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# Labor Day 1997

For over 150 years working people in the United States have organized into unions to achieve better jobs, wages, benefits and rights for all. Winning the right to representation, using the collective bargaining process as the core of their activities, struggling against bias and discrimination, the union

movement has played a central part in progressive politics in America. From the eight-hour day to the end of child labor, from the minimum wage to public education, the labor move-

ment has been a force for American progress.

And each September we celebrate the achievements of labor and commemorate its struggles and look forward to the battles ahead.

The new labor movement has refocused its energy on organizing workers and building support for unions. From Watsonville, CA, where demonstrators turned out by the thousands to support strawberry workers to New York where UNITE is on the frontlines of efforts to stop sweatshops, labor and its supporters are on the move.

In Detroit, a stronghold of the union movement, newspaper workers have been on strike since July 13, 1995 against the *Detroit News*, owned by Gannett, and the *Detroit*

*Free Press*, owned by Knight-Ridder. Gannett and Knight-Ridder are demanding the elimination of hundreds of jobs as well as other measures that would gut union contracts. In a public statement made a month after the strike began, Robert Giles, Editor and Publisher of the *Detroit News*, said: "We're going to hire a whole new workforce and go on without unions, or they can surrender unconditionally and salvage what they can."

The article by Susan Watson and the speech by U.S. Representative David Bonior (both courtesy of the *Detroit Sunday Journal*, the strikers' newspaper) give us a view of the issues, concerns and people involved in this effort.

April 15, '97  
**When does the BLEEDING of Jobs and Money Stop in Detroit?**

Knight-Ridder  
Shareholders meeting  
Philadelphia, PA  
Produced by Robert and newspaper workers



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# DSA OFFICES

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## NATIONAL

---

### NEW YORK, NY

Michele Rossi, DSA Locals Contact  
180 Varick Street FL 12  
New York, NY 10014  
212.727.8610

### WASHINGTON, DC

Christine Riddiough, DSA Political Director  
409 Butternut Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20012  
202.726.0745

---

## REGIONAL

---

### MIDWEST

Mike Heffron, Midwest Organizer  
PO Box 1073  
Columbus, OH 43216-1073  
614.253.8992

### NEW YORK STATE

Amy Bachrach, NY Organizer  
180 Varick Street FL 12  
New York, NY 10014  
212.727.2207

### BOSTON, MA

11 Garden St.  
Cambridge, MA 02138  
617.354.5078

---

## NATIONAL CAMPUS ORGANIZER

---

Kevin Pranis, DSA Youth Section Organizer  
c/o DSA National Office  
212.727.8610



DEMOCRATIC

*Editor*

**Chris Riddiough**

*Production*

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*Editorial Committee*

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# Detroit Strike Diary

BY SUSAN WATSON

July 13, 1997

Dear Strike Diary,

Two years.  
Who woulda thunk it?

The notion that we have been on strike and locked out for two whole years positively boggles the mind. An elephant could have had a baby in that amount of time. I could have become a manicurist. The Chicago Cubs could have put together a winning streak. The newspapers could have bought a conscience.

Two years.



What do you give someone who has been on strike that long?

If this were a marriage, people would be showering us with cotton or china. But the troubled relationship

between the companies and the unions is neither love match nor marriage of convenience. We just want this situation to end.

If we were children, our friends would come to our party and give up toys and books in exchange for ice cream and cake — and maybe a few balloon animals twisted into shape by a clown. But we ain't kids. We lost our naiveté after getting the brush-off from companies we once loved.

And anyway, it seems odd to celebrate an event that shook up so many lives.

Sure, we are thankful for surviving, grateful for new friends and ecstatic over recent National Labor Relations Board findings that our cause was indeed just.

But we don't celebrate going out on strike. There's been too much pain, too many lost lives for that.

Two years.

In those quiet moments when I am alone with my thoughts, I tell myself that I must not delight in another person's pain —

*Continued on page 4*

## Greetings from Nassau DSA

*Saluting DSA's active role in the Campaign for Economic Justice!*

Mark Finkel  
Chair

Lottie Friedman  
Treasurer

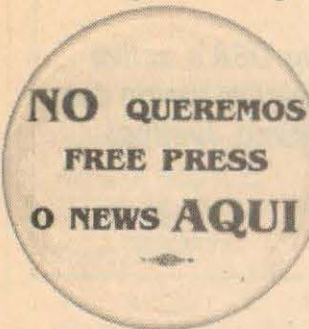


Nearly 100,000 people from across the U.S. came to Detroit to march in support of the *Detroit News* and *Free Press* strikers on June 21, 1997.

JIM WEST/IMPACT VISUALS



even if that person is a job-stealing scab or a management flunky. In those quiet moments, I wonder where you draw the line between righteous indignation and self-righteousness.



How do you find the strength to forgive when all that kept you going sometimes was the hope that "they" would have to pay for what they did?

How much heat can healthy anger absorb before it hardens into hatred?

If I allow this strike to change me into a mean-spirited harpy, then management will have won the ultimate victory. It will have cloned itself in me. Even if we were to get a good contract tomorrow, we would have lost our sense of direction.

The real question, I reckon, is this: How do you fight the good fight — how can you push for the victory that your future depends on — and still want to fight fairly? Mike Tyson is trying to answer that one right now.

Two years.

I have learned to live without reading a daily paper in my hometown. Hundreds of thousands of others have, too. The irony, the tragedy is that the company's calculated decision to destroy the unions has practically destroyed two great newspapers.

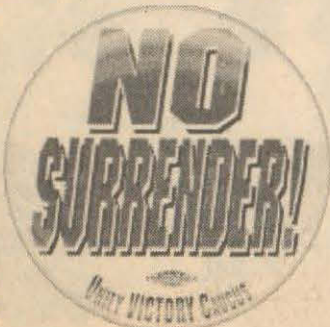
Two years.

As strange as it may seem, Dear Diary, I cling with childlike faith to a belief in fairness, in some universal scale that can't be tampered with or manipulated. I don't know when or where that scale will be read, but I know that one day it will. That knowledge both comforts me and prods me to clean up my act.

Two years.

Went on strike. Sold my house. Moved twice. Got fired. Put my dog to sleep. Learned to live alone. Gained so many pounds that my scale filed a grievance.

Two years.



*Susan Watson has been the co-editor of the Detroit Sunday Journal, the strikers' newspaper and was a long-time columnist for the Detroit Free-Press before the strike.*

## Tribute on the House Floor

BY REP. DAVID BONIOR

*This is the text of Rep. David Bonior's address before the House on June 24, one of six he has made on the strike/lockout. During the speech he held up the June 22 Sunday Journal with "GUILTY!" emblazoned across the front page.*

Mr. Speaker, tonight I want to take a few moments to pay tribute to some of the bravest and the strongest people that I know, those 2,000 men and women who are taking on two of the largest and the wealthiest and the most powerful corporations in our country, those 2,000 men and women who are standing strong in Detroit against Gannett and Knight-Ridder, those 2,000 men and women who have put their lives on hold for two years, been challenged economically, physically, emotionally, but are fighting for fairness and for justice and for what they believe in.

