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The Meaning of Oklahoma City

BY ALAN CHARNEY

To hear the reactionary Republicans and the right-wing radio commentators tell it, the April 19 slaughter in Oklahoma City—the worst peacetime attack on the U.S. government in history—had nothing to do with their politics. They would have us believe it was the isolated action of psychopathic terrorists.

But make no mistake about it. The bombing was a deliberate military action. The individuals—the normal, white male Persian Gulf veterans—who carried out this crime have their ideological and operational roots in a nationwide right-wing paramilitary network that has been growing, virtually unobstructed, for the last twenty years. The core of their ideology is an intense, all-consuming opposition to the federal government, buttressed by an extreme hatred of immigrants, people of color, Jews, feminists, and lesbians and gays. (And, of course, a fanatical defense of the right to bear arms.)

You don't have to be a radical critic of American society to notice the profound similarities between the program of the reactionary Republicans and the provocations of the right-wing militarists. After all, the central tenets of the Contract With America are wholesale attacks on government programs and the calculated scapegoating of immigrants, welfare recipients, and others.

Let's face the ugly, uncomfortable truth: there are sadistic, authoritarian currents that run across the spectrum of the contemporary right,

sometimes in the foreground, sometimes deep in the background. There is no question that the ascendancy of the reactionary right—and particularly the politics of hatred preached on the ubiquitous conservative talk shows—has created an emotional atmosphere that has emboldened the right's paramilitary elements. (The day after the bombing, talk show host G. Gordon Liddy, who knows a thing or two about abuses of federal power, explained to his listeners how to shoot federal agents who visit their homes. Aim for the head first, he said; then shoot above and below the bulletproof vest that protects the agent's torso.)

If the sorrow of Oklahoma City can have any positive value, it must be this: the majority of Americans have awakened to the potentially violent consequences of allowing a reactionary agenda to become the mainstream. The right wing does not stop at Newt Gingrich or Phil Gramm. It includes the likes of the Aryan Nations and the new militia movement.

But there is a deeper truth to be learned here. Although the left tries to build radically democratic institutions throughout society, we recognize that the country's *core* democratic institutions are representative political bodies like Congress. When the right wing says that the federal government should have a greatly restricted role in social life, what they really mean is: citizens should not exercise the right to make decisions, in a public and cooperative way, about social issues

that affect their lives. As socialists, we know, of course, that this means those decisions will be left to the leaders of the most powerful economic institutions in America—the transnational corporations—and the most affluent and privileged social strata. Therefore, right-wing attacks on the concept of government, whether armed or unarmed, have the same general consequence. They are ultimately attacks on democracy itself.

Now is the time for progressives to speak the truth about the military action in Oklahoma City. The bombing can serve as a “shock of recognition” for the American people, but only if we explain in plain language how the bombers' sadism and authoritarianism exist—albeit in lower doses—throughout the conservative movement that has captured Congress.

In particular, we must be clear that new laws to increase the powers of the FBI and other federal law enforcement agencies would do nothing to address the political underpinnings of the right-wing military movement. These agencies already have more than sufficient expertise and authority to deal with violations of federal laws and violent threats and plots against government and citizens. Moreover, progressives must never forget the wholesale infiltration and intimidation of left-wing organizations in the 1960's and early 1970's—the infamous COINTELPRO. Do we really want a Republican President with a Republican Congress in 1996 armed with these new powers?

We can best fight the right-wing militarists by opposing the right-wing political agenda, by beating back the Contract With America and by beginning to advance aspects of an alternative program that restores economic well-being undermined by global capital and expands democracy—including economic democracy—for the great majority of Americans.

But this means we have to face up to another painful truth: the progressive movement is facing a grave crisis of leadership. The Contract



Carolina Kroon/Impact Visuals

With America is sailing through the House, yet there is no organized, coordinated opposition from the liberal and progressive camps. Where is the broad-based national coalition against the Contract? Nowhere! Where are our progressive leaders providing direction for local activists around the country? Nowhere! Where is the alternative program around which we can unite and regain the ideological ground that has been lost to the reactionary right? Nowhere! There are hundreds and hundreds of progressive organizations representing social movements, constituencies and issues. Yet, in the “fight of our lives,” we are less—much less—than the sum of our parts.

Perhaps Oklahoma City has not only awakened a majority of the American people. Perhaps it has awakened a majority of progressives to our responsibility for uniting our movements and organizations in a common effort to repulse the reaction Republican agenda and to lift up a different vision—inspired by the values of radical democracy, social justice, internationalism, and cultural pluralism.

We always like to say it—“we’re in a new period now”—but the truth is, we really *are* in a new period. We must meet this new period with a new resolve. **DL**

Alan Charney is National Director of DSA. His regular column, “Present Progressive,” will return in the next issue of Democratic Left.

**The neo-Nazi
“Nationalist
Party” doing
military exercises
in Pennsylvania
in 1993.**

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EDITORIAL

CORNEL WEST'S ESSENTIAL VOCATION

BY PETER LAARMAN

Time was, a generous and free-ranging intellectual voice on the left, inflected by accents of hope derived from popular church tradition, would be a source of acclaim and delight among all progressive thinkers.

No more, apparently. In a much-discussed essay published in March in *The New Republic*, Leon Wieseltier tries to take DSA Honorary Chair Cornel West apart in the most brutal way, calling West's books "almost completely worthless" and sniping at West's diction, even his sartorial preferences.

Since the piece appeared, numerous commentators have deplored Wieseltier's malevolence. But West's comrades also need to rebut the substantive charge at the core of Wieseltier's essay, namely that West cannot be both a committed Christian and a committed democrat. For Wieseltier, "a religion based on a revelation is a religion based on an ideal of exclusiveness, which is not an ideal of democracy." In other words, if West is truly Christian, he cannot have truly democratic politics, except at the price of serious conceptual confusion.

Wieseltier goes on to question whether West is actually a proper Christian at all, suggesting that West

waffles on the idea of transhistorical truths. This takes Wieseltier into fairly deep theological waters—well out of his depth, suffice it to say. But on the matter of exclusivism, he should be made to account for all of the historical evidence, not just the evidence that suits him.

Cornel West is only too well aware of the historical crimes and follies of people calling themselves Christians. He rejects the idea that these crimes necessarily follow from the doctrines of their founder any more than the crimes and follies of people calling themselves Marxists necessarily follow from the doctrines of *their* founder. He identifies instead with the traditions of the war-renouncing Anabaptists, the antimonarchical English Puritans, and Scottish Enlightenment framers of democratic theory such as John Locke. In our times exemplars of these humane traditions have included Martin Luther King, Jr., Desmond Tutu, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and Dorothy Day, to name only a few.

West sees inclusive community, not exclusion, as the heart of the original vision; he thinks that it's a vision worth rehabilitating for a lot of reasons, among them the fact that Biblical narratives resonate in the common culture with an intensity never attained by appeals from the secular left.

But the real issue for Wieseltier was never philosophical theology. No other Christian thinker would come in for this kind of vituperation. It is precisely West's public identification with the socialist cause *and the recognition it has earned* that sticks in Wieseltier's craw.

Wieseltier understands the potency of West's invocation of the language of the gospel. Wieseltier would doubtless prefer a better-ordered world in which progressive preachers remained ineffectual, tending to the wounds of the afflicted rather than calling the wounders to account.

Given the dispirited state of our politics, the vocation of the "socialist divine"—Wieseltier's mocking label for West—has never been more urgent. Intuiting this, Wieseltier has launched a pre-emptive strike. Fortunately, this assault misses its mark and disgraces only its perpetrator. **DL**

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Welfare and Women's Lives

Toward a Feminist Understanding of the Reform Debate

BY MIMI ABRAMOVITZ

Frances Fox Piven wrote in these pages last summer about the faulty assumptions and cruel logic of the Clinton administration's welfare reform proposals. No one could have guessed then just how far and how fast the public debate on welfare would swing to the right. As I write today (in mid-April), the Republicans' "Personal Responsibility Act," which is even more punitive than Clinton's "Work and Personal Responsibility Act," has passed the House and awaits consideration in the Senate. Even if Clinton vetoes this first bill, it's almost certain that some kind of regressive welfare "reform" will become law before the 1996 elections. Welfare reform is bad for women, because they are the direct target of a drive to modify women's behavior; bad for children, who will see less of their mothers; bad for labor, who will face more competition for fewer jobs; bad for the poor, because it makes them poorer; and bad for the middle class, because their programs are next.

