

Inside: Evaluating the 1994 Elections

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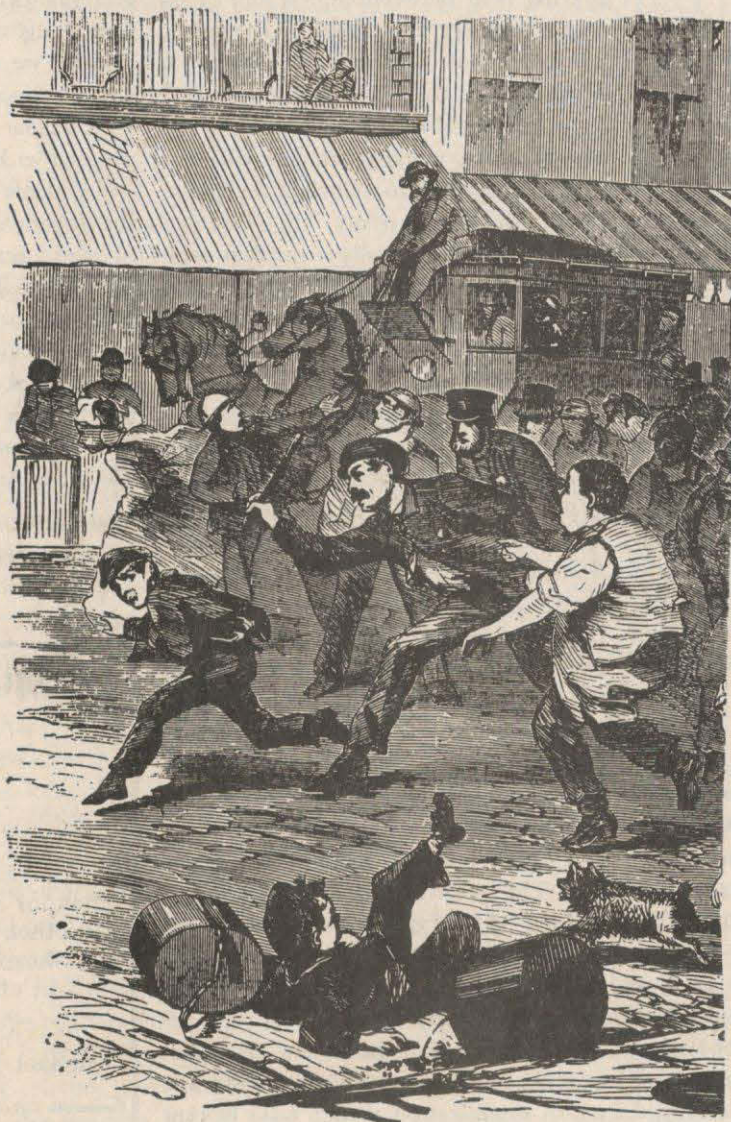
# DEMOCRATIC Left

November/December 1994

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## Crime and Our Communities

# Inside Democratic Left

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cover: Detail of "Stop, Thief!" This engraving originally appeared in the October 31, 1868, issue of *Harper's Weekly*.

## EDITORIAL

### GATT AND WORKERS' RIGHTS

BY PAUL GARVER

The proposed world trade deal embodied in GATT is a radical experiment that would further tilt the scales in favor of transnational corporations and against the interests of workers all over the world.

Successful completion of the GATT Uruguay Round and the World Trade Organization (WTO) it would establish is ultimately aimed at creating global free trade. As trade barriers are reduced, capital flows are deregulated to allow investment wherever the potential yield is highest. New telecommunications technology permits effective coordination of complex activities in all corners of the world. In principle any commodity, product, or service can be created anywhere in the world to be sold anywhere else.

The social consequences of economic globalization are staggering. One side effect of the anticipated mass migration from country to city, as agriculture is modernized, will be the addition of hundreds of millions of new entrants into an urbanized global work force available for industrial production. These workers increasingly come into direct competition with workers in developed countries, whose labor costs are many times higher. Not only does this pose a direct challenge to workers' living standards in developed countries -- it also makes it difficult for workers in developing countries that have begun to organize unions to negotiate improvements in their own conditions, since rootless transnationals can threaten

to move further on.

If labor were as mobile as capital, the playing field between capital and labor would quickly right itself. Of course, people cannot, and will not choose to, move around the world at the speed of light (as capital increasingly can). In the very long run, workers can and will organize themselves into unions at the global level, thus mounting an effective counterforce to globally organized capital. But this will involve generations of struggle to overcome barriers among workers with different histories, cultures, and languages.

Meanwhile, we must put a spoke into the wheels of an economic globalization that contains no protection for workers. While farmers and environmentalists took to the streets, forcing a few concessions within GATT, labor's polite advocacy of a social clause to protect workers' rights was ignored because of opposition from most developing countries—until the battle over NAFTA forced the U.S. government to push harder. Now the Preparatory Committee for the WTO is mandated to consider whether worker rights can be linked to trade.

This concession is too little and too late. The governments of China, India, and the ASEAN countries are totally opposed to any social clause. China is not about to give up its "competitive advantage" secured by child, forced, and repressed labor, and the others agree that genuine freedom of association and trade union organization would raise worker living standards too quickly for the comfort of international investors. Recognizing this impasse, none of the three candidates for head of the WTO has shown the slightest interest in this linkage.

Nor should we have the slightest interest in a WTO that will accelerate globalization without safeguards for worker rights. By defeating GATT ratification, we will not stop the process of global economic integration. But we will send a clear signal that it can no longer proceed without us.

Outside the GATT office in Geneva, the Japanese delegation to GATT has planted a scraggly tree with the sign: "In GATT We Trust." There are those who genuinely believe that the process of global free trade will create a new world of peace based on economic prosperity. We too favor a new world, but ours must include all of the world's people, not just the elites. And have room for trees. **DL**

*Paul Garver, a DSA member, lives in Geneva and works for the IUF, an international association of unions in the agricultural and food sectors.*

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# Learning to Live With the Crime Bill

