Inside: DSA resolution on Clinton v. Bush

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EDITORIAL

Elect Bill Clinton

Resolution passed by DSA NPC August 28, 1992

The *Democratic Left* is printing this resolution in order to provide guidance to members and locals in 1992 electoral work. Our September/October issues of 1984 and 1988 ran these statements, as well.

This year's presidential election presents the nation with real dangers and with the mild possibility of hope.

The Bush administration has been a completely expectable disaster. As the nation's economy continues its long and wrenching decline, as the twenty-year upward redistribution of wealth continues unchecked, as cities burn and dreams die, the response of the administration has been all but non-existent.

Yet, if ever a year had all the preconditions for progressive political change, 1992 is that year. This is the first election to follow the end of the Cold War -- the first in which the billions of dollars we have spent annually on our arms budget could be redirected towards our glaring social needs. This is also the first election to take place in post-prosperity America--the first election since 1948 in which a majority of Americans do not take prosperity as a given.

This leads to the good news: the American people want government to play a role again in promoting the life opportunities of its citizens. And then, the mixed news: belatedly, in its characteristically tepid fashion, the Democratic Party has begun to respond to this sea-change in the political climate. The party is shifting from more narrowly targeted to more universal programs: college loans, apprenticeship programs, family leave, national health insurance, affordable housing. There's political logic behind this shift, too: the recognition that government, and the Democrats, who in America passes for the party of government, only wins support when it serves the majority of Americans.

Yet in the rush towards universalist programs, the Democrats seem to be abandoning key constituencies: the poor and working poor, trade unionists, African-Americans and other communities of color, and the unemployed. Without the mobilization of these constituencies there can be no Democratic presidential victory, nor the vigorous pressure from below to pass progressive legislation over the opposition of the permanent Washington government, corporate lobbyists. In the guise of moderation the Democratic platform falls prey to precisely these special corporate interests. Out goes the commitment to Canadian-style national health care because it threatens the private insurance industry. Instead of proposing alternatives to "free trade" which would support trade union rights and balanced, environmentally-sound growth that would raise living standards both North and South, the platform speaks vaguely of "environmental standards." The platform speaks of military intervention to defend vital interests, yet ignores the political and

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An Organizer's Guide to Free Trade

Impact Visuals/Jim Saah

A Maquiladoran factory worker stands in front of the polluted stream that surrounds his home. The stream is used as a dumpsite by the nearby factory.

By Glenn Scott

Layoffs. Declining living standards. A shrinking middle class. A seemingly permanent, expanding underclass comprised of single women and their children living in poverty. High unemployment. Dramatic increase in the low-wage service sector. All the trappings of what we as progressives see as the wrenching injustices of the late 20th century American corporate capitalism.

How will a North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) affect the economy and people of North America? Will it provide an expanded business market, thereby spurring economic growth, as the pro-free traders claim? Critics say no. NAFTA will spur layoffs in U.S. manufacturing as corporations chase low wages in Mexico. Without lifting labor and environmental standards, the NAFTA will condemn Mexico for increased penetration of U.S. capital and lock the Mexican people into low wages, poverty conditions, and environmental degradation.

Several environmental policy activists, along with progressive labor economists, labor leaders, and progressive think tanks have developed a five-tenet critique of NAFTA's policy:

1. There has never been a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between two countries with such vastly different developmental and economic situations as the U.S. and Mexico. Even with a FTA between two countries with relatively similar economies, such as the one between the U.S. and Canada three years ago, positive results are hard to find. According to the New Democratic Party and the Canadian Labor Congress, free trade has been responsible for over 400,000 layoffs. Labor leaders, farmers, feminists, and environmentalists trash free trade for plunging Canada into their deepest recession in 40 years.

In contrast, the European Community has negotiated lowering trade barriers by recognizing the social dimension of trade and investment. In doing so, they were able to pass a wide range of measures to lift the weaker economies of Portugal and Greece in order to avoid a mass relocation of factories in search of cheaper labor and weaker environmental regulations.

2. The NAFTA process has deliberately si-

lenced workers and organizations in crucial matters. Recall George Bush's statement about labor and environmental issues being "off the negotiating table" when he first trotted out his FTA agenda. Since then, the Bush Administration has attempted to placate critics by negotiating the establishment of trilateral commissions to environmental standards and enforcement; the labor issue was not on the table, now it is not in the agreement.

3. The Maquiladora industry serves as a perfect illustration for the results of free trade. Along the Mexican side of the U.S./Mexican border, trade tariffs were drastically lowered to encourage the building of Maquiladoras, or assembly plants. The intent was to entice U.S. companies to build facilities in Mexico to give Mexicans jobs, thus slowing immigration considerably. This growth would expand markets, thus creating jobs in the U.S., and lower costs for goods.

Prior to 1980, there were about 50 assembly plants; presently there are over 1700 plants employing over 500,000 workers at an average wage of 60 cents an hour for a 50-hour work week. This is a lower wage than the rest of Mexico, but this should come as little surprise, for the work force is predominantly comprised of women between the ages of 16 to 24.

Over 90% of these companies are U.S. corporations assembling goods for the U.S. market, such as AT&T, Ford, General Motors, and Zenith. They have made huge profits from the low wages and lax environmental enforcement, while U.S. factories have closed factories in the U.S. causing tens of thousands of layoffs in both higher and lower wage manufacturing.

These factories seem like clean, well-lit showcases; however, only a few hundred short yards away lies the evidence of the human and social cost of this "success." Workers live in tin or cardboard shacks with no running water or electricity. When it rains, workers and children have to walk through sewage. Companies regularly dump untreated industrial waste in the ditches and tributaries of the Rio Grande, the only water supply. The National Toxics Campaign's sample tests have shown extremely high toxic chemical rates in the water near neighborhoods.

4. Mexican workers have not had any financial benefits from Maquiladora expansion and corporate profitability. In fact, wages have been cut in half over the last eight years thanks to austere policies. The largely Hispanic population along the U.S. side of the border has seen little improvement from the Maquiladoras. The Rio Grande Valley, Eagle Pass, Del Rio, El Paso, all border cities, have some of the highest unemployment rates and poverty statistics in the country. Yet this has definitely benefited the U.S. consumer, for the cost of Mexican-made goods is one eighth the cost of comparable U.S.-made goods.

Carlos Salinas' political base in the tiny Mexican upper class understand that they are trading low wage Mexican workers for a piece of the action. Any efforts on the part of Mexican workers to raise their wages are met with state intervention. Seven months ago, Agapito Gonzales, the union leader of a federation of 12,000 maquiladora workers, led a strike in Matamoros, Mexico, demanding $10 a day. Days later, he was arrested on charges of income tax violations. A newly appointed union leader settled the

This Maquiladoran factory worker works 9.6 hours a day at a minimum wage of 55 cents an hour.

Impact Visuals/Amy Zuckerman

strike with a wage agreement that was less than the rate of inflation.

Free Trade is going to be more of the same on a grander scale. FTA is a euphemism for an unrestricted capitalist movement, doing business at any cost to people and their environment for the lowest wages. There is compelling evidence against the NAFTA, and yet, not since Ronald Reagan's ascendancy has their been such a slick sell job as there has been with this "agreement."

In many cities, the Chambers of Commerce have collared professors, cultivated media, cooed and coaxed politicians and small business people, making significant inroads to Democrats such as Bill Clinton, Ann Richards, former New Mexico governor Tony Anaya, former Dallas and Houston mayors Annette Strauss and Kathy Whitmire. Traditional friends of labor like Richard Gephardt voted for fast track last year. Once an agreement is presented to Congress, Fast Track will give Congress 90 session days to vote up or down a proposed NAFTA with no allowances for amendments.

The organized opposition has had an effect on NAFTA's leading Democratic supporters. The Democratic center, however, is still wary of criticizing NAFTA because they believe "free trade" means economic growth.

NAFTA supporters have also recruited Hispanic leaders, including professors, elected officials, business people, and professional associations. Chambers of Commerce, in cooperation with the Salinas government, have hosted very slick bi-national conferences, dialogues, and exchanges. Many Hispanic leaders feel that by criticizing NAFTA, they simultaneously criticize the development opportunities for Mexico.

At least three major obstacles need to be overcome:

1. The Labor movement needs to overcome a history of neglect, ignorance, and racism toward Mexican workers on both sides of the border. There are plenty of union leaders railing against the problem of "illegals" who are taking "our" jobs and undercutting "our" wages. Labor backed the Simpson Mazzoli bill. Labor backed penalties for employers who hire undocumented workers. Labor has been slow to see the importance of organizing undocumented workers, as opposed to blaming them. Too many unions haven't recruited Hispanic staff members, especially in policy-level positions. Training Hispanics for leadership positions has also been exceedingly slow.

This is beginning to change. The AFL-CIO has devoted resources to an organizing program focused on Hispanic workers in Los Angeles and El Paso, as well as supported the Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras, in efforts to push the Maquiladora owners toward social responsibility. A number of unions, led by ACTWU, ILGWU and AFSCME, are training Hispanic labor leaders and organizers, as well as developing bi-cultural educational materials. These unions, along with others like CWA, have begun to communicate with affiliated and independent Mexican unions over the last two years. The Southwestern IUE, led by Jaime Marinez, has built ties with sister unions in Mexico, as well as prioritized membership mobilization against the NAFTA. The new Teamsters have begun a nationwide internal education campaign about "Fair Trade, not Free Trade." In Los Angeles, Latino labor community leaders and intellectuals have organized one of the strongest coalitions embracing a positive agenda for Mexican workers.

There is so much more to do. Labor leaders need to see that supporting a Mexican workers' strike in Matamoros is as much in U.S. interest as supporting the Mineworkers, or Solidarnosc. The UAW in the Southwest, spearheaded by Tommie Blackman, has held conferences on Maquiladoran working conditions, and begun talks with Mexican labor leaders. The UAW also sent $15,000 in strike support funds to Matamoros. There are UAW locals in Minneapolis and Kansas City that have sponsored tours and U.S./Mexico dialogues.

The Labor movement isn't the only force that must work with the Mexican organizations and the U.S. Hispanic community. Consumer organizations and environmental groups have to overcome their neglect and racism, as well. The Austin-based Texas Center for Policy Studies led by Mary Kelley, Domingo Gonzales, and Antonio Diaz, has spawned environmental research projects along the border and in the Rio Grande Valley. Texans United and Citizens Action are organizing against pollution in Hispanic communities in several Texas cities. Hispanic, Native-American, and African-American activists have recently formed the Southwest Network for Economic and Environmental Justice.

The second obstacle: the lack of resources devoted to building a multi-issue support for a progressive alternative to Free Trade. There

Impact Visuals/David Maung

A young Mexican girl assembles a component in a Tijuana electronics maquiladora.

is no broad progressive network that has settled on any kind of progressive economic and social agenda. Although DSA has potential, we know that we lack a significant political base. Progressive organizations haven't demonstrated a strong effort to educate and mobilize for an alternate development strategy. International union staff assigned to this issue are scarce. The national AFL-CIO has provided resources into striker replacement legislation.

Public Citizen, Friends of the Earth, and the Sierra Club national research and lobbying staffs are doing some good coalition work in organizing support for House Continuing Resolution 246 (HCR 246). HCR 246 explains that Congress would not support a NAFTA that jeopardizes U.S. labor, environmental, public health, and consumer laws. They are compiling and disseminating excellent analyses on the anti-democratic, anti-consumer, anti-environmental implications of Free Trade.

The fact remains that fair trade organizers haven't done enough to develop an agenda. Here are four significant networks that promote a "people-first," North American development strategy:

• The Fair Trade Campaign, a loose-knit network of environmentalists, labor activists, consumer advocates, and progressive think tank staff, has managed to pull off some very effective hit-and-run actions, lobbying and press events, all pushing for HCR 246. They intend to notify Bush that the House is significantly opposed to NAFTA. Presently, HCR 246 has sixty sponsors that originally voted for Fast Track.