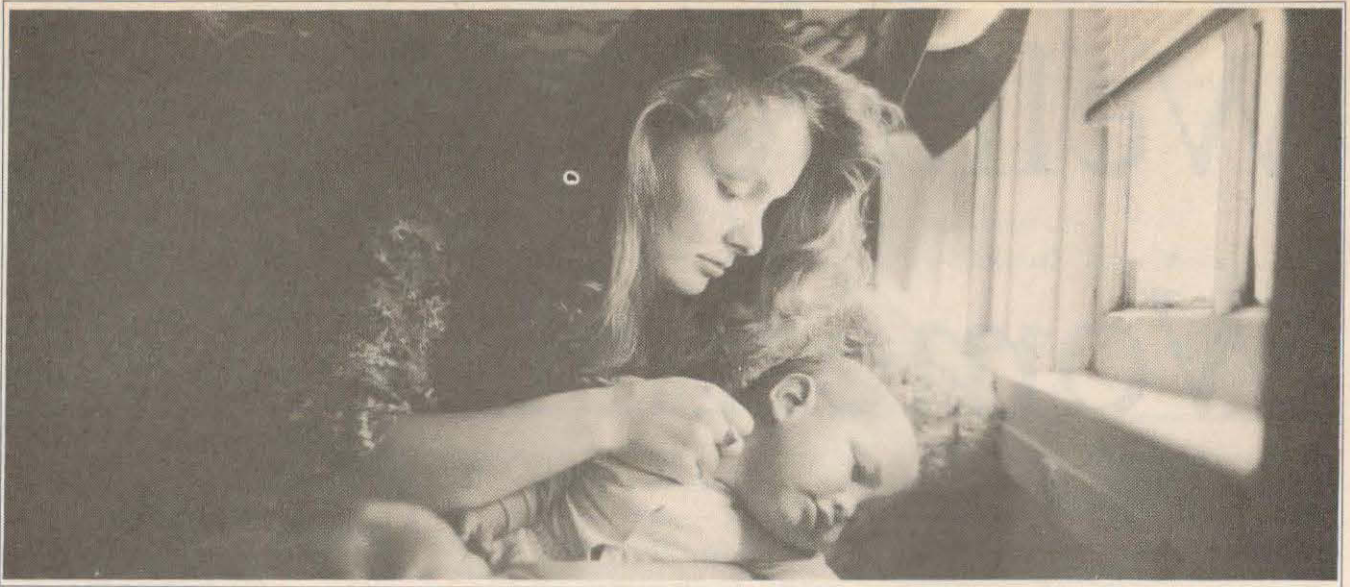
So we on the left have our work cut out for us. Just as the right patiently laid the groundwork over twenty years for its assault on the public sector, we need to do the slow work of building cohesive movements for social justice. A crucial part of this work will be raising public consciousness of welfare as a feminist issue—not

just in the superficial sense that most welfare recipients are women, but also with the understanding that the availability of welfare affects *all* women's ability to resist sexist workplaces and family structures.

Welfare reform has turned into a mean-spirited campaign to modify women's behavior and dismantle the welfare state. When Aid to Families With Dependent Children (AFDC) was created in 1935, Congress's intention was to cushion poverty and to enable mothers to stay home with their kids. AFDC has never performed either of these functions well, and feminists and the left have criticized it for years.

But now things have gone from bad to worse. Instead of fixing AFDC to compensate for the falling standard of living, the new welfare reform deflects attention from the sagging economy by maligning the marital, childbearing, and parenting behavior of poor women. To build support for their plans, the welfare cutters evoke false stereotypes of recipients as culturally adrift welfare queens who prefer welfare to work, live high on the hog, cheat the government, and have kids for money. The rhetoric of this assault is highly racialized. Although 40 percent of the welfare caseload nationwide is white, the reformers do not hesitate to pander to white voters' worst instincts.

Mark Ludak/Impact Visuals



A mother and child living in a shelter in San Francisco.

Nixon had his "southern strategy," Reagan had his welfare queen, Bush had Willie Horton, and today's politicians have welfare reform.

The first target of welfare reform is women's work behavior. Time limits and workfare plans presume that women do not want to work and need to be coerced into the labor market. But in fact, 70 percent of all AFDC recipients do leave the rolls within two years for work or marriage. A significant number of these women return within five years because of unstable jobs, failed

and union protection. Given these conditions, the administration's promise "to make work pay for those who try hard and play by the rules" rings hollow for welfare mothers. It also devalues their work at home. Finally, cutting welfare means the loss of many public sector jobs, which for years have provided large numbers of white women and women of color a way out of poverty.

The push for mandatory work requirements ignores years of research showing that welfare-to-work programs have only modest results.

relationships, or the lack of child care and health benefits. The remaining 30 percent are people who cannot compete effectively in today's labor market because of lack of education and skills, illness, disability, or emotional problems. They need supportive services, not punitive reforms.

The push for mandatory work requirements also ignores years of research showing that welfare-to-work programs have only modest results. This is not terribly surprising. First, there are not enough jobs for all those willing and able to work—and the Federal Reserve works hard to keep things that way. Second, the low-paying, part-time jobs available to poor women lack benefits

The second target of welfare reform, women's childbearing behavior, challenges women's reproductive rights. Both parties have expanded the child exclusion provision, which denies aid to children born on AFDC, and stiffened paternity procedures. These changes imply that women on welfare have large families, when in fact the average family on welfare is a mother and two children, the same as the rest of us. Forty-three percent of AFDC families have one child and 30 percent have two. Since you have to have at least one child to qualify for AFDC, this means that most women have just one additional child while on the rolls. It also suggests that women on welfare do have children for money. But 76 researchers recently announced that there is no evidence for a link between the availability of welfare and a woman's childbearing decisions.

The Republicans have made controlling women's reproductive choices the main goal of welfare reform. The stated purpose of their bill is to put an end to "illegitimacy." They say mother-only families—encouraged by welfare—have produced drug dealers, drive-by shooters,

and the deficit. To end "illegitimacy," they plan a range of horrific child exclusion provisions, some denying aid to children and young unwed mothers forever. The Republican paternity procedures hold back AFDC until the state establishes paternity, which can take months, leaving even more women out in the cold. If the pregnancies persist despite these penalties, the Republicans tell mothers to turn to relatives, apply for private charity, or place their children in "orphanages."

Although only 8 percent of all AFDC households are headed by teens, the welfare reformers pander to public worries about "babies having babies." If preventing teen pregnancy were the real goal of welfare reform, we would hear more about sex education, family planning, abortion services, and awareness of the complexities of teen pregnancy.

The third target of welfare reform is the parenting behavior of poor women and men. The welfare reform debate displays a deep distrust of parenting by poor women. Supporters of "orphanages" publicly suggest that any caretaking is better than that provided by welfare mothers, even though many have hired poor women in their own homes.

In the name of promoting parental responsibility, welfare reform forces single mothers to work, shrinks the AFDC check, and otherwise undercuts the conditions for effective parenting. Forcing women to work makes it harder for mothers to supervise their children. This makes little sense, especially in neighborhoods plagued by poor schools, lack of health care, substandard housing and in some cases drugs, crime, and violence. Stricter child support enforcement clamps down on the parenting behavior of so-called "deadbeat dads." While men should be expected to support their children, welfare reform ignores that most welfare fathers are poor and unemployed, that some are already involved with their children, and that an aggressive pursuit of child support could subject women to male violence. All these efforts to enforce responsible parenting defy the research that shows that the deprivations of poverty, not the receipt of a welfare check, impair children's development on all fronts. Although the combined value of AFDC and food stamps falls below the poverty line in all fifty states, the welfare reformers are silent on raising the grant and ending poverty as we know it.