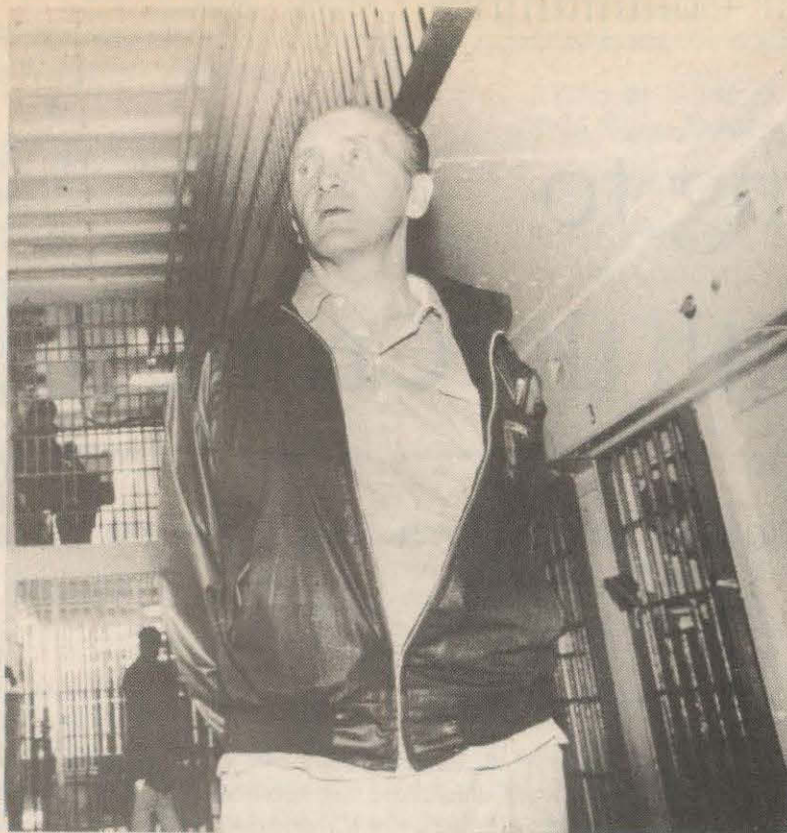
## A Few Constructive Tasks for a Reactionary Time

BY ELLIOTT CURRIE

When it comes to crime and justice, the past year has been a tough one for progressives, to say the least. Just as many of us thought we were making some progress in breaking the right's stranglehold on the issue, we were knocked flat by a seemingly inexorable resurgence of Draconian responses to crime that have ranged from the merely reactionary to the bizarrely destructive. This spring, California passed so-called "three strikes and you're out" legislation. Over the long term, the prison costs associated with this law will eviscerate what's left of the state's crumbling public sector, condemning its public system of higher education to spiraling decline and decimating every public institution in the state that might actually prevent crime. Other states aren't far behind. And the general public discourse on crime and punishment, even from plenty of liberals, has swerved sharply and appallingly to the right.

Meanwhile, Congress managed in August to pass an Omnibus Crime Bill that, while in many ways an improvement over the unmitigated atrocity passed last November by the Senate, remains a maddening hodgepodge of the good, the indifferent, and the dreadful. Is there anything in it for us? Yes, I think so—if we are very, very careful and move very, very quickly. But figuring out just how progressives might best make use of this legislation in ways that could really improve the safety of our communities isn't so simple, and it requires a hard look at just what the Bill has to offer.

First, the bad news. The Bill continues to tilt federal anticrime resources toward incarceration, in the face of the manifest failure of twenty years of an unprecedented prison "boom" that has given us the world's highest imprisonment rate *and* the developed world's highest rate of violent crime. And it would force many states to spend even more. In all, the Bill authorizes almost \$10 billion for prisons, nearly \$8 billion of which goes for two closely related provisions, called "Violent Offender Incarceration Grants" and "Truth In Sentencing Incentive Grants." Both work in much the same way; they push states to adopt "tougher" sentencing in order to be eligible for money to help pay for more prison space, which of course they will need if they do what the feds ask. States like California, which have already passed legislation mandating that offenders serve 85 percent of their sentences and a broad, wide-net "three strikes and you're out" law, may benefit by having the feds pay for a large part of their stupefyingly high future prison costs—but only a part: California's Legislative Analyst estimates that the maximum federal allotment under these provisions will bring \$1.2 billion to the state, assuming the state coughs up another \$1.2 billion in matching funds. The resulting money would be enough to build about five of the twenty-five new prisons the state says it will need to house its projected inmate population by the year 2000. States that don't already have sentencing practices that are as harsh as the federal ones would have to create them in order to



Donna Blinder/Impact Visuals

Rahway Prison,  
New Jersey.

get the federal help—a classically self-defeating course that would burden them with budget-busting costs down the road.

And the *really* bad news about this is that the \$10 billion thrown at new prisons will come in good part from reductions in other spending programs—as, indeed, will everything else in the Crime Bill, even its good provisions. This fact isn't well known, because the bill's arcane financing mechanisms are poorly understood by the public (and even by some legislators) and have shifted

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**E**ven the best use of these funds will only take us so far. The most important long-run attacks on crime must involve things that go far beyond the Crime Bill.

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importantly over the course of the Bill's tortuous passage through Congress. Initially, the money for the Crime Bill was supposed to come from the "reinventing government" efforts of the National Performance Review—that is, we'd pay for crime-fighting with the savings derived from firing 270,000 federal employees. That strategy was troubling enough—the concept of fighting crime by putting a quarter of a million Americans out of

work never sounded quite right to many of us. But the present scheme is worse. Recognizing that the federal government may never actually see those savings, the framers of the compromise bill wrote in what amounts to an insurance provision; whether or not \$30 billion worth of savings from laying off federal workers ever does appear, funds for the Crime Bill will be freed up by lowering the existing budget caps on other kinds of federal discretionary spending. That in turn will further limit the amounts we can legally spend on things like federal job training programs or preventive health care.

**I**s there any good news in all this? Well, some. The good news is that the bill does authorize close to \$7

billion in money for crime prevention, and that a bit of the prison spending itself could be used for alternatives to incarceration. This is not necessarily what it seems, of course, because the \$7 billion is the level of spending the bill *authorizes*—not what will actually be appropriated. One of the most important jobs for progressives is to fight to ensure that the good parts of the bill actually get the money the legislation technically authorizes. That's important, because if it really did happen, we'd see what could amount to an unprecedented level of federal support for some potentially very good programs. In some areas—especially drugs and violence against women—the money is enough to make a significant difference in the way these problems are now dealt with at the local level.

Conservatives in the House managed to chip a couple of billion dollars worth of prevention funding out of the bill at the last minute, with an astonishingly successful campaign denigrating all the bill's social spending programs as "pork." (As if prisons were not pork.) But the remaining \$7 billion amounts to much more money than the federal government has ever put into crime prevention before. Much of that money is contained in five key categories of the bill:



Piet van Lier/Impact Visuals

A drug sweep in Youngstown, Ohio.

**Local partnerships.** The Bill authorizes \$1.6 billion over the next six years for local governments to spend on a variety of prevention programs—which could include job training, education, and substance abuse.

**Local Crime Prevention Block Grants.** This \$377 million program is what's left of a broad array of specific programs chopped out of the House version of the Bill. It's not that different from the Local Partnership Program: the grants are to be used for any of a variety of prevention efforts, from midnight basketball leagues to gang intervention programs or youth anticrime councils.