This has been effective. Despite a lot of optimistic rhetoric from the U.S. Trade Office, Bush knows he cannot bring a negotiated NAFTA to Congress before the November election. Nonetheless, the White House is still trying to figure out how NAFTA can be a Bush re-election success story centerpiece. These efforts have also helped Clinton and Governor Richards recognize the social dimension, thus calling for funding to address the social costs.

• The efforts of Andy Hernandez and Antonio Gonzales of the Southwest Voter Education Project have provided another significant development. Funded in part by some international unions, Southwest Voter held at least four very successful conferences in the Southwest, bringing together Hispanic leaders from the U.S. and Mexico to discuss Free Trade and the impact on Hispanics. Because of very savvy planning, a progressive alternative to NAFTA gained broad support at these conferences. At the same time, Hispanic leaders were able to chart their own approaches to the issues of development, corporate power and trade in both countries. Follow-up on these conferences is very essential to a multi-cultural progressive alternative.

• A Washington DC-based network, MODTLE (Mobilization on Development and Trade), is promoting a continental development strategy that calls for a social charter to be a part the Free Trade negotiations. This group is holding an important conference in D.C. in September.

• There is an international feminist network involved in issues of women and the global economy, aiding the North American women's movement to fight for economic and social justice.

Synthesizing these four networks would be an important step toward the building of a multi-racial, multi-national feminist development strategy for economic justice and a sustainable future. With some luck and hard work, DSA activists could play a key role. Such a force could send the "Free Trade Fantasy Side Show" up in smoke. DL

Glenn Scott is an ACTWU International Representative, mother of a wonderful 8-year old daughter, and a founding member of DSA. (Thanks to Jose La Luz and Ron Blackwell of ACTWU, as well as the many activists in the Fair Trade Campaign for their work. All have been vital to her contribution on this issue.)

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Some written resources include:

Free Trade Agreement by William McGaughey, Thistlerose Publications, Minneapolis, MN (1992)

"The Effect of George Bush's NAFTA on American Workers," by Jeff Faux and Thea M. Lee from the Economic Policy Institute (1992). Call 1-800-537-9359 for a copy.

Does Bill Clinton *Work* for the Labor Movement?

Impact Visuals/Harvey Finkle

By David Moberg

If Bill Clinton captures the White House this November, he will have fewer debts or commitments to the labor movement than virtually any other Democratic president in this century. But with the long alien scent of victory for their endorsed candidate faintly in the air, many labor leaders don't seem to be bothered.

Clinton will still be a Democrat. After 12 years of the most aggressively anti-labor Republican administration of this century, approached only by the Harding-Coolidge-Hoover era, union officials are desperate for respite. As they reconcile themselves to a candidate many did not especially love, they argue that he's not as conservative as once feared and that at least he may listen to them or move under pressure of events or of organized lobbying.

Clinton would probably be neither a pro-labor nor anti-labor president. Unions are footnotes in his vision of America, a reflection not only of his experience in a southern right-to-work state but of the declining role of organized labor within Democratic politics.

Clinton is likely to implement, although possibly in a restrained way, many of the policies labor advocates: more domestic infrastructure spending, worker retraining funds, family leave legislation, more comprehensive national health care, and prohibition on permanent replacement of strikers. (But his inability to lean on the critical votes of Arkansas's Democratic Senators to close debate and force a presidential veto on striker replacement earlier this year calls into question how seriously he takes such legislation.) His appointments to federal agencies and courts would undoubtedly be less hostile to labor. But there is no indication that Clinton sees worker self-organization as a key part of either his political or economic vision for the country.

During the primaries only a few unions, i.e. AFSCME and the two teacher unions, leaned to Clinton. Iowa Senator Tom Harkin had the sentimental lead, then Jerry Brown tempted a few hearts, as the primary process unfolded with labor largely fragmented or on the sidelines. Clinton often made a point of showing his independence of unions, even praising Texas auto workers for opposing "union bosses" to grant concessions--that is, show "flexibility"--to keep their plant open.

Yet Clinton stirred disquiet among union

officials and politically active members, especially of the industrial unions, with his embrace of free trade and the fast track authority for the president to negotiate a North American Free Trade Agreement. Unions supporting a Canadian-style single-payer health insurance system, most of the bigger, more politically active unions and possibly a majority of the labor movement, were also unhappy with his vague support for a reform of the current mixed system of private and public insurance. His ties to the conservative Democratic Leadership Council make him suspect to many.

Gradually, after consolidating his nomination, Clinton and his campaign worked to establish friendlier relations with most unions. He calmed some fears by emphasizing his reservations about Bush's version of NAFTA, insisting on protections for the environment, workers and farmers. With the convention and bus trip afterwards, Clinton showed an aggressive, populist style of campaigning that union operatives believed could click with their members. But most of all Clinton's renewed strength in public opinion polls over the summer covered the political blemishes with the momentary rouge of success.

"I don't think this man is God, a saint, my deliverer," one union political officer said, "but nor do I think he's a schmuck I'm stuck with. He's got a core Democratic message and platform. If he were in office, members of my union would fare 500 percent better."

Control of the White House is essential for both initiating legislation and influencing the political climate of the country, but labor's influence is less important at that level than in races for other offices, from the U.S. Senate down to the most modest municipal posts. Union members have continued to give Democratic presidential candidates about a 12 to 15 percent margin compared to the electorate as a whole, even during the dismal '80s, but the labor movement is shrinking. Any labor impact is thus diminishing proportionately.

Labor's political clout has declined even more than its numbers. Polls show public sympathy for unions once again on the rise. Yet there is still a widespread negative perception of unions as narrow, selfish or irrelevant, even among swing independents and many middle class Democrats who might otherwise see themselves as liberals.

There are several reasons frequently suggested for the political disarray of labor. First, there is not a clear and consistent labor agenda. For example, despite the papered-over agreement on principles, there is still a fundamental division on national health care. The labor movement does not appear poised to take advantage of any Clinton victory with its own well-prepared agenda on institutional issues, such as labor law reform to facilitate organizing, or broader social policies, with the exception of a few ideas like family leave that are likely to prevail early in a Clinton administration.

Second, many unions have broadened their alliances in recent years through such efforts as the Jobs With Justice movement or the campaigns for strikers' rights and against the free trade pact with Mexico. But only a few have fully recognized the extent to which they need community, constituency and issue organizations of all types. Too often unions fail to reach out or insist on calling the tune in coalitions.

Third, many unions still fail their own basic task of organizing new members and keeping their old members active and involved. One politically liberal union was surprised to find that only about one-fourth of its members were even registered to vote (and has since started an aggressive registration drive). It hasn't been an easy time for labor to do anything, but that's hardly an excuse for the lackadaisical response to crisis and the insular, bunker mentality that still prevails in many quarters. Leaders need to spend less time at meetings in Florida or Washington with other officials, lobbyists and politicians. Maybe it would be good for all union officers and staff to spend at least a week each year out on the frontlines, trying to sign up new members or talking one-on-on on the shop and office floor with old members.

Clinton would probably be neither a pro-labor or anti-union President. Unions are a footnote in his vision of America.

There are labor political operatives who want to tinker with--or abandon--the current AFL-CIO procedure for endorsing presidential candidates. Although it has done little or nothing to expand labor's influence, AFL-CIO president Lane Kirkland seems quite content with it. But tactical and organizational adjustments, even if justified, won't solve the prob-

lems.

Unless unions have stronger ties beyond their ranks, more members and a deeper rapport between members and the institutions, then there is little chance for labor clout to grow. First, unions must transform themselves. The Teamsters union under new reform president Ron Carey has demonstrated how much can happen quickly in even one of the stodgiest unions: the union has stopped endorsing Republican presidential candidates, expanded its political action campaign, and formed new and wider alliances as it works to get members more active.

Many Democratic politicians, like Clinton, see unions as a bit of a political deadweight, a liability open for Republican exploitation. A small but growing number of labor officials think the Democrats are a deadweight for labor. They are joining with Tony Mazzocchi, an Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers official, to form a labor party that might at first work to articulate a vision, then run candidates, or endorsing The New Party idea of running both independent candidates and endorsing the better Democrats. A number of polls suggest that at the grass roots level of labor there is substantial support, far more than among staff and officers, for a new labor-oriented party. But apart from all the frequently-articulated difficulties with such a strategy, there is another fundamental problem: organized labor simply doesn't amount to enough these days to be the foundation of anything, even if it still an important building block.

Even without blood ties to labor, a Clinton administration should provide new openings for organized labor, if unions are willing to embarass and pressure a president who often distances himself from them. But labor needs to be mobilizing itself not just for the candidate but for a massive campaign of organizing, including the recruitment of more volunteer member organizers, and political action as early as possible after the election. If Clinton wins, it's an opportunity that can't be squandered, and labor can't count on even Clinton to deliver without pressure. If Bush wins, there's an equal but different reason for more aggressive mobilization: it may be close to an issue of organizational life or death. DL

David Moberg is a senior editor at In These Times magazine.

Work and Family: *The Missing Movement*

By Susan Cowell

The vastly increased participation of women in the paid workforce through out their child-bearing years has caused a revolution both in the workplace and the household. Despite the fact that women's participation in paid labor has had a tremendous effect on everyone, this sea change has not created a movement.

The opportunities seem clear. The need for family leave and child and elder care transcend class and race divisions. Studies have shown that the lack of family policy is a major barrier to gender equality. Yet, despite the vast constituency, the U.S. remains the only industrialized country without a family leave policy or a national childcare system.

Abortion is still the defining battlefield for gender politics. A clash between two fundamental and conflicting rights, abortion has formed mass movements and catchy slogans.

In contrast, "family" remains captive to the right. Work and family options now? Dependent care for all? Hardly words to chant at a rally. They evoke the social service providers and corporate personnel departments that have largely monopolized the issue.

"Work and family" seems a less dramatic issue. It is an issue of enduring the daily stress of juggling too many responsibilities. Many women remain ambivalent about work. After all, declining male wages were as powerful a motivation for women to seek paid jobs as the women's movement itself.

Many on the left are ambivalent about family. For feminists, gays and lesbians, the family seems a retrograde imposition of someone else's values.

Women's changing role both in the family and workplace became not a movement, but a problem to be solved by private initiative. The major achievement has been, not a guaranteed right to take leave to care for a family member, not a national system of quality child care, but just enough points of light to make George Bush happy.

Ten years ago, as an ILGWU staff member of Local 23-25, I coordinated an effort to create a new child care center for the children of garment workers in NYC's Chinatown. The effort was successful; the center it produced is so popular that it has a waiting list of 400 families. This year, a second center will open.

However, those centers barely make a dent in the need. A recent union-supported survey showed that NYC garment workers, mainly Chinese and Hispanic immigrants, were paying a high percentage of their income for unreliable, informal childcare and weren't able to find the high-quality childcare centers they want for their children.

The garment workers we interviewed were desperate for childcare, so desperate that some sent their children home to China or the Caribbean to ensure a safe environment and others brought children into the factory. Parents were distraught over the poor quality of the home-based childcare available in their neighborhoods, often an older, non-English speaking woman caring for too many children in a tiny apartment.

Reliance on the private sector has not only left enormous gaps in services and protections for working parents, but has allowed corporations to set the work-family agenda. For corporations, the solution to work and family conflicts is flexibility.

Too often, corporate-defined flexibility means the worker meets the employer's needs. Part-time work, usually pays less, and excludes benefits or job security, in order to meet a growing corporate demand for lower labor costs. The employee often does not have the right to set her hours or to return to full-time work when she's ready.

