benefited from the federal tax cuts, states should try to get that revenue back by taxing those who benefited from the fed-

Mark Levinson
eral tax cuts. There is much room for improvement. Citizens for Tax Justice recently came out with a study, "A Far Cry From Fair," which documents that if one includes Federal tax offsets, not one state has a progressive tax system. For example in New York, when all of the state and local taxes are added together, poor and middle-class families are taxed at rates significantly higher than those faced by the richest families. The richest one percent of New Yorkers -- who make an average income of \$1.5 million -- pay thirty-eight percent *less* of their incomes in state and local taxes than do working families making \$30,000.

D.L.: One of the arguments against progressive taxation at the state level is that wealthy individuals, and particularly businesses, will sim-



ply relocate to a low-tax state.

M.L.: That argument is vastly overrated. First, states with the most progressive -- or strictly speaking least regressive -- taxes had higher than average population growth and average personal-income growth in the 1980s. Second, taxes are a relatively unimportant factor in business location decisions. There are many other factors that are much more important, such as access to markets, the quality of the work force, the quality of life in a community -- and those are the very things that service cuts affect. It's the deteriorating quality of life brought on by declining services that cause business and people to leave. There is no correlation between a low state and local tax burden and business location.

D.L.: New York City has been hit very hard by this crisis -- from your perspective what should the city do to solve its fiscal crisis?

M.L.: New York City is in a very difficult situation. We have had a dramatic decline in federal assistance -- best illustrated by the fact that ten years ago, federal funds made up over twenty percent of New York City's budget, while this year federal funds make up less than ten percent of the city's budget. This year, if federal funds made up the same percent of the budget as it did ten years ago, the city would be receiving between two and three billion dollars in additional federal money. If we had that money today, we would have a much more manageable problem. In addition, New York State had a budget problem of its own. The state, faced with a six billion dollar deficit this year, was raising taxes and cutting back aid to the cities. New York was hit with blow after blow: federal cutbacks, state cutbacks, a national recession -- all in the context of increasing needs because of poverty, lack of health care, and deteriorating infrastructure.

But I believe New York City could have done more than it did to maintain services and avoid layoffs. Specifically, if an attrition policy had been put in place earlier, if a broad-based early retirement program was implemented, if excess management had been trimmed, if the city cut back contracting out, and if uniformed personnel doing clerical work were replaced by civilian workers, the city could have reduced the need for layoffs. Finally, although the city has had fairly large tax increases the last two years, I think the city can still raise more revenue.

D.L.: How?

M.L.: First, by raising the top income tax rates on those who make over \$200,000. In California a Republican governor raised the top rates on those who make over \$100,000 and raised them even higher on those who make over \$200,000. I don't see why we couldn't do something similar here. Second, we need to cut back on

unnecessary tax exemptions. Third, we should look at expanding the sales tax to include business services such as accounting, bookkeeping, legal services, and management consultants. Fourth, Ruth Messinger had an innovative idea that would raise the commuter tax so that surrounding communities would also benefit. And lastly, I would add a small surcharge on the general corporation tax. The problem is it requires approval by the state legislature to raise most of these taxes. The only tax the city has complete control over is the property tax. The politics of raising revenue are rather difficult.

D.L.: What are the implications of the calls for privatization as a strategy in response to the fiscal crisis?

M.L.: I find it very disturbing. When people don't know what else to do, they call for privatization. We have had enough experience with privatization to know that the problems of privatization are often underestimated, and the benefits are overrated. If we want to bust unions and if we want to pay workers poverty level wages, sure, a service can be provided for less, and that's often the way in which privatization saves money. But I don't think that's what the City of New York, or the public sector in general, should be about.

D.L.: One of our political tasks is to reaffirm the value of the public sector, to say that the public sector should be about promoting economic growth and providing for a humane society.

M.L.: That's very important. Right now, we are still paying the price of what the Reaganites did ideologically. They convinced the country that government is the problem -- and it became a self-fulfilling prophecy. People define government as the problem and therefore underfund government, which means government can't do what it is supposed to do, which reinforces the belief that government is the problem, which leads to further underfunding of government. We have to reestablish the belief, which I

take to be basic to democratic socialism, that government can make life better.

D.L.: Why should private sector workers and their unions care about this crisis in the public sector?

M.L.: There is, I believe, a crucial link between public and private sector workers, and the public and private sector in general. David Aschauer, an economist at the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, has shown a strong link between the decline in public-sector investment and the decline in private sector productivity. In fact he argues that the public sector has been so starved of funds that an extra dollar spent on public investment today yields a higher economic return to the country than a dollar spent on private investment. In addition, public and private sector workers share political goals -- a progressive tax system, a more active federal government in managing the national economy, reformed labor laws, and national health care. So their interests are not just compatible, but inextricably linked.

D.L.: Since state and local government must balance their budgets, can the financial demands of a fiscal crisis be reconciled with the service obligation of government?

M.L.: It's a question of priorities. The issue is who bears the burden of the fiscal crisis. Politicians must ask themselves: what is the purpose of government? Anyone can balance a budget by slashing services to hell, but then what have you done to the city? Ten years ago, speaking to a group of bankers, a young lieutenant governor of New York, later to become governor, said, "fiscal soundness is essential, and balanced budgets to achieve it are legally mandated. But the purpose of government is to make reasonably secure the condition of people's lives; if it fails to do that, it fails utterly, no matter how symmetrical the columns of its ledgers. A triple A bond rating for a state that has failed to meet its basic needs would be an emblem of hypocrisy." I think that is exactly right. ♦

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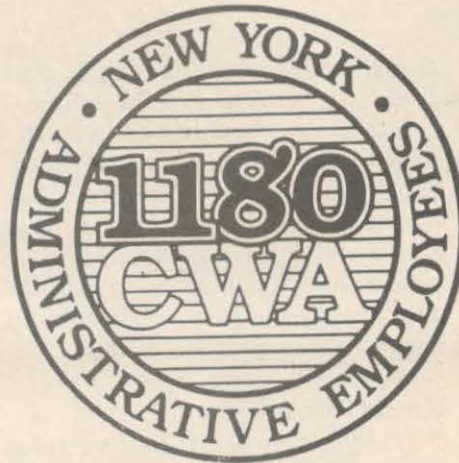
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Bucking the Trend

The Congress Of South African Trade Unions Prepares for a Democratic Socialist Economy

by Dorothee Benz

In the last two years, many things have changed in South Africa; but the daily experience of the apartheid nation's majority -- from police violence to shantytown housing -- is not one of them.

Among the most troubling realities South Africans face are a deep economic crisis and the burden of revitalizing the post-apartheid economy. This is an area of great concern to the democratic opposition, which rejects the idea that it is either feasible or desirable to abolish apartheid before economic reform is in place. Apartheid is as much an economic system of exploitation as it is political-- and as elsewhere in the world, economic and political democratization are inseparable.

The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) has led the debate about the economy. COSATU, which proclaims itself "unashamedly socialist," has generated many of the country's most serious economic proposals, and has championed so-called "innovative policies" that go beyond both free market and socialist-command measures.

In 1986, COSATU assembled the Economic Trends group, a collection of union economists and activists. Its initial task was a study of the apartheid economy's structural problems. But since 1989, the group has turned its attention to the question of restructuring the economy.

The present South African economy has some basic strengths as well

as giant structural weaknesses that need to be considered in any discussion of future economic policy. The country has a large industrial base, and a well-developed physical infrastructure linked to production. It is also a source of enormous mineral wealth, and this asset in particular may prove crucial in retaining and regaining foreign investment.