The current attack harms poor women and their children first and foremost for being poor. But welfare reform also fits into a broader strategy designed to take back the gains made by *all* women during the past thirty years. The proposed changes attack the rights of all women to decent pay, to control their own sexuality, to establish families free of abusive relationships, and to survive outside of the rigid family forms endorsed by the religious right. They do this by undercutting women's economic independence, weakening their caretaking supports, and threatening their reproductive rights.

Cutting AFDC benefits undercuts all women's economic independence by depriving women of a small but critical alternative to male and market income. Without this back-up many women facing hard times will have more trouble resisting an exploitative job, escaping an abusive relationship, or simply deciding to raise children alone. By forcing women to work, welfare reform twists the gains of the women's movement against poor women. Feminism has called for more choices, greater opportunities, and well-paying work for women—not coercion, workfare, and poverty-level jobs.

Welfare reform threatens the rights of all women by shifting the costs of caretaking back to the home. The attack on welfare fuels a larger attack on the nation's health, education, child

Cutting benefits undercuts *all* women's independence by removing a small but critical alternative to male and market income.

care, income support, and social service programs which among other things have underwritten the cost of family maintenance and eased the caretaking burdens of middle class as well as poor women.

Welfare reform also threatens the reproductive rights of every woman. Efforts to penalize non-marital births are not far removed from the anti-abortion movement's challenge to women's reproductive choices. The foes of abortion have not yet won their battle in full. But if the government wins the right to control the bodies of poor women on welfare, it will be much easier to control the bodies of all women.

Welfare is an issue for women because poli-

Harvey Finkle/Impact Visuals



A broad coalition marched in Philadelphia to defend welfare rights on March 20.

ticians have built support for their attack on women's rights by blaming all women for the nation's woes. Women, welfare, and now affirmative action are being scapegoated to ease the moral panic generated by new family structures and greater economic independence among women. Welfare reform enforces traditional work and family forms by disciplining those defined as "not playing by the rules." The reformers openly hope that their stiff penalties will send a message to women about what happens to those who do not marry, who raise kids on their own, and otherwise step out of role. Since any woman can be tarred and feathered in this way, we must ask: Who made the rules? Who benefits from the rules? And can single mothers even play by a set of rules that defines their family structure as out of bounds?

While the Democrats' "Work and Personal Responsibility Act" bids for conservative votes by making welfare leaner and meaner, the Republican "Personal Responsibility Act" ups the ante by ending the welfare state altogether. It cuts welfare grants, converts major income support programs into state-administered block grants, and wipes out the federal guarantee of funds for all those who apply for aid. Without the federal back-up, fiscally strapped states will not be able to serve all those in need when the population grows or the economy sinks. You'd never guess from all the fuss that the \$24 billion spent on AFDC benefits in 1994 represented only 1 percent of the federal

budget—4 percent when Medicaid and food stamps are included.

Despite all this, I can end on an optimistic note. Poor and middle class women are not taking the blame, the punishment, or the coercion lying down. Since 1987, poor women have been fighting the war on the poor through such groups as the National Welfare Rights Union. This time around, they have been joined by large numbers of welfare advocates who are also work-

ing to limit punitive policies and to secure "real" welfare reform. Reversing past practice, these activists are spanning the traditional schisms between welfare recipients, feminist activists, and human service workers. The infrastructure built up during the past ten years of fighting right-wing social policies was mobilized on Valentine's Day, when organizations in 38 states and 77 cities from Maine to Hawaii participated in a national day of action to stop the war on the poor. This growing network is now well-positioned to be mobilized again, and again, and again.

These grassroots actions are critical. The historical record shows that the powers that be rarely act and social change rarely occurs for the better unless pressured from below. Unless today's politicians know that we mean business, they will not budge. DL

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This article is adapted from a talk given at a speak-out, "Women for Women: Against the Contract: The Crisis and the Cuts," sponsored by the Women's Studies Certificate Program and the Center for the Study of Women and Society, and held at the Graduate School and University Center, City University Graduate Center, New York City, March 8, 1995.

And Now, Health Care Reform Republican-Style

George Voinovich and the "OhioCare" Follies

BY BOB FITRAKIS

In the upside-down world of the Gingrich era, Ohio is a "reform" state with a Republican "reform" governor, George Voinovich. Reportedly eager to fill the vice presidential slot on Senator Bob Dole's ticket, Voinovich is now working overtime to reform health care in Ohio and to establish public policy that will serve as a model for other states. His so-called "OhioCare" plan is nominally designed to expand the number of people covered under Medicaid in Ohio. But it would also seriously reduce the quality of health care Medicaid clients receive, shut down dozens of community-based health care clinics, and put downward pressure on the quality of all Ohioans' health care. Progressive health care activists throughout the country should keep a sharp eye on OhioCare—if the right-wing political sweep continues, Voinovich's notions of "reform" may soon become the conventional wisdom.

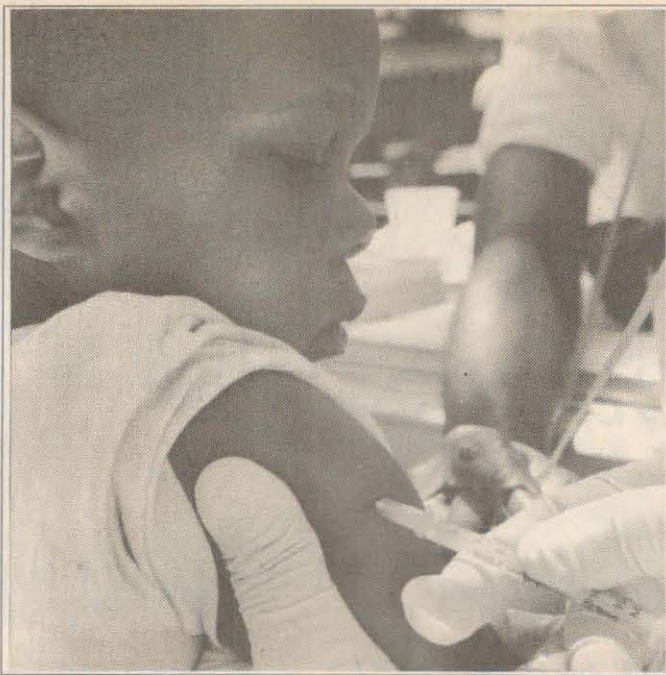
Last year, the Voinovich administration submitted a request to the federal government to release Ohio from federal Medicaid rules. This Medicaid waiver has been requested by many governors to escape federal guidelines in running their Medicaid programs. At the time of the Ohio waiver request, Medicaid expenses consumed over a quarter of the state's budget.

The OhioCare proposal—in reality designed as a way to reduce Medicaid outlays—proved so lengthy and complex that it initially

caught health care activists off guard. OhioCare was unveiled as a cure-all for uninsured Ohioans living at or below the federal poverty level. By some alchemy, Voinovich promises to cover an additional 500,000 currently uninsured citizens while cutting overall costs at the same time.

By design, OhioCare will allow each county in Ohio to contract with existing for-profit managed care plans (HMO's) to provide a "basic" benefits package to uninsured Ohio residents with below-poverty incomes. In essence, the state will contract out to the HMO with the cheapest proposal, and all Medicaid recipients will be limited to that specific HMO's provider network. Voinovich administrators claim that this "devolution" of health care to the county level would save so much money that it would likely be possible to provide coverage for people living at as much as 200 percent of the poverty line. An early analysis by Kathy Levine of the Universal Health Care Action Network of Central Ohio (UHCAN-CO) warned that while the governor was promising significant improvements in health care access for low-income people, the legislation, "if enacted, will reshape health care delivery for more than just the poor. . . a particular concern is the ability of consumers to choose providers."

Specifically, Ohio's Medicaid recipients will lose the option of some of the most accessible and democratic health care currently avail-



Michelle Gienow/Impact Visuals

OhioCare threatens non-profit neighborhood health clinics with extinction.

able to them. OhioCare would mean that Ohio's neighborhood "community health centers," generally funded with so-called "330" money from the federal government, which have traditionally provided low-income inner-city residents, will be shut down. Otto Beatty, a state legislator representing an affected inner-city district, has charged that the Voinovich reforms are little more than an attempt to "make a few chosen HMO's rich."