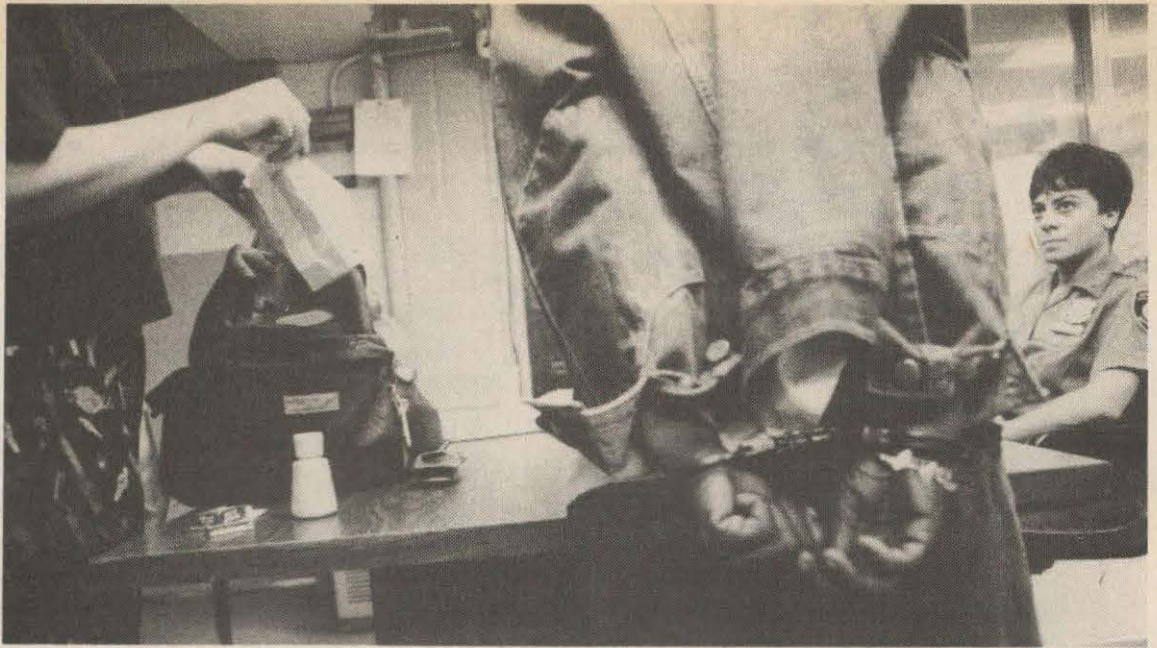
**Family and Community Endeavor Schools.** This is an \$800 million program to fund sports and other extracurricular activities for young people—after school, on weekends, or in summer—to be run by community-based organizations.

Taken together these three provisions can potentially be tapped to fund a genuine, if limited, expansion of serious vocational and educational opportunities for youth in the cities and to rebuild the now-shattered social infrastructure of recreational and supportive programs that used to serve disadvantaged kids. That's especially true if local communities can link these Crime Bill funds with money from other federal sources—like HUD's Empowerment Zone and Enterprise Community initiatives. Alone, most of these efforts would barely make a dent in the massive forces

now destroying the lives of young people in urban America. Put together, within the context of a carefully developed overall strategy for youth development, they could make a difference.

**Programs to Combat Violence Against Women.** This is one of the best and most overdue pieces of the bill. Approximately \$1.5 billion has been allocated for a wide range of strategies against domestic violence and rape, including training for police, programs to toughen the courts' response to violence against women, and support for shelters and support services for victims. What is crucial is to see to it that the money authorized does indeed get spent, and that the decisions about how it is spent reflect the democratic deliberation of everyone concerned—including women's organizations and nonprofit service providers.

**Drug courts.** The Bill provides \$1 billion over six years to fund programs—exemplified by a much-touted program in Miami—that divert low-level drug offenders from jails and prisons if they agree to undergo court-supervised treatment. The evaluations we have of existing drug courts say they do keep a lot of minor drug addicts out of prisons and jails, where they rarely get any help and mainly serve to clog the system—sometimes forcing the early release of people who really *are* dangerous. The funds can be used not only to establish special drug courts but also to enhance a community's capacity to deliver treatment, after-care, and health services to addicted offenders.



Donna Blinder/Impact Visuals

### Searching a suspect's possessions.

That money—assuming, of course, that it's actually appropriated—could go a long way toward supporting a comprehensive, progressive local anti-drug strategy based on keeping addicts out of jail and building a care and treatment system that is linked to the provision of job training, placement, and preventive health care.

Some of the Bill's prison provisions also contain important openings to do something useful. The Bill provides \$150 million over six years, for example, for what it calls "Certain Punishment for Youthful Offenders." That's not as bad as it sounds, however, because what the provision actually offers is money for state and local agencies to use for *alternatives* to traditional incarceration for young offenders. Used carefully, these funds could help communities build a comprehensive intervention strategy for kids in trouble—one that provides real consequences, but also offers serious help, while working hard to keep most kids out of penal institutions.

**I**n all of these areas, the trick is to make sure that the money is spent wisely and to real effect and that the process of deciding how it will be spent is democratic and community-based. We don't want the money for preventing crimes against women to be simply sucked into law enforcement strategies, even if they're good ones; we don't want the drug monies to be simply doled out to existing treatment providers to do business as usual; we don't want money for youth programs to be dribbled away to support fashionable ideas that don't work. How can progressives ensure that the

monies go to protect real lives in real communities? Part of the answer is to leverage our influence over these decisions by helping to form local and state coalitions that hammer out a long-range prevention strategy tailored to local needs, and then fighting hard to ensure that the strategy is taken seriously.

In the long run, of course, even the best use of these funds will only take us so far. The most important long-run attacks on crime must involve things that go much beyond the Crime Bill, or indeed any Crime Bill: a concerted antipoverty strategy including genuine universal access to preventive health care; full and decent employment; better child care and other supports for hard-pressed families. But that doesn't mean that what we could do under the aegis of the Crime Bill is unimportant. We can save lives and bodies. We can mobilize heretofore disorganized and beaten communities. And we can design model programs—especially in domestic violence, juvenile justice, and drug abuse—that prefigure what we could really do, on a bigger scale, in a better world. We can demonstrate, in other words, that there are other ways to go about dealing with crime than the break-the-bank, three strikes and we're broke approach that threatens to hurtle us into a new dark age. DL

*Elliott Currie, a DSA member, is a Lecturer in the Law and Society Program at the University of California, Berkeley. His books include Confronting Crime: An American Challenge (Pantheon, 1985).*

# Fighting for Hope, Block by Block

## Activist Responses

### to Crime—and Crime Hysteria—in California

BY GARY PHILLIPS

In 1994, the national discourse about crime has been more racially loaded than ever. As both Republicans and Democrats abandoned the federal Crime Bill's prevention programs, and instead fought ever more furiously for mandatory lifetime sentences, they sent an unmistakable message to youth of color: Don't pass go, go directly to jail. It's the night of the predators, and they've come to rob America of her future.

In California, as in several other states, the legislature passed a "three strikes and you're out" law early in the year. On November 8, California voters passed Proposition 184, an even tougher version of "three strikes" that removes almost all sentencing discretion from prosecutors and judges. The state's policy makers haven't been willing to invest resources in rebuilding the neighborhoods and communities that have been devastated by the recession—but they've been all too willing to enact prison building and sentencing laws that will cost the state hundreds of billions of dollars over the next fifty years.