Racial Fordism

On the other hand, the structural failings of the apartheid economy are massive. There is widespread unemployment-- fifty percent in some areas -- and crushing poverty. The infrastructure developed to meet the needs of production (and of the white minority) is absent in the townships and bantustans, leaving vast shortages of water, electricity, transportation, and communication networks. Likewise, the absence of a social infrastructure has left a desperate need for housing, health care, and education.

Education in particular is of overwhelming economic and social concern, since future economic growth depends on a more skilled workforce. Literacy and worker training projects already occupy a central place in trade union programs and economic proposals.

South Africa enjoyed a relatively high, sustained growth rate (about five percent) after World War II until the early 1970s. To some extent, the subsequent crisis period is simply a carry-over from the world-wide capitalist recession of 1973-75. But a number of factors make South Africa's experience unique.

South Africa's post-war industri-

alization was built on low-wage production of high-cost, sophisticated consumer goods for the white market, rather than basic consumer goods for a wider domestic and foreign market. This economy, which South African economist Stephen Gelb calls "racial Fordism" due to apartheid's centrality in shaping production decisions, "worked" with relative stability until the 1970s.

That is, it continued to create wealth for a minority while steadily increasing the relative poverty of the majority. It is a market structurally incapable of meeting the needs of South Africa's majority.

The crisis was precipitated by the collapse of the Bretton Woods system and the subsequent wide fluctuation of gold and other mineral prices on the world market. South Africa relies on imports for machine parts and tools, thus tying its ability to expand production to its balance of payments. When these were adversely affected by market fluctuations, so was the manufacturing sector's capacity for growth. Production costs rose, profitability declined.

Supply-Side Crisis

The weaknesses of the racial Fordist model now became crippling. Without a mass market -- made impossible by low-wage, high-cost goods -- there was no prospect for domestic growth. South African manufacturing was not competitive on the world market, preventing expansion through an export economy. A steady drop in investment started in the 1970s and accelerated in the 1980s. The result has been a declining econ-

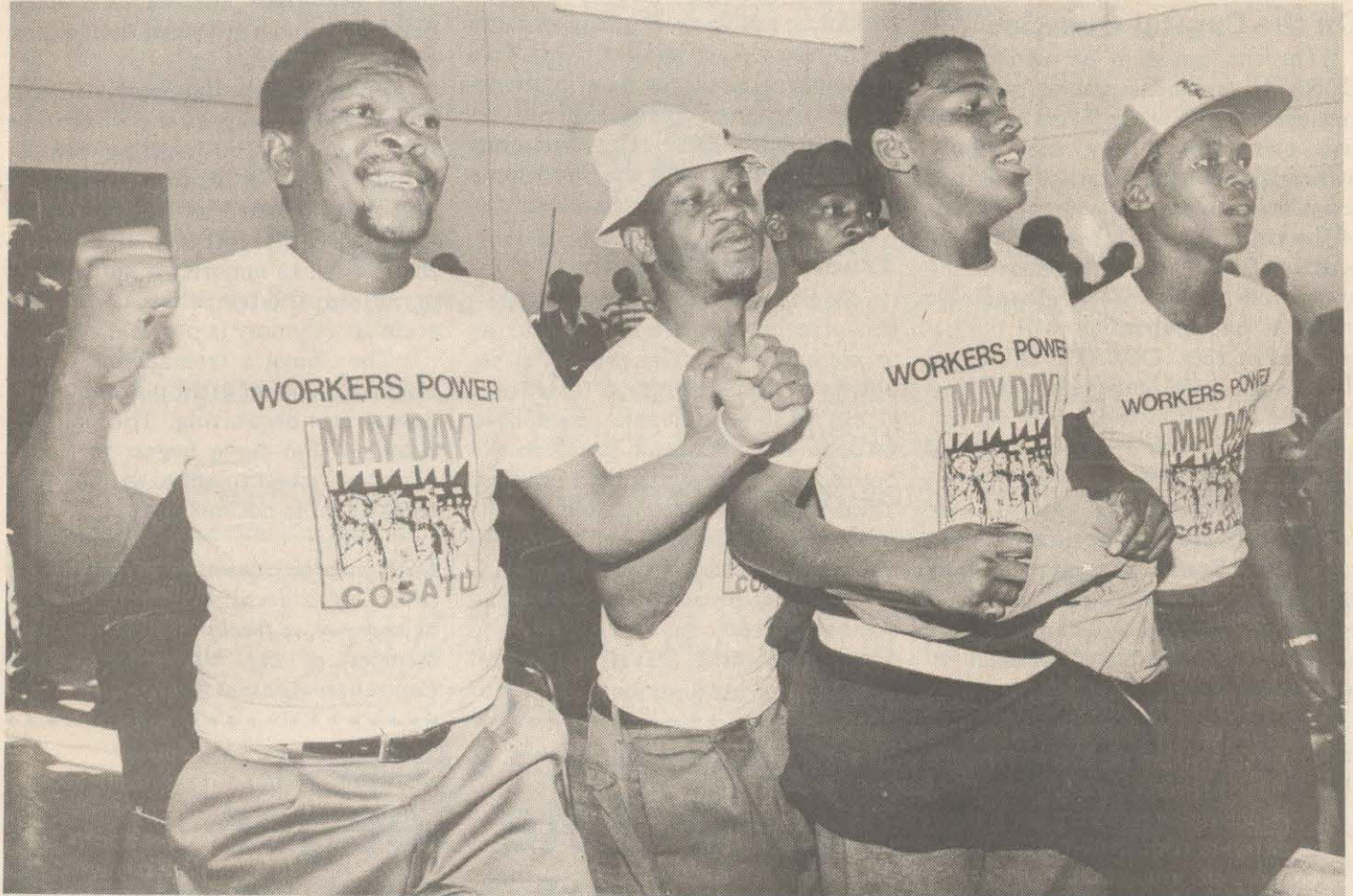
omy that has created an ever-deteriorating social crisis.

The South African government's efforts to save the economy have concentrated on shoring up the racial Fordist model and, in recent years, on a program of privatization and deregulation. Since the existing economic order excludes the black majority, the government's economic reform strategy is necessarily comple-

Growth cannot be based simply on an expansion of demand (such as might be created by a simple income redistribution). South Africa's economic crisis is largely a supply-side one -- that is, its failings lay in the production process. A restructuring of production is therefore central. This restructuring would create employment through the expansion of a labor-intensive industry that produces

investment must also be directed at building the social infrastructure. Investments in education, health and housing will help sustain growth rates as well as meet the most urgent needs of the population.

Such restructuring and investment requires coherent strategic planning and a strong state role. Since market forces by themselves do not generate changes, the state must play



Anna Zieminski/Impact Visuals

COSATU members celebrate May Day at the University of the Witwatersrand.

mented by its political repression. The privatization campaign was sparked by South Africa's debt crisis, but it is also an attempt to disempower a post-apartheid state.

This, then, is the economy that South Africa's first democratic government will inherit. Its two most important tasks must be addressing the gross disparity of wealth as well as finding a way to make the economy grow. The COSATU position is that the key to transforming the economy is economic growth through redistribution of wealth and economic power.

basic consumer goods.

But redistribution of wealth cannot focus on income. As noted above: it must be focused on a redistribution of investment. Simply providing higher wages or subsidies to the unemployed would create inflation, and would not address the fundamental cause of the crisis. A redirection of investment, however, could lead to the necessary increases in productivity and other improvements that would create a dynamic productive sector that would create both jobs and cheap goods.

