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Danger & Opportunity



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Eric Lee on the Arab-Israeli stalemate

Bogdan Denitch on the collapse of Yugoslavia

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EDITORIAL

THE PERILS OF NAFTA

BY FRANCIS ADAMS AND ANNE PETERS

The recently completed North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) among the United States, Canada, and Mexico is sure to spark intense and emotional debate as it moves toward congressional review later this year.

There has already been considerable speculation about who will be the primary "winners" and "losers" in this country from the creation of a regional trading bloc. The initial assumption is that while American businesses and consumers will generally benefit from the accord, some American assembly jobs will be lost as corporations shift their operations to Mexico and U.S. farmers will face increased competition from imported fruits and vegetables.

At the same time, most analysts have declared Mexico the clear-cut winner in the accord. Access to foreign markets will stimulate local export production and expanding foreign investment will bring an infusion of much-needed capital and advanced technology, modernizing the nation's industrial base and increasing productive capacity.

Expansion of the export sector is then expected to stimulate other sectors of the Mexican economy, increasing employment opportunities, raising real incomes, and laying the foundation for genuine national development.

Unfortunately, there have been few attempts to examine the differential effects that NAFTA is likely to have inside Mexico or to seriously consider the social and political repercussions of the agreement. NAFTA may be as devastating for Mexican small business and agriculture as it is likely to be to many industrial and agricultural communities across the United States.

On the one hand, certain sectors of the Mexican economy will clearly benefit from liberalized trade and investment regimes. Entrepreneurs in industry and agribusiness will benefit from access to American and Canadian markets, while professionals and skilled laborers will find expanded employment opportunities in multinational corporations, possibly with significantly better wages and benefits than they now enjoy.

At the same time, it is not at all clear that the gradual reduction of tariffs and other barriers to trade and investment would benefit the majority of working class and poor rural Mexicans.

NAFTA is likely to lead to the dismantling of a broad array of manufacturing enterprises in Mexico, as the transnationals drive out small scale artisans without compa-

nable access to capital, economies of scale, advanced technologies, or marketing skills. Small landowners will also be displaced as production of cash crops for export replaces the production of staples to meet local needs and the best lands become concentrated in the hands of a small group of foreign and local exporters. The cost of living is already soaring in Mexico. This combination could result in declining real income and increased unemployment.

Moreover, it is important to consider the type of jobs that foreign corporations are likely to bring to unskilled Mexican laborers. The maquiladoras presently operating along the nation's northern border are already notorious for low wages, poor health and safety conditions,

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"The Most Participatory Way"

Prospects for Radical Democracy in the Americas: An Interview with José LaLuz

Democratic Left: The mainstream press has written extensively about how democracy has come to Latin and South America, yet in some respects they praise a very narrow, limited vision of democracy. What are the prospects for a broader vision and program, a "radical" democracy in the Americas?

LaLuz: The various forces that are emerging in the hemisphere, the voices that are in fact putting forth an alternative vision of what democracy is, the Workers Party in Brazil, Causa Radical in Venezuela, the Party of the Democratic Revolution in Mexico, and others, have been insisting that Latin America has never truly experienced democracy, because democracy means that citizens are able to participate in any and all institutions, and that includes political parties most certainly, it includes trade unions, and most fundamentally the state. They conceive democracy in the most participatory way, so that people are involved in decision making at all levels; particularly when it comes to economic planning, planning for development of the respective countries. People should be involved in formulating policies and programs that affect their daily lives, that affect their standard of living, the quality of their lives. And that calls for, in fact, as you characterize it, a radical approach to democracy. It's not just a matter of exercising their right to vote every four or five or six years.

What we're discussing here is participation by all sections of the population, particularly those that have been deliberately and consciously disenfranchised: workers, poor people who live in marginalized communities -- these are the people who have yet to benefit from this experiment in what we call a radical democracy

in the hemisphere, and those are the people who have to become the subject, not the object, of democracy. They have to become protagonists of this political project that has yet to be implemented in our hemisphere, which calls for an expanded role in the civil society. That is our understanding of democracy.

DL: Let's make this country-specific and first talk about Venezuela. What's your view of democracy in Venezuela in light of the recent coup attempts against the social democratic government of Carlos Andres Perez, what are the prospects in Venezuela for a radical democracy?

LaLuz: The best example of what we mean by democracy has to do with the fact that growing sections of the people in Venezuela, particularly the working class and poor people, do not see the political project of our sister party in Venezuela, the Accion Democratica, led by President Perez, as one that speaks to their legitimate aspirations and interests. These attempted coups d'etat by sections of the military did not enjoy popular support; it wasn't like the civic military insurrection in the '50s that overthrew the military dictatorship in Venezuela, in which our sister party played in fact a prominent role. However, growing sections of the people identify with some of the goals of this military element that led the coup, because in fact they call for a participation of people in the economic integration processes that are being promoted by President Perez himself, and by his party in his administration.