#### Youth Responses

But in Los Angeles, in the months leading up to the November elections, the African American and Latino youth that many of our leaders would write off weren't taking it like chumps. Calling themselves South Central Youth Empowered Through Action (SC-YEA, which is an outgrowth of the Community Coalition for Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment), these youths have

mounted a grassroots response to crime hysteria.

"Building prisons and thinking that's a solution to crime is like building cemeteries and thinking that's an answer to AIDS," says SC-YEA member Tony Zepeda.

Project Coordinator Solomon Rivera describes the quick political learning curve of these teenage activists. "Initially, the youths' goal was to propose different legislation for juveniles. But the more they got into this, had more meetings and educationals from seasoned activists, the more they realized they had to oppose Proposition 184 outright."

The SC-YEA activists also took a position against California's anti-immigrant Proposition 187. Combining work against both of these initiatives has helped SC-YEA achieve something rare in California student politics: a united African American/Latino front. "We're showing that black and brown can do something together," says fourteen-year-old activist Annette Wells.

In the weeks before the election, SC-YEA students organized public forums, appeared on the radio, and did voter registration work. Their activism was typical of the broad upsurge of youth politics in California throughout October, which culminated in the widely publicized high school walkouts of November 1 and 2.

#### Community Responses in South Central

Politicians play to the national metaphor of South Central Los Angeles as a riot-scarred land-



Steve Mellon/Impact Visuals

A bullet-riddled stop sign in an inner-city community.

scape bleak with despair, as foreign as the surface of Mars. Yes, South Central is beset by joblessness, deindustrialization, crime, and police abuse—but the reality of the neighborhood is, of course, much more complex. Although many elected officials lack a sense of what is possible here, the neighborhood is a crucible of organizing and activity.

Activist formations here include the Black Awareness Community Development Organization (BACDO), an organization of politicized ex-prisoners working with parolees and gang members to turn their lives around.

And Action for Grassroots Empowerment

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**T**hese multiracial neighborhood-based organizations suggest some of the things we must do as we work to rebuild the left.

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and Neighborhood Development Alternatives (AGENDA) has taken the high ground on the issue of community-based policing. Fielding a youthful contingent of Latino and African American organizers, AGENDA has organized ordinary folks to provide a community response to a heretofore police-department-defined plan.

**Coalition '94**

For the last decade, L.A.'s progressive

activists have been experimenting with a form of coalition that has died out in most of the country: the neighborhood-based precinct network. Each year, the coalition works on a few crucial races and ballot initiatives, educating and mobilizing so-called "occasional voters." For example, Coalition '93 played an important role in the defeat of last year's ballot initiative on public school vouchers.

Coalition '94 was larger and better-organized than any of its predecessors. Using a staff of paid organizers, and with the heavy involvement of Los Angeles DSA activists, it activated a precinct network to mobilize opposition to Propositions 184 and 187 and support for Proposition 186, which would have es-

tablished a single-payer health care system in California.

The left went down to defeat in all three of these battles, and these defeats will have painful ramifications for decades across the country. But progressives can take some solace in the real achievements of Coalition '94. Hundreds of precinct activists were educated and mobilized in African American, Latino, and Asian American neighborhoods. The coalition's efforts brought together thousands of activists, and, more importantly, brought together a truly unified, multiracial body of progressives, something Los Angeles has not seen in many years.

Now the members of Coalition '94 will need to decide where to take all of this energy. It's vital that we do not allow the unity and commitment we have created to dissipate in the wake of our electoral defeats. The huge Republican victories in Congress have reminded us—as if we needed it—how desperately we need multiracial, community-based coalitions if we are going to rebuild the left. The work of organizations like SC-YEA, AGENDA, and Coalition '94 may help show us the way.

DL

*Gary Phillips, a DSA member, is a long-time activist in South Central Los Angeles. He is co-director of the MultiCultural Collaborative. He is the author of the mystery novel Violent Spring (West Coast Crime, 1994).*



# Health Care Update

## Massachusetts: An Action Day for Single Payer

Boston DSA activists co-sponsored an Action Day in Lynn, Massachusetts on Saturday, October 29, to help win the Massachusetts Single Payer Referendum campaign. The referendum is a non-binding appeal for the legislature to enact a single-payer health care system for Massachusetts. It will be on the November ballot in a number of key state senate and representative districts, covering about 20 percent of the voters in Massachusetts.

Boston DSA has played a key role in this campaign, both at the statewide coordinating level and helping to organize individual district campaigns. DSA members Gayle Neave, David Knuttenen, and Vic Bloomberg are particularly active in the campaign. One purpose of the October 29 Action Day was to give more DSA members a chance to participate, especially those who do

not live in districts where there is a local campaign.

The DSA Action Day helped to jump-start the Lynn campaign, which had been having difficulty mustering enough volunteers to get campaign literature out to the public. Boston DSA members, joined by National Director Alan Charney and Field Coordinator Ginny Coughlin, participated in a house-to-house literature drop, delivering thousands of copies of a four-page newsprint flyer entitled "\$4 Billion Down the Drain"—a reference to the amount of money that Massachusetts residents pay annually for health insurance company profits, advertising, paperwork, and lobbyists to maintain the status quo.

DSA volunteers gathered immediately after the leaflet drop at the seaside home of long-time DSA member John Cort for refreshments and conversation.

Alan Charney led a political discussion about the struggles anticipated during the next two years, what DSA's role should be in these struggles, and how Boston DSA could use them to build the local. The fight for single-payer health care will be ongoing in Massachusetts, and DSA is well positioned to continue to play an important role in organizing this effort. Single-payer health care is an issue with strong appeal for DSA members—in single payer they can see their fundamental socialist principles informing a struggle that is both pragmatic and immediate. All agreed that single-payer health care should remain a priority for Boston DSA, and that the local should try to structure its involvement that allows activists to participate as DSA members, rather than as general members of the progressive community.

-- David Knuttenen

## DSA Resolution on Haiti

passed by the National Political Committee on October 9

DSA applauds the tentative success of progressive democratic forces in Haiti. The restoration of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide and the establishment of a democratic civil society free from military tyranny would represent major triumphs for the courageous activism of Haitians and Haitian-Americans.

DSA acknowledges the role of the U.S. military intervention in facilitating Aristide's return -- but we recognize that on the most fundamental level, Haiti's oppressive elites are the product of U.S. institutions. The U.S. military continued to train Haitian military forces even after the 1991 coup against President Aristide. The U.S. Agency for International Development has consistently worked to defend the interests of U.S. businesses and to maintain Haiti's low-wage, weak-union climate. Most obscenely, the Central Intelligence Agency has trained and nurtured Haiti's most violent and repressive paramilitary forces, and has spread disinformation in order to discredit President Aristide.

If the Bush and Clinton administrations had taken appro-

priate early steps to defend democracy in Haiti -- especially a truly effective regime of sanctions -- it is likely that no military intervention would have been necessary. These administrations have also treated Haitian refugees and emigrants in a consistently racist and hostile manner.