Homeworking is the most absurd form of "flexibility." Homeworkers invariably work long hours to meet employer-set quotas. Who can care for children and do piece work at the same time, anyway?

In most cases, the flexible workplace works only for the few successful women who can negotiate a good deal. A recent study by the Family and Work Institute, a non-profit re-

Impact Visuals/Cara Metz

Impact Visuals/Dani Steele

Right: Lack of daycare at a Brooklyn factory. Left: Union-sponsored daycare, supplied by the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union.

search firm, showed that family-friendly policies and childcare centers are most likely to benefit high-paid professionals at corporate headquarters and are usually offered as rewards for valued employees, not as rights for working parents.

It's unfortunate that the expanded entry of women into the workplace coincided with a corporate assault on the security and standards of working Americans. Labor has encountered the flexible workplace as part of an effort to undermine workers' power. But working parents do need flexible hours and part-time work options, along with paid family leave and childcare.

While a corporate-controlled "work and family" agenda has done little to expand workers' rights or families' well-being, it is not too late to lay out a progressive agenda for families, and that agenda includes a strong labor component.

The first challenge is to re-define the flexible workplace. If the goal is to help working families, flexibility must be a worker's right, not an employer's option. Job security, which only unions can guarantee, ensures that workers, not just employers, get flexibility. Along with strengthening the ability of unions to organize and bargain, government must ensure that employers accommodate family needs as a basic right.

Passage of the Family and Medical Leave Act would be a first step. If low-income workers are to use family leave, it must include wage replacement. A social insurance program could provide partial wage replacement at modest cost. Legislation should also protect part-time and contingent workers, ensuring job security, equal wages and benefits.

Second, while employers have an obligation to accommodate their employees' family responsibilities, employers can never provide a universal, quality system of childcare, nor should they. Childcare must be seen as a natural extension of public school, a right of families and an essential public investment in our children.

Third, services like child and elder care depend on trained, experienced workers. We must value the work of caring for others and not subsidize childcare on the backs of low-paid providers. Union organizing has been the single most effective means of upgrading the pay, benefits and status of dependent care providers.

Finally, childcare and family leave cannot be separated from other basic family needs. What working parents need most is an adequate income to support a family. A strong economy which provides good jobs will go a long way toward strengthening families.

Healthcare must be a universal right, unconnected to the workplace. It is one of the ironies of the so-called "family-friendly workplace" that health insurance is least accessible for part-time workers, i.e. women with children. Co-payments are highest for family coverage, for children are the age group most likely to be uninsured.

The nature of the workplace of the 21st century is at stake, and labor must define the issues and lead the struggle. Unions can't continue to respond defensively to corporate strategies, but must shape the new workplace through creative bargaining and aggressive lobbying.

Also, would someone please try to think up a good slogan? DL

DSA member Susan Cowell is a Vice-President of the International Ladies Garment Worker's Union.

There is Power in a Union: *International Labor Solidarity in West Virginia*

photos by Penny Schantz

BY PENNY SCHANTZ

With the internationalization of the global economy, a "local" or "American" labor dispute is increasingly rare. With some digging, local disputes sometimes reveal significant international dimensions. A study of the success of the United Steelworkers of America/Industrial Union Department, AFL-CIO (USWA/IUD) Ravenswood Coordinated Campaign serves as a prime example, for it provides valuable insight into ways to combat the international corporate offensive.

On November 1, 1990, the Ravenswood Aluminum Corporation, a minute financial component of billionaire commodities trader Marc Rich's global empire, locked out 1,700 members of USWA Local 5668 in an attempt to destroy the union, hiring 1,000 permanent replacement workers (scabs).

The USWA in coordination with the Industrial Union Department, AFL-CIO, launched an unprecedented international campaign in which the central strategy focused on Rich.

After extensive research, the IUD found that RAC's principal new owners gained their control of the company through a leveraged buy out, financed in great part by Ridgeway Commercial, a Marc Rich Group company. The NMB Postbank Group of Amsterdam was a major creditor. Willy Strothotte, RAC's chief stockholder, also served as General Director of Clarendon Ltd., formerly "Marc Rich and Co. International A.G.". Throughout the campaign, RAC denied ties to Rich, but it became clear that he controlled Ravenswood.

Additional investigations revealed that Rich's background made him vulnerable. Charged under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organization (RICO) statute, he is under indictment in the United States. There is a $750,000 reward for his capture, for he faces 65 counts of tax fraud, racketeering, conspiracy and trading with the enemy, including allegations of trading grain to the Soviet Union during the 1979-80 U.S. grain embargo and shipping oil to South Africa during the international trade embargo. In April 1990, *Forbes* magazine wrote "if the Business World has produced a champion sleaze in recent years, 55 year old Marc Rich owns that title." Rich was an ideal target, and the campaign's task was to make the dispute at Ravenswood worth settling.

Rich set up his world headquarters in Zug, outside of Zurich, Switzerland where the laws protect financial dealings undertaken by those anxious to avoid normal fiscal and legal

accountability.

In June 1991, a USWA delegation of locked-out workers went to Zug in attempts to meet with Rich; unfortunately, he refused. In the Netherlands, the delegation did meet with officials from a major creditor, the NMB Postbank Group. With the assistance of the Dutch Bank Workers Union and its labor federation, the FNV, the delegation urged the bank to get involved.

In October 1991, a USWA delegation handbilled a gathering of the London Metals' Exchange with an old American-style "WANTED" poster. The leaflet featured a large photo of Rich, the $750,000 reward for his capture and a summary of the RAC dispute. The assistance of the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) and a USWA delegation then handbilled an aluminum convention in Vancouver, British Columbia.

By January 1992, it was evident that the international pressure had to intensify. I was hired as European-based coordinator to mount an intensive international labor solidarity campaign.

Securing the support of the International Trade Secretariats (ITS's), the global trade union organization by industry and occupation, was crucial in strenthening and expanding woldwide sectoral labor assistance. The concrete assistance of both the Geneva-based International Metalworkers Federation (IMF) and the Brussels-based International Federation of Chemical, Energy and General Workers' uNion (ICEF) in particular, proved vital to the campaign's success. They provided contacts, research, and publicity.

The Public Services International (PSI), ITS, whose affiliates represent border control workers worldwide, distributed the "WANTED" leaflet, urging members to report Rich if identified trying to cross borders. The International Union of Foodworkers (IUF) also provided assistance, especially in Romania, where Rich attempted to buy a luxurious hotel. The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) provided global press contacts. Furthermore, throughout the international campaign, the AFL-CIO's European office provided extensive resources and expertise.

Upon securing international support, the plan entailed pressuring Rich to intervene in the dispute by creating negative global publicity tying him to Ravenswood. Initially, the targets were cities where Rich either had an office and/or trading interests (which were plentiful), and where unions could assist the campaign, beginning with Western, Central and Eastern Europe. The actions varied by country, taking into account cultural differences and the advice of the supporting unions.

The first action took place in Berne, Switzerland, where a delegation of USWA locked-out workers, along with the Swiss Metalworkers Federation, SMUV, and the IMF handbilled members of the Swiss Parliament with the "WANTED" flyer in both German and French. They also met with socialist members of Parliament, many of whom were already aware of the conflict.

Earlier in the dispute, a British Labor Party member of the European Parliament, formally requested the European Parliament to investigate the Marc Rich Group activities, and whether the Swiss laws sheltering Rich should be changed in order for Switzerland to join the European Community.

Rich's world headquarters in Zug was the next pressure point. A political puppet show played a part in the campaing, with a fifteen-foot caricature of veteran American union organizer, Mother Jones, and a six-foot caricature of Rich with an oversized head. The puppets had already been successfully used by the U.S. campaign, and attracted major media attention, as Mother Jones, a symbol of justice, scolded Rich.

Corporate campaigns are not new; however, they are being used with increasing effectiveness when organized on a global scale.

As the markets of Central and Eastern Europe opened to the West, research revealed that Rich was investing in both the hotel and petroleum industries in Romania. With FRATZIA's assistance, the free and independent post-Ceaucescu union affiliated with the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), the campaign participated in a broad-based Bucharest union rally. The crowd of over 20,000 booed at Rich's personification of the worst of Western capitalism, as thousands of leaflets were distributed throughout Romania.

Shortly thereafter, the Czechoslovakian Metalworkers Federation (KOVO) organized a major press conference in Prague. Earlier in the campaign, USWA President Lynn Wil-

liams sent a letter to Czechoslovakian President Vaclav Havel, resulting in the blockage of Rich's bid to buy one of Slovakia's largest aluminum companies.

A second trip was made to the United Kingdom, where the demonstration included the British Iron and Steel Trades Confederation and the Mother Jones and Rich caricatures in front of his London trading office, followed by a press conference, chaired by the British Trade Union Congress's (TUC) General Secretary Norman Willis.

The Dutch FNV once again assisted the campaign by organizing a demonstration and press conference similar to the London event, in front of Rich's Rotterdam trading office. Soon after, the NMB Postbank Group withdrew as a RAC creditor.

Within days after the Rotterdam demonstration, the French Metalworkers of the Force Ouvriere (FO) handbilled Rich's Paris office. Again, they achieved wide-ranging press coverage, including a worldwide broadcast on Radio France Internationale.

The campaign received extensive attention labor movements worldwide as well when it brought "Mother Jones and Marc Rich" and the "WANTED" handbills in 8 languages to the World Congress of the ICFTU, in Caracas, Venezuela. The ICFTU's Inter-American Regional of Workers (ORIT) lent specific support as Ravenswood's message was heard by trade unionists everywhere.

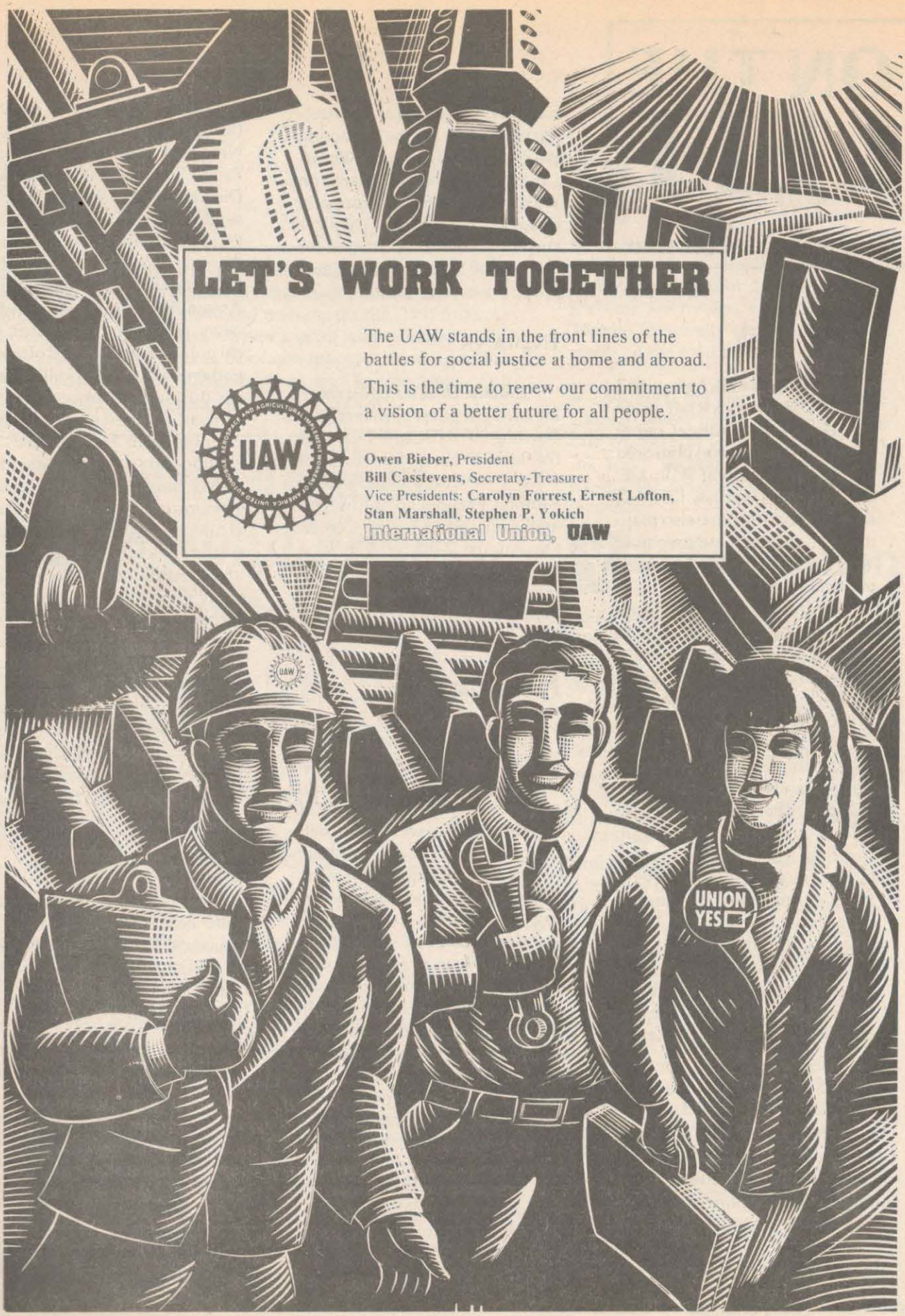
The international pressure intensified as Rich was targeted in seven countries within a seven-week period. By the end of March, actions were being planned in Bulgaria, Finland, Hong Kong, Israel, Russia and Spain. In April, Strothotte forced RAC CEO Emmett Boyle out of the company and renewed negotiations were visible. Bargaining continued through May, and by mid-June, the workers at Ravenswood overwhelmingly ratified an outstanding contract which included wage and other improvements. The scabs were let go.