They are people like Kate DeSmet and Sandra Davis. They are people like Frank Brabenec and Stephen Olter, Mark Naumoff and Ben Solomon. They are the people that I met with last weekend when we held a rally and a march and did a civil action against those who would deny the over 2,000 men and women in Detroit their jobs at these newspapers.

We had over 120,000 people attend a rally in support of these brave men and women. Last Saturday morning I heard Frank Brabenec tell of being struck in the head, beaten, dragged across the pavement. I saw hundreds of people holding picket signs with a picture of him being kicked. I heard Stephen Olter tell of being struck with a baton and a metal nut launched from a sling shot. I heard Mark Naumoff tell of being pinned under a gate when a truck knocked off its hinges and knocked go through nearly every day as they fight for what is right. They are the same struggles our parents and our grandparents fought for, bled for and sometimes died for. But they are the struggles that brought us a decent wage, that brought us pensions and health benefits, that brought us the weekend, that brought us safe working standards, that brought us overtime pay, that brought us all the things that help make the middle class in our country today and make our country as productive and as wealthy as it is.

They are the struggles that have raised the standards of living for every single American citizen, whether they belong to a union or not. We owe them a thank-you, not a kick in the side as they were given in their efforts to bring justice to the workplace.



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# Students Support for Labor Movement on the Rise

BY SARAH POTTER

Student activism in support of the labor movement has been on the rise in recent months. Media coverage announces students' protests of Guess sweatshops, their roles in organizing labor teach-ins on campuses, and their enthusiasm to participate in the AFL-CIO's Union Summer.

Based on this you may be thinking, "Students have finally seen the light and understand the importance of the labor movement!" You might even be cheerily assuming that labor is officially a hot youth issue that is winning over the hearts of millions as it reforms itself for the next century. However, as a student and labor activist at Columbia University, I am not sure that labor is yet as hip and appealing to students as we might wish.

I've found that many students are aware

of and sympathetic to the labor movement. But, especially on a campus like Columbia, where students' odds in the labor market are better than most and the backgrounds wealthier than most, their reluctance to identify themselves with labor issues is real. Even for students who work, the connections between student interests and those of the labor movement are not that readily apparent.

With the hope of gaining some insight into how to better convince students to connect with labor issues, I decided to talk to fellow labor activists on other campuses about their projects over the past year. I inquired about how students generally became interested, how they reached out to other students, and what issues got the most attention on campus. While everyone found it difficult to bring more students into their movements, their stories illustrate that it is possible to get students excited about labor and prospects are looking better all the time.

In my small and very unscientific survey of activists, ev-



DANA SCHUERHOLZ/IMPACT VISUALS

Demonstrators protesting Nike's exploitative labor practices in Indonesia disrupt the Nike-sponsored Pro Golf Tournament in Lacey, Washington, October 1996.



everyone I talked to said the instigators of most student-labor campaigns were political before they became involved in labor movement work. The AFL-CIO has done well for itself with Union Summer — almost all groups doing labor work had Union Summer graduates leading the way. In addition, left groups of all persuasions often jumped on board, as well as student of color groups.

At NYU, a union fighting for several new clauses in their contract with the administration solicited the support of left groups by giving a presentation at each group's meeting. To recruit more students who aren't already political, the Swarthmore labor group has planned a series of programs with speakers such as Nelson Lichtenstein, Joel Rogers, and Linda Chavez-Thompson. By having the speakers educate students about the intellectual and political aspects of labor, they hope to lure them into activism. Similarly, students and faculty organized labor teach-ins at campuses all over the country last year to publicize the revitalized labor movement and win over new labor fans.

The student-labor campaigns that most successfully expanded beyond a core of existing left activists focused on an on-campus labor struggle between campus employees and the administration. In general, students already had a stake in what was happening on the campuses where they lived and studied (and, most importantly, paid outrageously high tuition), so the chances of them taking interest and getting involved were higher when the issue was on campus. Perhaps because many students also have a certain skepticism about the good intentions of their university, few doubted campus workers' allegations of unfair wages or labor practices by administrators. The distrust of the university that students and workers share gave activists a ready-made way to connect students with labor issues. Organizing around on-campus labor issues was even easier for activists when the employees were mostly women (which was usually the case) and mostly people of color (also usually true). So how did students intervene in on-campus labor disputes?

At Bryn Mawr, which typically has little student activism, students rallied around dining and maintenance workers trying to organize a union. Students made banners to hang up around campus and signs which they carried into the dining hall in support of the workers there. Bryn Mawr hired union-busting consultants and the union lost the election by only a few votes. After the failed election, students continued their support by trying to get

an unfairly fired worker's case to the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). While the end of the school year also ended the labor activism, many hope to begin anew next year with another organizing drive.

Many previously inactive NYU students became involved in helping clerical employees get a closed shop and better pay and benefits in their next contract. A coalition in support of the union included environmental, hip hop, and political campus groups. Activists at NYU found creativity to be the best way to intrigue uninvolved students. Because their campaign was centered around the greed of NYU's administration and its workers' poverty, union supporters held a bake sale (croustons were a penny, cookies — ten cents) to help raise the president's mere \$380,000 a year salary to full \$400,000 a year. Humor and sarcasm made the point clear to other students.

Perhaps the most dramatic instance of an on-campus conflict was at UCLA, where the teaching assistants' union (SAGE/UAW) continued its battle to be recognized by the University. While the graduate students twice organized themselves to strike, they also organized undergraduates in their support. SAGE got 10,000 undergraduate signatures on a petition endorsing both the union and the tactic of striking and was repeatedly backed in the undergraduate newspaper. The union reports that, because of its organizing efforts, a far higher percentage of undergrads support unions in general and are sympathetic to labor issues. Like all of the on-campus campaigns, students also began to see the university as an employer who holds power over student and non-student employees and thus labor organizing is important.

The other fairly common route to labor activism was through national labor campaigns — most notably the UFW's strawberry worker campaign and UNITE's campaign against Guess sweatshops. Cornell students sent postcards to Guess headquarters and did guerrilla theater on campus to protest Guess' use of sweatshop labor. Columbia's DSA Youth Section chapter went to Macy's and Bloomingdale's and stuck pieces of paper in the pockets of Guess jeans which warned the buyer that the product was made in a sweatshop. Student groups at several schools also hosted sweatshop workers to speak about their working conditions. Swarthmore students spent a couple days going out to local grocery stores to tell store owners about the horrible conditions in which strawberry pickers are forced to work. They also networked with groups who took an interest in the predominantly Mexican immigrant farm workers to set up a committee of Hispanic, labor, and leftist student groups to head up more efforts next year.