DSA urges U.S. troops to leave Haiti as soon as President Aristide has been restored and the paramilitary forces disarmed and demobilized. The U.S. military must never play the role of defending Haiti's elites against popular mobilizations. Any military force that remains to protect civil society should be internationalized and brought under the control of the United Nations and the Organization of American States, and should ensure transition to civilian Haitian democratic control.

DSA encourages its locals, commissions, and Youth Section chapters to support activism in defense of Haiti's democratic forces, and to educate themselves and their communities about how U.S. institutions and the International Monetary Fund have shaped the political economy of Haiti.

# DSAAction

## Los Angeles Update:

### DSA Local Does Intensive Work in Referendum Campaigns

Los Angeles DSA mobilized its membership more intensively than ever before in its history as it worked on the campaigns to defeat Propositions 184 and 187, and to support Proposition 186. (For more details about these campaigns, see pages 7 and 8.) The local successfully raised funds to hire three temporary staff members for the weeks leading up to the election.

The local participated heavily in the electoral mobilization known as Coalition '94. Over sixty Los Angeles DSAers acted as precinct captains for the coalition. The local was also a visible presence at October's major demonstrations in support of immigration rights.

Although all three of these campaigns went down to defeat, leaders of Los Angeles DSA are determined to consolidate and build upon the energy of the last several weeks. As activists throughout Southern California work to reconstitute an effective multiracial left, L.A. DSA is sure to play a serious role.



Liz Ryder

## Social Charter Update

DSA will sponsor a major series of panels on economic globalization and international solidarity at the 1995 Socialist Scholars Conference, which will be held in New York City during the weekend of April 7-9.

These panels will include representatives from trade unions, environmentalist organizations, and other progressive formations from throughout the Western Hemisphere. Panelists will discuss and debate the effects of NAFTA and the feasibility of international campaigns for a social charter that would protect workers' rights, civil rights, and the environment. Representatives from Europe will discuss the arguments raging over the European social charter.

For more information about this project, contact David Glenn at the DSA national office.

## DSA Health Care Activists Meeting Saturday, January 21

**J**oin us at this free event as leaders of DSA locals, commissions, Youth Section chapters, and the Health Care Task Force gather to discuss:

❖ What are the political lessons of the health care disaster in Congress this year?

❖ To what extent has DSA met the goals it set when it launched its health care campaign in 1990?

❖ Where do we go from here?

The meeting will be held during the afternoon (exact time to be announced).

**DSA National Office**  
180 Varick Street  
Twelfth Floor  
New York City

*Varick Street is the extension of Seventh Avenue south of Houston Street.*

*180 Varick Street is one and a half blocks south of Houston Street.*

*The office is easily accessible from the A,B,C,D,E,F,1, and 9 subway lines.*

*Call Margie Burns at 212/727-8610 for more detailed directions.*

## Commission Notes

### DSA African American Commission Lays Goals for 1995

Leaders of the DSA African American Commission met in New York on October 13 to discuss plans for the next year. The commission will organize a major series of plenaries and discussions at the 1995 Socialist Scholars Conference, which will be held in New York during the weekend of April 7-9. They plan to use this conference, along with a West Coast conference planned for next fall, as a launching pad for a renewed program of DSA anti-racist activism, centering on questions of economic democracy in inner-city communities that have been abandoned by the global market.

Topics of discussion at these conferences will include worker ownership, the

crisis of African American leadership, liberation theology, and electoral politics for the 1990s.

The commission leaders also discussed the question of launching a new program of "activist apprenticeships" for students of color within DSA. These apprenticeships would be designed to build skills and leadership within the commission and throughout DSA. The commission is considering ways of raising funds to launch this program.

For more information about the African American Commission, contact Juanita Webster c/o the DSA national office: 180 Varick Street, twelfth floor, New York, NY 10014.

### DSA Commission Leaders to Meet in December

Leaders and activists from all of DSA's commissions will meet on Saturday, December 10 from noon until 4:00 at the DSA national office in New York City.

Members are invited to discuss how DSA's commissions can more effectively serve as bridges between DSA and the country's major progressive social movements.

The meeting will also discuss how

DSA's locals and national leadership can assist the commissions in their mission of recruitment, education, mobilization, and leadership development.

If you are interested in basic information about DSA's commissions, consult the directory on page 15 of this issue. For more information about this meeting, contact David Glenn at the DSA national office.

## Wedding Bells Ring

The "On the Left" column does not appear in this issue because Harry Fleischman has been traveling the world—and moving to New Jersey—with his new bride, Dr. Ethel Kahn. As most of you know, Harry is a charter member of DSA who once worked as Norman Thomas's campaign manager. Dr. Kahn is a professor emeritus of human behavior at Rutgers University. The two were married in New Jersey on October 29. Congratulations, Harry and Ethel!

## Staff News

DSA's Field Coordinator, Ginny Coughlin, will be leaving staff as of February 1. After almost four years of rewarding—and exhausting—service on the national staff, Ginny says that she is ready to move on to "civilian life."

Ginny joined the national office in April 1991 after several years as an activist in the Youth Section. She served as Program Assistant and Youth Organizer before becoming Field Coordinator in early 1994. Her political insight and warm spirit have contributed enormously to DSA's progress during the last four years.

Applications to fill this staff position are now being accepted. Candidates should be well grounded in all aspects of progressive politics, possess excellent writing and public speaking skills, and be willing to work long hours. DSA is an affirmative action employer.

Please send résumés and cover letters to the attention of Alan Charney at DSA, 180 Varick Street, twelfth floor, New York, NY 10014.

## NPC Vacancy

A vacancy exists on the DSA National Political Committee. This vacancy must be filled by a woman.

Between national conventions, the NPC is empowered to fill its own vacancies, so long as adequate notice has been given to the membership at large.

The NPC plans to vote to fill this vacancy at its January 21-22 meeting. If you would like to nominate yourself or another DSA member, please send a one-paragraph statement of nomination to the attention of Alan Charney at the national office before January 1, 1995.

For more information, contact David Glenn at the national office.

# Give Democratic Left for the holidays—and help us improve the magazine for 1995!

Thanks to the hundreds of you who have responded to DSA's survey and fund appeal on *Democratic Left*. This mailing was designed to solicit feedback about the magazine's strengths and weaknesses, and to raise funds to help improve it during the coming year. If you haven't yet donated, well, it's never too late!

Here's how this appeal works: If you donate \$40, we'll send a year's subscription to the *friend* or *library* of your choice. For each additional \$10 you donate, we'll send another gift subscription. This is a great way to help spread DSA's political message more widely—please join us!

Yes, I want to help spread our word.

\$100       \$75       \$60       \$40

\$25       \$250       Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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# The Meaning of 1994

Clinton, NAFTA,

and the Republican Resurgence

BY ALAN CHARNEY

The results of the 1994 elections should come as no surprise. Since Clinton's fateful collaboration with the Republicans on NAFTA one year ago, the Republican Party has been in effective control of Congress. Now that the Republicans have effective majorities in both houses, party reality has simply caught up with political reality.