A variety of factors contributed to the tremendous victory. For starters, the Ravenswood Local 5668 members remained strong, determined and united as they held out "one day longer" than RAC. The USWA firmly backed the local throughout the dispute, committing the resources needed to win. The domestic campaign severely impaired the company financially, and the effective media strategy brought widespread attention to the workers' plight. Finally, the international labor solidarity campaign played a decisive role in the victory.

Corporate campaigns are not new; however, as with Ravenswood, they are being used with increasing effectiveness when organized on a global scale. In this case, a broad-based international mobilization triggered a settlement. In other instances, preparatory research may reduce the need for a subsequent full-scale international campaign. Before a tough labor conflict emerges, unions should answer some basic questions about who they are dealing with, such as: which multinationals are connected to the American firm or its subcontractors? What percentage of sales are overseas? Where? Who are the major stockholders and creditors? Which unions in addition to the U.S. have relationships with the subsidiaries or business partners?

Having this information and appropriately using regional and global trade union channels, as well as campaign follow-up, international labor solidarity produced victories in several campaigns including the United Mine Workers of America Pittston Coal dispute, the Service Employees International Union in their Justice for Janitors campaign, the United Food and Commercial Workers at Carrefour supermarkets, the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees at United Nations Restaurants and now, the United Steelworkers of America in Ravenswood, West Virginia. DL

DSA member Penny Schantz, a trade union consultant based in Paris, was the European Coordinator for the Ravenswood campaign.


LET'S WORK TOGETHER
The UAW stands in the front lines of the battles for social justice at home and abroad.
This is the time to renew our commitment to a vision of a better future for all people.
UAW
Owen Bieber, President
Bill Casstevens, Secretary-Treasurer
Vice Presidents: Carolyn Forrest, Ernest Lofton, Stan Marshall, Stephen P. Yokich
International Union, UAW
UAW
UNION YES

ON THE LEFT

by Harry Fleischman

California

Los Angeles DSA provided several volunteers to staff an exhibit booth at the Orange County Fair, which was co-sponsored by the group, along with UE, CWA, Health Access, LULAC, and PNHP. They are also planning for a dinner in November with a theme entailing women political leaders.

Peninsula/Stanford DSA attended a DSA Statewide Retreat on August 2nd at the Stanford Women's Center. They discussed the Michoacan elections, as well as set priorities for all of California DSA, such as issues of health reform, the Boxer campaign for Senate, and Wilson's welfare initiative. That Sunday, they also held a screening of the film *Homeless Not Helpless*, directed by San Francisco filmmaker Jerry Jones, as a part of an ongoing political film series. Terry Messman, an Oakland-based organizer who was active in the campaign to win housing rights for homeless people, joined the film and the post-film discussion.

Illinois

The Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Commission of **Chicago DSA** recently attended a national board meeting in Washington, DC at Galludet University's Northwest Campus. Discussed at the meeting were ideas for the upcoming issue of ***Socialism and Sexuality***, as well as the 1993 March on Washington. DSA has formally endorsed the march. They are currently collecting articles for issue #8 of ***Socialism and Sexuality***.

Indiana

Indiana DSA's August meeting brought guest speakers Sara Bowling of AFSCME 1690 and the Socialist Party, Jim Trulok of UAW CAP Council, and Shawn Kimmel, President of the Indianapolis Peace and Justice Center. On August 23rd, they held a Common Agenda Campaign teach in/panel discussion on Domestic Priorities for Public Spending.

New York

Ithaca DSA members appeared on the cable television show "Round About Ithaca" to argue for community support of Cornell's service workers in their negotiations for a new contract (which they subsequently signed). The group has also been preparing to engage the issue of rental housing again, as the security deposit ordinance creeps through committees of Common Council, towards a probable vote in late summer or early fall. They are also going to be tackling the health care issue once again, in efforts to build community support for a state or national single-payer system of health insurance.

New York City DSA has decided to endorse Attorney General Robert Abrams for U.S. Senate, Nydia Velazquez for U.S. Congress, Richard Irizarry (28th New York State Senate District), Peggy Shepard (70th Assembly District), James Brennan (44th Assembly District), Hulbert James (31st Assembly District), Nelson Antonio Denis (68th Assembly District), and Trudy Mason (73rd Assembly District). Also in the news: delegates, alternates, local politicos, and elected officials gathered at DSA's Socialist Caucus during the Democratic Convention. Congressman Neil Abercrombie from Hawaii gave an extemporaneous, impassioned speech to the delegates. DSA Honorary Chair Cornel West challenged Caucus-goers to act on the values of equality, justice, and freedom in the face of the party's rightward drift. Bob Fitrakis, candidate for the 12th Congressional District in Ohio, spoke about his campaigns and Ed Vargas talked about how progressives took over the Hartford Democratic Party. It was a humble, but inspired alternative to the corporate-sponsored free-flowing bars, and engorged hors d'oeuvre trays.

Pennsylvania

Philadelphia DSA held its annual retreat on August 9th at Bruce and Cynthia Haskin's home to discuss their participation in the Vision/Mission Project of National DSA.

DSAction

Resources

✦ **The New Labor Press**, edited by Sam Pizzigatti and Fred Solowey provides an incisive examination of how union publications meet its obligation to the labor movement and working people. This collection of essays also offers proposals for a new kind of labor press, including reactions to a proposed national labor newspaper with contributions by DSAers Daniel Beagle, Richard Olson, and Jo-Ann Mort. Published this month by ILR Press, Ithaca, New York.

Fourth Annual Campus/Labor Institute

"Forging a Student-Labor Coalition for a Fair State Budget"

A project of the DSA Youth Section
and
the American Solidarity Campaign.

Saturday, November 21, 1992
University of California-Davis

Issues to be discussed include: the California state budget; students & labor united for the environment; fighting for progressive fair trade, not free trade; career opportunities in the labor movement; graduate student organizing.

The Campus/Labor Institute provides a unique opportunity for students and labor union organizers, staffers, and members to have dialogue on common issues and to forge coalitions. Previous Campus/Labor Institutes have been held in Cleveland, Boston, and Lafayette, Indiana.

For more info, contact Ginny Coughlin, DSA Youth Organizer: 212/962-0390, or write DSA-YS, 15 Dutch Street, #500, NY, NY 10038.

Staff News

◆ Ginny Coughlin recently "moved over" to Youth Section organizers. Formerely Assistant to the National Director, Ginny was a member of the Temple University chapter, and is already on the road for socialism.

◆ Tom Ellett has also moved...back to Chicago where he is organizing health care workers for SEIU. Tom hasn't left the Youth Section, though; he will be editing *the Activist*, as corresponding secretary.

Youth Section

DSA Youth Section members met at Bowling Green State University in early August to plan for the upcoming academic year. DSA chapter activists discussed the current state of student politics and strategies for building the Youth Section. Speakers included Mark Levinson, DSA NPC member; Terri Burgess, out-going DSA-YS vice chair; novelist Philip O'Connor; Bob Fitrakis, candidate for congress from Ohio; and Saul Wellman, former member of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade.

Outgoing DSA Youth Organizer Tom Ellett and newly elected YS co-chair Karen Marie Gibson facilitated a direct organizing workshop.

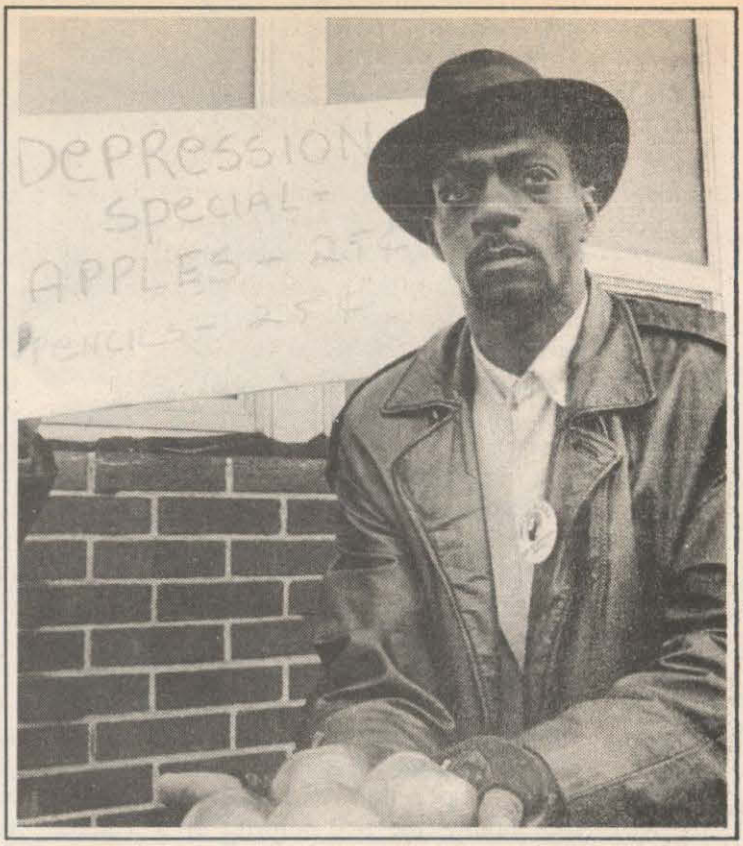
YS Coordinating Committee Officers

Karen Marie Gibson, Co-Chair (Long Island, NY), Jeff Lacher, Co-Chair (SUNY-Stony Brook), L. Donelle Gladwin, Secretary-Treasurer (NYC Youth Section), Tom Ellett, Corresponding Secretary (Chicago DSA)

At-Large Members

George Boas , Paul Burke , Dominic Chan, Susannah Davis , Greg Feller, David Glenn, Andrew Hammer, Laura Hengehold,Martha Larson, Colleen McGinn, Jonathan Prince .