While all of these campaigns made a clear appeal to issues of human rights and social justice, they were not as immediate as struggles between administrators and employees on campus. Consequently, work on national campaigns was usually not sustained for as long as that around campus issues even though none of the national campaigns has been resolved. However, both the UFW and UNITE have had interns working all summer on programs to bring in more students next year and maybe their work will pay off in long term campaigns.

Despite the many difficulties of attracting students to labor issues, it has been an exciting year overall for student-

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# Nonprofits and Religious Organizations Speak Out Ending Workfare As We Know It

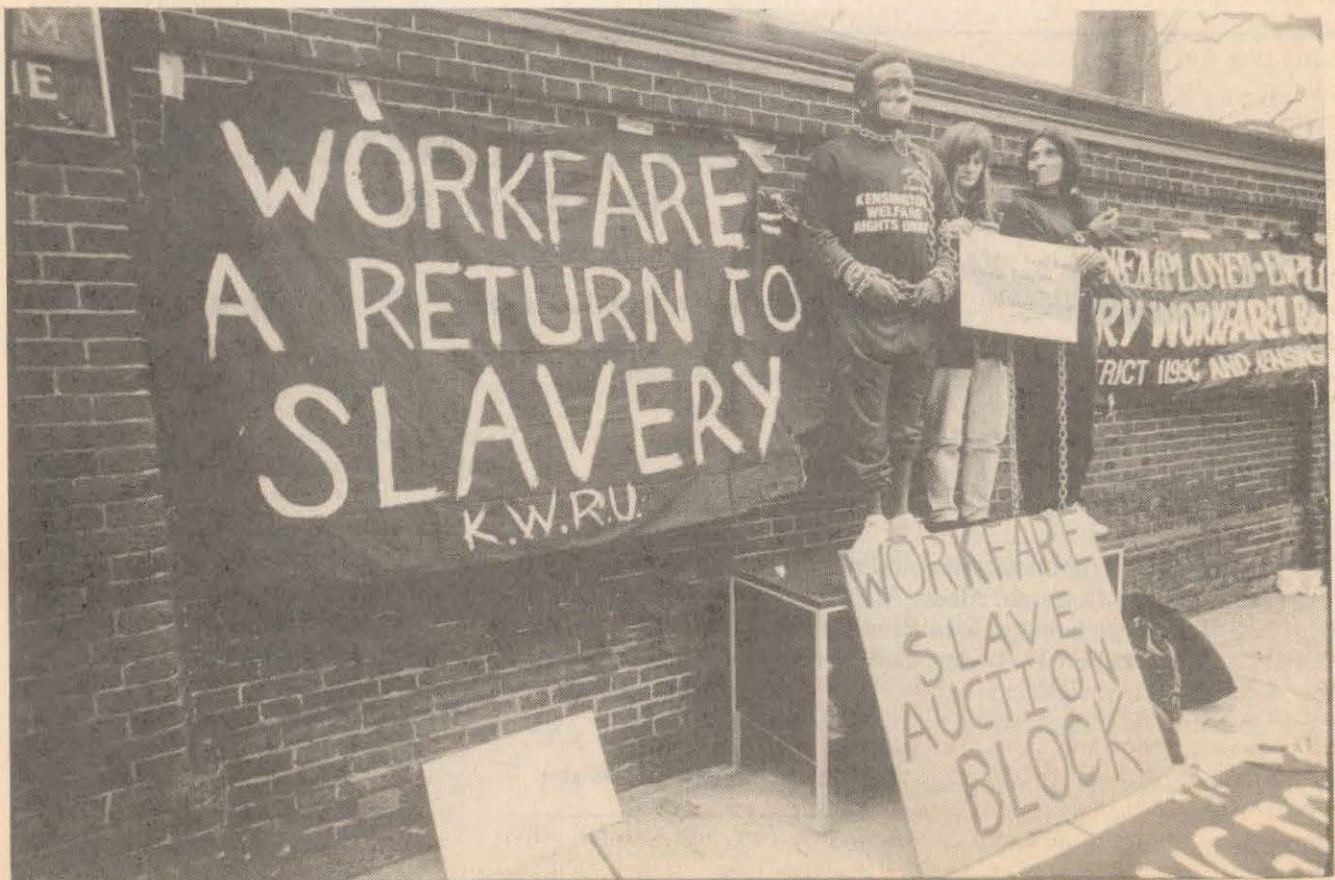
BY PETER LAARMAN

A coalition of religious and nonprofit organizations in New York City has launched a "Pledge of Resistance" campaign to halt the spread of workfare in the nonprofit sector. The campaign began after Mayor Rudolph Giuliani announced plans to expand the current workfare, or Work Experience Program (WEP), from nearly 40,000 to 100,000 participants by 1998. New York City has the nation's largest workfare program, through which 150,000 welfare clients have passed in the last three years.

This peonage system, whereby welfare clients work off their grants in city agencies but receive none of the benefits normally associated with steady work, would extend into religious and nonprofit organizations and might

possibly become a requirement for nonprofit agencies with city contracts. At the same time that the program has grown in New York City, some 23,000 municipal workers have been laid off of, a large number from maintenance-type jobs. Without the clean-up efforts of workfare workers, the city's parks, streets, and subways would be overwhelmed by trash.

If the reality of jobs and job training available in New York matched the rhetoric of welfare-to-work, WEP or something like WEP might succeed. But New York City has long had the highest official unemployment rate of any major urban center, and living-wage jobs are especially scarce for people with few skills and little job experience. As currently designed, WEP doesn't even pretend to ready people for success in the job market; it merely compels welfare clients to do various tasks the city needs done—tasks that used to be performed by decently paid municipal employees. In fact, WEP has become a political bonanza for Giuliani, allowing him to say the quality



Welfare recipients and supporters demonstrate outside a Department of Human Services conference discussing changes in welfare in Philadelphia, PA, December 10, 1996.

HARVEY FINKLE/IMPACT VISUALS



of life is improving (city parks and streets cleaned by armies of WEP workers) while the city budget is reasonably balanced.

The mayor's official "win-win" rhetoric conceals an ugly reality for people in the program. They know their WEP assignments are going nowhere—not preparing them at all for real employment. Some 7,000 of them actually had a chance to make it in the private job market: they were enrolled in City University classes until WEP forced them to quit school and pick up a broom. Many WEP workers also have to work in humiliating, unsafe conditions: at work sites that lack decent sanitary facilities and without needed equipment and training in health and safety procedures for handling garbage and contaminated waste.

The blatant exploitation and abuse involved in WEP prompted more than three dozen religious congregations and nonprofit social service agencies to declare that they will not serve as WEP placement sites and also

that they will do all in their power to end the abuses associated with WEP. New York DSA was an early signer of the *Pledge of Resistance*. The Pledge points out that (1) WEP forces welfare recipients to work without pay and without hope for full-time employment; (2) WEP workers lose their opportunity to pursue higher education and real vocational training; (3) WEP drives down wages and living standards for all workers; and (4) WEP displaces a shrinking city workforce and weakens the unions that represent them.