Such is the price we pay when a Democratic president carries water for a Republican bill.

Indeed, much of the Clinton program, with the primary exception of health care, mightily paved the way for the Republican victories on November 8. In 1993, there was the deficit reduction and NAFTA; in 1994, we have seen the Crime Bill, the imminent passage of GATT, and the introduction of welfare reform. Of course, it was not the administration's strategy to hand congressional power over to the Republicans. We are not pushing a conspiracy theory or promoting any talk of betrayal. But, objectively, the net effect of Clinton's various political choices was to aid and abet the formation of a Republican majority in Congress.

But here is the real irony. The main message that the Republicans pushed in the 1994 election was this: activist government is bad. They adroitly played upon what a recent Times Mirror poll identified as "a sharp increase in alienation, cynicism, and general discontent with the political system." Yet, Clinton's government has been "activist" primarily in favor of conservative programs: in the last two years, the government has used its

muscle to build prisons and make trade easier for corporations, not to fight poverty or protect workers' rights. It's exactly the type of "activist" government we should expect to see now that the Republicans control Congress.

As my grandmother used to say: the Republicans had their cake and ate it too.

Poll after poll has shown that this anti-government sentiment cleaves the electorate in ways that produce a Republican majority. In fact, the main thread that unites the core of the Democratic Party is a positive attitude toward government. For the Republicans, it is precisely the opposite that holds their core constituencies together. As for the so-called "new center" -- those constituencies most supportive of Perot or most cynical about either party -- it, too, has a deep distrust of politics as usual. Although there are profound differences between the Republican core and the new center on such questions as free trade and abortion rights, they often form de facto electoral alliances because of the "bridge" of suspicion toward government.

Fundamentally, there were only a few ways that the Clinton administration could have unhooked the core Republicans from the new center. For what was needed was a program that the Democratic core could share with the new center, but was anathema to the Republican core. The administration opted for health care as the "bridge" issue. But, as we have learned all too well, support for health care reform is not simply a

Amy Zuckerman/Impact Visuals



The new Republican congressional majority makes the prospects for America's most desperate communities even bleaker.

question of need and self-interest. It also requires a positive attitude toward government -- an attitude sorely lacking among the new center. (And the administration didn't help matters by proposing such a cumbersome and complicated initial health care plan.)

Had Clinton chosen to oppose NAFTA -- to demand its fundamental renegotiation to protect workers' rights, civil rights, and the environment -- *that* would have provided an effective bridge issue. It would have brought into sharper focus than health care the question of economic insecurity and decline without the public-opinion albatross of government. It would have mobilized both members of the new center who are skeptical about free trade and most of the core Democratic

bridge issue in the near future, but it is ruled out by the administration's wholesale commitment to the global trade and investment agenda of the transnationals. As we in DSA help to lay the groundwork for a trinational campaign calling for a social charter for NAFTA, we are not only helping to build a crucial movement for the future of the left in Mexico, Canada, and the U.S. -- we also happen to be preparing an effective bridge issue for the post-Clinton era.

The politics of NAFTA have led to profound reverberations in yet another arena -- the anti-immigrant hysteria that has swept California and may rise up in other states with large numbers of Mexican immigrants. Certainly, there has been a long history of officially sanctioned immigrant-bashing in California, including massive deportations. Proposition 187 must be seen as a continuation of this history. But it is also unique -- a specific anti-immigrant hysteria that could only have emerged after NAFTA.

The fight over NAFTA was actually a surrogate fight over economic insecurity and decline. In terms of public attitudes, it was, for the most part, a battle of the haves and have-nots. Because NAFTA was a trade agreement for the transnationals, there was nothing in it for working people. . . .no social provisions, environmental standards, worker rights, and so on. In the absence of an alternative -- a Democratic alternative -- some of the anti-NAFTA opposition rode a wave of xenophobia and resentment, particularly among the new center. (This was exemplified by

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**A**fter Proposition 187's passage, it is clearer than ever that our post-NAFTA politics must include immigration rights as a central component.

---

constituencies. How else can we explain the fact that a majority of Democrats in the House opposed Clinton on such a pivotal and defining issue for his presidency?

Sadly, there is no new bridge issue on the immediate agenda -- at least not unless Clinton reverses his commitment to the right-wing version of global economic integration. That is because post-NAFTA politics remains the only potential

H. Ross Perot's "America first" approach to the question of jobs.) Of course, most trade unions and other progressive anti-NAFTA organizations fought hard against this xenophobia -- stressing their solidarity with independent labor activists and environmentalists in Mexico -- and succeeded to a large degree. But the public debates about NAFTA set the context for a new xenophobia, directed first against Mexicans. Proposition 187 became the first post-NAFTA expression of this new xenophobia.

After the passage of Proposition 187, it is impossible to put forward a post-NAFTA political agenda that does not have immigration rights as a central focus. For us, that means that a progressive social charter and immigration are inextricably linked. When we speak about worker rights and social provisions for NAFTA, we mean it not

just as a mechanism for "leveling up" wages and working conditions and guaranteeing social rights in Mexico, but "leveling up" wages and working conditions and guaranteeing social rights for Mexicans (and other immigrants) in the United States as well.

The Latino opposition to Proposition 187 represents the cutting edge of this post-NAFTA political movement. This opposition has a mass and spontaneous character, and is driven by the energy and commitment of Latino student activists. It is the kind of upsurge that many of us have not seen for over twenty years. And, as the anti-immigrant hysteria spreads to other states, this outpouring of Latino activism will spread as well. It is one emerging base for our next left.

*Alan Charney is National Director of DSA.*

## DSA Commissions

### ❖ African American Commission

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Shakoor Aljuwani, *convenor*  
Lynne Mosley Engelskirchen, *convenor*

telephone c/o DSA national office:  
212/727-8610

newsletter:  
*Our Struggle/Nuestra Lucha*  
P.O. Box 162394  
Sacramento, CA 95816  
subscription: \$15/year

### ❖ Anti-Racism Commission

Duane Campbell, *chair*

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newsletter: *EcoSocialist Review*  
c/o Chicago DSA  
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Chicago, IL 60607  
subscription: \$8/year

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Washington, DC 20011  
subscription: \$10/year

### ❖ Latino Commission

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newsletter:  
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### ❖ Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Commission

Claire Kaplan, *co-chair*  
Route 1 Box 1250  
Troy, VA 22974

### ❖ Commission on Religion and Socialism

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# The 3-Minute Guide to DSA Fund Raising for 1995

DSA is a membership-driven organization. Nearly all our income derives directly from the membership through dues, fund appeals, book and merchandise sales, periodic pledges and special contributions. Our only substantial outside income comes from advertising in *Democratic Left*.

In 1993, our basic operating budget was \$478,000, 96 percent of which came from the membership. This is proof of the strong support DSAers have for the organization.