As a result of this crisis, we see some very interesting developments. In the most recent elections in that country, the gubernatorial and municipal elections, the opposition, which includes some elements that were formerly in the

Accion Democratica, and now are part of this new party, called Causa Radical, which functions and operates more like a movement. These are the ones that have put forth a vision of

What we're talking about is a process that allows citizens to participate fully in developing their own programs. . .

radical democracy and of the need for people to participate fully and in any and all processes that affect their lives, especially economic decisions such as those that have to do with trade and investment in the Andean region (President Perez and our sister party are part of this Andean economic integration project in that region of South America). The Causa Radical is also promoting participation in redistribution policies, especially the whole question of the use of the oil resource in Venezuela, in order to bring a lot more equity in terms of the economic growth that has been attained in that country.

We have in Venezuela a very clear example of how the failure of the social democratic party to grasp the necessity to incorporate ever-growing sectors of the working class and the people into this thrust towards democratizing the state and all institutions has resulted in its own serious internal crisis. And I anticipate that this will also be the case for other sister parties.

DL: Let's turn to the situation in Brazil. I

think of particular interest to the American left has been the rise of the Workers Party in Brazil, and its very charismatic leader, Inácio da Silva, known as Lula. What can you tell us about their program in the context of radical democracy, and specifically their prospects for electoral success in Brazil?

LaLuz: That is a fascinating case in point, because when it comes to Brazil, what we're talking about is the legacy of corporatism, similar to the fascism through a populist party that dominated the state under the dictatorship of Vargas, in which the trade unions in fact were part and parcel of that political project. And now the birth, or the rebirth if you will, of the Brazilian left was the result of the thrust towards democratization, of not only the state legacy of corporatism, but also the democratization of society itself. After the decimation of the Brazilian left in the late '60s and '70s, a new left emerged with a new language, with a new practice, which is the result of the experience of the Christian-based communities, the popular education, people that did a different type of organizing within trade unions to reconstruct a progressive presence, all of which resulted in the formation of an independent trade union movement, known as the CUT, the Unitary Confederation of Brazilian Workers. Out of that whole experience, there emerged a new political formation, the Workers Party, which sees itself as the institution that has the major responsibility for democratization, of not only the state but of

Brazilian society.

Their experience has been very instructive from the point of view of those of us who subscribe to this view of radical democracy, because in the recent past they were able to win significant gains in the electoral front. For instance, they won the elections in Sao Paulo in the last round of municipal elections, as well as in other major cities in Brazil. That generated a debate within that party and its allies about what it means for people who subscribe to this view of democracy to administer and govern.

In the city of Sao Paulo, which is the country's largest city, the party advocated the creation of parallel organiza-

Riot police arrest striking civil service employees in El Salvador.



Domini DiCesare/Impact Visuals



David Munoz/Impact Visuals

tions to those municipal governing bodies, so that people would have the possibility to participate fully in developing their own proposals about how to govern better a city like Sao Paulo. That resulted in some tension: some elements in the party saw the party's role as that of supporting, without criticism, without question, the municipal administration of a leading party member, a woman who became mayor of Sao Paulo. And it's very instructive also that the party lost the election in the most recent round of municipal elections, which coincided with my visit there in November. And a lot of that had to do with discontent among the people of Sao Paulo with some of the programs or lack thereof from this Workers-Party-led municipal administration, although the party won the elections in other cities.

DL: Does this conflict, or tension, between popular and representational democracy hold broader lessons for the left?

LaLuz: Yes--that is the tension, the dialectical tension if you will, that we have to insist on when it comes to the practice of democracy. It is not enough to elect somebody to enable that person, him or her, to develop a public policy and develop programs; it becomes important for citizens to participate fully in any and all decisions, and obviously we're not talking about lobbying either. We're not talking about lobbying as it is practiced in this and other countries, where it's just a matter of attempting to monitor the work of a particular elected official. What we're talking about is a complicated,

multi-faceted process that allows citizens, that allows people, particularly those that have been systematically disenfranchised, the opportunity and the possibility to participate fully in developing their own proposals and their own policies, and ultimately their own programs to govern the municipality or to govern the state, or as the case might be, to govern a country. That is also happening in Mexico.

DL: Let's talk about Mexico.

LaLuz: In Mexico, there are similarities with the character of the state in Brazil, because we're talking once again about a one-party state, and a corporatist state, in which, since the

In a maquiladora in Guatemala City, A young woman assembles clothing for export to the U.S.

People have to become the subject, not the object, of democracy.