With the end of welfare as we know it, activists must end workfare as we know it. Together with active campaigns to win union representation for WEP workers, the resistance campaign stands a good chance of forcing serious modifications in a program that to date has caused workfare in New York to reek with the stench of hypocrisy and fraud. For more information about starting a "Pledge of Resistance" campaign in your community, contact Heidi Dorow, Urban Justice Center, 666 Broadway, 10th floor, New York, N.Y. 10012; phone: 212-533-0540.

*Peter Laarman is senior minister of Judson Memorial Church in New York City and a DSA member.*



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# IT'S A DIRTY JOB, BUT...

## A Quarterly Look at Conservative Periodicals and Pundits

BY HARVEY J. KAYE

Unease and disarray continue to afflict conservatives. Even with Whitewater and the Lincoln Bedroom, only Sam Tanenhaus' *Whittaker Chambers* (Random House) and David Horowitz' autobiography, *Radical Son* (Free Press), seemed to give them cause to celebrate. The books also gave them yet another opportunity to bash Old and New Left alike, as the March 17 *Weekly Standard* cover announced: "TWO WITNESSES — Whittaker Chambers, David Horowitz, and the Legacy of American Communism." In this tradition, as well, *American Enterprise* devoted its entire May/June issue to disparaging the 1960s, affording a chance for conservative middle-aged folk to offer their regrets for youthful sins. These guys go on and on longer than the Energizer bunny.

British Labour's triumph, the French Socialists' victory, and the Canadian Conservative Party's utter defeat didn't exactly make American conservatives apoplectic; but the left's wins obviously rattled them, as evidenced by David Frum's "Crack-Up," Don Feder's "Parties of Right in Retreat," and Bill Buckley's "French Binge." I felt something good was happening when, following the first round of the French elections, a conservative writer rang to say he had been commissioned suddenly to fly over for Round Two and asked if I could connect him with a few Parisian Socialists. Some on the right found solace in the fact that Blair had embraced elements of Thatcherism (see Irwin Seltzer, "Why Tony Blair Isn't Like Clinton," *Weekly Standard*, May 19).

Upsetting conservatives more is the apparent mess the Republicans are making of themselves (though at times I think they agonize publically just to hide their glee at Clinton's deference). With articles like "Clintonized Republicans" and "Confused Conservatives," *Weekly Standard's* editors bemoaned "The Clueless GOP" (June 9) and "Chaos on Capitol Hill" (June 30). *National Review's* editors observed that "So battered is the House Republican leadership that it should qualify for disaster relief funds of its own by

now."

Conservative anxiety extended beyond the "week in review." The 20th Anniversary cover of Heritage Foundation's *Policy Review* (July/August) declared "Reagan Betrayed" in the boldest letters (they just love the guy). And a special issue of *National Review* treating "Immigration and Politics" doubly exploited popular conservative fears with: "THE EMERGING DEMOCRATIC MAJORITY — Increasing Democratic Vote Share as a Result of Immigration."

If things weren't bad enough, in the July *Esquire* (and on C-Span), David Brock, *American Spectator* writer and author of *The Real Anita Hill*, recounted his shock and dismay at being all but burned at the stake by his rightwing comrades for failing to completely trash the First Lady in his book, *The Seduction of Hillary Clinton*. Still, Brock refused to see an umbilical connection between the intellectual right and sleaze.

But I just adore columnist Arianna Huffington — best known recently for appearing in bed with liberal comic Al Franken on "Politically Incorrect" during election season '96. Bearing no love for the left, she nevertheless has little patience of late for any of her own ilk. Referring to Rush's hostility to Colin Powell's promotion of "Volunteerism," she wrote: "Now I don't agree with Al Franken that Rush Limbaugh is a big, fat idiot. He is merely a morally impoverished ignoramus." Of course, what does Arianna know? Rush testifies daily to his caring about America. Hell, the April *Limbaugh Letter* decried "The Era of Apathy"; the June issue asked "What Makes a Good Citizen?"; and the May cover had Rush decked out in full 1960s regalia with "If I Were a Liberal" emblazoned below. At least he didn't fantasize about being a socialist.

If you prefer hardcore, think about the 25th anniversary of Watergate. Rewriting history, Pat Buchanan asserts that "Watergate was indeed a coup. It was the overthrow of an elected president by a media and political elite he had routed in a 49-state landslide the like of which America had never seen" (June 17). *National Review* (June 16) proffered its readers a more pleasant historical note: the 50th anniversary of the original Mont Pelerin gathering organized by economist Friedrich Hayek. On that occasion, Hayek and crew began their intellectual campaign against the postwar social-democratic state. If only DSA's Center for Democratic Values project could be so successful (but more quickly).

Actually, there is reason to hope. Consider that 16 of the 25 figures selected this spring for Life magazine's "Hall of Heroes" were progressives or radicals: Abraham Lincoln, Franklin

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# ART & ACTION

BY JOE UEHLEIN

**A**rt is a critical compliment to activism. No matter how brilliant our attempts to inform, it is our ability to inspire that will make the difference. Cultural tools, like art and music, can be used to communicate in a way that the spoken word cannot because it reaches people in the heart and soul. Our soul is our spirit, and its strength makes for a strong and true movement.

## Art and Activism

What is art and why is it so important? Art, broadly speaking, is that which invites us to contemplation. In that moment of contemplation, art intensifies the presence of the world. Through art we see reality more vividly and more deeply. Through art we can be moved to raise questions that agitate and challenge existing networks of power and oppression. Art is a skillful and imaginative process of expression that historically has led to the creation of objects or sounds capable of producing an aesthetic response. In short, art taps the creative forces in all of us. We need our creativity now more than ever.

Intellectual political conversions are vulnerable and may not last long. When someone listens with the heart and soul, the result is true commitment. Anyone who has organized a union has made personal visits (house calls), one-on-one with workers. You know that you can "sign up" a worker based on the intellectual/ economic argument made. You also know that you may hear a few weeks later that the same worker has flipped back over to the company's side. They were influenced perhaps by another intellectual argument, but most likely, by a huge dose of fear. A nourished soul can help tear down fear and transform it into hope and determination.

A great deal has been said about how to restructure our organizations and devise new programs to take our movement forward into the new millennium. Cultural tools — art and music — have a practical role in the advancement of these new programs. As we advance organizationally these cultural tools will also nourish the soul of the movement. If we do

nothing to nourish our soul, we'll advance technically, and perhaps we'll grow as a result of new services and new approaches to organizing, and we'll build better organizations, but we won't have a strong movement. Tapping the soul power of our current members, staff and leaders, and mobilizing them into a real force will aid in organizing, building coalitions, and exerting ourselves politically. We should view art and music — cultural tools — as "soul food," with real, practical, day-to-day application in advancing new programs.