A considerable part of any new

the leading role in restructuring the economy. The question for COSATU economists is not whether there should be state intervention, but what forms of state intervention are appropriate and effective.

While rejecting overarching central planning, the ANC and COSATU have called for "some form of overall macro-economic planning." A March 1991 discussion paper published in preparation for the July COSATU Congress calls for "a mixed economy with a socialist orientation." The

continued next page

question, of course, is what is the mix, and how does it work? Alec Erwin, the National Education Officer of the National Union of Metalworkers, South Africa (NUMSA) and a prominent member of the Economic Trends Group, stresses the need for coherent planning and advocates a model in which the planning process is clearly dominant in the mixed economy.

On the Capital Question

On the question of ownership, COSATU envisions public, private, cooperative and other forms of collective ownership. They are keenly aware that nationalization does not translate into worker control. (Much of the thinking on this subject is evocative of Alec Nove's *The Economics of Feasible Socialism*.) While indicating that nationalization will play a significant role, COSATU is clearly flexible on this point, emphasizing that the form of ownership is not the point -- democratic control or input is the point. Some areas are clearly more likely than others to be nationalized, particularly around the infrastructural needs. Erwin cites studies that show that only twenty percent of the country's housing needs can be met at a profit as an example of the need for a dominant state role.

Many other issues of state intervention have also been discussed: fiscal, monetary, and wage policies; possible representation on corporate boards by government and labor representatives; and the use of anti-trust laws to regulate or restructure the financial networks of the conglomerates.

COSATU insists that an economy that is not democratically planned cannot be stable in the long run. An outstanding point in all of COSATU's economic papers is the need for democratic structures on the national, regional and local levels that will effect economic policy, and the need for a strong independent civic sector.

Trade Union Democracy

To South African trade unionists, this principle is more than posturing or pie-in-the-sky. The process of debating what economic strategy COSATU should adopt has itself been an open one; and union structures in South Africa have long held national officers strictly accountable to the rank and file through the system of mandates and reports to locals.

It is not unusual for a regional representative to spend a week after a national meeting traveling to local meetings, giving his or her report. Nor

is it unusual for someone to challenge a decision a representative may have participated in.

Can it Work?

Since black unions were legalized in 1979, they have built one of the most powerful and dynamic labor movements in the world. Their own experience with democratic structures and their success as a mass movement have informed their vision of what is possible.

The obstacles that South Africans face in trying to forge a socialist future are immense. But nothing can be achieved if it is not first envisioned and then pursued as if it were possible. COSATU believes that if the South African majority is sufficiently organized, the transition to a future socialist economy is possible.

They have a tremendous -- and inspiring -- belief in the power of mass democratic organizing. The political changes that have begun in South Africa are a testament to the fact that their belief is not misplaced.

DSA member Dorothee Benz is the editor of a local New York union newspaper, a freelance writer and a member of the New York Labor Committee Against Apartheid.

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STAFF NEWS

❖ Tom Ellett recently joined staff as Youth Section Organizer. He grew up in a south suburb of Chicago, the son of a steel worker. Tom joined DSA in 1987 and organized the chapter at Northern Illinois University where he studied labor and social history.

❖ DSA wishes good luck to our outgoing Youth Organizer, Dinah Leventhal. Dinah was recently married to Patrick Lacefield and currently works as a legislative aide for a progressive Maryland state senator.

❖ Ginny Coughlin joined staff in April as Assistant to the National Director after working as a reporter in New York City. Ginny was a member of the Temple University chapter and was on the steering committee of the Philadelphia Local.

❖ With this issue of DEMOCRATIC LEFT we say goodbye to Susan Smith, our summer intern. Susan is a second-year journalism student at Ohio University. She will continue to build the DSA chapter there and serve as Secretary-Treasurer of the Youth Section.

RESOURCES

❖ *Pride at Work: Organizing for Lesbian and Gay Rights in Unions*, by Miriam Frank and Desma Holcomb of New York City's Lesbian and Gay Labor Network. Send check or money order for \$6 to LGLN, Box 1159, Stuyvesant Sta., NY, NY 10009.

❖ *Solidarity: A Labor Support Manual for Young Activists* is available from the DSA Youth Section, 15 Dutch St., #500, NY, NY 10038. Cost is \$3.

GOINGS ON

❖ DSA activists and thinkers met for an intense strategizing weekend at the fifth annual National Leadership Retreat in Ambler, Pennsylvania, July 5-7. Topics of discussion included organizing for national health care, race and class in urban politics, and next steps for the peace movement. Speakers included DSA Honorary Chair Barbara Ehrenreich, and DSA'ers Lynne Mosley, Dave Rathke Joe Schwartz and Steve Tarzynski.

❖ Watch for the DSA Canadian Health Care Speakers Tour -- coming your way soon! Canadian doctors, trade unionists and parliamentarians will visit these locals: Baltimore, New York, Connecticut, Princeton, Philly, DC, Cleveland, Columbus, Detroit, Chicago, St. Louis, Portland, Sacramento, Los Angeles, San Francisco Bay Area, and San Diego.

Youth Conference Energizes Activists

DSA Youth Section members met for some sun, sea and socialism at Cleveland State University (OK, so there wasn't any sea) August 22-25. DSA chapter activists discussed the course of the Youth Section for the coming year and participated in panel discussions on health care, multiculturalism and other issues.

Participants designed eight organizing projects, including: a national student coalition for universal health care, a day of education around socialist feminism memorializing the 1989 murders of thirteen women at the University of Montreal, and actions designed to educate the public about the multicultural history of the Americas.

Speakers included Victoria Cross and Tessa Hebb of Canada's New Democratic Party, longtime labor activist Millie Jeffrey, NARAL Campus Organizer Leslie Watson-Davis, DSA National Director Michael Lighty and DSA members Joe Schwartz, Patrick Lacefield, J. Hughes, Bob Fittrakis, Mark Levinson speaking on such panels as "A Democratic Socialist Perspective on Foreign Policy," "Multiculturalism and the Left," and "Access to Education and the Economic Crisis."

In addition, new members of the Executive Committee (renamed the Coordinating Committee) were elected.

Youth Section Coordinating Committee Officers

Jeff Lacher, *Chair* (SUNY-Geneseo)
Terri Burgess, *Vice-Chair* (Cleveland Local)
Susan Smith, *Secretary-Treasurer* (Ohio University)
Jonathan Prince, *Corresponding Secretary* (Ohio U.)

At-Large Members

Susie Baldwin (NYC Youth Section, Columbia Grad)
Mike Coccia (SUNY-Geneseo grad)
Susannah Davis (Oberlin)
Goldie Deskins (Columbus State Community College)
Greg Feller (NYC Youth Section, Duke grad)
Karen Marie Gibson (SUNY-Geneseo grad)
Daniel Gray (Purdue University)
Andrew Hammer (Religion and Socialism Commission)
Alec Harrington (NYC Youth Section, Columbia grad)
Monica McDermott (Villanova, Philadelphia Local)
Jaimie Noone (NYC Youth Section)
Liz O'Connor (SUNY-Geneseo grad, DC Local)
Alex Ott (SUNY-Geneseo)
Heather Schneider (Ohio University)

Congratulations to Youth Organizer Tom Ellett for a terrific conference!
-- Susan Smith

ON THE LEFT



by Harry Fleischman

MISSOURI

St. Louis DSA'ers are gathering grassroots support for the Russo Bill and for a national single-payer health care system. Every Saturday, DSA'ers ask local residents to fill out a ballot endorsing the single-payer system. They plan to send the collected ballots to Washington D.C. as part of a nationwide Emergency Drive for Health Care, in which ambulances will stop at cities all over the country, pick up the ballots, and converge on Washington. DSA is planning a rally on Sept. 25, when the ambulance will stop at St. Louis.