Mexican revolution, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) has been the only party in power. It wasn't until recently, until the last two decades really, particularly the very recent past, that there has been an opposition we can actually speak of in Mexico. And that came about as a result of the split from the PRI itself, led by the Democratic Current, elements that were identified with a section of the PRI, which included Cuahetemoc Cardenas, Porfirio Munoz Ledo, who was the president of the PRI for years, and also Mexico's ambassador to the UN, and a number of other leading figures of that party



Striking workers occupy a textile factory in El Salvador.

that seceded from the party, and coincided with some process of unification of the Mexican left after the dissolution of the Communist Party in Mexico and other left forces. All of these elements coincided and resulted in the formation of a political party that saw as its most important task the democratization of Mexico. In this case, obviously not only the state, doing away with the one-party corporatist rule, but also

their own lives on the line. In the state of Michoacán, where the PRD was the incumbent party, the fraud in the recent election also included a violent response by the PRI supporters and presumably some of its leaders that resulted in the murder of many of the PRD's organizers and leading members. The military is in fact very much controlled by this corporatist state, by this one-party state. We can sense that in Mexico this question of democratization of the state and society could be a very tumultuous and perhaps even a violent process.

This hemisphere is going to witness some tremendous changes.

DL: From this survey, what is your view of the immediate electoral possibilities for the radical democrats in the hemisphere?

democratizing society as well. And that is in fact the project of the Party of the Democratic Revolution in Mexico (PRD).

LaLuz: We anticipate that the real democracy, the participatory, popular democracy that we envision, is going to be the subject of much debate in the hemisphere in the coming years. Some of these parties that put forth and advocate this view of radical democracy have real possibilities of winning the elections in countries like Brazil of course, or in Mexico itself. In Chile there is a possibility of Ricardo Lagos, who is the leader of the democratic socialist party there, our sister party, becoming elected in the next presidential elections. So this hemisphere is going to witness some tremendous, significant changes, and the parties and the movements that are leading this see democracy as something where citizens, where people, are able to affect any and all decisions that impact their lives. And this is something that we would like to see in our own country ourselves, but it's going to be the subject of much discussion with our friends and allies in the coming months.

The complications, however, are perhaps more serious because the powers of the presidency in Mexico are perhaps unparalleled in the history of so-called democracy in Latin America. *Presidencialismo*, as they describe it in Mexico, has no precedence in Mexico itself and the rest of Latin America, because as you know in Brazil, which has a similar history, the fact remains that the legislative body was able to impeach the president, and Collor had to step down, and now a deal was dropped recently where would not have to be tried, I believe. But in Mexico, that's inconceivable.

The conventional and popular wisdom is that the 1988 presidential election was in fact won by Cardenas. At that time, he was the leader of the broad-based opposition known as the Democratic National Front. And so the party in Mexico has made democracy its utmost priority, and in Mexico that has meant putting

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DSA Action

Youth Section

Fourteen members of the DSA Youth Section, along with two comrades from the New Democratic Youth of Canada, traveled to the U.S.-Mexican border January 5-12 to gather information about human rights and environmental abuses being committed by U.S. companies in the maquiladora zones.

Many observers believe that these abuses will increase if the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is ratified. The youth section planned this investigative trip as the first component of a broader anti-NAFTA organizing campaign.

The students visited several maquiladora industrial parks and workers' neighborhoods in the Mexican cities of Matamoros and Reynosa. In Matamoros, across the border from Brownsville, Texas, students met with former maquila workers who are organizing an underground movement to improve wages and working conditions. They are demanding basic rights such as warning signs printed in Spanish and 30-minute lunch breaks. In Matamoros, the students witnessed toxic dumping by General Motors, Zenith, and Stepan.

While in Texas, the students were hosted by local leaders of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union. ACTWU and several other unions provided crucial support for the trip.

Feminist Commission

The DSA Feminist Commission held a conference entitled "Socialist Feminists: Who Are We Now?" January 8-10 in Washington, D.C. The conference was designed to help set a socialist feminist agenda for the Clinton era.

Over 100 people attended the opening-night plenary, which featured Heidi Hartmann of the Institute for Women's Policy Research, NOW president Patricia Ireland, D.C. activist Gwen McKinney, and Kay Ostberg of the Human Rights Campaign Fund.

Saturday afternoon's session was entitled "Breaking Bread: Can We Be Part of a Multiracial Women's Movement?" Speakers included Juanita Webster, of DSA's African American Commission and the Feminist Commission; Tomasa Gonzalez, of DSA's Latino/a Commission and the Feminist Commission; and Cindy Deitch of the Feminist Commission.

The Feminist Commission plans to compile a detailed report of the conference, including synopses of all the major speeches and notes from each workshop. The report should be available by late February. To obtain a copy, send \$10.00 to the Commission: 5123 Fifth Street NW, Washington, DC 20011.

Fighting for Hope: Remembering Petra Kelly

by Eleanor Mulloney LeCain

Petra Kelly, an outspoken champion for peace, a healthy environment, and human rights for all, was found dead on October 19 at the age of 44.