Cultural tools cannot be viewed as an add-on — something done in addition to political and organizational work. They are an integral part of that work that is central to our organizational and political agendas. Art, music, and other cultural tools do help us understand where we've come from — our history, but they have a compelling and perhaps more important contemporary application as well, helping us understand current patterns of power that need to be changed, and in building the will and determination to change them.

## Activism Through Art

Bertolt Brecht said that "art is not a mirror reflecting reality, but a hammer with which to shape it." The truth is that art is both. We need to build a culture of change. We need political art that is visionary, and visionary art that is political. Art can help us call into question the corporate domination of our lives (political, economic, and social), and challenge existing networks of power, domination, and violence. Art can also be used to educate in simple, moving terms subjects that are complex and seemingly illusory.

The advancement of culture and cultural tools within our movement requires an organizing strategy. In addition, cultural work must be strategic in terms of complementing the programs of organized labor.

There are many different ways within our movement that cultural work can be strategic and effective:

*First, in organizing:* Reaching key and diverse constituencies which are targets for new organizing drives will be done, in part, through high visibility media access which cultural work can create. What workers see on TV influences what they do and how they see themselves and feel about themselves.

*Second, at the grassroots:* As a source of inspiration, education, and mobilization — in the union halls, on the picket lines, and in the communities we must build cultural work into our local programs.

*Third, in large key campaigns:* Art can support and bring visibility to key campaigns, both through the media and by being a reinforcing presence on-site. We must use music and art and other cultural tools as a part of all large campaigns, and as part of assistance provided in high profile emergencies. Cultural





JUDY JANDA/IMPACT VISUALS

Pete Seeger with Sechaba, a South African a cappella group during a 1986 Labor Day rally in New York City.

tools have been used successfully to communicate and build spirit in large campaigns like Ravenswood and Bridgestone-Firestone.

*Fourth, in the international arena:* Art and culture can communicate in a genuine way and transcend the barriers of language, history, and culture.

## The Role of Artists

We also need to expand our outreach to artists, including those 'stars' who are sympathetic to labor. There are well known artists who share our vision and concerns. Our history as a movement contains examples of the commissioning of artists to do work for labor: Woody Guthrie, Jacob Lawrence, Images Of Labor, Bread & Roses, Pins & Needles.

We need an on-going organizing strategy for mainstream cultural workers — to build a core of artists who are pro-labor and outspoken. These include big name artists like Bruce Springsteen, Merle Haggard, Donna Summer, Dolly Parton, Johnny Cash, U2, R.E.M., Ani DiFranco, The Nields, Los Lobos, Wynton Marsalis, Stevie Wonder, and many more.

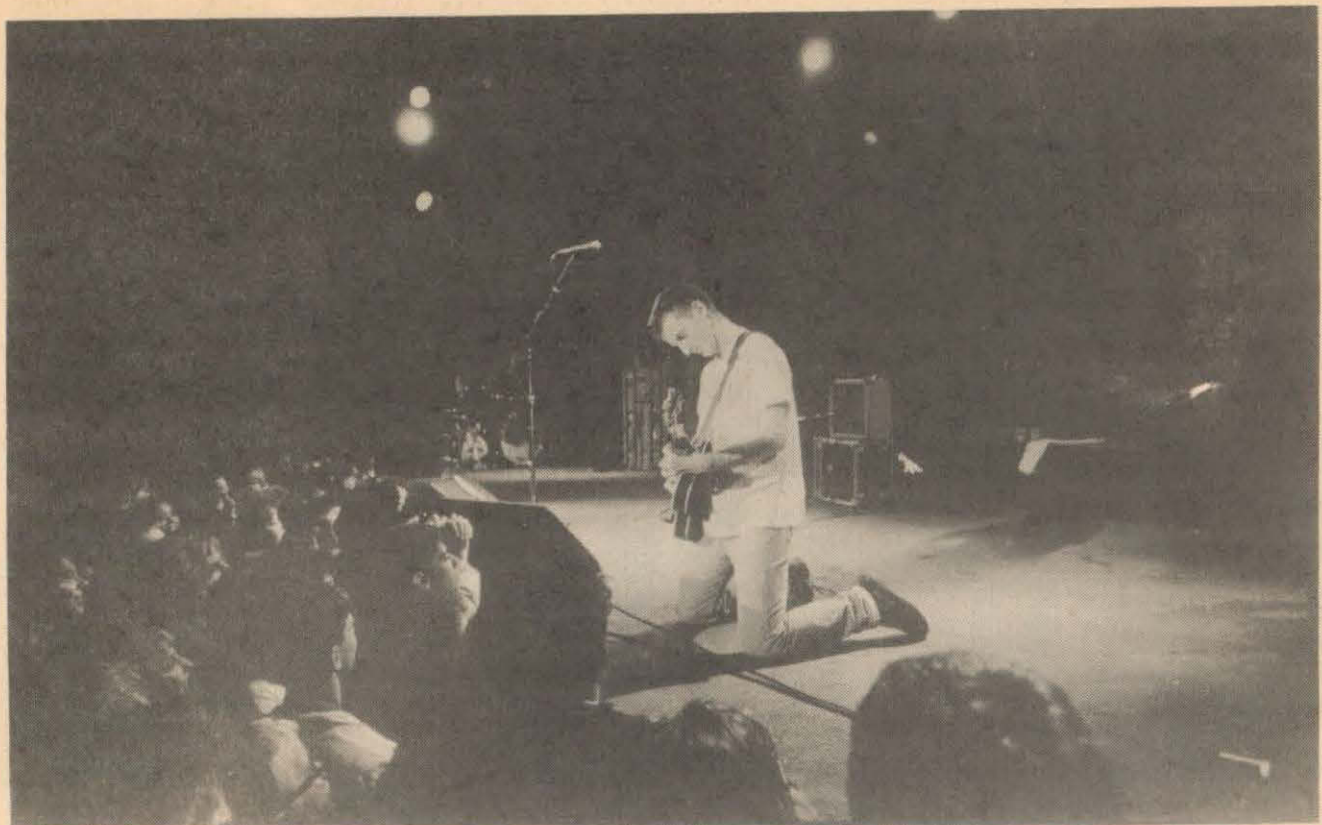
*Rolling Stone* magazine some time ago printed a painting titled "The History of Rock 'n Roll — Woody Guthrie's Home Room." In it Woody is depicted as the teacher. Sitting in the class

and taking a test, you can see a very young-looking, almost child-like, Bruce Springsteen, John Mellencamp, and Bob Dylan. The point is obvious: these famous performers all learned from Woody Guthrie. Similarly, Pete Seeger, who worked with Woody for years, and who recently received a Grammy Award and has been inducted into the Rock 'n Roll Hall of Fame, is an icon to many popular performers today. The cultural heritage of organized labor is very popular among contemporary artists.