Labor Day 1992: *The Democratic New (?) Deal*



Impact Visuals/Donna Binder

BY JO-ANN MORT

The United States is experiencing a collective identity crisis. The econ omy is in a downward spiral. Organized labor's numbers are at an all-time low. The nation's elites are arguing about the need for a national industrial policy. Voices are raised in support of an infusion of public spending to revitalize our nation's infrastructure.

The soul of the Democratic Party is being tugged at by Wall Street lawyers on one side and organized labor on the other. A group of intellectuals and leftists have called for a new third party in the pages of *The Nation* magazine.

Labor Day 1992? No--Labor Day 1929, when the original Herbert Hoover was strutting his stuff across the American landscape.

Responding to events, the CIO forged a strategy from the early 1930s through the 1940s that transformed the labor movement and the way America does politics. More importantly, it transformed the nation by laying a groundswell for what would become the New Deal.

When Franklin D. Roosevelt was elected in 1932, he wasn't the favorite choice of organized labor. He didn't run initially on a New Deal platform. In today's jargon, the 1932 FDR was practically a neo-liberal, a firm believer in laissez-faire capitalism.

It was a convergence of forces, along with the CIO's predominance, persistence, and muscle, that transported a president and a country into a new era of prosperity. The Keynesian FDR, the passionate defender of the welfare state who implored working people to register to vote and supported the most extensive labor laws this country ever saw, emerged once in office.

Labor leaders like Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America's Sidney Hillman, and the United Mine Workers' John L. Lewis concocted a strategy which put organized labor dead center in the Democratic Party and opened the way for Roosevelt to welcome a pro-labor agenda. The CIO political strategy was part of a broader effort whose components were an industrial approach, an electoral strategy, militant shop-floor tactics and the most massive union organizing in the history of this country.

Hillman founded the nation's first Political Action Committee (PAC) for the CIO in 1944. After Roosevelt's landslide that year, the media hailed this new labor-driven political strategy. *Newsweek* claimed that "for the first time in American history, labor had been the organizational vehicle of a presidential candidate." The "N.Y. World-Telegram" proclaimed: "Labor, militant, alert, and organ-

ized as never before, deserves credit for Roosevelt's re-election."

The CIO PAC was originally an ingenious idea because it was about much more than raising money. Labor tied the small-dollar amount contributions from working people to intensive voter registration, worker political education and voter mobilization, presumably activities which are the bedrock of our democracy. But CIO leaders could have never envisioned a national election campaign whose backbone was television advertising instead of precinct canvassing.

Labor Day 1992: the Democratic Party's New Deal is supplanted by the New Covenant. 1992 is as much a turning point for the Democratic Party and organized labor as was 1932. The New Deal anthem, "Happy Days are Here Again," was even retired this summer, replaced by Fleetwood Mac's rock lyrics, "Don't Stop Thinking About Tomorrow."

In a new era, one role labor can play is to reshape American politics by taking big money out of the equation. Public financing is the way to equalize the playing field, which will diminish not only PAC financial power, but soft money, the real culprit. It will allow working people to reassert themselves into the political process, in the way the CIO PAC did in an earlier, and less expensive political era.

The New Deal's success depended not only on a dynamic labor movement, but on labor's alliance with the middle class. Were Hillman around for this year's campaign, he'd doubtlessly point out the contradiction posed by pitting labor against the middle class. In his day, Hillman understood that labor needed a broader constituency to push forward the New Deal agenda, so he forged his forged his version of a coalition with this election year's most coveted constituency. Hillman helped establish the National Citizens Political Action Committee, founded precisely to meld the unions with the middle class.

This coalition was only logical since labor's efforts led to the creation of a middle class. Hillman also understood that by helping to shape the middle class and broadening support for labor's initiatives, he'd be helping his primary constituency, industrial workers. The "family values" issue will lead socialists to once again claim the banner of true "conservatives" for "conserving" the family values of a stability fueled by high-wage employment, childcare, health benefits and other economic and social necessities to give the empty phrase real meaning.

FDR's White House was also highly influenced by a fervent and ideological progressive movement, which helped shape policies Americans of all political persuasions take for granted today, providing activists for the labor movement and intellectuals for the presidency.

These were the forces which placed Keynes in the Keynesian New Deal, masterminding programs with universal appeal like social security and unemployment insurance. Even the fiercest, red-baiting politician wouldn't recommend gutting or weakening these programs.

Labor's electoral undertaking for Clinton is not enough. Presidency is shaped by the social movements which are in motion outside of the Beltway. In our present era of social movement meltdown, two surviving ones are the pro-choice and environmental movements.

Today's reality calls for a new progressive coalition of labor with these and other social movements. Unions should lead the way to grassroots political activity, which will also build the base for aggressive new union organizing. Labor can, once again, reshape the political landscape by engaging the imagination of a new generation.

Labor must join hands with these movements, but that, too, isn't enough. Unions must fight for an economic agenda as bold for our time as the CIO's was for an earlier time; only then will labor rebuild its ranks, and force "the powers that be" to respond to the kind of structural economic reform which is necessary to pull us out of the over-leveraged, underfinanced '80s and allow American workers to compete on an even playing field with a high-wage workforce like Germany's.

We'll never know if the New Deal would have taken hold without a militant labor movement and stubborn labor-statesmen like Lewis and Hillman. It's certainly conceivable that even FDR wouldn't have traveled the distance without a strong social movement, and an organizedLeft that offered programs with universal appeal, reshaped a presidency and a nation. DL

Jo-Ann Mort has written about labor and politics for **The Nation** *and* **Dissent**, *where she serves on the editorial board. She is director of communications at the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers' Union. A different version of this article appeared in the* Outlook *section of the Sunday, September 6, 1992 issue of* **the Washington Post**.

If we didn't have strong unions It would be just like the good old days

We think we've come a long way in Canada since the early days of union organizing and the Great Depression. Canadians are better off, right?

But take a look around. Over 400,000 jobs gone because of Free Trade. A vicious business lobby who says improving the rights of working people is "too costly". Food banks that just get busier and busier, while the rich just get richer.

Maybe these are the good old days.

Everybody's UNION

And that means we need strong unions – like the United Steelworkers – **now more than ever.**

STEELWORKERS METALLOS

The End of the Conservative Era?

Impact Visuals/Evan Johnson

Plant Manager Gary Van Patten tells Louisiana-Pacific lumbermill crew they will be laid off when the mill closes.

By Mark Levinson

Not since 1980 has a presidential election been so dominated by economic issues.

Twelve years ago, Ronald Reagan was the candidate demanding fundamental new departures. Jimmy Carter was depicted as a representative of an outlived conventional wisdom. Where the New Deal had linked social justice to economic efficiency, the new conservatism linked social meanness to economic efficiency. The workers and the poor were turned into "special interests" and the betterment of "enterpreneurs" (read: corporate America) was the way to social progress.

The Republicans had an explanation for the crisis of the 1970s. Liberals had "thrown money at problems" and "crowded out" productive investment by irresponsible social spending. They had imposed their priorities on the market. Government now was going to subsidize investment at the expense of workers and the poor. This was supposed to create a vast supply of savings that would automatically turn into new plants, and enhanced competitiveness. The role of government was to get out of the way. Such was the litany of supply side economics.

The conservatives have had their chance. They enacted their program of tax cuts, military spending and dismantling government social programs. After a deep recession in the early 1980s, the economy recovered. But it was a recovery which masked serious problems: the financial system in disarray, a dismantled manufacturing base and a drastically underfunded public sector. The recovery coincided with record levels of inequality and falling real wages for most American workers. Stagnant wages forced families to cut their standard of living or go into debt. When consumers couldn't accumulate any further debt, demand collapsed, leading the economy into recession.

The economic stagnation started before the recession. The economy has grown at an annual rate of only 0.7% since the end of 1988. Except for the period spanning two recessions in the early 1980s, which included one of the worst postwar slumps, this is the poorest three-and-a-half year performance since the 1930s.

What about the so-called recovery? Between the second quarter of 1991 and the first quarter of 1992, the economy grew a meager 1.6%. This compares with the average growth rate in the first year of past recoveries of 6.3%.

Growth has been so slow that not enough income or jobs are being generated. Due to population and productivity increases each

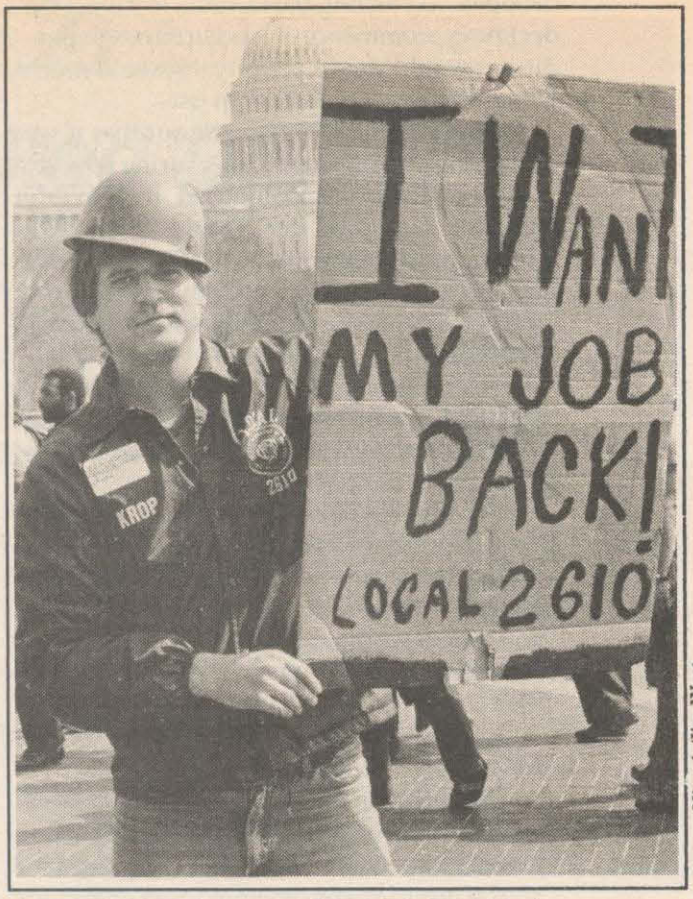
year, the economy must grow at least 2% annually just to keep employment stable. Because the economy is growing slower than that, several months into the "recovery," unemployment is higher than it was during the recession. Fewer Americans have jobs now than before the recession began, even though our labor force has grown by about two million workers.

However, not everyone was suffering. Despite anemic growth, many corporations managed strong earnings. According to a ***Business Week*** survey, after-tax profits were up 20% from a year ago. Many businesses have been increasing profit margins by cutting costs, in large part, by reducing wages and jobs. But that's the problem. Low wages and the lack of jobs means slack demand which leads to slow growth. "Recoveries," ***Business Week*** commented, "are not supposed to hurt." Yet for many Americans this recovery feels more like a recession.

The most visible symptom of the stalled economy is the lack of jobs. Almost one in five workers has been without work at some point during the last year. Not only are more people experiencing unemployment over the course of the year, but according to Harvard economist James Medoff, when someone loses a job, it is more likely to be a permanent separation, they are more likely to be unemployed for a longer period of time, and when they get reemployed, their job is likely to pay less and have fewer benefits than the previous job.

In past recessions, over 40% of job losses were temporary layoffs. In this recession, it is less than 20%. There is also a striking contrast with past recessions in the duration of unemployment. In 1973, nearly half of the unemployed were out of work for less than five weeks; during Spring 1992, the figure was only 36%. At the other end of the spectrum, in 1973 less than 10% of the unemployed were jobless for 27 or more weeks, while in the summer of 1992, the rate was close to 20%. The unemployed are also older. In 1971-73, fully one-quarter were between the ages of 16 and 19. In April 1992, the proportion was almost half that. Meanwhile, the percentage of 25 to 54 year olds among the jobless had climbed from around 40% in 1971-72 to 63% in the first quarter of 1992.