In Columbus alone, six inner-city centers that serve some ten thousand people would immediately close under the OhioCare plan. Although Voinovich requested the federal Med-

receive the same basic health care package. Since the total funds would be capped instead of open-ended, local county boards that contract with HMO providers may find themselves with inadequate funds to serve people with special needs. In the face of these concerns, the Democratic majority in the Ohio House managed to stall the governor's OhioCare legislation in 1994.

But after President Clinton's disastrous health care efforts fizzled in the fall, Voinovich made OhioCare a centerpiece of his re-election campaign. He stumped the state with promises to extend benefits to half million new Ohioans—a one-third increase over the present 1.4 million Medicaid recipients—"with no new taxes and no reduced benefits."

Mainstream Ohio media accepted those figures as credible.

But many health care specialists did not. Pam Argus, a health policy analyst for the Ohio American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), was skeptical: "To cover half a million new people with savings from manages care would be too good to be true—and it is too good." And Dr. Jonathan Ross, a Toledo-based physician and founder of an HMO that serves Medicaid patients, publicly warned, "They are going to put all the people in an HMO? They're not going to have enough primary-care physicians to make this thing work."

Progressive health care activists throughout the country should keep a sharp eye on OhioCare—if the right-wing political sweep continues, this kind of "reform" may soon become the conventional wisdom.

icaid waiver for a "demonstration period," he plans in fact to dismantle the infrastructure of Ohio's present system while he "tests" his new policy.

By June 1994, advocates and activists for the mentally retarded and developmentally disabled began to raise concerns as word leaked out that all citizens, regardless of disabilities, would

Voinovich's own estimates project that all of this will save the state only 2 percent over five years. This would essentially be accomplished by the time-tested bureaucratic method of "rationing through inconvenience." In 1992, Ohio's private HMO's had a mean rate of 341.6 in-patient hospitalization days per 1000 enrollees per year. In contrast, existing state Medicaid programs averaged between 1100-1200 days per 1000 enrollees per year. Thus the governor's vaunted 2 percent savings rest largely on reducing in-patient hospitalization.

Voinovich has also touted "Ohio's experience in large-scale managed care." UHCANCO's Cathy Levine has pointed out that this

"experience" amounts to only 43,400 Ohioans, or 2 percent of OhioCare's projected population, and that the for-profit HMO's now scrambling for OhioCare contracts have some of the worst provider records in the state.

In Cleveland and other cities, for-profit HMO's had offered prizes and made fraudulent promises to induce Medicaid recipients to sign up. Consumer groups found that in most cases, neither the for-profit HMO nor the state was advising these enrollees of their rights—particularly that they were giving up access to their

regular health care provider.

OhioCare makes no provisions for quality standards, public monitoring, or consumer grievance procedures in its HMO contracts. In the anti-regulatory brave new world of corporate health care, for-profit HMO's set their own standards.

The governor's campaign boasts of "up to 500,000 additional insured Ohioans" have, of course, been scaled back. Administrators at the Ohio Department of Human Services now concede that only an additional 100,000 to

Toward a Managed Care Bill of Rights

BY JEFF GOLD

DSA health care activists in New York, California, Missouri, and Massachusetts have been working in coalitions to craft so-called "Managed Care Bills of Rights" to protect HMO patients on the state level. This legislative campaign will be an important organizing vehicle to preserve at least some of the broader principles of universality and accountability we fought for during the single payer battles.

New York state's legislature is closest to moving a Bill of Rights, with community, labor, disability and even a few aggrieved provider groups on board together. New York DSA has been fighting this legislation in coalition with two recently merged labor-community single payer organizations. The main principles of the New York Managed Care Bill of Rights are as follows:

- ◆ Access to a full range of appropriate health care providers/settings. Choice of providers/plans.
- ◆ Comprehensive benefits.
- ◆ Affordable care.
- ◆ Quality care, and quality assurance oversight.
- ◆ Consumer protections, and a consumer/patient appeals process.
- ◆ Disclosure of plan information.
- ◆ Non-discrimination based on health status.

◆ Consumer/patient representation on plan governing bodies.

The massive transfer of wealth to unaccountable, for-profit "integrated health networks" has hardly been a boon for the nation. The corporatization of health care has often left patients without adequate or appropriate care, de-skilled or eliminated whole categories of health care workers, and treated doctors and nurses as profit generators—often interfering with life-and-death practice decisions. These networks are largely outside the purview of most regulation in most states. In New York, one of the few states with a history of health regulation, these networks seem to be just as unaccountable.

The Bill of Rights would finally let patients compare plans on an apples-to-apples basis. Now most information—doctors and specialties available, scope of coverage, and so forth—is virtually impossible to obtain, or subject to change without notice. This is one reason why MD's arbitrarily rejected by HMO panels have been enraged enough to join with health care activists on this issue. It is also why patients denied serious specialty care unavailable in certain HMOs must pay penalties of 40 percent or more to go outside the networks for essential coverage.

Fighting for state-level Bills of Rights is not as radical or as satisfying as last year's activism for single payer. But it does move the debate about health reform off the dime in a very conservative period, characterized by massive population transfers into managed care. It also may give Medicaid (and, soon, Medicare) patients forced into managed care schemes some voice. The abuses of network Medicaid patients in Florida resulted in a state moratorium on new enrollments. In Tennessee, the state has brought suit against fly-by-night Medicaid managed care plans; capitation payments in the hundreds of thousands had been sent to post office boxes and phantom soup kitchens.

Bowing to pressure from conservative, high-fee specialist elements in the AMA, Newt Gingrich will hold congressional hearings this spring on managed care—which, one hopes, will spin out of control in favor of a *left* critique of managed care. Both Senator Paul Wellstone of Minnesota and Representative Jerrold Nadler of New York have expressed interest in sponsoring federal versions of a Patients' Bill of Rights. **D**

Jeff Gold is a longtime health care activist and a member of the Democratic Left editorial committee.

300,000 people will be covered. Labor unions insist that OhioCare will actually offer employers an incentive to reduce wages so that their employees will qualify for OhioCare coverage. Under current guidelines a single parent with two children earning \$12,320 or less will be eligible. You can hear benevolent employers now saying, "Don't take that raise—you'll lose your health care benefits."

OhioCare is slated to take effect on January 1, 1996. The Voinovich administration developed the scheme in virtual secrecy, with no meaningful public debate. A few staged "public meetings" were held in the fall of 1994, but these poorly publicized medicine shows simply promoted OhioCare with a mumbo-jumbo of policy-wonk bureaucratise.

With OhioCare on the policy fast-track, Ohio health care activists are staging a last-gasp grassroots lobbying campaign to convince state legislators to adopt the following five measures:

- » Maintenance of the existing public health infrastructure and community providers during OhioCare's five-year "demonstration period."
- » Independent monitoring of the OhioCare

program by a public entity including recipients in each county.

» Regulations that insure that the savings from the OhioCare model will actually be used to expand coverage, rather than yielding large profits for HMO's.

» Making OhioCare voluntary for Medicaid recipients and insuring patient access as well as establishing a patients' "Bill of Rights."

» Convening open public hearings throughout Ohio with full participation from consumers and their advocates prior to implementation.

The political forces and conditions in Ohio make this an uphill struggle. Ohio's right-wing version of health "reform" may serve as a caution to other states' activists. If your governor starts to talk about the miracles of the OhioCare model, beware! And organize fast. DL

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Starbucks Agrees to Adopt Code of Conduct

BY ERICH HAHN AND STEPHEN COATS

In response to grassroots pressure from across North America, Starbucks Coffee Company announced on February 15 that they will adopt a "code of conduct" to protect the rights and working conditions of coffee workers on plantations where they buy their coffee beans.

Starbucks, the largest gourmet coffee company in the U.S., has been the target of a North America-wide campaign initiated by the U.S./Guatemala Labor Education Project (U.S./GLEP). The main objective of the campaign is to persuade U.S. coffee companies to take responsibility for conditions under which the coffee they sell is grown and harvested. In particular, U.S./GLEP was pressuring Starbucks to adopt a code of conduct ensuring that workers are paid a living wage, are provided with health and safety training and equipment, have decent housing, are not subject to discrimination, and that their basic worker rights, including freedom of association, are respected.