Recently, Case Western Reserve, with a \$150,000.00 grant from the Ford Motor Company, and in conjunction with the Rock 'n Roll Hall of Fame, sponsored a three-day symposium on the life of Woody Guthrie. A public concert included stars such as Bruce Springsteen, Ani DiFranco, Pete Seeger, Billy Bragg, Jimmy Dale Gilmore, Arlo Guthrie, and others who came together to honor Woody. Case Western Reserve was also opening the Woody Guthrie study center. Nora Guthrie, Woody's daughter, asked Billy Bragg to review Woody's unpublished writings so that Billy could prepare a new recording of Woody Guthrie songs to Billy's music. This exciting recording is due out next year, and will be accompanied by a nationwide tour.

Bragg, a British rocker who tours the U.S. once a year, opened some of this year's shows with a tribute to the *Detroit News* strikers. He sang an anti-scab song, preceded with a strong statement in support of the strikers and saying how he opened his U.S. tour with a benefit for them. Midway through his set he did a song dedicated to the defeat of Robert Dornan, the right-wing Congressman from Orange County, CA. He told how the Democratic Party pulled its money out of the race because they felt Dornan was unbeatable; but the labor move-





DAVID VITA/IMPACT VISUALS

Billy Bragg at the Ritz in New York City, Nov. 22, 1986.

ment stayed in and working in the community elected a Latina woman to Congress. Then he closed with his original "There Is Power In A Union," preceded by a five minute speech about why the labor movement is the place to be, that labor is revitalizing in the U.S. and everyone needs to get with the labor movement for the betterment of all.

The American Federation of Musicians recently endorsed "Artists For a Hate Free America" (AHFA). AHFA is dedicated to "countering bigotry, homophobia, racism, violence and censorship in American politics and public life, through strategies of education, grassroots organizing and advocacy." According to its mission statement AHFA "gives artists effective ways to be involved in fighting hate by providing the information, resources, and programs needed to make the most of their time and talents. It works with artists to mobilize their audiences and the general public to take an active role in fighting hate." So, who makes up AHFA? Pearl Jam, Neil Young, R.E.M., Branford Marsalis, Bonnie Raitt, Melissa Ethridge, The Posies, and many more.

And I have to ask, why aren't these artists, and many others — like those associated with the Woody Guthrie tributes — closer to the labor movement? Why can't organized labor tap into this cultural energy? Currently we

tend to go from public event to public event trying to attract big names, with some success, to bring attention to our cause. But we lack a strategy for organizing in the cultural arena that address the self interest of these performers and brings a long-term, sustainable popular cultural element to our work as trade unionists and to our work as part of a movement that seeks the betterment of the human condition.

### Connecting Art, Artists and Action

We must change the belief that we can't live without technology and better function, but we can live without spirit, imagination, and beauty — the arts — the time-tested source of inspiration and creativity. The cutting of arts funding at the federal, state, and local level before cutting technology, athletics or war represents a skewed sense of priorities. It's amazing to me that we can explore outer space but we cannot imagine a way to bring about peace on earth — we can build ever more efficient machinery, but we can't imagine a way to provide for economic justice in our society.

The bottom line is that cultural tools can help us win.

*Joe Uehlein is the secretary-treasurer of the Industrial Union Department at the AFL-CIO and president of The Labor Heritage Foundation. He is also actively involved in work on art and action. Those interested in more information on labor and art/art and action should write to him at: The Labor Heritage Foundation, 815 16th St. NW, Washington, DC 20006.*



# Jobs, Income Equity and Economic Justice

BY CHRIS RIDDIOUGH

**W**hile the media reports that the U.S. economy has never been better, the average American is still concerned about their economic security. Why? Although the economy as a whole may be in good shape, the rewards are not distributed evenly — over the last 15 years, CEOs fared much better than the average working person. In 1995, the average salary and bonus for a CEO increased by 18 percent to an average of \$1.7 million and stock options and other forms of compensation resulted in an average of 30 percent to over \$3.7 million.

Most Americans don't seem to mind high salaries, but watching executives get big increases while the workers get very little — or even get laid off — does make people mad. A coalition of groups from the AFL-CIO to Share the Wealth to DSA is trying to do something about that and, at the same time, increase awareness about living wage and corporate accountability issues.

## Income Equity Action

One focus of this coalition effort is the Income Equity Act, introduced earlier this year by Rep Martin Sabo (D-MN). This act restricts executive pay by closing corporate tax loopholes. Under current law, compensation is tax deductible as a business expense. The Income Equity Act caps the tax deductibility of excessive compensation to 25 times that of the lowest paid full-time worker in the same firm. If the lowest paid worker at a business makes \$10,000 a year, the business will only be allowed to deduct \$250,000 (25 times \$10,000) in salary and bonuses per executive.

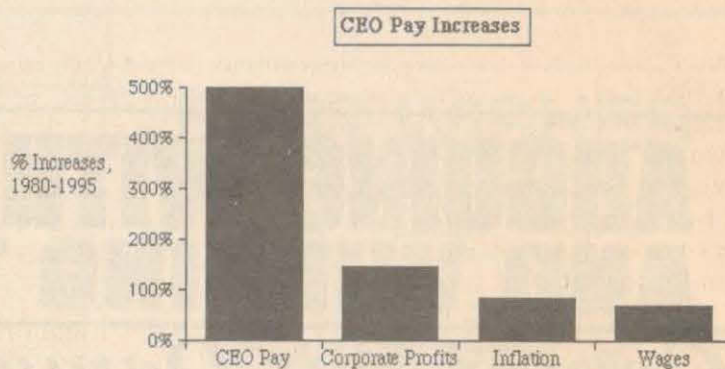
This legislation doesn't cover stock options or other forms of income even though they're the primary cause of the large increases in CEO pay over the last few years. Regulating stock options is complex and those inequities might better be addressed with progressive taxation of capital gains or financial transactions.

Nonetheless, this bill is an important vehicle for sending a message to Congress that we want fair pay not giveaways to corporations and the wealthy. Contact your representative and urge them to support this bill. Write

to your local newspaper and tell them about the bill — urge them to write an editorial in support or write one yourself.

You can also find out about the CEO pay for the company you work for or hold stock in. If you participate in a pension fund, own shares in a mutual fund or 401k, or directly own stock in a company, or you are an employee owner (through an employee stock plan), then you are a shareholder — you can use that power to change how the company operates.

You can also contact the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). The SEC is the federal regulatory agency that oversees all publicly held corporations, and requires these corporations to file reports which help investors make informed choices about their investments. You can send a letter to the SEC urging them to change their rules and require full disclosure of CEO compensation.



Source: AFL-CIO

## Get the Facts

When you write to your representatives, the SEC or local newspaper, you'll need to know just how far out of control, the CEO pay situation is. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, the pay disparity between CEOs and U.S. workers has jumped. In 1965, CEOs made 44 times the average factory worker's salary. Today, CEOs make 212 times the average worker's pay.