In 1994, our core operating budget has remained virtually the same, but we have added an extensive direct mail outreach campaign that has recruited nearly 2,100 new members. Again, virtually all of our income has come directly from the membership.

In 1995, we will be making some significant changes in our fund raising program. Also since we have so many new members, it is important that everyone understand exactly how our fund raising program works.

The essential thing to bear in mind is that our national fund raising program actually has three purposes. The first purpose is to raise funds; that goes without saying. The second purpose is to tell you about DSA activities and to help you get involved in these activities. The third purpose is to find out your opinion about DSA's programs and politics. The core of our fund raising program is membership renewals. DSA has two cycles for membership renewals. You can tell which is your cycle by looking at the upper right hand corner mailing label on this issue of *Democratic Left*. If you are a 94/12, then you are on the first cycle. If you are a 95/06, then you are on the second cycle.

New members who joined before May 1994 fall in the 94/12 cycle. Those who have joined after are in the 95/06 cycle.

All 94/12's will receive their first 1995 renewal mailing this November. Anyone who responds to this first mailing will not receive another renewal letter. But, those who do not respond will receive a second letter in about six weeks,

## DSA 1995 Renewal Cycles

<u>cycle</u>	<u>join date</u>	<u>membership period</u>	<u>renewal letter mailed</u>
94/12	Nov-Apr	Jan-Dec	November 1994
95/06	May-Oct	July-June	April 1995

## 1995 Fund Raising Schedule

#1 February

#3 August

#2 May

#4 November

followed by a third letter if they don't renew, and then a fourth. Finally, in April, everyone who still hasn't renewed (and for whom we have telephone numbers) will be called and asked to renew. All 94/12's who have not renewed after the fourth mailing will no longer receive *Democratic Left*.

The cycle for the 95/06's is exactly the same, except for the dates of the mailings and phoning. The first renewal letter will go out in April, 1995 and the other three will be sent in six-week intervals. Those who don't respond to any of the renewal letters (and for whom we have telephone numbers) will receive a call in October, 1995. All 95/06's will stop receiving *Democratic Left* after the fourth mailing.

That's how the membership renewals work. The fund appeals are simpler to understand because there is only one cycle for all members.

In 1994, there have already been three fund appeals. There were two fund appeals by mail: one to support our Organizational Renewal Fund and the second to support improvements in *Democratic Left*. The summer phoning raised funds for our single-payer campaign, with a special emphasis on the California referendum. During November and December, there will be another fund appeal by phone.

A word about DSA's telephone fund appeals: DSA contracts this work to the

CLEC Canvass Network, a progressive fund raising network with an extremely high reputation. CLEC's director is a member of DSA, as are many of the callers. The entire CLEC staff is kept well-informed about DSA's activities through regular consultations with our national office.

In 1995, we will also have one cycle of four fund appeals. But, they will be organized more efficiently so that we can generate a higher net income for the organization. That means we will be lowering the percentage of total funds that goes for expenses.

The first appeal will be in February. First, everyone will receive this appeal through the mail. Then, everyone who has not responded after about a month will receive a call. The second appeal will be sent out in May, and the same procedure will be followed. That will also be the case for the third appeal scheduled for August; and the fourth appeal slated for November.

Overall, DSAers are comfortable with our fund raising program. The results from our 1994 Membership Survey show that 61 percent think we fund raise just the right amount, as opposed to 9 percent who think it is too little, 9 percent too much, and 21 percent with no opinion.

-- Alan Charney

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### DSA CAMPUSnet

A new on-line network for DSA Youth Section activists. Share strategies, discuss politics, plan for a better future. Send your name, the name of your school, and your e-mail address to: [CAMPUSnet@aol.com](mailto:CAMPUSnet@aol.com) (DSA Youth Section activists only, please!)

### 30th Anniversary Reunion BERKELEY FREE SPEECH MOVEMENT

Socialists of FSM unite for political/social reunion December 1-4. Lost FSMer info/deductible donations to MCLI-FSM c/o St. Hieronymus Press, 1705 MLK Jr. Way, Berkeley, CA 94709, fax 510/549-1405, messages 415/487-7671, e-mail [felsenst@interval.com](mailto:felsenst@interval.com).

### INTERGENERATIONAL POLITICS

Any DSAers interested in issues of aging and intergenerational relations, please contact Allen Glicksman at E107 250 Beverly Boulevard, Upper Darby, PA 19082. E-mail: [ITF@psuvm.psu.edu](mailto:ITF@psuvm.psu.edu).

### Twentieth Anniversary Issue of THE WORKBOOK

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### In the next *Democratic Left*:

#### The State of the Union, 1995

The meaning of the Republicans' resurgence; the health care reform debacle; and domestic policies for the next decade.

Plus: Eastern Europe; child labor; New Year's Resolutions; and more...

## Letters to Democratic Left



### Our Biggest Unused Weapon

Dear Editors,

Over the last year, I have returned to DSA after turning my back on left-wing politics in frustration, disgust, and (dare I admit it?) *boredom*. I'd been a union organizer and an environmental activist for many years, but eventually the demands of family and work grew and it seemed that the energy I put into politics was often wasted in endless, tiresome, fruitless meetings and political wheel-spinning. But now that I'm a professor of American government, it has become impossible to teach without laughing and crying at the same time.

American politics has become far too unbalanced—it's time to rebuild the left. I would like to see the American left quit talking to itself and become a more unified, imaginative, playful, and influential force in the mainstream life of our country.

However, over the last few decades the opposite has been the case. Political discourse in this country is moving further and further to the right. Rush Limbaugh and a well-organized conservative movement are having a major impact on American political culture. Meanwhile the left has become caught in the stifling straitjacket of political correctness. The once imaginative, colorful radicalism of the 1960s has become more dour, humorless, and inef-

fectual with every passing year.

The quickest way to gain the ear of the masses is with imagination, wit, and humor. Our biggest unused weapon is laughter. . . . after all, how hard can it be to make a party with a leader named Newt look like the slimy, bottom-feeding, scum-sucking, mud-slingers they are?

Craig Collins  
Berkeley, California

Dear Editors,

Alan Charney's "Present Progressive" column and Steve Max's "Janie Higgins Reports" (September/October) are as good as anything I've seen on the present situation. Clinton is indeed a disappointment, but I think Bush, or any Republican, would be worse. And incidentally, the Republicans are worse than ever, thus driving our whole society more to the right.

But—be patient. Some time the truth is going to come out like the sun after a long rainy spell. I'm 88—an old ex-Communist who fought in Spain and has seen it all. And I can still hope. Education has got to help us, someday.

Al Amery  
Pepperell, Massachusetts

Letters should be addressed to David Glenn at DSA, 180 Varick Street, New York, NY 10014. Please include a telephone number. Letters may be edited for space or clarity.

## In Memoriam: Rose Laub Coser 1916-1994

Rose Laub Coser, a distinguished sociologist and activist who was a charter member of DSA, died in Wellfleet, Massachusetts on August 21.