Unemployment isn't the sole issue. Millions of Americans, despite full-time employment, have insufficient income to adequately provide for their families. In their new book, **The Forgotten Americans**, John Schwartz and Thomas Volgy document how this is hidden by the outmoded way in which we measure poverty.



Impact Visuals/Jim West

If poverty is supposed to measure a family's inability to afford basic necessities, the official poverty figures drastically undercount the poor. To understand why, we must examine how the official poverty level is determined. In 1965, the Social Security Administration developed a formula for calculating the poverty line. The method involved calculating the minimum that families could spend on food while still meeting federally-approved nutrition standards. Based on a 1955 Department of Agriculture study that claimed the average family spends one-third of their income on food, the minimum food budget was multiplied by three to determine the poverty level. Since 1965, each year's poverty line has been updated by adjusting for inflation.

The poverty line figures are based on a dated breakdown as to how the average U.S. family spends its income. In 1955, supposedly one-third of our consumption dollars was spent on food. As costs of other essentials, such as housing and health care, have escalated and the general standard of living has improved, the share of income allocated to food has

dropped. Adjusting the formula to reflect the declining prominence of food in family expenditures would yield a poverty threshold much higher than the levels now in use.

Schwartz and Volgy point out that if we used the same approach to measuring poverty in 1990 that was originally used, the poverty line for a family of four would be $22,300, which is much higher than the official poverty line of $13,360. Updating the poverty measure in this way, in 1989 (before the recession), almost 63 million Americans (over one-quarter of the population) lived in poverty. Forty percent of all full-time workers (31 million workers) earned less than it took to keep a family of four out of poverty!

The administration, callously unconcerned about the extent of economic hardship, does nothing to alleviate it. In contrast to 1980, it is now conservatism that no longer seems relevant. As Guy Molyneux described the conservative dilemma:

> Ironically, the very ideas that first energized the conservative revolution--their critique of government as unable to solve problems--now threaten their hold on power. They continue to preach the limits of government, even as the public increasingly wants action on a variety of domestic problems...Without government, there simply can be no pursuit of great national purposes.

Bill Clinton's economic program, which includes an increase in public investment, a commitment to some form of national health insurance, progressive tax reform, expanded college loans and apprenticeships for non-college bound youth is more far-reaching than any Democratic candidate since George McGovern.

But what about the proliferation of low-wage jobs? Clinton would do well to listen to Lester Thurow's analysis of why Western European countries don't have this problem:

> (T)here are a number of explanations. Greater unionization and more emphasis on social solidarity in wage setting is one. More generous social welfare systems limit the individual's need to accept low-wage job offers. Foreign minimum wage laws mandate much higher wages than those required in the United States. In northern Europe minimum wages are often more than 80 percent of average wages while in the U.S. they are less than one-third of average wages...As a result, the very low wages at which workers may be hired here are simply not to be found there.

Yet domestic measures by themselves are not enough. The underlying problem of today's world economy is insufficient demand. We need stabilizers at the global level as well.

Almost one in five workers has been without work at some point during the last year.

A less deflationist IMF and World Bank could do more to alleviate the Third World debt burden and to inject investment into those areas of the world economy that now act as a drag on economic growth. William Greider, in criticizing the North American Free Trade Agreement, makes the crucial point:

> the only answer to the destructive forces of the global economy is to impose a social contract on all new trade agreements--the same kind of standards that individual nations impose on domestic producers. Products made with child labor or poverty wages or environmental destruction should be banned or penalty taxes levied until the offending corporations obey the laws. The idea is to create a trading system that pulls the bottom up instead of tearing the top down.

Electing Clinton is just the beginning of what needs to be done. The left should see Clinton's election as a point of departure to organize a movement for full employment. The goal should be not only jobs, but good jobs that produce socially desirable goods and services and provide a strong underpinning for long term economic growth. DL

Mark Levinson, is the chief economist at District Council 37-AFSCME and is a member of DSA's National Political Committee.

TIME SQUEEZE:
The Overworked DSAer

By Joanne Barkan

We all think we're drowning in work and starving for leisure. As it turns out, what we believe about our lives is mathematically true: Americans have been living the reality of expanding work time for two decades.

Anyone who wants to see the figures can find them in Juliet B. Schor's **The Overworked American: The Unexpected Decline of Leisure** (Basic Books, 1991). According to Schor (Associate Professor of Economics, Harvard University), between 1969 and 1987, annual work time for the average employed American man climbed 98 hours (about 2.5 weeks); 305 hours for American women (about 7.5 weeks).

The steep rise in work hours grew out of the woes of capital in the 1970s: higher oil prices, slow productivity growth, heightened international competition, and sluggish demand. Profits fell, and recessions deepened. In order to rescue the bottom line, employers squeezed out more hours from salaried employees, and drove down hourly pay rates after 1973, forcing workers to clock more hours to sustain their standard of living.

For Schor, the dramatic surge in work hours after 1969 counts as a specific instance of capitalism's general bias toward long-hour jobs: hire fewer workers for longer hours, and less will be spent on recruitment, training, and fringe benefits. At the macro level, this bias sustains unemployment, which in turn undermines the leverage and confidence of labor.

Schor also argues that the leisure deficit does not afflict all capitalist societies. Manufacturing employees in West Germany and France work 320 fewer hours each year (two months of labor!) than do their American counterparts. To deter the capitalist thrust, a society needs social reformers or a powerful labor movement attentive to the issue.

Longer hours at paid labor haven't been balanced by fewer hours of unpaid labor. Americans don't end the work day free to "chill out." We devote as many hours today to household work as we did eighty years ago. True, we bought washing machines, vacuum cleaners, and food processors, but standards for household labor just rose higher. Schor claims that the microwave oven is the only major appliance to save significant amounts of time. Women, of course, still do more domestic labor than men.

For Schor, the undiminished workload at home and long-hour jobs in the labor market tell only half the story. Consumerism explains the rest. We devote three to four times as many hours to shopping as West Europeans. Americans spend, accumulate debt, and then work more hours to pay their debts.

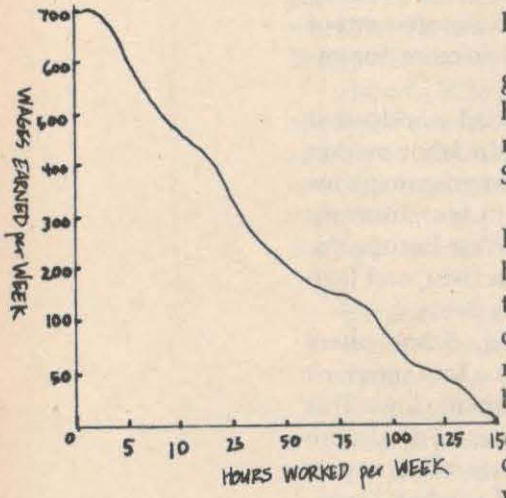
As a long-term solution, Schor offers "Buddhist economics:" enjoy a low standard of living by keeping desires equally low. This assumes a revolution in values. For a more immediate future, she suggests reforms: preset annual hours for salaried workers; overtime paid in time off; prorated fringe benefits for part-time workers; no mandatory overtime; job sharing; the option of shorter hours in exchange for productivity gains; and national standards for vacation time and paid parental leave.

The overworking of America is clearly a systemic problem requiring broad solutions. But how do you wrest major concessions during a period of economic dislocation and high unemployment, especially when the labor movement is in agony? Responses remain anecdotal and solutions individual.

Schor's book became a best seller, showing that folks are eager for information and proposals. When I read the volume, I felt relief (...so it's not just in my head...) and curiosity. If so many book buyers were interested in the overworked American, how do DSAers respond? Presumably we have a group of people sensitive to questions of labor, exploitation, quality of life, innovative alternatives, and so on. How do they experience the decline of leisure? ***Democratic Left*** agreed an investigation was in order for the Labor Day issue. What follows is my sampling of the overworked DSAer.

Larry Mishel

DC-MD-NoVA DSA; Research Director of the Economic Policy Institute (EPI).



You should know right away that EPI helped to finance Juliet Schor's research, and she thanks me in the preface to her book for my comments. So it's not as though I'm coming to her work for the first time. I certainly agree with her general propositions, but I put a different emphasis on various aspects. For example, she tends to lump the 1970s and 1980s together, and she argues that unemployment disciplines workers. I would look more closely at the role of Reaganomics. The Reagan years saw the biggest increase in workers' annual paid hours, and yet unemployment was for the most part lower than it was in the 1970s. In the 1980s, the unions were under attack. Wages and benefits deteriorated. Alternative jobs were available, but they paid much worse, and this is what disciplined workers.

I'd emphasize the relative powers of workers and employers more and the general framework of capitalism less. Every period is different. The rise in work hours in the 1980s was primarily driven by the falling wages of men. Women had to make up the difference, so more wives went to work. Feminism was also a factor. Some women wanted to go into the work force.

Schor argues that the unions gave up the fight for shorter hours after the 1940s. But much more recently, when I was an economist with the UAW [United Automobile Workers], the union negotiated more paid personal leave days. It turned out that the union was ahead of the rank and file on this issue and gave it up because workers didn't take the days. They would work for double wages during vacation. Schor's right that people want to maximize their spending power. Right now, wages have been cut, so more leisure can't be a priority for labor.

Schor's interest in leisure is that it's less consumption-oriented. She attacks the consumptionist ethic. I'm more interested in wages, income, and the reversal of workers' power. It's a difference in emphasis. Mine is more red, and hers green.

My own work schedule? You noticed I leave the office at five o'clock. I've organized my life so I eat dinner with my kids and spend some time with them. If I have more work, I do it after they're in bed. If I didn't help out, my wife would have to do it all, right? But don't get me wrong--I'm not claiming to be the world's greatest feminist. I still have lots of failures in this area. Just ask my wife--though I think I'm better than she does.

When I interviewed for this job at EPI, I explained what my routine was going to be. It was an issue, but in the end we worked it out. In this organization and similar ones, it's a hard learning process to function with contained work hours. It's a hard thing to learn.

Linnea Capps

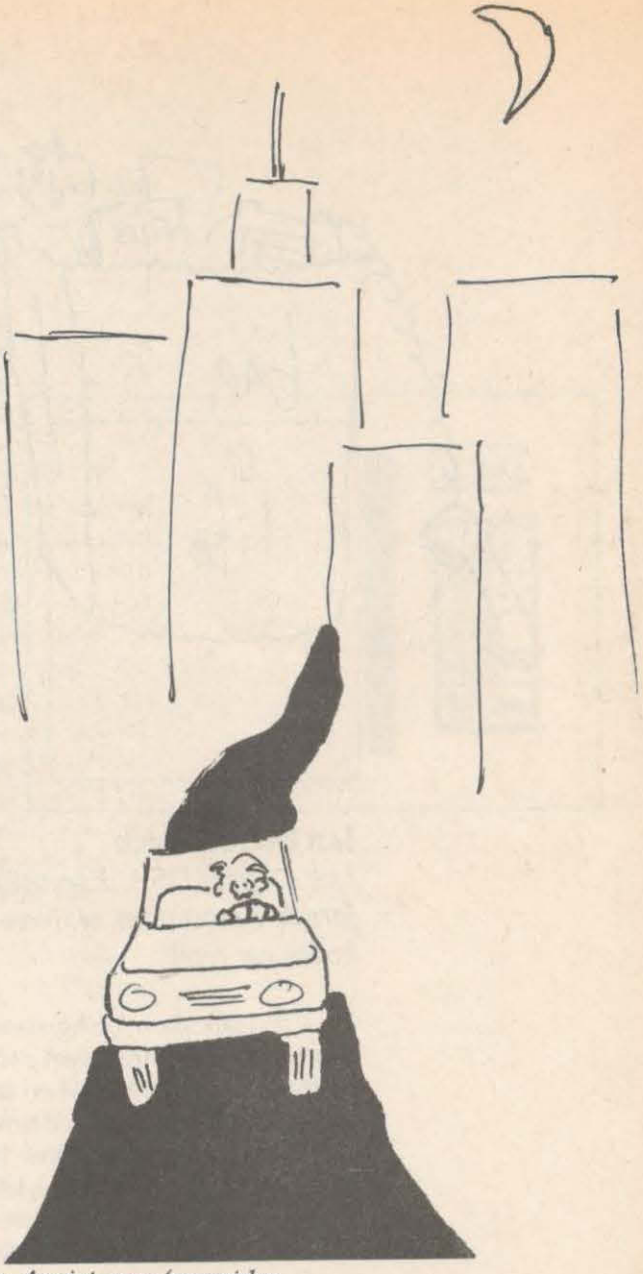
New York DSA; Chief of the Division of General Medicine at Harlem Hospital; works 50 to 55 hours per week.