*Business Week* reported that the CEOs of the 20 companies with the largest announced layoffs saw their salaries and bonuses actually increase by 25 percent. If, instead of being laid off, factory workers had received pay raises comparable to those of CEOs between 1980 and 1995, they would now be paid \$90,000 a year. Minimum wage workers would be paid \$39,000.

The obvious reason for all this is greed, but behind the greed lies a web of interlocking directorates, increasing use of stock options as compensation and, of course, the tremendous corporate power. Boards of directors are responsible for ap-



proving executive compensation packages. Many CEOs serve on each others' boards and approve each others' pay packages. Some directors are relatives of the CEO or rely on them for business.

Stock options allow executives to buy the company's stock at a predetermined price in the future. If the stock price goes up in the future, an executive can collect big-time. One reason for increased reliance on stock options is the big tax breaks for companies.

Increased corporate power also means that executives can take far more for themselves. Attacking this corporate power and reinvigorating labor is central to this effort to provide income equity for all working people. Working with labor and other economic justice organizations, DSA is hard at work to make this happen. You can be part of this exciting effort by joining the *DSA Action Network*. Call (202) 726-0745 for more information.

*Chris Riddiough is DSA Political Director. More information on CEO pay is available on the world wide web at <http://www.aflcio.org> or <http://www.stw.org>*

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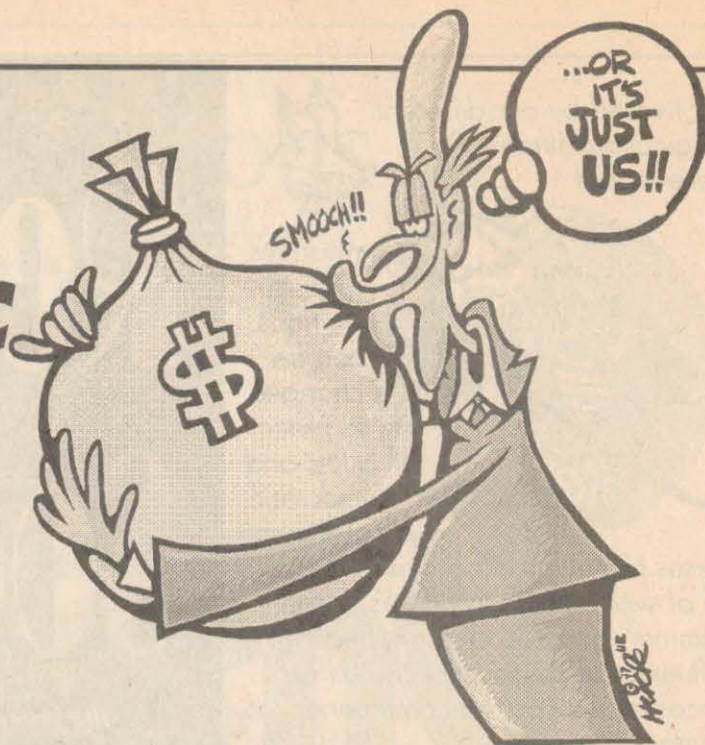
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— Religion & Socialism Commission, DSA—

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# SOLIDARITY

On Labor Day, Americans pause to reflect on the struggles of workers today and the sacrifices of those who came before us. As we reach across boundaries and borders to form one united, progressive struggle for economic justice, now — as always — the linchpin to our success is SOLIDARITY.

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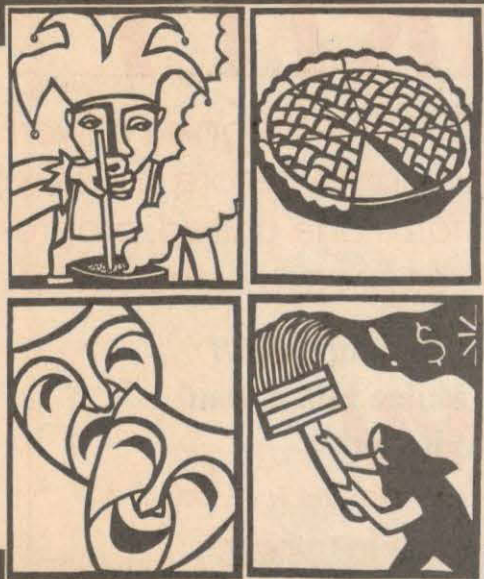


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labor activists. According to the students I talked to, educating students about the politics and history that inspire many activists, organizing around issues students already have some connection with (i.e., on campus, or around specific groups of workers who are largely Latino or women, etc.), and having fun and exciting actions have proved to be good ways to pull in new faces. As we head into another school year, we can use these tactics and invent more to broaden our base and truly make labor the sexy youth issue it dreams of becoming.

Conservative Periodicals / continued from page 8

Roosevelt, Eleanor Roosevelt, Martin Luther King Jr., Tecumseh, Thomas Jefferson, Margaret Sanger, Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass, Susan B. Anthony, Jane Addams, Cesar Chavez, Helen Keller, Rachel Carson, Jacob Riis, and Mother Jones. I expect P.J. O'Rourke, having called for a renewed McCarthyism, will now add *Life's* editorial board to his "Enemies List."

*Harvey J. Kaye is professor of social change and development at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay (kayeh@uwgb.edu) and author of "Why Do Ruling Classes Fear History?" and Other Questions (St Martin's Press, 1997 paperback).*

**THE INDUSTRIAL UNION DEPARTMENT,  
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until life closes;  
Hearts starve as well as bodies - give us  
bread but give us roses."*

**Peter S. diCicco  
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**Joseph B. Uehlein  
Secretary-Treasurer**

So tonight, Mr. Speaker, I say thank you to Frank and Stephen and to Mark and Ben, and to everyone who has fought for the dignity of American workers. I also stand with you. This is a struggle for human rights, for fairness and for justice; it is a struggle worth fighting for, and I can tell these workers, and I can tell 120,000 people who came from all over the country last weekend — in fact, we had people come from Europe to



stand with our brothers and sisters — that we will win this struggle, because the News and the Free Press, the two papers in Detroit owned by Gannett and Knight-Ridder are wrong, they are disobeying the law, they are guilty, they are guilty of disrespect for the law by keeping these workers out.

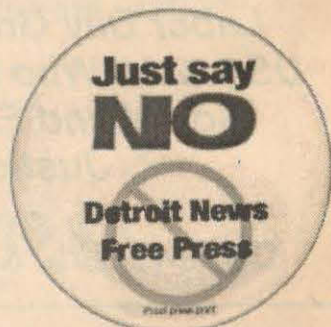


A judge just last week ruled that they conducted themselves with unfair labor practices. They need to return these people to work so they can provide for their families. And we will be talking about this issue as we talked about the issue of the strawberry

workers in California who are struggling to be able to be recognized with a decent wage and decent benefits.

We will be talking about workers struggling in the poultry facilities in the Carolinas or the textile mills in the South or the steelworkers at Pittston or the Caterpillar workers who have been struggling for years. These are American workers who deserve the respect of their government, of the corporate leaders in this country, and certainly their citizens.