Coser was born into Berlin's socialist milieu in 1916; Rosa Luxemburg was her godmother. In 1939, she came with her family to the United States. She studied sociology at Columbia University and taught at Wellesley College, Northeastern University, and for many years at the State University of New York at Stony

Brook. She authored or co-authored eight books on topics including gender and role theory, the family, and the sociology of medicine.

In 1954, Coser and her husband Lewis Coser were among the founding editors of *Dissent* magazine. She continued to serve on *Dissent's* editorial board until her death.

An award for work in the *Sociology of Gender* is being established in Rose Laub Coser's name. Those who wish to contribute may send a check to the Eastern Sociological Society, Box U-68, University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT 06269.

# PRESENT PROGRESSIVE

BY DSA NATIONAL DIRECTOR ALAN CHARNEY

Underlying the debacle of health care reform is a pervasive American distrust of government. All that the Republicans and the insurance companies had to do was equate health care reform with more government, and our emerging movement was stopped dead in its tracks. This anti-government mood literally overwhelmed the public's sense of fairness and the genuine need that the health care issue represents. Even though a significant majority of Americans still believes in universal coverage and that employer mandates are the way to achieve this coverage, the public is now apprehensive about any major changes in health care financing or delivery.

Cynicism about government has increased dramatically over the past several years. A new study of the American public by the Times Mirror Center for People and the Press documents its true depth. For example: in 1987, 47 percent of the American public agreed with the statement that "most elected officials care what people like me think." In 1994 the number who agreed had plummeted to 33 percent. In 1987, 57 percent believed that "the government is really run for the benefit of the people"; today, that number is 42 percent. Finally, in 1987, 55 percent agreed that "government regulation of business usually does more harm than good." By 1994, this number had gone up to 63 percent.

This anti-government mood presents socialists with a formidable dilemma. In order for our progressive agenda to advance, a majority of the American public must be confident that government can be effective and bring about real improvements in their lives.

The irony is that in many ways we socialists are much greater critics of the federal government than the "statistical" public. From our point of view, the government is not some neutral institution that we expect to serve all citizens equally. Increasingly, the federal government is playing the role it held during the late nineteenth century—as a wholly owned subsidiary of American corporations and the wealthiest 20 percent of the

population. Inequality of wealth produces an inequality of political power. Should we really be surprised that the public on average has a deep and growing distrust of government? Not at all! The problem is that the general public's suspicion of government is right-wing in orientation. Their critique of government is not based on a deeper critique of corporate power—it is a hodgepodge of true and false beliefs about the government's effectiveness and responsiveness.

Were we asking too much of the public, then, when we and other progressives launched our single payer campaign? Absolutely not! For as much as the public distrusts government, antipathy toward insurance companies is at least as strong—the Times-Mirror poll reports that 58 percent of Americans have an unfavorable opinion of them. Coupled with the broad support for universal coverage, this antipathy toward insurance companies has always given single payer the greatest potential appeal of any health care reform proposal. That is why it was a grave error when the Clinton Administration rejected single-payer and incorporated the insurance companies into its ridiculously complicated initial plan. In so doing, Clinton gave up the high ground without a fight.

Make no mistake about it! There was a genuine opening for health care reform during 1992 and into 1993. Perhaps it could have been the progressive wedge issue that could have opened up the political space for a broader progressive agenda. In 1994, that national opening has shut tight. Now we will have to work like old moles pushing single-payer state by state, and winning health care reform step by step. But health care clearly can no longer serve as the progressive wedge issue we all hoped for.

This situation compels DSA to enter into a broad dialogue about the strategic importance of our health care work over the next few years. To this end, we are organizing a January meeting of DSA's health care activists (see the notice on page 13). Everyone who is concerned about where we go with single-payer should attend this meeting.

## CLASSIFIEDS

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# Jimmy Higgins Reports

## as told to Steve Max

The problem with the *New York Times* is that it has no game page. Sure, for the elite few who can spell there's the revered crossword, but I enjoy Connect the Dots,

Find the Hidden Word, and What's Wrong With This Picture? Like-minded *Times* readers need not despair. Now you can play **Higgins: The Game**, which involves elements of all of the above.

### Higgins: The Game—Rules and Directions

1] Remove the *Times*' Business Day section and turn to the page headed "Company News."

2] Cut out all the headlines. Mix them up well and lay them out on your desk, face down.

3] Turn them over one at a time looking for patterns, hidden words, and concealed meanings. When you find them, answer the question, What's wrong with this picture?

Example (slightly abbreviated from the *Times* of September 7): "Fleet Financial to Buy Plaza Home Mortgage. Medaphis to Acquire Advacare. Hilton Stock Surges On Takeover Speculation. Discovery Zone Completes Two Acquisitions. Coachmen to Buy Georgie Boy Manufacturing. GE Computer Services Buys Total Audio Visual. Noel Group to Purchase Plan Services."

Now look carefully, connect the dots. If you don't see the pattern yet, add the next day's headlines: "After Takeover Executives At LAC Resign. Avon Shares Rise On Takeover Talk. Applebee's International and Pub Ventures Merge. Lilly Offers to Buy McKesson. Allied Holdings to Acquire Auto-Trans. American Travelers to Acquire J.C. Penney Life. Consolidated Graphics to Acquire Jarvis Press."

Need a hint? Says *Business Week*, "A stampede of deals, unmatched since the heyday of junk-bond-financed takeovers. . . is sweeping through corporate America. Transactions by year-end should approach the 1988 record of \$336 billion."

Professor Michael C. Jensen of Harvard's Business School told the magazine, "We're going through a third industrial revolution, marked by efforts to eliminate excess capacity." Did you find the hidden word in "eliminate excess capacity?" It's J O B S.

Paul Sweezy, editor of the socialist *Monthly Review*, would dispute the term "third industrial revolution." He calls it a financial revolution, in which "a financial expansion feeds not on a healthy economy but on a stagnant one." Since the return of chronic stagnation in the early 1970s, he suggests, investment capital has been moving away from productive fields and into speculation. In recent years we saw the leveraged buyout madness, the real estate frenzy, currency and stock market crazes, and now the merger boom is back again.

Sweezy explains it this way -- capitalism is structured to yield high profits, but this puts strict limits on the income of the underlying population. People can barely buy the current output at a price that produces the going rate of profit, so why would capitalists invest in new capacity? Instead, corporate profits are being reinvested in financial speculation, and if that takes the form of a merger boom that cuts capacity, all the better from the corporate point of view.

Ironically, putting capitalism back on track by returning investment to the real economy of production and services would require a global rise in living standards. Wages have to go up to create a market for additional products, but that's the last thing to which a profit-conscious CEO will agree.

The kicker is that only the program of the left and labor can break the cycle of stagnation and speculation that has befallen capitalism -- not exactly what we socialists intended, but nonetheless true. Conversely, the prescriptions of the corporate ideologists only make things worse for the system. This has to be the biggest puzzle of all. Admit it: **Higgins: The Game** is a whole lot more fun than some old crossword.

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