St. Louis DSA honors its most committed activists with the Janie Higgins and Jimmie Higgins Awards. To date winners of the awards, for work beyond the call of duty, are **Richard Burke**, **Pat Grace**, and **Katherine Litwak**.

NEW JERSEY

Central New Jersey DSA, New Jersey Citizen Action and other groups sponsored a conference on "Universal Health Care: Can We Live Without It?"

KENTUCKY

Central Kentucky DSA is protesting Cracker Barrel Restaurant's anti-gay and lesbian hiring policies. The

chain's corporate policy is to ban workers whose "sexual preferences fail to demonstrate normal heterosexual values." To protest, send a mailgram by calling 1-800-325-6000, hotline #9823. The cost of the Western Union mailgram is \$7. They also held a summer retreat, where they decided that health care and reproductive rights would be next year's focus. The ACLU is litigating on behalf of the local over the denial of the Adopt-a-Spot contract. They also joined other local groups to form an alternative presence in Lexington's 4th of July parade. They carried signs such as "reproductive freedom," "freedom from military madness," etc.

ILLINOIS

Chicago DSA is mobilizing members to restore abortion services for poor women at a local hospital by encouraging members to write to the responsible elected officials. The Local's endorsed candidates -- **Danny Davis** for Democratic nominee for mayor and **Ron Sable** for alderman of the 44th Ward -- were defeated in an election many observers said was riddled with fraud.

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles DSA held the 13th Annual DSA Dodger night. Thirty people came to the Dodgers vs. the Cubs game on August 30. Since DSA turned out 30 people, DSA's name was listed on the big screen TV during the game. The local also supported two winning candidates for the Los Angeles City

Council --- **Mark Ridley-Thomas** and **Ruth Galanter**. The local is encouraging members to support **Local 11** of the **Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Union (HERE)** in its struggle for a decent contract. Members are asked to boycott the three L.A. Hyatts -- Hyatt Regency, Hyatt on Sunset and Hyatt Wishire.

Sacramento Valley DSA and other groups are sponsoring hearings named "Health Care for All: How Do We Get There?" at the local country board of supervisors. Members hope that a person from the national tour of Canadian health care workers and legislators will speak at the hearings on October 5. Members will discuss the national health campaign and pick delegates for the national DSA convention at their meeting Sept. 22.

PENNSYLVANIA

Reading/Berks DSA member **Mark Smolkowicz** won one of the two Democratic Party nominations for the Reading City Council. November is election time. Another DSA member, **Darlington Hoopes Jr.**, won a seat on a non-partisan commission that will study the current form of county government in Berks Co., PA, and possibly recommend changes.

Philadelphia DSA saw three of their endorsed candidates win in the Democratic primary -- **Happy Fernandez**, **David Cohen** and **Angel Ortiz**. They also received a grant from Philadelphia's Bread and Roses Community Fund to begin programs on post-war American problems.

DSA Marches At Solidarity Day '91

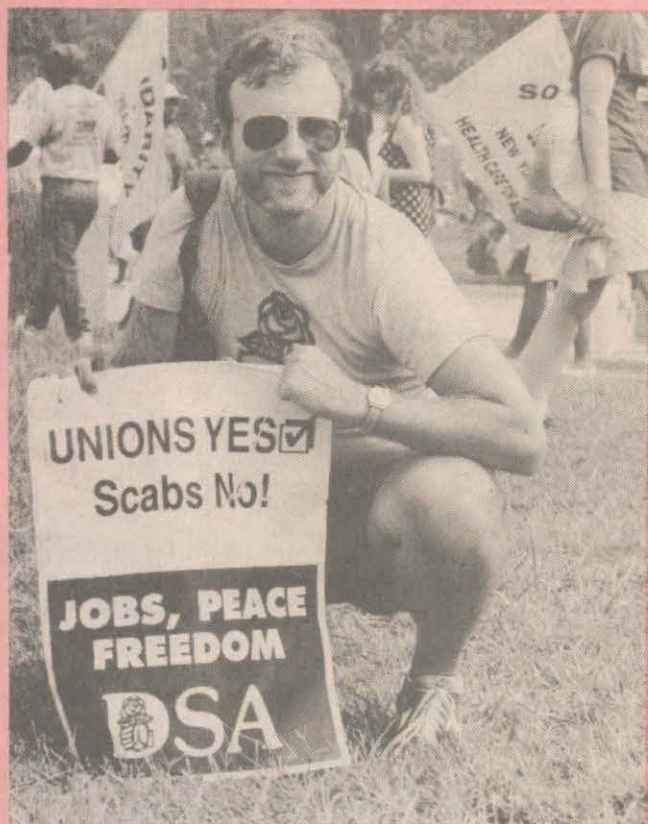
Ten years ago, as America entered the Reagan era, organized labor responded with Solidarity Day to warn of impending disaster. On August 31 of this year, over 300,000 union workers and their supporters marched in Washington, DC at a second Solidarity Day to say "we told you so." And DSA was there with them. In particular, many banners carried the demand for national health insurance.

Despite the assaults of union-busters, supply-siders, and free-marketeers over the past ten years, Solidarity Day '91's turn-out was comparable to the first march. The 325,000 on the Mall was twice the anticipated number and showed the diversity of the labor movement today.

DSA members from as far west as Chicago distributed over 2,000 copies of "What Unions Are... and Are Not" and "Labor Solidarity" to marchers along the route from the Washington Monument to the Capitol. DSA was also invited by the AFL-CIO to march in the parade and proudly took their place along side the International Union of Electrical workers.

Afterwards, DSA sponsored a well-attended reception at a Washington pub. Dennis Rivera, president of Local 1199 in New York City, and Juan Gonzales, a leader of the *Daily News* strike, were but two of the labor luminaries in attendance.

-- Tom Ellett



Bill Mosely of DC/MD/NoVA DSA at Solidarity Day '91.

T.L. Litt/Impact Visuals

Members participated in the August 31 Solidarity Day event in Washington and plan to participate in the September 2 Philadelphia/Delaware Valley Labor Day march and celebration. The chapter is mobilizing to save Philadelphia's city health care clinics, which are the only public guaranteed health care facilities.

MICHIGAN

Ann Arbor DSA held a successful fundraising drive for SOCPAC. The chapter is part of a local coalition which is forming around the issues of national health care.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

DC/Maryland/Northern Virginia DSA members attended Solidarity Day in Washington on August 31. The Labor Day issue of *Washington Socialist* was also distributed at Solidarity Day. They are also preparing for October 2-3, when the national tour of Canadian health care workers and legislators will stop at Washington.

IOWA

Iowa City DSA'er Jeff Cox, editor of *The Prairie Progressive* is a participant, along with other local media people, in a television program called "The Sanders Group."

NEW YORK

Ithaca DSA had a successful planning meeting about the November primary campaigns and the health care project on August 11. They also held profitable a yard sale fundraiser on August 31.

New York City DSA has endorsed 13 candidates in a crowded city council election. The local saw its vision of a progressive coalition in city politics realized by **The Majority Coalition for a New New York**, which is organizing an independent political campaign for progressive city council candidates. One candidate, **Craig Miller**, is a DSA member.