So again, I thank those who are fighting the News and the Free Press for justice and fairness for the American worker.



*David Bonior is a member of the U.S. House of Representatives from Michigan. He is the minority whip for the Democrats and is a member of the Congressional Progressive Caucus. He was arrested in July for action in support of the striking workers.*



# PRESENT PROGRESSIVE

BY DSA NATIONAL DIRECTOR ALAN CHARNEY

**H**ere's a question for you! What's the difference between a progressive and a socialist? I know that many more people call themselves progressives than call themselves socialists. Usually, however, I find myself using the terms almost interchangeably. Why is this?

Thirty years ago — before there was a coherent progressive ideology — we would never have joined the terms “liberal” and “socialist” together. After all, the dominant ideology of that time was corporate liberalism. Even so Michael Harrington insisted that many American liberals were socialist but didn't know it. They really supported a political program that in Western Europe was considered, at minimum, social democratic. So, our mission at that time was to make socialism much more “user-friendly” to these liberals — to create an environment in which they could break with their corporate connections, come out of the ideological closet and affirm their socialist politics. Hence, the founding of DSOC and DSA.

But, the ideological universe has been turned upside down in the last thirty years. The dominant ideology is now corporate conservatism. And liberalism has split in two directions. Those who have kept the corporate connections have become neo-liberal (aka, new Democrats). The other liberals have become . . . progressives.

Indeed, many political traditions have come together to constitute today's progressivism. The liberal tradition is one; the socialist tradition another. In fact, every social movement has made its own contribution: the abolitionist/civil rights tradition; the suffragist/feminist tradition; the populist/agrarian tradition; the syndicalist/CIO tradition; the social gospel/religious left tradition; and some newer contributions from environmentalists, gay and lesbian activists, community organizers,

new immigrants, etc. No one tradition can claim an historic hegemony over American progressivism. And, more importantly, it cannot be claimed that American progressivism is only a transition to a “higher,” more advanced, political expression. Nourished from many traditions of social struggle, American progressivism is now sui generis.

American progressivism is not however, a least-common-denominator ideology. It's guiding principles are, if anything, social democratic in character. These include a strong democratic ideal; a commitment to social equality; and an affirmation of solidarity and multi-culturalism — all expressed within an American liberal context. In our Political Perspectives Document, we state that “our vision of socialism is a profoundly democratic one, rooted in the belief that individuals can only reach their full potential in a society that embodies the values of liberty, equality and solidarity. Only through creating material and cultural bonds of solidarity across racial, gender, age, national and class lines can true equality of opportunity be achieved.” This statement could just as easily express the considered convictions of most American progressives. Moreover, American progressives are anti-corporate and envision institutional alternatives based on “the democratic control of productive and social life.”

So, Harrington's assessment is even truer today than thirty years ago! Or, as a prominent unionist said to me: “we're all in the same social-democratic soup together.” That's why our Political Perspectives Document affirms that DSA's mission is “the founding of a new progressive movement. . . . Democratic socialists have an historic opportunity and responsibility to play a central role in the founding of a next left”

Back in January, DSA's National Political Committee invited over

sixty people to a retreat in Washington, DC to talk about our mission. It was the first step in a broad discussion that is now taking place throughout the organization. In a position paper written for this retreat, NPC-member Joe Schwartz challenged us most directly: “Are the values and vision historically associated with democratic socialism most productively borne by an explicit socialist organization?”

If you accept my assessment of today's progressivism, then you have to conclude that it has become an historic bearer of democratic socialist values and vision, just as it has become an historic bearer of the values and vision of other radical traditions. Yes, our socialist politics are now central to the politics of mainstream American progressivism! Or, as Cornel West puts it: “we are the socialist leaven in the progressive bread.” That's why building a next left means building a revitalized, coherent progressive movement.

Joe Schwartz also provoked us with a second question: “why is there no mass membership organization of left-liberals, radical democrats, progressives etc.? Should someone create one?” There are certainly lots of progressive groups that are organized on primarily ideological grounds: for example, the New Party, Americans for Democratic Action, Neighbor to Neighbor, Jobs with Justice, the Labor Party, the Rainbow Coalition, DSA — even the Progressive Caucus in Congress. If, as I maintain, there is a coherent progressive ideology, then why isn't there one dominant mass membership progressive organization? Are we condemned to this fragmentation that makes the progressive whole much less than the sum of its parts?

For me this is the crux of DSA's mission: What should we be doing to help make the progressive whole much more than the sum of its parts?



**America Needs A Left Arguing With the Right:  
DSA's 1997 National Convention  
& Center for Democratic Values Conference**

*November 6-9 Columbus, OH*

**Democratic Socialist Politics & Frolics  
with Barbara Ehrenreich, Cornel West,  
and Scores of Fellow DSAers!**

*Plus FREE admission to "Arguing With the Right—And Winning the People,"  
a conference sponsored November 6-7 by the Center for Democratic Values*

**Location:** Clarion Hotel, 7007 North High Street, Columbus, OH Phone 614.436.0700

**Accommodations:** \$79 per room per night. A room sleeps up to four people. *Reservations must be made by October 10, 1997 to get the lower convention rate.* Call 614.436.0700 to make your room reservations. Don't forget to mention you will be attending the CDV Conference/DSA National Convention!

**Transportation:** DSA has made special arrangements with Continental and American West Airlines. To get the discounted airfare, call VTS travel at 1-800-669-9875 to book your flight, and be sure to mention you are attending the DSA Convention. *To guarantee the reduced fare, make your travel arrangements by October 10, 1997.*

**Registration fee:** \$110 per person. The registration fee includes admission to "Arguing With the Right—And Winning the People," a conference sponsored by the Center for Democratic values November 6-7, prior to the opening of the Convention; plus attendance at all convention sessions, transportation to off-site events (Thursday evening's CDV debate between prominent intellectuals of the Left and Right, Friday evening's "Breaking Bread" featuring **Barbara Ehrenreich and Cornel West**), Saturday evening's Midwest DSA awards banquet, convention workshops, and coffee breaks. *To register, simply send in the form with payment by October 20. Make your check payable to DSA, or pay by credit card.*

**1997 DSA NATIONAL CONVENTION / CDV CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM**

YES, I / We want to attend DSA's 1997 National Convention! (Will you attend the CDV Conference? \_\_\_\_)

I / We will be attending as: \_\_\_\_ Observer \_\_\_\_ At-large Delegate \_\_\_\_ Local Delegate \_\_\_\_ Alternate

Enclosed is a check for my/our registration fee(s). \$ \_\_\_\_\_  Bill my/our credit card.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

I / We will need child care for a child/children age \_\_\_\_\_. Any other special needs? Please describe:

Credit Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Complete and mail by October 20, 1997 to DSA, ATTN: Convention, 180 Varick Street FL 12, New York, NY 10014. 212.727.8610