As in much of Central America, working conditions in the agricultural sector in Guatemala are even worse than in the industrial or maquiladora

sector. Death threats, disappearances, kidnappings and murder are the common reward for those trying to organize for improvement or even just legally guaranteed rights.

The recent wave of land occupations by peasants in the countryside is an indication of the persistent frustration of workers and farmers. The Guatemala News and Information Bureau (GNIB) reports that some of these occupations, such as the one by Kekchi farm workers in San Pedro Carcha, are focused on the demand for payment of back wages, or for payment of the legal minimum wage.

To start the grassroots campaign, U.S./GLEP approached local solidarity committees, faith-based and labor activist groups, and peace and justice centers around the country to ask for their support in a nationally coordinated educational leafleting of Starbucks stores and letter writing in support of the code of conduct. DSA Field Coordinator Ginny Coughlin played a key role in pulling together a diverse group of New York activists, as well as advising U.S./GLEP on youth and student contacts around the U.S.

Protesters, including members of

DSA chapters in several cities, began drawing attention to the working conditions in Guatemalan coffee plantations last December. This mobilization culminated on February 11, four days before the Starbucks annual shareholder meeting, with activists handing out leaflets at over 75 Starbucks locations throughout North America.

In their February 15 announcement, Starbucks said that they will convene a "team" to research and formulate the elements of the code. This team will consist of people within Starbucks as well as others from independent organizations, including U.S./GLEP. Since there is no such code in the agricultural sector, the next stage of developing a model will be difficult.

Beyond its concrete implications for coffee workers, the Starbucks victory is an indication of how much can be accomplished through consumer activism and strategically targeted corporate campaigns. **DL**

Erich Hahn is a Staff Associate at U.S./GLEP. Stephen Coats is the Executive Director of U.S./GLEP.

Democratic Left Labor Day Issue 1995

The Labor Day issue of *Democratic Left* will once again be dedicated to coverage of the American and international labor struggle. Our annual Labor Day ad campaign is the principal fundraiser for *Democratic Left*. It provides an excellent opportunity for you to join with trade unions, progressive organizations, and DSA members to show your support for DSA and for *Democratic Left*. We welcome advertisements and personal greetings from individuals, DSA locals, organizations, and progressive businesses. Your message will reach 12,000 of the country's most committed progressive activists. We must receive ad copy by Wednesday, August 9, 1995. Make checks payable to DSA, or pay by credit card.

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DSA Action

New NPC Members

DSA's National Political Committee has elected two new members to fill recently vacated positions.

Eric Vega, a civil rights attorney in Sacramento who chairs the DSA Latino Commission, and Harris Gruman, a founding member of Colorado DSA, have joined the committee.

The National Political Committee is a twenty-five-member volunteer committee that oversees and assists the national staff in carrying out DSA's political and organizational priorities.

The 1994-1995 NPC's term will end in November, when a new NPC will be elected at DSA's National Convention. All DSA members are entitled to run in these elections (for more information, see pages 22-23).

Staff Notes

DSA's new Field Coordinator, Carmen Mitchell, will join the staff on June 19, just weeks after she graduates from Oberlin College in Ohio. Carmen has been active in DSA and other progressive organizations throughout her career at Oberlin. This year she is also the manager of Oberlin's student radio station. Welcome, Carmen!

Resources

DSA has published a new eight-page pamphlet entitled "Working Your Way to the Bottom: The Global Economy and the New Poverty." If you would like copies, contact Margie Burns at the national office.

The first 1995 issue of *Socialist Forum* has been delayed until July, so that it can include the NPC's version of the proposed new DSA Political Perspectives Statement. Apologies!

Legislation Worth Fighting For

DSA works toward broad, radical change—for economic justice and for tolerant, democratic workplaces, communities, and families. Of course, these goals can't be boiled down to government programs or pieces of legislation. Fighting for democracy, freedom, and justice is a complex project that involves the active participation of committed individuals throughout society. But we do sometimes work to support legislation that can help build toward our larger goals. During the 1995-96 Congress, we'll be fighting to support these two bills:

The Living Wage/ Jobs for All Act

This bill has been introduced in the House by Rep. Ron Dellums (D-CA)—who is a Vice Chair of DSA—with fourteen co-sponsors. The bill is grounded in the principles declared by Franklin D. Roosevelt in his 1944 State of the Union Address: that every American has "the right to a useful and remunerative job in the industries or shops or farms or mines of the nation."

The Act would instruct the President to take whatever steps necessary to:

- ◆ reduce the unemployment rate for U.S. adults to 3 percent or less within three years;
- ◆ guarantee U.S. workers' rights to organize and bargain collectively, and to give appropriate diplomatic and trade-policy support to democratic trade unions in the rest of the world;
- ◆ and guarantee adequate health care services and workplace safety for all.

These reforms would involve an array of public and private works programs to rebuild our schools and hospitals, and a reduction of the standard work week to 35 hours.

They would be financed in part through the increased revenues generated in a full-employment economy.

The Corporate Responsibility Act

This is an omnibus bill encompassing dozens of stand-alone pieces of legislation cutting "wealthfare"—special subsidies and tax breaks that benefit private industry and the rich. The bills have been developed by the House Progressive Caucus, and especially by the office of Rep. Bernie Sanders (I-VT). They will be introduced in the House during the spring.

These reforms would eliminate programs that have given...

- ◆ \$500,000 in taxpayer money to Campbell's Soup to advertise V-8 Juice in Argentina;
- ◆ billions of dollars worth of federal lands to mining companies, who are allowed to purchase land for \$2.50 or \$3.00 an acre and pay no royalties on the minerals they extract;
- ◆ billions of dollars to U.S. corporations via a full tax credit for taxes they pay in foreign countries. This credit should be changed to a deduction.

The Act would also remove the 28 percent tax cap on capital gains, and instead tax capital gains at the same rate as other income. This special break for the wealthy already costs taxpayers \$9.1 billion every year—and the Republican Contract With America proposes to make it even worse by making only half of capital gains taxable.

Dear Margie

Letters, real and imagined, to
DSA Membership Services Coordinator Margie Burns

Dear Margie,

Until last week, I was the president of the College Republicans on my campus. But after spending a weekend reading The Dialectic of Sex, The Fire Next Time, and volume two of Das Kapital, I've decided to convert to the left. What do I need to do to help launch a vibrant, powerful DSA Youth Section chapter here?

—*Suddenly Pinko in Poughkeepsie*

Dear Suddenly,

You really don't need a lot of money to get a DSA campus chapter off the ground. What you do need is a core of hard-working, like-minded activists who have a commitment to democratic values and concrete issues they want to organize around.

The first step in starting a DSA Youth Section chapter is registering as a campus organization. Depending on the college you attend, initiating a DSA chapter may require collecting signatures, recruiting a faculty advisor, or creating some sort of constitution. With this task behind you, it's time to start serious recruiting.

Before you begin broader campus outreach, you may want to contact the national office and ask for a list of DSA members in your community. Who better to explain DSA's goals and answer questions at meetings?

Along the same line, you may want to invite prominent DSA speakers, such as Cornel West or Barbara Ehrenreich. Bringing such high-profile speakers sometimes (not always) involves raising a fair amount of money—but most chapters find that the energy and insight these speakers bring is well worth it. (For information about DSA's speakers bureau,

Voices For Change, call 212/727-8611.)

DSA Youth Section chapters have worked on a huge range of campaigns during the past year—for workers' rights in the United States, for democracy in Haiti and Mexico, for reproductive freedom around the world. If you ever need suggestions or assistance in developing your political campaigns, talk to the national leadership of the Youth Section. Try contacting Lidija Sekaric at lsekaric@cc.brynmawr.edu. You'll also want to get to know DSA's new national Field Coordinator, Carmen Mitchell.

As your chapter grows, keep these points in mind:

Be competent and reliable—be known as a top-notch coalition partner. Develop solid relationships with members of every other progressive group in your community.