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
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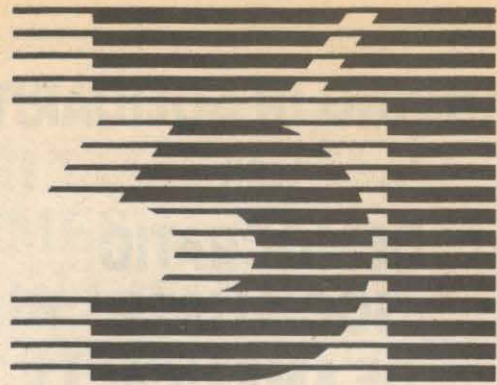
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GREETINGS



CBTU

COALITION OF BLACK TRADE UNIONISTS

Organizing the Lesbian and Gay Labor Network

An Interview With Desma Holcomb

The Lesbian and Gay Labor Network, based in New York City, helps gay trade unionists organize together to promote lesbian and gay rights within their unions. The Network's organizing manual, *Pride At Work*, points out that many workplaces are still not covered by non-discrimination legislation regarding sexual orientation. For the Network that's step one: getting civil rights on the job for gays.

The Network also helps gay trade unionists reach out to the broader lesbian and gay movement, educating gay activists about trade unionism and encouraging them to support union struggles. Network activists want to insure that issues faced by working class lesbians and gays are taken seriously by both movements.

Desma Holcomb and Miriam Frank were founding members of the Network and, as Desma tells it, they "realized at a certain point that the only way to really break into the labor movement more broadly, more permanently, was through caucuses based in union locals." Some caucuses have recently been recognized by union leadership as a formal part of the unions, and two caucuses in New York City even have operating budgets.

An especially successful example is the officially recognized Lesbian and Gay Issues Committee of District Council 37 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), the largest union in New York City. The DC 37



Tom Griessel

Union negotiator Desma Holcomb leafletting for workers' rights.

committee organized an event at the union hall for Black History Month featuring the lesbian and gay Lavender Light Gospel Choir. A diverse group of people who were involved in Black History Month within the union came to the event, many of whom were not likely to attend a gay event in the union or outside the union. Now many other locals want to have Lavender Light sing. As Desma says, "it's been a real eye-opener." The DC 37 committee's strategy reflects the Network's approach: to bring the presence of lesbians and gays into all mainstream events of the union.

Through the caucuses and other outreach work, the Network focuses on obtaining domestic partnership

benefits and dealing with issues of AIDS in the workplace. Democratic Left spoke with Desma Holcomb about the Network and about organizing for domestic partnership benefits.

DEMOCRATIC LEFT: What is domestic partnership and why is it important?

Desma Holcomb: Domestic partnership refers to gay or straight unmarried couples who are committed to each other. Usually domestic partners live together, or at least share one residence, and economically and emotionally take care of each other. Various affidavits that affirm these partnerships are used in different parts of the country.

continued next page

Employment benefits based on marital status discriminate against gay and lesbian couples, who cannot get married. But benefits are also denied to unmarried straight couples. A lot of people who could get married choose not to, and yet develop long-term, committed relationships. These partners should receive the portion of their compensation which comes in the form of family benefits. Additionally, the children of domestic partners should be covered for health insurance and other purposes.

What's interesting is the incredible grass roots groundswell around domestic partner benefits that's happening all over the country: It's happening at universities, where stu-

dents are raising the issue of married student housing, access to the gym, which everybody's husband and wife gets, but why not my lover, and so on. Anywhere lesbian and gay people have gotten a toe-hold in terms of non-discrimination, they are now moving past requests that they not be discriminated against, to demand that they actually get equal benefits to straight families. So, it's an interesting step from protection against negative behavior to demanding positive benefits and privileges that are equal.

D.L.: New York City has a mayoral executive order, which a future mayor could rescind, that provides recognition of domestic partnerships and

bereavement benefits, but applies only to New York City municipal employees. Two legislative proposals would strengthen that policy by allowing partners to register and then, on their own, seek "marital" benefits. The other would mandate equal benefits, including health care, for domestic partners within the city's jurisdiction. What are the prospects for passage?

D.H.: It's going to be rough. I think that what it's going to take, and what's really been developing around the country, is coalition work.

For example, the gay movement has spearheaded coalition work with groups representing the elderly. There may be more domestic partnerships among the elderly than any other single group. If you're on social security and you're a widow or widower, your basic income is threatened if you remarry. As a result, there are many widows and widowers living together without the benefit of marriage, because they literally could not afford to survive if they got married. This must be remedied.

In Seattle and San Francisco, groups such as the Gray Panthers are already on board, and activists are approaching the American Association of Retired Persons to be part of the coalition around domestic partnership. Unfortunately, there really aren't political organizations representing unmarried straight people. However, there are organizations representing different ethnic communities and racial groups that can get involved. Also, disabled people are affected because the same rules apply to disability as to Social Security -- government income benefits for disabled people are jeopardized if you marry somebody who is not completely impoverished. Disabled groups are involved in the coalition already in New York City. The only way we're going to win is if everybody who's affected gets on board.

D.L.: It seems that the Network represents a particular political strategy for the lesbian and gay movement, that is, it's explicitly coalitional; it's



Activists carry the Labor Network banner at the New York Pride March.



T.L. Lit/Impact Visuals

The Lavender Light Gospel Choir.

talking about issues that are not simply specific to lesbian and gay people, but to other groups of people in society.

D.H.: Yes, when domestic partnership struggles have been successful, often it is because they were won within the context of work and family issues in the labor movement. These issues are now considered a mainstream priority item for the AFL-CIO: family medical leave legislation and more comprehensive parental leave, child care issues, exploding the myth of Dad at work and Mom at home with the kids -- all of those issues where your family life and your work life come into conflict or impact on each other. Organizing for domestic partner benefits in the context of other "work and family issues" is a winning strategy.

D.L.: These issues around domestic partnership are connected to broader union issues as well. If the union is under attack, it will be difficult to get domestic partnership benefits negotiated successfully, and in that sense it's in the interest of folks within the Network to build up the strength of the union.

D.H.: While that's certainly true, it's important to be prepared with the facts in order to counter management arguments that these are tough economic times, so your demands are impossible. In most of the places that have domestic partner health insurance, it actually costs no more than covering some additional spouses. So it's important not to fall into the trap of, "domestic partnership benefits are going to be very expensive," which is basically an insurance industry fear about AIDS. On the other hand, the stronger the union is, the better shot you're going to have at getting these things that you need, plus the other things you need, like a raise -- gay people need raises too.

D.L.: How has the lesbian and gay community reacted to the Network?

D.H.: One of our founding issues was the Coors boycott in New York. At the time the Network was coming together, Coors was bringing their product to the New York area. We were ideally positioned to bring together the gay movement and the labor movement around that issue. Coors was offending gay people as well as trade unionists, so we educated the

gay community about the union aspect of the boycott.

As we become known as a resource on AIDS at work and domestic partnership issues, we are called on a lot for advice on negotiations and the domestic partner bill in New York City. People want to see unions supporting certain aspects of the gay agenda where there's a coincidence of interest. And that's begun to happen.

D.L.: Your strategy, the caucus strategy, rests on individuals making the choice to come out and be gay and lesbian identified at work.

D.H.: Back to the basics.

Desma Holcomb is coauthor of Pride at Work: Organizing for Lesbian and Gay Rights in Unions, and a founder of the Lesbian and Gay Labor Network, both with Miriam Frank, her partner. They are also co-parents of a nine-month-old baby, Ruth. Desma has been an organizer and negotiator with District 65 of the United Auto Workers and is currently a researcher with the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union. To order a copy of Pride At Work see DSAAction, page 17.