The official statement maintains that she was killed by her companion, general-turned-pacifist Gert Bastion, who then allegedly killed himself. However, Petra and Gert had recently received death threats, and there is some speculation that they could have been murdered by Nazis because of their work for human rights in Germany.

We may never know the cause of Petra Kelly's death. But we do know the causes she championed with her too-brief life.

Petra Kelly was an extraordinary woman, a tireless fighter whose words and deeds helped change the political landscape. In 1979, she co-founded the Green Party in Germany, for which she served in parliament from 1983 until 1990. She published numerous books and articles on ecology, feminism, peace, and human rights.

I first met Petra ten years ago, when I was in Europe doing some human rights work. I was immediately struck with her intelligence and verve. She was full of life and compassion and fight. Our paths crossed over the years at various conferences where she inspired me and countless others with her clarity of thought and her courage. She was a firebrand with a vision.

It is tragic that at a time of darkness, we have lost a woman who could help light our way.

Petra believed passionately in nonviolent transformation to a more peaceful, just, and ecologically sustainable civilization. Although she has died, that vision lives.

ON THE LEFT



by Harry Fleischman

ALASKA

Alaska DSAers met December 9 to discuss "Political Restructuring: Opportunities and Options in the 1990s."

In Alaska as elsewhere, 1992 was a year of political gains for women. Two progressive Democratic women defeated two reactionary, pro-life male Republicans for State Senate seats representing South Anchorage and the Kenai Peninsula.

CALIFORNIA

DSAer Bonnie Anderson, a student at Los Angeles Valley College, helped launch the L.A. wing of the "Bite 'Em Back Campaign," the movement to recall Governor Pete Wilson.

DSA activists Barbara Hooper and Donna Wilkinson host a radio program entitled "Voices from the Left: A Socialist Perspective." It's heard every other Friday at 5:00 pm on KPFK 90.7, the Los Angeles Pacifica station.

Los Angeles DSA plans a March tour to Vancouver, BC to learn first-hand about the merits of the Canadian health care system.

INDIANA

Indiana DSA has voted to make support for the United Farm Workers' boycott of California table grapes a top priority for 1993. They

plan to work to strengthen the boycott campaign throughout Indiana. An organizing tour by Arturo Rodriguez of the United Food and Commercial Workers is planned for the spring.

ILLINOIS

Chicago DSAers have just published a six-page leaflet, *Raise Hell with Chicago Democratic Socialists*, welcoming progressives into membership. It features comments by United Steelworkers leader Ed Sadlowski; Dr. Ron Sable, the Illinois chair of the Physicians for a National Health Plan; Vicki Starr, who appeared in the film *Union Maids*; political scientist Jane Mansbridge; and theologians Rosemary Reuther and Michael Dyson.

Chicago DSA also sponsored four panels at the Midwest Radical Scholars and Activists Conference, which was held at Loyola University in late October. DSA speakers at the conference included Bogdan Denitch, Bob Fitrakis, and J. Hughes.

IOWA

Iowa City DSA is working with Iowans Against the Death Penalty to fight legislation that would legalize capital punishment in the state. They urge Iowans to contact State Representatives Mona Martin, Bob Rafferty, and Dick Weidman, the undecided members of the Iowa House Judiciary Committee.

KENTUCKY

The *Kentucky Socialist Banner's* December edition featured election reflections on social change and left values, noting that "our first order of business" is to hold Clinton

and Gore "to their promises."

MINNESOTA

Stephen Peter, a DSAer who is also a member of the German Social Democratic Party, spoke at a meeting of the St. Paul-Minneapolis DSA in November on the political situation in Europe.

DSAers Gene and Anita Martinez hosted a fundraiser for the Wellstone Alliance. Senator Paul Wellstone spoke to the DSAers and Democratic Farmer Laborites in attendance.

NEW YORK

On January 15 New York City DSA held a forum entitled "Our 100 Days or Theirs?" at which the meaning of the Clinton victory for radical activists was discussed. Speakers included DSA vice chair Jim Chapin, Noreen Connell of the Education Priorities Panel, and Gale Brewer, the federal liaison for New York City.

NYC DSA held a fundraising bash on December 7 at which longtime activists Ruth and Victor Sidel were awarded the Paul Du Brul Memorial Award. Approximately 150 people gathered to honor the Sidels, to enjoy a performance by Pete Seeger and Randy Harris, and to hear remarks by Manhattan Borough President Ruth Messinger and other political and labor leaders.

Ithaca DSA celebrated Bill Clinton's victory with, appropriately enough, a waffle brunch.

PENNSYLVANIA

DSA's DELCO / Seventh Congressional District branch met November 22 to discuss "The Elections and Beyond: Where Does the Left Go From Here?"

Who Wants Peace in the Middle East?

Facing the stumbling blocks in the Rabin era

BY ERIC LEE

For fifteen years the Israeli left had a two-word solution for the hundred-year-old Jewish-Arab conflict: elect Labor. The only thing preventing the outbreak of a wondrous era of peace and reconciliation, we said, was the Likud government in Israel.