Be articulate and well-informed, especially when dealing with conservative groups on campus.

Have fun. If you go through a semester without throwing a few parties, getting together for coffee, defacing a few campus statues, and so forth, something is seriously wrong.

Finally, **avoid burnout**: delegate work to responsible people, have non-political interests, and never let DSA become the center of your life.

If you follow these principles carefully, your DSA chapter will thrive, and your former organization will be consigned to the dustbin of history in no time.

Send letters to: Dear Margie, c/o DSA, 180 Varick Street, twelfth floor, New York, NY 10014.

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Into the Post-Marxist Wilderness

BY BILL DIXON

These days, talk about socialism always begins with grand qualifications. Hoping to cast their politics in a contemporary light, socialists today often rush to distance themselves from orthodoxy, particularly Marxism. There are sound impulses behind this move—in this century we have learned painful lessons about the vulnerability of democracy and the slipperiness of history. Tomorrow's socialism will likely involve a very different political vocabulary. But for now, even if Marxism is "over," socialists still have a serious stake in exactly how the story ends.

That's one of many reasons why socialists should check out these two recent works on Marxism and the contemporary situation of the left. Each of these works contributes important insights to the contemporary socialist debate. Also, both are just different enough from the leading perspectives within DSA to make for a revealing and important discussion. They would make excellent reading for locals compiling study group material, theorists looking for something to argue about, and, most important, newcomers who might be in search of a few clues.

Marxism in the Postmodern Age: Confronting the New World Order is an anthology of short essays from over fifty writers, mainly from the U.S..

(The project was born of a 1992 conference organized by *Rethinking MARXISM*, a reasonably heterodox academic journal.) The stated aim of editors Antonio Callari, Stephen Cullenberg, and Carole Biewener is to help orient Marxism to an "open de-

ism." The resulting balance yields in an accessible and interesting collection.

The anthology is organized into sub-sections, usually conceived around salient topics. Unfortunately, there are some serious omissions. Almost nothing is said about actually existing labor movements, North or South. Organized socialist politics go virtually unmentioned, let alone analyzed. And there is more focus on evaluating the former USSR than the contemporary state of European social democracy and Democratic liberalism in the U.S..

Still, the highlights are pretty good. Immanuel Wallerstein provides a succinct and candid statement on anticapitalisms past and present. Rosemary Hennessy reviews recent work in "queer theory" and persuasively urges a closer relation between Marxism and sex-radicalism. The late Ralph Miliband argues cogently for the left to "reclaim the socialist alternative" by way of a critical commitment to electoral democracy and class politics. This essay counters some of the worst parts of the book, such as Frank Rosengarten's insistence that socialism can be "practically and historically" "separable" from democracy or philosopher and literary critic Gayatri Chakravorty-Spivak's remarks that "state power" is "irrelevant as a

REVIEWED IN THIS ESSAY

Marxism in the Postmodern Age: Confronting the New World Order

edited by Antonio Callari, Stephen
Cullenberg, and Carole Biewener.
Guilford Press, 1995. \$19.95.

After Marxism

by Ronald Aronson.
Guilford Press, 1995. \$18.95.

bate" with its own "rich diversity" in hopes of moving on to address the "crises and possibilities" of the moment. They try to fit somewhere between theory and politics. There is little talk of strategy, but neither is much time spent on "post-modern-

direct goal" to the "local" politics of women working in the Third World (this in a call for feminism, ecology, democracy, and "deconstruction" that leaves out the unspeakable sword).

Of particular interest to DSA's post-NAFTA activists is the section on "Political Struggles over the North American Order." David Barkin discusses the capitalist transnationalization of Mexico's economy, while Barbara Harlow contrasts the passage of NAFTA with that of the Maastricht Treaty of the European Union. In one of the few policy recommendations of the book, Stephen Cullenberg and George DeMartino offer an original proposal for "social tariffs" as an internationalist and solidaristic alternative to the profit-driven biases of current trade and development policies. The tariffs would take into account wage and "quality of life" factors with the intent of arresting the flow of capital to union-busting, structurally impoverished, authoritarian states. Although the approach seems to me to assert a single market-based solution to what is really a set of more complicated political problems, it's still an interesting idea. (For a fuller discussion, see the December 1994 *Social Text*.)

Finally, Nancy Fraser's discussion of Clintonism gives an excellent reading of what happened to yesterday's realignment strategy. With '96 just around the corner, the path by which '92 led to '94 remains a crucial question for the U.S. left. Fraser's close analysis details how Clinton's campaign rhetoric, with its focus on the "middle-class," "workfare," "investment," and so on continued an ambivalence toward "social citizenship" (such as a "right" to an education or health care) in favor of the "private consumption" of necessary goods, a move begun during the Reagan years. What she calls the



Hazel Hankin/Impact Visuals

"anti-social wage"—the consumerist rejection of public goods and the social contract that justifies them, ultimately involves a serious challenge to public life and democratic solidarity.

Helping to answer that challenge is Ron Aronson's *After Marxism*. Aronson is a longtime left activist and theorist. He was once a student of Herbert Marcuse, and his Marxist credentials place him at the outskirts of the Frankfurt School. Put simply, Aronson's argument is that Marxism is over because of its eclipse as an organized politics. As Aronson tells it, Marxism was never merely a theory but a political argument as well. With that political success now apparently denied, "Marxism" must now abandon any pretensions of being the one and only movement for collective freedom. At best, the left might look for help from a partially restored "marxism," the lower-case *m* signifying its position as one among many political players on the field of left politics.


There's a wonderful autobiographical dimension to Aronson's book, with a personal narrative at the beginning that both frames his major

arguments and stands alone as a unique piece of New Left testimonial. But, beyond that, Aronson expresses the ambiguities, disappointments, and hopes of left politics. He is a solid New Left philosopher, and so takes "subjectivity" pretty seriously. And he's given the possibility of a renewed leftist ethic some careful and imaginative reflection. Aronson's Marxist apostasy leads not to nostalgia and handwringing so much as to agitation and leap of faith.

Aronson was a founding member of the New American Movement, one of the predecessor organizations to DSA. His activism during the immediate aftermath of the New Left provides an excellent perspective on the background of contemporary debates. In one of the most valuable chapters, "The Marxist-Feminist Encounter," he describes how the early failures of socialist-feminism advanced the questions of class and gender (and later, race and sexuality) that would permanently transform left politics. Aronson is a quick and informed guide to the relevant literature. (This chapter in particular would serve a study group well.)

Unfortunately, his bleak ambivalence about the future prospects for socialist-feminism seems to border on pessimism. The point is worth arguing over, especially now with feminism gaining unprecedented ground in the labor movement.

Another interesting section, "What's in a Name?," discusses the politics of left nomenclature. Aronson suggests that the Next Left adopt the adjective *radical*, plain and simple, over such leading contenders as "communitarian," "radical democratic," and "socialist." Aronson argues that there's more to the corruption of socialism's good name than its association with either social democrats or Stalinists, rightly declaring that "after a century of socialisms, we do not yet know what socialism means." It's a good point, but couldn't the same (and more) be said for "radicalism"? More important, the policies and practices that Aronson criticizes are dated. Aronson mentions "welfare-state reforms that leave the system intact," the nationalization of industry, and party domination of society. But nationalization and vanguard parties haven't been high on the socialist agenda for some time. And today the remaining bulwarks of the welfare state seem less the system's ally than our own. Here Aronson clearly means to engage socialists in a debate about the left, but unfortunately misses the mark by at least a decade or two.

Where exactly does that mark lie—what's really the difference between democratic socialism and Aronson's "radicalism" or the "post-modern Marxism" of Callari, Cullenberg, and Biewener? Anyone interested in how to talk about socialism now should take a look at these two books and help the rest of us figure it out. 

Bill Dixon is a senior at the University of Chicago and a leader of that campus's DSA Youth Section chapter.

Letters to Democratic Left



Dear Editors:

In early April, the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) held a conference in Pittsburgh for nursing home workers from around the country. A portion of the conference was devoted to comments from the floor from the workers. I was impressed and moved by the comments and horror stories told by these workers. One comment was especially moving and inspiring and beautiful.