Defeating Scab Culture

DEMOCRATIC LEFT is proud to publish the remarks of Richard L. Trumka, President of the United Mine Workers of America, to the Workers Defense League

Today, as never before in our lives, the right of working people to organize and to engage in free collective bargaining is under siege. And because organized labor and the trade union movement is the one institution in American life with the proven ability to raise the standard of living for poor workers, for women workers, and for minority workers, our future, our survival, and our growth, is absolutely essential if America wants to leave its children with a nation that's more than an economic free fire zone of no-benefit, de-skilled, part-time, fast-food jobs.

That's why whether or not you're a part of the American labor movement you have a stake in the American labor movement. That's the message we have to start spreading across this country in the 1990s. We have to get it out because Americans have to understand that it's more than a labor issue when one out of every five workers loses their job for backing an organizing drive. And it's more than a labor issue when fewer than half of all successful representation elections lead to a first-contract. And it's more than some isolated, obscure labor relations issue when more than eighty percent of all employers facing 1991 contract expirations say they'd give thought to firing any worker who dares to use their legal right to strike.

Now, I don't know where each of you comes from, but I'd like to tell you a little about the part of the country where I'm from: about the coalfields of southwest Pennsylvania. It's a part of America that might not seem unfamiliar to a lot of you. A lot of the people

who settled there had family trees whose roots went back to Poland, Italy, Slovenia, and Ireland. When they came they didn't have money. Most of them didn't have much in the way of a formal education, either. And people will often ask what gave those workers then and today the courage to go down into those mines each day. And as many times as I hear the question, it's hard to really explain unless you've been there yourself. But, you know, ultimately I don't think it's any different than what gives any of you the strength to go to work each day. Because when it comes down to it, the wages are all the same: it's food on the table, the clothes on your back. That's why we work.

And that was on my mind when I was back home in Pennsylvania this past weekend. Because while I was there I couldn't help but think about some other people. People who aren't any different from you or I or any of the people we work with. There's a man I know -- a friend of mine -- named Dave Fisher. He lives in Avonmore, Pennsylvania. He and his wife Debbie have two daughters. For nine and a half years Dave Fisher worked for a company called Canterbury Coal. That's where a lot of Dave's friends worked, too. Because if you grew up in Avonmore and you wanted to make a decent wage and decided that you weren't going to leave your whole life behind and move off to try to find a job in Pittsburgh or Texas, you could try to get work at the foundry, or you went into the mines.

Dave Fisher went into the mines. And it was rugged, dangerous work.

But Dave was good at it and it was the best paying job you could find. The kind of job you could buy a house with. Raise a family with. Save some college money for the kids. Maybe even take a vacation every now and then. But in 1984, when the union opened up negotiations with Canterbury Coal, the company that owned the mine Dave Fisher worked at, the boss came to the table not with a bargaining position, but only concession demands.

Dozens of concession demands. Take-backs on safety, pensions, wages, job security, and seniority. Contract demands that guaranteed only one thing: poverty and senseless danger for anyone who worked under them. And in August 1985, Dave Fisher and his co-workers went on strike. Who were they? . . . American workers, with American families -- ordinary dreams, simple dreams, American dreams. They went on strike. *And each and every one of them were fired: or, as the company put it, "permanently replaced."* No one will ever know for sure whether Canterbury planned to provoke a strike and replace the workers all along. But. . . it doesn't matter much anymore to Dave Fisher. He's got enough to worry about just trying to get something going so he can take care of Debbie and Sarah and little Martha.

You can read more about them, but you don't have to. Because chances are you could tell stories of your own. About the tugboat workers of New York harbor. About garment workers who dared to take a stand. About machinists and steelworkers; workers in every industry who struck

and were left to lose everything but their self-respect.

Back in Washington, people... spend a lot of time on Capitol Hill talking about the need to pass a law to ban the permanent replacement of striking workers. And while we can talk about all the polls the AFL-CIO has done that show public support for this law; and talk about how firing striking workers is banned in countries like Germany and France and Sweden; what really counts is how well we can mobilize coal miners in places like Avonmore, Pennsylvania. And it's how well you can mobilize union families in New York City and in towns like this all across this country. And it's also how well [our] allies can build support among the families who may only see a picket line from the window of a passing car.

Because the fact is that when any worker can see their one small piece of the American dream ripped out of their hands, all of us are threatened, every job is at risk, and every American has to know that they could be next. We have to change the law. We have to pass HR 5 and S 55, but we should make no mistake assuming that our battle is over by winning this law, because the challenge we all face isn't just to reform laws. It's to effect a change in how Americans view their relationship to each other.

I'm convinced that we can pass an anti-scab law, but what we also have to come to terms with is that today we live in a scab culture. The incredible wealth generated over the last ten years never trickled down to the majority of Americans, but what did trickle down was a belief that greed and self-interest weren't just acceptable in this society, but that it was an asset, even a virtue.

That's scab culture -- and how we challenge it, how we re-install and encourage the kind of unity and solidarity that we're about, that we want our children to be about is going to decide exactly what course this nation follows over these coming years.

The playwright Arthur Miller was once asked how he developed characters for the stage and he said



Members of the United Mine Workers of America march at Solidarity Day '91.

that the key is to understand how the characters interacted with the society they lived in. "The fish is in the water," he said, "but the water is also in the fish." Well, by the same token, I think we need to understand that unless we challenge a culture that breeds those attitudes, we'll find the labor movement decaying internally tomorrow just as we are under attack externally today. Just as the water is in the fish, American culture is in the worker. We have to change that culture. We have to challenge those attitudes. And that sometimes we may only measure our progress in inches.

But you've shown that it can be done because you just did it at the Daily News when you stirred the conscience of millions of New Yorkers. You beat that scab culture because you reminded New York that this city was never built by the Donald Trumps or the Michael Milken or any one of the corporate sharks you see swimming their way down Wall Street. You beat the boss because you reminded New York of its heritage, and reminded this city that what really makes New York work are the

1199ers staffing the emergency rooms, and it's the UFT members standing in front of classrooms. It's the brothers and sisters of DC 37 keeping the water running, and it's the CWA members at NYNEX, and it's the ILG, and ACTWU, and it's Service Employees, Transport Workers, OCAW, RWDSU, and building trades. It's every other union man and union woman whose sweat and blood keeps this city working.

That's the New York that beat the Tribune Syndicate, that's the America that helped us win at Pittston, and that's the kind of movement that can win an anti-scab law, that can stop George Bush on Free Trade, that can pass the civil rights act, that can win national health care, that can stop privatization, that can fight AIDS, that can save our schools, because, brothers and sisters, it's our lives, it's our kids, it's our future, it's our America, and, by God, it's time we took it back! ♦

The above is excerpted from a speech given by Richard L. Trumpka upon receiving the David Clendenin Award of the Workers Defense League on August 13, 1991.

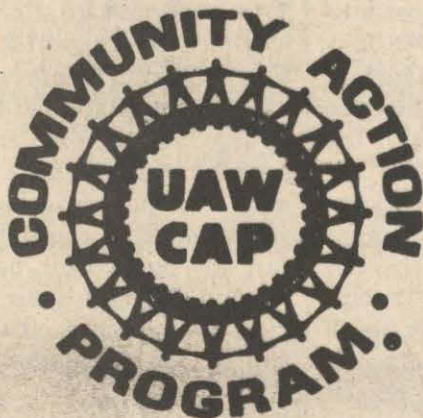
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Franklin D. Roosevelt



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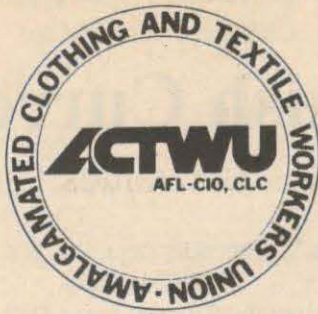
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and outside the labor movement.**

Joyce D. Miller
National President

ACTWU salutes DSA



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**Harry Fleischman, Joe Friedman,
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in the struggle for progressive policies and values.