I've gradually extended my work day by going to the hospital earlier and earlier. Now I'm getting there at seven-thirty in the morning and leaving at six or six-thirty. I have a long commute, so the evening at home is just two hours long, and then I have to go to bed. Sometimes I bring home reading and writing. Only on Saturdays am I awake enough to see friends. I get four weeks vacation a year. I take it all but in small pieces, usually tacked onto conferences.

I probably would like the choice of shorter hours and less salary. But it's not really an option. I'm responsible for certain things and expected to be there. Job sharing might work. I'm psychologically responsible as head of the division, but with more than one person in my position, we could divide the responsibilities. If I proposed it, I'd be told there's not enough money to hire more people. There's no money to hire a secretary. My house is always a mess. I sweep only when I see tumbleweeds rolling across the room. I grab whatever's closest to eat, like soup in the microwave. I'd lead a more civilized life if I had more time.

John Katz

East Bay DSA; Transit Planner for the City of San Francisco; member of the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers; works 40 to 45 hours per week.



I really like my job, almost everything about it. There's never a dull moment. But I'm not a workaholic. I don't work myself into the ground. My hours are pretty steady, but if I work on a weekend, I get comp time, which I take as soon as possible--usually the next week.

Am I too busy? Yes, yes! I'm a homeowner, and it's an old house that always needs work. I'm in a relationship with someone who's here only part of the time, so I commute to see her. My commute to work in San Francisco is two hours a day. I'm trying to do political work on both sides of the bay, too. If I could change anything, it would be the commute to work. I might take a job on this side of the bay even though it's less money. A cut in salary isn't key. It's the substance of my work that's important.

If I could work fewer hours for less pay, I'd do it. I don't think I'd be fired if I asked to go on four-fifths time, but it would be bad for my future. I'd like to move up a little more in my career. I'd really like six months off, but I'd lose my job because of the civil service rules.

I try to find ways to save time. If I have meetings outside the office, I set them up so they're on my way to work, to avoid going back and forth. Sometimes I take the ferry in the morning. It costs more, but it's relaxing, and I can eat breakfast there which saves time. I also try to avoid rush hours by going to work later, about nine-thirty, and coming home later.

I eat out a lot. I eat dinner near the office right after work, so I don't have to deal with food preparation and cleaning up when I get home. I clean the house one day a week. I have part of my laundry--my clothes for work--done outside. It costs about ten dollars a week, but it would take me two or three hours to do it myself. No, I don't have a microwave. Juliet Schor's book says that washing machines don't save time? I can't believe that. I have one, and I think it saves a lot of time.

Marshall Mayer

DSA at-large member in Montana; Executive Director of Desktop Assistance (provides training and consulting on information technology for nonprofit organizations); works 45 hours per week.

My list of things to do is way too long. The important stuff gets done and not the rest. I'm not neurotic about it. My wife, Bonnie, works as much as I do, but we've made it a high priority to raise our son. We spend as much time as possible with him. We try to protect our time at home in the evenings and on weekends.

I'd like to work less, even if it meant making less money, but there's not a lot of margin financially. We made a conscious choice not to join the consumer society because it takes too much money. It's hard to earn a lot in Montana. We carry almost no debt. We use things until they wear out. One of our cars is ten years old, the other twenty. We're trying to save money for a college education.

We hire babysitters, mostly high school students, for the week days until five-thirty in the afternoon. But we do this cooperatively with friends. One week the kids are at our house; the next week at our friends' house. Bonnie does more cleaning than I do. She thinks it's more important. I'm a slob. Yes, we have a VCR and a microwave, but both were gifts.

Miriam Rabban

New York DSA; Project Coordinator at the Center for the Study of Family Policy at Hunter College; works 50 hours per week.

My job is officially forty hours a week, but I work longer because I want to get more done. It's my personality. I'm a workaholic. My boss thinks I work too long and too hard, but he lets people do it their own way. So, yes, I feel too busy, but it's a personal choice.

If I were offered shorter hours for less money, I wouldn't be interested. But I would like large chunks of time off, like six months to travel, to live in Italy or Bali. It's dreaming, completely unrealistic.

If I had kids, I'd want flextime or work sharing. I think I could get it here. I've ended up working in a place where people share my values.

I don't do much housework. My home is clean but messy. I find cooking a pleasure, very relaxing. I shop on my way home from work and make something I really want to eat. I won't ever get a microwave. I'm convinced they're bad for you.

Jan Breidenbach

Los Angeles DSA; Executive Director of the Southern California Association of Non-Profit Housing; works 37 1/2 hours per week.

Can I talk about being overworked and alternatives? Sure--do you have about three weeks to listen? At my job, we had a forty-hour-week policy, but when my 5 percent raise was due, I asked to take the raise as reduced time. I ended up getting both the raise and the reduced time. Now I leave a half-hour early and avoid rush hour. I can pick up the kids, cook, and we eat by six o'clock. The kids go to bed at eight-thirty, so now I have some time with them. Why have children otherwise? It would be kind of stupid.

I'm too busy, but it's not just having two kids. It's endemic to our lives. There's no space, everything gets filled. Expectations are higher as to what we do. On the left, people are working for good causes, but overwork is part of the larger culture--computers, beepers, call waiting. No time is down time. And then there's creeping consumerism. Our friends say my family is less consumerist than most, but I can see it in us. We added on to our house, and now I look around and think, Did we need all this?

Have I found any solutions? I got rid of call waiting. Then we got a separate line and answering machine for Dan's business calls. We use a day-labor cooperative for house cleaning once a week. The co-op caters to undocumented workers. We pay an hourly rate and make a donation. They parcel out the jobs.

Basically I believe in the thirty-five-hour week with three weeks vacation plus another week at Christmas. I think the workforce would function better. How can anyone really work forty hours a week?

Barbara Baran

Boston DSA; Director of the Reemployment Assistance Program of Massachusetts; works 65 to 70 hours per week.

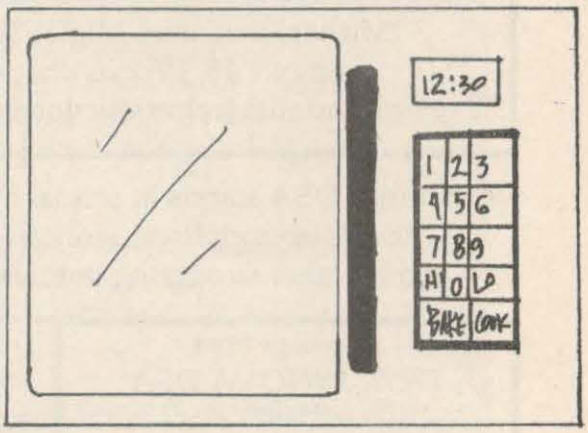
Do I want to talk about being overworked and ways to deal with the problem? You sound like my shrink. Actually, I used to work one day every weekend in addition to what I do now. But with my shrink, I decided to stop. I used to like the sense of control, the seductiveness of getting everything done.

My job has no boundaries and is extremely high stress. There's always a crisis in my face. In the evenings, I do my reading and paper work, which I find relaxing. I don't feel frazzled because I don't have small kids. I worked hard when my son was young, too, and I think it hurt him. Characterologically, I'm a workaholic.

Job sharing or taking less money in exchange for more leisure isn't something I want now. I love my job. I feel blessed. But later on, yes. I can see the stress taking a physical and psychological toll. Part of me fantasizes about running a small community program up near Dartmouth where Jim [husband Jim Shoch, DSA member] will be teaching.

Housework? We've been negotiating since we started living together. When Jim went back to school and wasn't working for money, he was supposed to take over all the housework, and I was supposed to do special projects. The problem is we have different standards. I'm compulsively clean. Lately he's been so frazzled that we clean together on the weekends. But when I begin commuting to New Hampshire on weekends, we may need to hire someone to clean once a month. It's something I've never wanted to do. We used to live somewhat communally, sharing a two-family house with my sister and brother-in-law. Now we have to do more things like gardening. I like it, but Jim doesn't.

We don't cook at all. We bought a microwave, we get frozen food, and that's it. Microwaves and frozen food used to strike me as gross. I was so humiliated at first in the checkout line in the grocery store. What are people thinking of me? But before the microwave, I spent an hour and a half cooking and cleaning up. Now it's twenty minutes. Time is key. It's sad. At work, we used to oversee fifteen placement centers. Now we have 55 centers and no new staff. We spend lots of time just trying to organize our time.



Maxine Phillips

New York DSA; Managing Editor of **Dissent** *magazine (part-time); freelance writer and editor; does not keep track of work hours.*

We participate in a babysitting co-op that covers a ten-block radius on the upper west side of Manhattan. There's a list of people who babysit for each other. When you join, you pay ten dollars, and you get ten cards, each of which is worth an hour of babysitting. The co-op is about twenty years old, but it's having trouble now. No one has asked us to babysit for months. People are more stressed out. Both members of a couple work so they have less time for the co-op and more money for regular babysitters.

There was a small dinner co-op in one of the buildings around here. Three couples took turns making a main course. So two nights a week, two couples would just take the elevator to pick up dinner. It went on for a while, but then everyone got too busy.

I don't have any other ideas on how to save time. I'm hoping I'll get some when I read your article in ***Democratic Left***. DL

GREETINGS

James E. Wolfe **Leo Edbril** **Los Angeles DSA** **Benjamin Nichols** **Sylvis Society**
Honorine & Earl M. Bourdon **Bernard & Henrietta Backer** **Bruce & Helen Brown**
Sara & Max Siegel **Krista Schneider & Joe Slater** Dorothy & Sam Tolmach Maxine Phillips
Lottie & Joe Friedman Mel & Marje Willbach Carl Schwartz & Wilda Luttermoser
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DC/MD/NOVA DSA
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Labor Day Greetings from
the Unified Team of
North Jersey DSA and **Central DSA**

In memory
of
Franz Daniel
and
Powers
Hapgood
--Philip &
Miriam Gelder

Labor Day Greetings
from Westchester DSA

Happy Labor Day--and Happy Election
Day--to all who work for social justice.
--Ruth Messinger

In memory of Michael Harrington ***Lucille Sydnor***

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You *Can* Win in the 1990s

By Greg Tarpinian

No union leader likes to lose. But not every union leader intends to win under the economic and political conditions that prevail today.

There is no easy formula, for every situation is unique. But victory is possible in the era of permanent replacements, union-busting employers, recession, intensified competition, and an anti-labor political climate.

Why are there so many defeats? Why do Caterpillar's and similar situations dominate the news?

Although victory is within reach in nearly every situation, many union leaders have not prepared their members or themselves for the 1990s victory requirements.