The woman talked about how her boss always told them to take better care of the patients who had lots of money (yes, the cancer of class privilege will follow us all to the grave). It is hoped by most administrators that monied residents will leave money to the home and they also can milk more

money out of them while they are living. The worker recounted how one day her boss told her, "Mrs. So-and-so is used to being pampered, you take good care of her, OK?" The worker responded by saying, "She's had her turn. These others have never been pampered in their lives. It's their turn, now." Beautiful, isn't it? People say socialism is un-American? I think socialist sentiment runs pretty damn deep in most of us—it just so rarely gets a chance to shine.

The conference was filled with such testaments to fairness, equality, solidarity, and just sticking together.

Hope this helps us all keep the faith. It sure as hell helped me!

Ron Ruggiero
Columbus, Ohio

The DSA Library

Recently Published Books by DSA Members

◆ Stephen E. Barton, editor (with Carol J. Silverman), *Common Interest Communities: Private Governments and the Public Interest* (Institute of Governmental Studies Press).

◆ Gary Dorrien, *The Neoconservative Mind: Politics, Culture, and the War of Ideology* (Temple University Press) and *Soul in Society: The Making and Renewal of Social Christianity* (Fortress Press).

◆ Barbara Ehrenreich, *The Snarling Citizen* (Farrar, Straus, and Giroux).

◆ Wilmer MacNair, *Basic Thinking: On Beginning at the Beginning in Thinking About Social and Economic Problems* (University Press of America).

◆ Leon Wofsy, *Looking for the Future* (I. W. Rose Press).

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by Harry Fleischman

California

Sacramento Valley DSA co-sponsored a large May 2 rally at Sacramento State University. National Political Committee member Duane Campbell was among the speakers. He urged student activists to build enduring organizations and to draw connections between the campaign to repeal Proposition 187, the campaign to defend affirmative action, and the broader fight against the Contract With America.

Colorado

Colorado DSA continues to focus on the campaign for a statewide single payer health care ballot initiative in 1996. The statewide coalition supporting this resolution is extremely committed and well-organized. Endorsing organizations now include the AFL-CIO of Colorado, the Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers Union, the Colorado Green Party, the Gray Panthers, the Vietnamese Baptist Church of Aurora, and the Rocky Mountain Peace Center.

Illinois

Chicago DSA has been pouring most of its energy into preparing the May 13 DSA Midwest Regional Activist Conference. They are also preparing to conduct a Socialist Summer School in conjunction with the Chicago Committees of Correspondence. This school, which will be held on Sundays from 3 to 5 pm, kicks off on June 18.

Meanwhile, the Youth Section chapter at the University of Chicago is organizing furiously for this

summer's national DSA youth conference, which they will host during the weekend of August 18-20. They plan to invite student leaders from throughout the democratic left—especially those who have been leading the fight to repeal California's Proposition 187.

Iowa

Iowa City DSA co-sponsored a large May 6 rally against the Contract With America. Other sponsors included the American Federation of Teachers Local 716, the New Party, Iowa NOW, and the Emma Goldman Clinic for Women.

Massachusetts

Boston DSA's annual Debs-Thomas-Bernstein Dinner will be held on June 1 at the Dante Alighieri Center in Cambridge. This year's honorees are Byron Rushing, a longtime civil rights activist who represents Boston's South End in the Massachusetts House of Representatives, and Carin Schiewe, the director of the Commonwealth Coalition, a grassroots alliance working to elect progressive candidates to the State House. A special Michael Harrington Award will be given to Lewis Coser, the distinguished sociologist who was a founding member of DSA and a founding editor of *Dissent* magazine.

The Youth Section chapter at Harvard University has been active in building coalitions and organizing rallies against cuts in health care, food stamps, and other programs. They hope to help some of Harvard's traditionally service-oriented student organizations to see these issues in more explicitly political terms.

New Jersey

Central New Jersey DSA has launched an education and activist campaign on the issue of campaign finance reform. The local co-sponsored an April 25 forum with Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School. John Bonifaz, the

founder and director of the Massachusetts-based National Voting Rights Institute, offered ideas about how to challenge the constitutionality of the current congressional campaign finance system, which violates both candidates' and voters' rights. Meanwhile, Eric Vega, the chair of the DSA Latino Commission, spoke at Drew University in Madison on April 13 about the battle for immigrants' rights in California.

New York

New York DSA held its annual convention on Saturday, April 29. The convention elected National Political Committee member Marsha Borenstein as the local's new chair. The local has been actively organizing in support of the Corporate Responsibility Act, a set of federal legislation introduced by Representative Bernie Sanders (I-Vermont). In particular, the local has been picketing and leafleting at AT&T, a corporation that uses a series of loopholes to avoid paying federal income tax. The local's annual dinner will be held June 7 and will honor Jim Butler, the President of Local 420, the New York Municipal Hospital Employees Union, and Fran Barrett, founder and director of Community Resource Exchange. (For information, call 212/727-2207.)

New York University's Socialists at NYU sponsored a May Day party that featured the band Severna Park. Later in the week, the group screened the film *Salt of the Earth*.

Eric Vega and DSA Honorary Chair Dolores Huerta, a Vice President of the United Farm Workers, spoke at the City College of New York on April 12. They spoke the day after forty members of the CUNY Coalition, which has organized to fight proposed cuts in public education funding, had been arrested for trespassing during a sit-in. Huerta and Vega reminded the students, who were continuing their sit-in, of the need for tenacity and courage. They urged the student activists to link together the struggle for education funding with

the movements for immigration rights and workers' rights. Later in the month, National Political Committee member Shakoor Aljuwani was cited in the *Village Voice* as one of the key leaders of a successful citywide CUNY Coalition demonstration.

Ohio

The Youth Section chapter at Miami University of Ohio rallied in front of the student union on the March 29 national student day of action against the Contract With America. The chapter circulated hundreds of petitions and leaflets, and the rally made the local news. Other participating student organizations included the Lesbian Avengers and the College Democrats.

At Oberlin College, a broad student coalition including DSA organized a March 22 day of action including two speak-outs, letter-writing, and guerilla theater. A "Republican lunch patrol" interrupted students' lunches by taking their food for a few minutes and explaining how devastating the cuts associated with the Contract With America will be. Speakers included Professor of Politics (and DSA member) Marc Blecher and DSA's new national Field Coordinator, Carmen Mitchell, who will graduate in May.

Pennsylvania

The Youth Section chapter at Bryn Mawr College also participated in the March 29 day of action, distributing pamphlets, organizing letter-writing tables aimed at the Senate, and—most successfully—sponsoring a well-attended student panel on the Contract. The panel allowed a wide variety of student organizations—including environmentalists and lesbian activists—to exchange ideas and to sharpen their political response to the Republican agenda.

The University of Pennsylvania chapter has also been extremely active in a broad campus coalition against the cuts. They participated in a citywide demonstration on April 17.

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B. Paid and/or requested circulation		
1. Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors, and counter sales	0	0
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D. Free distribution by mail (samples, complimentary, and other free)	2,000	2,800
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I certify that the statements made by me above are true and complete/John McMurria, Financial Coordinator.

8 Questions about the

1995 DSA National Convention

1 What is the 1995 DSA National Convention? DSA's National Conventions are held every two years. They are the highest decision-making body of the organization. Delegates to the Convention set priorities for DSA's elected leadership and national staff.

2 Just what we need: another pointless week-end of leftists sucking their thumbs and passing empty resolutions, while reactionary forces are busy threatening freedom, democracy, and social justice around the world. Why should I waste my time on yet another meeting? It's exactly *because* of the reactionary onslaught that the left needs to learn to take meetings seriously. The reasons the right has been so successful are no secret—they have promoted their ideas aggressively, nurtured their organizations carefully, and always tied their work to concrete political action. We should learn lessons from the right's success. This year's DSA National Convention will be a place where DSAers—rank-and-file members, elected leaders, and staff—can exchange ideas and tie their serious discussions to serious action.