Six months after Labor's spectacular return to power in the early days of summer, it has now become clear that there are, in fact, two obstacles to peace in the Middle East.

One, as we have discovered to our sorrow, is the Arab side. The Syrians continue to back terror, and to back away from serious negotiations, even when offered the Golan Heights in exchange for a peace treaty. The Lebanese will do nothing unless and until Damascus gives the green light; negotiating with the Beirut politicians as if Lebanon had an independent government is absurd. Jordan and Israel could sign a peace treaty today; in fact, they could have signed one years ago. There are no serious issues dividing the two countries. But Hussein is no Sadat, and will not dare to risk signing an agreement with Israel before the Syrians have done so.

Tragically, the Palestinians are also a stumbling block. The election of Labor in Israel, rather than forcing the Palestinians to adopt more moderate positions and prepare themselves for compromise, has had no readily apparent positive effect. To the contrary, the Palestinian voices urging an abandonment of the peace process have grown louder day by day.

The second obstacle to peace, it is now becoming clear, is the Rabin government itself. For all its talk of giving up the Golan Heights, its appeals to Syrian dictator Assad to come to a summit meeting, its repeal of the Likud govern-

ment's disgraceful ban on Israeli-Palestinian contacts—despite all the fireworks of the Labor government's "peace offensive," Israel has not offered much more now than it did in the days of Begin and Shamir.

Israel still does not recognize the PLO as a legitimate (or even illegitimate) partner in the peace process. Years ago Israeli leftists would say that the day will come when Israel will look back fondly upon Arafat; the radicalization of the Palestinians would make Arafat look like a moderate. That day has now arrived. The PLO, for better or worse, is the best negotiating partner Israel can find among the Palestinians. The alternative is a nightmare: the murderous Islamic Resistance Movement, known as Hamas. As some recent elections in the occupied territories have shown, Hamas has begun to displace the PLO as the key player among the Palestinians. And still the Rabin government will not talk to the PLO.

Israel will not concede even in principle, even at this early stage, that it is prepared to negotiate with the Palestinians on the basis of UN Security Council resolutions 242 and 338. What this means is that Israel is not willing to give up land for peace when it comes to the Palestinians. The Rabin government is adamant: there will never be an independent Palestinian state between Israel and the Jordan River.

Finally, Israel's version of Palestinian autonomy is no different from the version offered by Menachem Begin at Camp David. Autonomy is not seen as a transitional stage prior to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. It is not being offered to the tens of thousands of Palestinians who live in Israel's capital, Jerusalem. And thanks to a quarter century of Israeli occupation, tens of thousands

of Jewish settlers scattered throughout the territories make the implementation of any autonomy proposal nearly impossible.

No wonder the peace talks are going nowhere.

Journalists and politicians keep coming up with good reasons to explain the delays. The Israelis and Arabs are awaiting the results of the Israeli elections. They're waiting for the results of the American elections. Now we're all waiting for Bill Clinton's inaugural. By the time this article appears in print, the excuse will be something like the local council elections in Norway.

The fact is that neither side is actually in any hurry to reach a peace agreement. The Arab governments negotiating with Israel (including the state-on-its-way, Palestine) are, without exception, impoverished, dictatorial regimes that derive all of their popular legitimacy from the persistence of the conflict. Take away the "Zionist threat" and tyrants like Assad and Hussein will be hard-pressed to think of a reason why they should be allowed to remain in power a moment longer. You really have to live in close proximity to these countries to understand exactly what this means. Jordan's state-owned television, for example, exists, one would think, solely to remind Jordanians about all the terrible things going on across the river, in Israel, and of the wonderful job King Hussein has been doing all these forty-some-odd years in fighting off the Zionists. Even Saddam Hussein justified his invasion of Kuwait as part of a master plan to reconquer Jerusalem from the infidels. The Arab dictators want an end to the conflict about as much as the East German Communists wanted an end to the Cold War. And their regimes would survive just about as long following the signing of the peace treaties.

While the Israeli people are hungry and thirsty for peace (as are the Arab masses, no doubt), Yitzhak Rabin and his comrades on the right wing of the Israel Labor party are another story. Rabin was never the great spiritual leader of the Israeli peace camp. When hundreds of thousands of Israelis were marching against the insane war in Lebanon, Rabin was urging the Likud government to cut off the water supply to Beirut. When Rabin had the chance to cope with the Palestinian intifada, back in 1988, he gave the famous order to break arms and legs. Today he takes every opportunity to bash his opponents on the left, as he did throughout the election campaign, when he equated the Israeli democratic left with the lunatic fringe Right.

I don't think that the current stalemate will

last forever. On the contrary, I would expect that within a few months, once Clinton is inaugurated and Norway has held its local elections and whatever else has happened--I would expect a very dramatic change.