Industrial Union Department (AFL-CIO)

Howard D. Samuel
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Elmer Chatak
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*"Every decent moment in the history of a union
is the assertion of an affronted conscience."*

---- Murray Kempton

In Unity with DSA



Communications Workers of America, AFL-CIO-CLC
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How to Be Religious Without Losing Your Mind



Among the well-educated the myth still circulates that religion is the preserve of the dim-witted, unlettered, and irrational, that the price of salvation is checking your mind at the Pearly Gates. Yet, from Harvard to Berkeley, and among inquisitive people generally, there's an undeniable renewal of interest in the questions traditional religion raises and seeks to answer. This fascination is largely the result of the failure of secular substitutes for religion (such as positivism, rationalism, hedonism, consumerism, technological utopianism, Freudianism, and Marxism) to give abidingly satisfying answers to the truly significant puzzles in life: evil, goodness, suffering, love, death, and the meaning of it all.

Contrary to stereotypes, this religious renaissance does not imply a retreat from working for peace, justice, and human dignity; nor does it signify a hostility to science, only an appreciation of the limits of science and technology.

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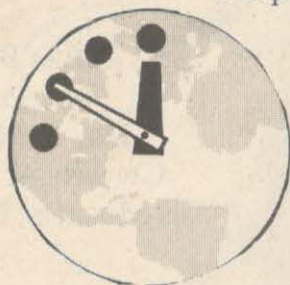


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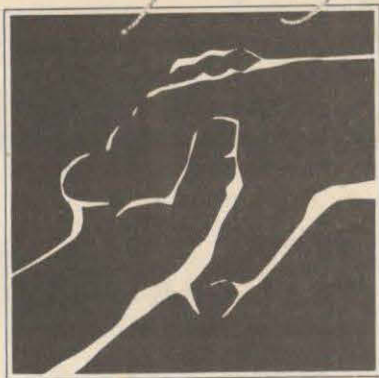
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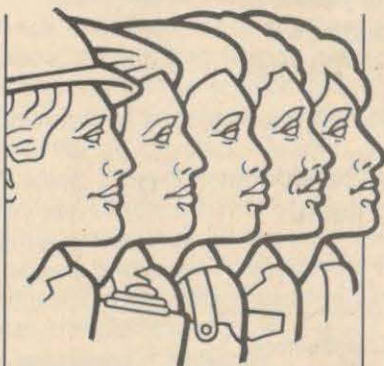
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**There's More --
Other Side**

FILM REVIEW

Portrait of a Strike

Capturing the Fading American Dream

by Jo-Ann Mort

AMERICAN DREAM, Barbara Kopple, 1990.

A good documentary lets the story tell itself. "American Dream" does just that, offering a compelling portrait of where American workers and the American economy stand after more than a decade of the slash and burn policies of corporate America and our national leaders.

With the collapse of national labor press coverage, the



A scene from "American Dream."

role of a documentary filmmaker like Barbara Kopple becomes essential to publicizing the human side of the plight of this nation's workers. Kopple's previous film, "Harlan County," and this new one have both won Academy Awards, proving that someone out there does care about the plight of today's shrinking unionized work-force. Yet, this film, which chronicles the historic and tragic fight of Local P-9 of the United Food and Commercial Workers against the Hormel Meat Packing Company in Austin, Minnesota, points out how much labor is at a crossroads.

The strength of this film is that Kopple situates two struggles -- the union local versus its international and the

union versus the company -- in the context of the decade of the 1980s. The eighties began with Reagan firing the PATCO workers and ended with a national corporate strategy to shrink the living standards of American workers maximize corporate profit. As the film tells us, in 1984 Hormel was earning \$29.5 million in profits, but proposing to cut wages from \$10.69 to \$8.25 an hour. The local rejected the offer against the advice of the international, then hired a corporate consultant to run their campaign.

Unfortunately, for those of us who know the ending of the story before the final reel, this movie plays like a Shakespearean tragedy, with all the main players heading for a fall. Kopple includes incredible footage of bargaining sessions and session between the international union and dissident P-9 members.

A labor dispute is the closest thing the United States may ever see to a war being fought on our own territory since the Civil War. In a small town like Austin, a strike becomes a civil war almost overnight, ripping apart families and neighborhoods.

Perhaps the most moving footage is of workers discussing whether or not to cross the picket line. In a town where families were divided over the strike, Kopple brings us into the center of a dispute between two brothers -- one who crosses the line and one who doesn't.

I'd like to think that the Academy Award given to this important film is a vote of support for the union movement. The theme of the struggle portrayed in this movie -- how unions should

adapt to a changing marketplace -- is one of the most critical questions facing unions today. How do you take on a corporate leadership which will hire permanent replacements and force down wages? How does the union movement harness the spirit and energy of workers who see the gains they've achieved slipping away? How does the labor movement reinvigorate itself as a movement for social change? As of this writing, "American Dream" hasn't been released nationwide. When it is, see it. ♦

Jo-Ann Mort is a member of the DSA National Political Committee and is active in the DSA Labor Commission. She is Communications Director for ACTWU.

BOOK REVIEW

There Are No Neutrals Here

A Life of Struggle in the Labor Movement

by Rafael PiRomán

WHICH SIDE ARE YOU ON? by Thomas Geoghegan, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1991. 287 pages.

Every once in a while when I find myself railing against some of my comrades on the left -- their easy self-righteousness, their posturing, their double standards, their susceptibility to "political correctness" and to third worldism -- the question comes to me that maybe I'm on the wrong side. That doesn't happen often and it passes quickly because as a union organizer and union rep for nearly a decade, I sat across the negotiating table from "the other side," dealt with them at NLRB hearings and arbitrations, saw their labor consultants at work, saw them fire workers illegally with impunity, saw their power, their greed, their ruthlessness, their hypocrisy. In short, I saw the enemy -- and it was not us.

For those who want to get a sense of the enemy or for those who simply wish to be reassured of their chosen side, I can recommend nothing better than to hunker down with Tom Geoghegan's *Which Side Are You On?*

Geoghegan, a Harvard lawyer, comes from that stratum of middle-class America where "you wouldn't have known a union from an onion at least until you were in your twenties." His introduction to the labor movement was a stint as an observer for the dissident Miners for Democracy (MFD) in the government-supervised United Mine Workers (UMW) election held after the murder of dissident leader "Jock" Yablonski. This was a task he undertook reluctantly and at least in part to help him mend a heart broken by a Radcliffe junior ("She'll be sorry," he thinks, "if I'm murdered by miners.") But once he saw the determination of old miners suffering from black lung, a disease so bad they had to sleep standing up, he was hooked. And when the MFD won the election, Geoghegan went to work for the mine workers as a staff lawyer.

He stayed with the UMW through its years of anarchy until reactionary Tony Boyle holdovers briefly regained

control of the union. He then went to work for Ed Sadlow-ski, the fiery dissident steel worker who in 1976 ran against Lloyd McBride, and who, despite vote stealing, came close to winning. After that, Geoghegan settled down to practice labor law in Chicago, doing a great deal of work for members of the Teamsters for a Democratic Union against the Teamster thug leadership.