Union leaders must be committed to fighting smarter. They must broaden their understanding of the employer adversary and the strengths and weaknesses of their own membership. They must think broadly and strategically. They must realize that the potential at the bargaining table is determined by the union's relative power off the table, and be willing to be bold and take risks. Above all, they must take nothing for granted.

A review of union victories and losses over the last several years suggests that there are some basic elements of victory in the 1990s that are applicable to all situations.

• Unions must prepare for contract campaigns long in advance of expiration. The first element of preparation should be the development of a comprehensive membership education and workplace mobilization strategy.

• Unions need to establish rapid and efficient means of two-way communication between members and leaders. Union members should know that timing, discipline, and unity are critical to success.

• Union leaders must recognize that victory requires money, and that the principle of "pay now, or pay more later" is applicable. If a union does not have sufficient money to mount a sophisticated campaign, it should raise it: from the members, from the international union, from other unions.

• Unions must be willing to spend the money and time to wage an effective public relations campaign, winning public support for the workers, while isolating the employer as a public enemy. Effective PR limits the employer's tactical latitude.

• Union leaders must learn to think and act strategically. This means learning how to take the initiative, maintain it, and determine the terms of battle; how to surprise the enemy; how to avoid the expected and do the unexpected; how to escalate and de-escalate a campaign at the appropriate times; how to put the employer on the defensive, at the same time, giving him a way out through negotiated settlement; how to energize the troops (members) without making them unrealistic; how to act surgically to reveal potential power without falling into employer traps; how to hit the employer on multiple fronts.

• Union leaders must shed the business union mentality. Only by an effective campaign away from the table can the potential boundaries for a settlement be expanded.

• Labor solidarity is critical to any victory. This means getting concrete support, usually by pledging future reciprocal support through "solidarity pacts."

• Union must become the master of public interest. The contract fight should be perceived as a fight for "all working people" and/or for the "public welfare."

• Union leaders must understand the political, legislative, and regulatory processes affecting their industry and employer in order to efficiently target them to expand bargaining leverage.

• Unions need to identify all possible sources of employer economic power so as to undermine them in efforts to gain union leverage at the expense of the employer. Who are the employer's customers? What are the major sources of revenue? Can they be cut off or reduced? Who are the bankers and investors that the company relies on for capital? What are the economics of the production process itself?

• Union leaders must realize that every battle is a fight over costs and benefits. They must know the equation that is governing the employer's cost-benefit analysis in order to figure out the employer's "pain threshold." DL

Reprinted by permission from **Economic Notes** *May/June 1992, published by Labor Research Associates (LRA). Greg Tarpinian is the Executive Director of LRA.*

economic environment in the Third World which causes the clash between North and South.

DSA's politics are built on pragmatism and vision. We recognize that George Bush must be defeated if there is to be political space for a revived progressive politics in America. And in 1992 the only way to end to defeat twelve years of reactionary rule and to defeat George Bush is to work for the election of Bill Clinton.

DSA has no illusions about Bill Clinton; he is a leader of the moderate-to-conservative Democratic Leadership Council and has consciously distanced himself from the core constituencies of the Party: African-Americans and trade unionists. This DLC strategy of "addition by subtraction" fails to recognize that a majoritarian politics can be built around universal social and economic programs that benefit all; but which disproportionately benefit (not attack) the disadvantaged. While we welcome Clinton's call to end the divisive racial politics practiced by the Republicans, he needs to be more specific as to how his policies would redress the disproportionate suffering borne by our cities and communities of color under Reagan-Bush. And while his program for significant investment in infrastructure and job-training is welcome, his instincts will be to structure them so as not to alienate the "special interest" Wall Street community which provided the bulk of his primary campaign funds.

But, we also remember that FDR and JFK were moderate Democrats elected on relatively conservative platforms. They governed better than they planned because of pressure from social movements that took to the streets demanding government redress of their grievances after a decade of conservative neglect. As Jesse Jackson has argued, a Clinton-Gore victory would reopen space for popular movements to demand reform. Thus, while voting to defeat the Reagan-Bush era, progressives must build grassroots movements in favor of progressive legislation that a Republican presidency would definitely veto, but that a Democratic president is likely to sign if pressured from below (e.g., single-payer, universal health care; paid family leave; anti-striker replacement laws; military conversion programs, etc.).

Undoubtedly, the terrain of struggle will be better for the progressive movement under a moderate Democratic administration that, at least, rhetorically claims to be responsive to ordinary Americans. That is why Democratic presidencies have invariably witnessed popular mobilization from below (the CIO, the civil rights and anti-war movements), while Republican presidencies have been characterized by political demoralization and demobilization (the relatively quiescent 1920's, 1950's and 1980's). If any progressive doubts the stakes in this presidential election, we remind them of the words of an 83 year old Supreme Court Justice Harry Blackmun: Roe v. Wade hangs by the thread of the next Supreme Court appointment.

But a moderate Democratic administration only opens political space; it does not guarantee progressive gains. That can only be secured by progressive mobilization that continues well beyond the '92 elections to put "street heat" on the Democratic administration. Bill Clinton's moderate instincts might lead him to repeat the political disaster of the Carter years. Carter abandoned progressive constituencies by failing to push through labor law reform and by supporting regressive tax measures and a massive military build-up. These measures not only damaged the U.S. economy; they also demobilized the progressive core of the party, paved the way for the policies of the Reagan-Bush era, and guaranteed Carter`s 1980 defeat. To avoid another failed Democratic administration and the return of another bleak era of Republican dominance, the progressive movement will have to engage in permanent mobilization to pressure a Democratic presidency to live up to its rhetorical promise.

DSA pledges itself to a permanent politics of grassroots mobilization to pressure the government from below because it is the only way to address the anger, frustration and apathy that characterizes the nation in 1992. The campaigns of Brown, Buchanan and Perot tapped into these emotions. The left cannot and should not ignore the sentiments expressed by those campaigns. Both white and blue collar workers are scared and doubtful about the future. We believe that there must be a coherent leftwing response to the turmoil in our nation today. Presently, the national arena has been ceded to the center and the right. The current political climate offers a chance to engage in a bold, new kind of politics.

The Democratic primary victories of women Senate candidates points the way towards this new politics. They built campaigns on issues and with the support of a grassroots feminist movement. Frequently they triumphed with little financial backing. The victory of Braun, Boxer, Yeakel and others in the fall would substantially alter the Senate and lay the groundwork for further insurgent, progressive campaigns.

As for the Democratic ticket, the good news of the year is the reinvention of substantive government programs. The macro-economics of Clinton's campaign -- the stress on making education and job training universally accessible, for instance -- is well in advance of the Mondale campaign of 1984 and the Dukakis campaign of 1988. Unfortunately, that's not saying very much: Mondale ran on closing the deficit, Dukakis on competence.

From a democratic left point of view, there are significant shortcomings in Clinton's policies and record. First, while he rightly points to the nations of Northern Europe for pursuing policies of social solidarity that have enabled them to have more productive economies and societies than the U.S., he fails to grasp the

role of bottom-up social movements, unions in particular in building such societies. Whether his distance from unions is a function of Clinton or of governing right-to-work Arkansas, it is still a shortcoming in his record and his vision. What the Clinton economic program fails to realize is that strong and growing trade unions increase both productivity and living standards. Workers are less likely to innovate if they fear the productivity gains might mean their own unemployment.

Second, while increased access to universities, apprenticeships programs, an adequately-funded child-care policy and the like are entirely commendable, there is at bottom in Clintonomics a belief that education and training are in themselves sufficient to rebuild the American economy: educate the work force and the jobs will come. Would that markets were that efficient --and that this were the work of a year, not a generation. Clinton needs to commit to more traditional and untraditional stimulation of the economy: a new WPA program, an industrial policy that targets new industries. Moreover, Clinton's support, qualified though it may be, for the pending North American Free Trade Agreement, imperils many of the very high-skill, adequate wage jobs he talks about preserving and creating. Finally, like much of the Democratic Party leadership, Clinton is committed to a"pay-or-play" health insurance system that goes against the logic of universalism he clearly understand when it comes to other issues. Supporting a single-payer system like Canada's would be better policy -- and better politics.

Thus, the real issue for DSA and the broader progressive movement in 1992 is not who to vote for President. The issue is how to build stronger grassroots political movements that can change the political climate and generate the future political leaders who represent -- and can be held accountable to our vision of a just America.

Accordingly, the DSA NPC resolves:

•That DSA shall militantly oppose the re-election of George Bush;

•That DSA endorses an issues-based campaign at all levels of electoral politics which highlights the fight for national health care, jobs and a strong economy, and ending the racism, homophobia, and sexism that divide our society;

•That DSA will carry on this issues-based campaign primarily in grassroots campaigns for progressive Congressional and state and local candidates. It is in these campaigns that "person power" rather than advertising budgets can make a difference. And it is only at the local level that progressive constituencies can bring sufficient pressure to bear to build an independent political movement capable of moving Democrats to the left or running viable independent candidates (and holding them accountable once they gain office). We understand the frustration of some progressive activists that leads them to wish for a third party left presidential campaign. But to believe that the first step in building a viable independent politics is a top-down third party presidential candidacy misunderstands the realities of the American electoral system. There is no short-cut to independent left politics which can avoid building strong grassroots coalitions rooted in local political struggles.

Finally, while we do not support all of Bill Clinton's program, we believe the election of the Clinton-Gore ticket is a necessary (though by no means sufficient) condition for the struggle to adopt more humane social policy and to the creation of the kind of political space in which popular movements can flourish and generate the political pressure from below necessary for democratic social reforms. DL

Janie Higgins Reports

FAIR THEE WELL, SPOTTED OWLS

The government can't prevent the threatened spotted owl from becoming extinct in the the Pacific Northwest's ancient forests, according to Agriculture Secretary Edward Madigan. Madigan also joked that the 1992 GOP platform would include a farm plank calling for "More money, higher income, more markets. String all the environmentalists up." The comments came as President Bush toured California's Sequoia National Park in an effort to highlight his commitment to the environment.

BUSH, RACIALLY EXCLUSIVE?

President Bush's Executive Office of the Presidency ranked dead last among major federal agencies in employing Hispanic-Americans, according to the bi-annual report on federal employment practices by the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO). The report found that only 15 of the 1,312 employees of the Executive Office of the President were Hispanic--only 1.1%! The report also shows that 9.61% of the Justice Department are Hispanic. Only the Justice figure, among all agencies and cabinet departments surveyed, exceeded the Hispanic civilian work force percentage.

LAZY AMERICANS? DON'T THINK SO

Despite the reputation of the lazy American worker, according to the *Union Bank of Switzerland, Prices and Earnings Around the Globe* (Zurich: UBS, 1991), of the 19 major industrial nations surveyed, the U.S. ranked last, for having the lowest average for paid vacation days per year, at only 10.8. Spain has the most, with 32 fully-paid vacation days per year, followed by the Netherlands (31.9), Norway (31.4), Germany (29.9), Finland (28.6), Sweden (27.8), France (27.0), Austria (26.8), Denmark (25.0), Belgium (24.6), Italy (24.6), United Kingdom (24.5), Japan (24.0), Switzerland (23.4), Ireland (22.9), Australia (22.4), and Canada (14.7).

BUSINESS BACKS BILL

Unlike its feelings about the 1988 Democratic ticket, many of the corporate convention sponsors believe the Clinton-Gore slate has a chance to win, according to Rep. Robert Matsui, D-Calif., and Democratic National Committee treasurer. He also predicts that the GOP-supporting defense contractor community will become more willing to support the Democrats as the campaign progresses, because, as Matsui explains, "over the next 10-15 years, they are going to need to convert into civilian-type activities. These are the areas where the Democrats outshine the Republicans."

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