And in expectation of that change, I know that I should be taking my gas mask down from the attic and looking around for some masking tape and plastic sheeting. Because we're either going to begin making progress in the peace talks, or we're going to sleep in bomb shelters and "sealed rooms." Syria's bloody despot has said again and again that the alternative to progress in the talks is war. His word is to be taken seriously. The Syrians have attacked Israel twice in my lifetime. King Hussein says the same thing all the time. Hussein is not talking about Jordan attacking Israel -- he means the possibility of a Syrian-Israeli war. And when Syria attacks, bygones will suddenly be bygones, and Iraq will rush to aid its Arab brothers with a few dozen Scud missile launches.

So much for the new world order.

A major war is, I think, not inevitable. It is possible, even likely, that it can be prevented. It can be prevented if both sides, or even one side, realizes that the stakes in the Middle East have been raised dramatically since the last time that Israel and Syria had a full scale fight, back in 1973. Chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons have come into the region in wholesale quantities, at must-liquidate-inventory prices, thanks to the end of the cold war.

Does the United States have an interest in preventing a "limited nuclear conflict" on the shores of the eastern Mediterranean? Does Europe? Do the Israelis and Arabs understand what their governments fail to grasp? I don't know.

My regular-guy friends in the army reserves, the ones who used to vote Likud but this time went for Rabin, like to answer: yeah, but what about Palestinian terrorists firing mortar at Tel Aviv's suburbs? And what about Jerusalem, the eternal capital of the Jewish state? And the importance of the Golan in defending the eastern Galilee? And the spiritual attachment of the Jewish people to Hebron and Nablus?

I think of the alternative, and tell them that land for peace is not such a bad idea.

Eric Lee, a member of Kibbutz Ein Dor, is author of Saigon to Jerusalem: Conversations with Israel's Vietnam Veterans and the forthcoming Mole: Stalin and the Okhrana.

Facing the Worst in Former Yugoslavia

*With neo-fascist parties ascendent, can the democratic forces survive?:
An interview with Bogdan Denitch*

Editor's note: Democratic Left caught up with DSA Vice-Chair Bogdan Denitch between international flights to discuss the crisis in former Yugoslavia. Denitch was an almost successful candidate for the Croatian parliament in elections this past summer.

Democratic Left: You've just returned from former Yugoslavia. What's your view of the situation there?

Denitch: I visited Belgrade, Zagreb, and Ljubljana in three of the main republics. I spent as much time as I could with the opposition in Belgrade, which was totally demoralized, as a result of the December 20 election, where, to almost everybody's shock, about 30% of the electorate voted for a fascist party, and another, let's say 5%, 6% voted to send an additional batch of killers into the parliament. People expected [Serbian President] Milosevic to probably win, and [Yugoslavian President] Panic was after all a very peculiar figure; it wasn't quite clear to what extent he represented American interests, to what extent he was a free booter. But nobody expected an openly fascist party to win as many votes as it did. The fascist figures in this particular case had obviously been instruments of Milosevic's government and of the police. Once you get 30% of the vote, however, you're no longer just an instrument; it's a case of a tool becoming independent and terribly dangerous.

Croatia is not as wild a scene, it's much more legal. Croatia was a victim of Serbian aggression in the war of 1990-91, but it's an autocratic presidential system and a repressive state. My close comrade who was supposed to have set up a labor operation for the Social Democratic Union got killed on December 17 on

his doorstep by killers who stabbed him after ringing his doorbell. They have not been found by the police, which hasn't got a trace of anything -- they did make an announcement that it was not a political killing. The United States embassy in Croatia is excessively willing to give credit to the Croat authorities for good motives, which I will not at this time.

DL: Can you give us a sense of the relationship of the Milosevic government in Serbia to the Serbs in Bosnia and how that affects the conduct of the war?

Denitch: The war in Bosnia is waged by the Serbs in Bosnia who could not wage it without the military, logistic and political support of the Milosevic government. I regard the Milosevic government as responsible, first, for breaking up Yugoslavia. I think Yugoslavia was a lesser evil than what followed. I do not agree that the national break up of Yugoslavia was necessarily a step towards democracy. The Serbian regime killed Yugoslavia. Once Yugoslavia was killed, it was a problem of what does one do with the successor states? And obviously, our comrades there, who are a large number by the way, wanted at least individual republics, like Serbia, Bosnia, Slovenia, and Serbia, to be democratic states with powerful labor movements and strong democratic socialist organizations. The war made that almost impossible. And what you have is a remarkable similarity in domestic policies between the Milosevic and the Croat governments: both repress workers; both, practically speaking, ban strikes; both have blocked the formation of free trade unions; and both have turned the factories which were run by some kind of workers' self-management structures into state run factories. In fact, the anti-communist, post-communist regimes national-

ized the factories that had been in the hands of workers, as a preliminary to trying to privatize them.