Even though Geoghegan has spent much of his career defending dissidents against the entrenched labor bureaucracy, and although he spends a considerable portion of the book cataloging their sins, they are not the ultimate enemies of American workers. The real enemies are corporate America and its political representatives.

Reagan takes a beating not only for his direct assaults on labor, such as the firing of the PATCO workers (which, to Geoghegan, was a public blessing bestowed by Reagan on union busters as the Wagner Act had been a public blessing bestowed on union organizers by Roosevelt), but also for Reaganomics: that double whammy of high interest rates and an artificially high dollar, which destroyed much of American manufacturing.

Geoghegan places the beginning of the offensive against the American labor movement in 1947 with the passage of Taft Hartley. That law, passed over Truman's veto by the Dixiecrats and the Republicans, who had just taken control of the House and Senate, was, to Geoghegan, the beginning of the end. It outlawed the tactics his hero John L. Lewis had invented to make the great CIO organizing campaigns possible -- the sit-ins, sit-downs, and secondary boycotts.

Taft Hartley not only put an end to organizing on a grand scale, it also began the slow decline of organizing on a small scale since now "card checks," a simple show of majority interest by workers to be unionized, was no longer sufficient. And it accelerated the bureaucratization of the CIO as well, since now the unions could be sued for breach of contract and since, with the ranks immobilized, the staff and lawyers would have to carry the fight -- what was left of it.

Even though the labor movement had now been de-clawed and defanged, the full impact of this was not felt until the end of the "American Century" sometime around the early 1970s. It was then that corporate America finally realized the bountiful gifts the late Mr. Taft and Mr. Hartley had bequeathed to it, and began using them. With the coming of Reagan, Geoghegan writes, "labor didn't even have the right for unconditional surrender." To go on strike now "means to risk losing your whole life," and Geoghegan even wonders whether it is morally justifiable to try to organize workers, to set them loose in an environment where they cannot be protected, an environment where employers commit mass civil disobedience on a daily basis as they brazenly, "rationally, and with impunity break every meaningless labor law in the book."

Geoghegan goes on to consider whether, as Seymour Martin Lipset and others claim, labor is weak because Americans, particularly after Reagan, are culturally against "solidarity" and against anything else that might impinge on "traditional values." His response is: What created what? Does the culture create the laws or do the laws affect the culture? Didn't Jim Crow laws create a certain culture in the south and the Civil Rights Act another? If Americans could join a union to gain more security and better wages without the fear of getting fired would they still be so anti-union, so individualistic? Geoghegan's guess is that they would join unions in droves precisely for their individual self interests if they could do it -- if American labor laws were like those of Canada, France, or Poland.

And where are the Democrats, Geoghegan wonders. Where is the party that can't elect a president without a strong labor movement? Why haven't the Democrats changed the laws, fought to transform the present anti-union reality? Why, in 1978, with a Democratic President and a Democratic House and Senate did a set of relatively harmless though helpful labor law reforms get trounced? His answer to this is that the Democrats (like Robert Strauss, whose law firm represented Frank Lorenzo during the fight to crush Eastern Airlines workers) are union busters themselves. They may not get a President, but at least their own campaign coffers will continue to be filled with corporate dollars.

Geoghegan is a good Catholic and *Which Side Are You On?* is in large part his confession. He confesses that he likes iced decaffeinated cappuccinos, that he likes to dine in fancy Italian restaurants, that he makes his "upper class" income off the backs of the poor, and that he is not at all sure why he has spent his professional life representing these men and women who are invisible to just about everyone else from his class and background.

It may also be due to his Catholicism that he pretends to believe that not much good can ultimately be accomplished in this life by sinners such as we. Yet, even at his gloomiest we tend to be suspicious of his pessimism, and we come to suspect he really does believe that the laws will change, that the Democrats will come around, that another John L. Lewis will appear to lead us to the Promised Land, that Korean women will no longer be fired for

Against all odds. . .

For the next few months after the settlement, I kept waking up and thinking I was free. The case was over, and I could go to New York now, or someplace else, and do whatever I liked. But then I found out I could not, and I am still here, still practicing law.

Years from now, I will still be here, an old man, flipping through old press clippings. The picture of the back of my head. Another article saying "Attorney Quashes Settlement Rumor."

Maybe I'm still here because Frank Lumpkin is still here. Frank is old now, over seventy, and he has stopped riding his motorbike. But he is organizing a new Save Our Jobs, a union of the unemployed, and they are trying, against all odds, to get a steel mill going in South Chicago. Frank still sees everything, even South Chicago, in light of resurrection.

I wish to God he would give up.

Still I notice, with each year, as I continue living in Chicago, I seem to move further and further north. Up to Evanston, to bigger homes, bigger lawns, where my friends are. While Santuccis and my clients seem to move further and further south. Down to Lansing, etc. As if in the city there were a Big Bang in the early '80s when the mills closed, and ever since then, the two sides of the city, North and South, like two galaxies, have been hurling away from each other, faster and faster.

-- From Thomas Geoghegan's *Which Side Are You On?*

refusing to work in sweat shop conditions, and that the south side of Chicago will one day no longer look like Soweto.

But perhaps it is because he really doesn't believe any of these things will happen and still struggles to live the moral life in the face of "the fragility of goodness," that this book serves as such a rare moral example, a necessary measuring stick for the rest of us who know which side we should be on regardless of defeat or victory. ♦

Rafael PiRomán, former business manager at NABET Local 15, is the host of WNBC's Visionés and is a member of the DSA National Political Committee.

JANIE HIGGINS REPORTS

MISSING THE POINT

Revelers in the death of Communism got a treat during this summer's Pan American games in Cuba. During coverage of the games, an ABC reporter interviewed a Cuban dissenter -- a social democrat. At the close of the interview, the reporter rambled on about the death of socialism as the camera zeroed-in on the bright yellow cover of *Socialism: Past and Future* -- Michael Harrington's last book. Death of socialism? Little do they know. . . .

MORE TV NEWS

DSA member and National Council of Senior Citizens Board Member Earl Boudon recently got presidential hopeful Senator Tom Harkin to sign the Russo single-payer universal health care bill. . . while the TV news cameras were rolling!

RAINING ON HIS VACATION

Activists were determined that George Bush would not have a peaceful vacation this August. DSA'er Mike Cavanaugh led a march of unemployed workers and their advocates through Kennebunkport one day, while members of ACT UP marched the next. The day the unemployed marched was the very day that Bush refused to extend unemployment benefits.

GOOD NEIGHBORS

One of the key strategies for stopping the violence and repression in El Salvador has been Neighbor To Neighbor's boycott of Folger's coffee. For the past two years Neighbor To Neighbor has targeted Pizzeria Uno, a major purchaser of Folgers, with picket lines encouraging potential customers to join the boycott. Well, Pizzeria Uno finally gave in, although not due to a sudden awakening of social conscience. Managers simply got tired of dealing with the rallies and pickets. The restaurant chain's president made a deal with Neighbor To Neighbor: "As our contracts with Folgers run out, we will switch to another brand, provided that nobody connected with Pizzeria Uno has any further contact whatsoever with any person connected with your cause."

HOTEL FIST AND ROSE

Planning a vacation in Italy? The Hotel delle Rose in Venice is offering discount rates to members of organizations and parties affiliated with the Socialist International. The hotel promises "that personal service the discriminating person requires." You can reach the hotel at (041) 987133. Yet another reason to be sure that you are a card-carrying member of DSA -- a member of the Socialist International.

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