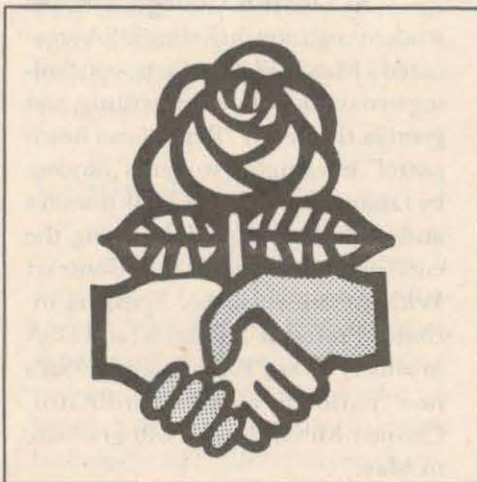
3 Okay, maybe I'll try to be there. When and where is it? This year's National Convention will be held during the weekend of November 10-12, at the National 4-H Center, a campus-style

conference facility just outside Washington, D.C. (Friday, November 10 will be observed as the Veterans Day holiday at many workplaces and schools.)

4 And what exactly goes on at these Conventions? Well, there are speeches and dialogues featuring some of DSA's most prominent members—recent Conventions have featured Barbara Ehrenreich, Cornel West, Frances Fox Piven, and Ron Dellums. This year there will be a major outreach event designed to remind the D.C. political establishment that a serious left still exists, and that we're not going away. The Convention is also a chance for DSA local activists from around the country to exchange ideas about politics and strategy, and for DSA's commis-

sions to meet in person. The Convention elects the National Political Committee (NPC) which will guide DSA's day-to-day work for the next two years. Any DSA member is eligible to run for a seat on the NPC. Finally, of course, there are decision-making sessions, where delegates will develop and debate resolutions about DSA's future. This year, these sessions will include debate about a proposed new DSA Political Perspectives Document.

5 So how do I sign up? Everyone is welcome—just fill out and return the form on the opposite page. If you'd like to attend as a delegate—that is, if you'd like to have voting privileges—you also need to



November 10 - 12 ❖ Washington, D.C.

take a couple of extra steps. If you live in an area where there is no DSA local, you should ask to attend as an "at-large" delegate. Check the "at-large delegate" box on the reply form, and the national office will contact you with details during July. If you live in an area where there is a DSA local, contact the leaders of your local. (See the directory on page 19.) Locals are required by the DSA Constitution to hold open elections to choose their delegates between July 10 and September 26.

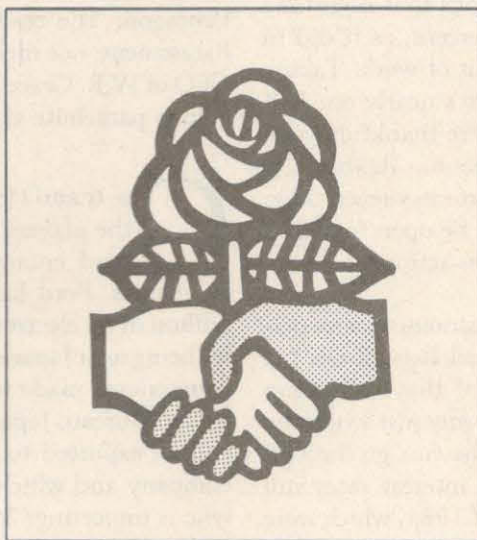
6 Is this going to be one of those weekends where I come home exhausted and depressed? Human suffering is everywhere, so we can't make guarantees. But we're designing the Convention so that there will be plenty of time for socializing, networking, and recreation. And spending a weekend with some of the country's most energetic and thoughtful progressives should help us to see the hope and possibility that exist even in these bleak times.

7 How much will it cost to attend? This will be the least expensive DSA Convention in years. For most attendees, the total cost including room, meals, and the registration fee will be between \$175 and \$225. (The variation is because the 4-H Center offers a variety of room

styles, ranging from single-bed rooms with bathrooms attached to quadruple-bed rooms with dorm-style hallway bathrooms. We'll send you details about these choices after you return the reply form.) If you attend the Convention as a delegate, you will also participate in the Convention's "travel share" pool, which is designed to equalize travel costs for delegates from throughout the country. Travel costs for delegates will be about \$100, whether they travel from Alaska or from three blocks away.

8 What I can I do between now and November? Convince your friends in DSA and throughout the left that it's important to be at the Convention. Study and participate in the ongoing debates about political strategy and tactics in *Socialist Forum*, DSA's discussion bulletin. And, of course, work with the

locals and Youth Section chapters in your area to do serious activism. Support the Corporate Responsibility Act. Defend abortion clinics. Educate yourself about international workers' rights. Organize a worker-owned cooperative in your neighborhood. Fight to repeal Proposition 187. The goals and values of the democratic left are under a new kind of threat. We need to develop a new kind of response—a radical activism that embodies what we know about democracy, justice, and freedom.



The 1995 DSA National Convention

Yes! I am interested in attending the Convention. Please send me full registration information. (Returning this coupon does not represent a binding commitment to attend.)

I live in an area where there is no DSA local, and I would like to attend the Convention as an "at-large" delegate. Please send me information about this.

If I attend the Convention, I will need child care for a child/children aged _____.

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Return to DSA, 180 Varick Street, New York, NY 10014 212/727-8610



Janie Higgins Reports

as told to Steve Max

"**W**hy Wall Street Cheers as Economy Slips" Do

you feel that powerful forces are plotting your downfall? You should—because it's true!

Under the headline above, the *New York Times* business section reported, "Wall Street investors broke out the champagne this week, celebrating what appeared to be an economic slowdown by setting new records in the stock market." The reason for the cheers? In an economy increasingly based on speculation instead of production, the rich fear inflation more than recession.

In Associated Press dispatches, analysts have been congratulating the Federal Reserve on what they call a "soft landing"—the economy is deliberately slowed but recession avoided. Of course no one mentions that each time unemployment rises by a "soft" 0.1 percent, as it did in March, 124,000 people are thrown out of work. Taking into account the effect on families, that's nearly one half million lives disrupted. No doubt they're thankful it was done "softly." Since the Federal Reserve has deliberately put people out of work by raising interest rates seven times in fourteen months, shouldn't the Fed be open to a class action suit—or some other form of class action?

Who's in charge here? Economists are perplexed. Many experts label Republican tax cuts "a recipe for inflation" that will pump more money into a near-capacity economy just when the Fed is trying to slow things down. If the cuts go through Congress, the Fed will probably raise interest rates still higher. Shades of the Reagan tax cuts of 1981, which were followed by the steepest economic downturn since the Great Depression. Is Newt setting up Clinton for a not-so-soft landing in 1996?

The Fed frankly admits that low unemployment leads to higher wages. Socialists note that low unemployment

also makes workers bolder, and union organizing easier. It increases racial and ethnic unity between groups that might otherwise compete for scarce jobs. It puts the environment back on the agenda and advances the progressive program. No wonder the Fed, representing the largest banks—the financial sector of capitalism—wants unemployment raised to 8 percent.

To Them That Hath is Given. Proving the wisdom of this Biblical adage once again, the Pentagon has agreed to pay \$31 million to cover bonuses going to executives of defense contractors Martin Marietta and Lockheed. The two companies recently merged, eliminating 30,000 jobs. For their good works, officials shared bonuses of \$92 million, including the gift from a grateful Pentagon. The really big money, however, is in sexual harassment, not mergers. Accused debaucher J.P. Bolduc, CEO of W.R. Grace & Co., has just received a \$43 million golden parachute after being fired for misconduct.

Go, team! How do you tell the teams apart when all the players wear the same uniform? It would be hard enough in football, but try it with auto companies. Ford has announced that it's investing \$40 million in an electronic components center in Yokohama. By being near Japanese customers, Ford hopes to sell more components made in the USA. But according to the AP Tokyo Bureau, Japanese cars made with American parts will be exported to America. So which is the American company and which the foreign? Who is exporting and who is importing? Who scores points the next time Ford asks its workers for wage givebacks and tax breaks to fight Japanese competition? To confuse matters still more, 51 percent of Ford employees now work in plants outside the U.S. (the figures are 36 percent for General Motors, and 31 percent for Chrysler).

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 - \$50 sustainer \$35 regular
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