But what's going on in Bosnia is an endless horror. The overwhelming majority of the dead are civilians: the elderly, women, and children. The Serbian regime and its militias in Bosnia are guilty of the political use of mass rape as an instrument of ethnic cleansing, i.e., of shifting a population. The European Community, for example, reports that some 20,000 women have been raped, most of them gang raped in public, in order to make their families' stay in the areas intolerable. They have held some of the raped women for months so that they'd be forced to bear children.

DL: In the last couple weeks we've been reading some reports in the U.S. press about so-called progress in the peace talks. What's your perspective on these reports?

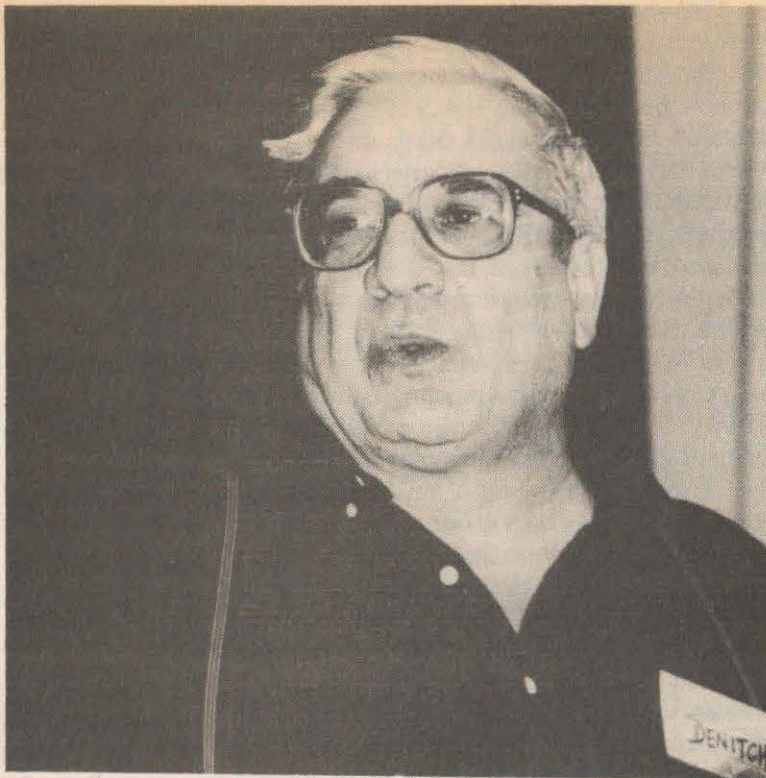
Denitch: I think the barbarians have won. The barbarians, mostly on the Serb side, but also partially on the Croat side, have had one message: that you can't have multiethnic communities living side by side. Through their massacres they have in fact created a situation where it is now probably impossible for people to live side

by side, where you need a U.N. protectorate for a period of five to ten years to prevent revenge and counterrevenge, massacre and counter-massacre -- because while the Serbs have to be defeated in Bosnia, and I think this is a case where there is a need for an international military intervention against the Serbs, just defeating the Serbs will not solve the problem, because one also has to assure that some kind of a civilized solution with human rights and protection of minorities results.

[U.N. envoy Cyrus] Vance, in my opinion, has rewarded aggression by proposing a partition which goes against the interests of the majority of the Moslems: it rewards the Serbs and the Croats at the expense of the Moslems, who are the most numerous group. And he goes on with a liberal paradigm that it's always better to negotiate and talk. The answer is, yes, it would be if the fighting had stopped and they were talking endlessly; but while they were talking endlessly, children were being murdered, women were being gang raped, and the Serbs kept expanding the territory they hold. The Croats quietly, while no one was watching, also expanded their territory. So the talks were a reflection of the helplessness of the international

Bosnian militiamen march through a Sarajevo cemetery.





DSA Vice
Chair
Bogdan
Denitch

community to create some instruments to deal with this kind of aggression.

DL: What's your perspective on U.S. intervention?

Denitch: Intervention should have taken place in April or May when the war broke out. By now hundreds of thousands of people are in peril of dying or have died, and even if the fighting were now to stop by some miracle, some hundreds of thousands of people would die, because the winter has set in and the cities have been destroyed. There should be military intervention now to prevent the continued massacres in Bosnia, there should be a clear warning that any move south towards Macedonia of course would get an immediate response, there should be a continued blockade. But I think the U.S. has a scandalous position on this, that it will intervene or not intervene, but that its troops will not be under U.N. command. That's precisely wrong. What we want is an international peace force to be able to intervene in this case, and the U.S. has not been picked to be the world policeman. I don't think that there should be a ground intervention, I think that that's too late, but I do think that it is necessary to take out the artillery which is bombarding the cities, the tank units, which give the Serbian and the Yugoslav army an edge, and that it is necessary to open up corridors so that the population in Sarajevo and the other cities can escape, can

save their lives.

The Bosnian government is also playing a cynical game; it's not letting anybody leave Sarajevo, because if everybody leaves Sarajevo there's no Bosnian government anymore. So they're also treating people as pawns.

DL: What do you think that DSA members, and the American democratic left, should be doing in relation to Yugoslavia?

Denitch: I think, to begin with, we have to insist with our representatives and our friends in Congress and the Senate, that the American policy of not allowing in refugees and not allowing people who are fleeing the holocaust in Bosnia into the States is a horror that has to stop. I think it's cynical to argue that to accept the refugees is to accept ethnic cleansing; no, it's not. It's providing minimal, humane help to people who are victims.

Second place, there is the one missing factor: help from us, from the labor movement and from the democratic community, to the heroic opposition against the Milosevic government in Belgrade and the government in Croatia. At the present time, the Swedes have been helpful, and a few of the smaller European countries; American money has been badly misspent because of the scandalous situation we have with the National Endowment for Democracy, which has been in the hand of inveterate cold warriors, who are simply not interested in helping the existing democratic forces. They don't fit their particular image of what those should be. We desperately need to provide help for the organizations like the Social Democratic Union of Croatia and circles defending human rights in Serbia. Even small funds would help those now trying to create some labor defense offices in four major cities to defend individual workers from repression, and to defend democratic unions. I think here is a case where even small scale outfits like ours can make a difference in life and death.

Bogdan Denitch has established an account to support the democratic forces in the former Yugoslavia. Those interested in contributing can make checks payable to the Institute for Democratic Socialism -- Yugoslavia Fund, and send to IDS, 15 Dutch Street, Suite 500, New York, NY 10038.

Bogdan Denitch is a Vice Chair of DSA and the chair of DSA's International Affairs Committee. He is one of the founders of the Social Democratic Union of Croatia, which is a sibling party of ours.

Adams & Peters

continued from page 2

long working days, forced overtime, and the use of child labor. Workers attempting to organize in these assembly plants are frequently harassed, threatened, fired, or imprisoned.

NAFTA promoters have largely downplayed or ignored these social and human costs. While these conditions have been criticized, they are nonetheless an integral part of the "competitive advantage" which Mexico offers to the relocating plants.

In short, NAFTA is unlikely to alter the structural injustices which presently exist in Mexican society. If anything, the accord will preserve and intensify existing

inequalities, reinforcing the very conditions that generate poverty and underdevelopment in the first place.

So it is misleading to frame the impending debate over NAFTA as primarily a conflict between the interests of American and Mexican workers. The agreement does not represent a victory for poor and working class people in either country. Rather it tends to advance the interests of a fairly narrow economic elite in both nations, facilitating the growth of investment capital by increasing access to natural resources and cheaper labor in both Mexico and the United States.

Francis Adams teaches in the Politics Department at Ithaca College. Ann Peters is a doctoral candidate in Anthropology at Cornell University. They are both members of the Committee on United States-Latin American Relations at Cornell.

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Janie Higgins Reports



MURPHY'S SWEATSHOP

Dan Quayle may be happy to learn that Sprint Long Distance, despite its television endorsements from *Murphy Brown's* Candice Bergen, is hardly a hot-bed of feminism. Predominantly male and predominantly female jobs at Sprint have a wage gap roughly 25 percent wider than the comparable gender gaps at AT&T. Sprint operators are also subjected to management eavesdropping, speed-ups, and a complete lack of scheduling flexibility. Could the difference here be the absence of a union at Sprint, perhaps? Memo to Candice: Television characters aren't the only women who deserve dignity on the job.

YOU SAID IT

Here's Iowa City DSA's 1992 "Inadvertant Moment of Truth" Award: Karl Luther, the administrator of a Sioux City nursing home, dropped his facility from Medicaid and forced some of the poorer residents to move. "That's living in America," he observed.

DEBS PRIZE

The Eugene V. Debs Foundation will be awarding the fourteenth annual Bryant Spann Memorial Prize for the best article "written in the Debsian spirit of social protest and reform." Previous winners of the \$1000 award include DSAers Todd Gitlin, Adam Hochschild, Jack Metzgar, and Richard Cloward & Frances Fox Piven. Deadline: April 30. For more information, call 812 232-2163.

PAT'S BOUNTY

Colorado for Family Values, the far-right organization that successfully fought for the passage of the state's anti-gay-rights referendum, has given its organizational apparatus over to the Christian Coalition, the national political group headed by television preacher Pat Robertson. Robertson deserves our thanks for having called George Bush's New World Order "a Satanic plot," but we can do without his homophobic political campaigns.

Meanwhile, similar anti-gay organizing efforts have been reported in Idaho, Maine, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, and Washington state. The time to fight these efforts is now.

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more information soon

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