



things that go well together



special issue: *democratic left* and *the activist*

nafta for the americas: the ftaa

left strategy under Bush

race and student activism

local reports • book, music and movie reviews • more

Welcome to a special issue of Democratic Left including a section from the activist, the publication of the Young Democratic Socialists, DSA's youth section. We are proud to be a multi-generational political organization capable of generating activism both on campus and in communities, and we look forward to giving you a bird's eye view of each organization's work.

As the right-wing onslaught continues, it is more important than ever to mount a systemic, hard-hitting critique of the order we face. Daunting though it may be, the current situation in the US opens up a myriad of possibilities for direct cooperation between DSA and YDS. The growing movement against corporate-driven globalization has been galvanized by a surge in political involvement by students and youth, who often play leading roles. At the same time, that movement's difficulty in grappling effectively with issues of race presents us with the ambitious task of fully integrating an anti-racist agenda into the work we do. Indeed, finding ways to effectively address the struggles of women and people of color, as well as mounting a socialist, anti-corporate critique, is a challenge that has yet to be met by the Left. As democratic socialists, we understand this task as part of the very soul of our politics: the interests of ordinary people and their common environment should be put before the interests of profit. But to wage such a battle, we must seek to engage with the struggles of those to whom the anti-globalization movement does not speak: women, people of color, and, often, poor people.

While each organization rightly retains its own identity, we are stronger for being bound together than we would be separately. For DSA's part, we are proud to have a vibrant cadre of young activists engaging with progressive politics to push forth a critical, intelligent analysis within the student movement, fighting to make "the S-word" part of the world of student politics. For YDS' part, we are proud to be part of a multigenerational organization into which we can graduate and continue our work in the struggle for social justice, not just as progressives, but as democratic socialists. Indeed, our joint presence at the IMF-World Bank meeting last April was a strong showing of our strength and solidarity with each other. And we are both proud of the fact that DSA and YDS, in tandem, remain the largest socialist organization in the country.

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# Goodbye, Horace!

On May 15<sup>th</sup> Horace Small gave up the position of National Director of DSA so that he could relocate with his family from Philadelphia to Boston. Horace had hoped this move would happen later in the year so that he could carry out more of his agenda. "It was simply not practical, or fair, to continue to ask him administer and lead the organization from so far away", said Kathy Quinn, chair of the Steering Committee of DSA's board of directors, the National Political Committee.

In nearly two years Horace Small had made great progress in gaining new visibility for DSA. "It is our job, collectively, to finish what he started," said Frank Llewellyn who was initially appointed Interim Director by the Steering committee was confirmed as Acting National Director by the National Political Committee at its June meeting. Horace Small, who had worked with Llewellyn on a number of DSA projects, recommended Llewellyn's appointment.

Llewellyn has been a member of the NPC for five years. He worked closely with DSA's Founding Chair Michael Harrington, organizing the founding convention of DSA. "I am thrilled to be able to make this kind of contribution to the organization again, after so many years," he said after his appointment was confirmed.

Thank you, Horace, for all your work. And good luck, Frank, in your new role.

## A Message from the Acting National Director

DSA has an important agenda to complete. The strategic planning process, which begins with the Future Search Retreat in mid-July, and concludes with our convention this November in Philadelphia, will determine how we deploy our resources to achieve results.

I am writing this at the conclusion of the meeting of the Council of the Socialist International in Lisbon. Perhaps you saw a clip from the meeting where Yassir Arafat and Shimon Peres talked, from the SI stage, about achieving peace, security and independence. Their interchange was, we all hope, a step toward restarting the shattered peace process and it certainly was the most dramatic moment of the two day conference.

But what of the other work of this council—a demand to ratify the Kyoto agreement now; a demand to reform the WTO; a demand to end the armed conflicts that dominate too much of the geography of the world? These statements of consensus from the largest federation of political parties in the world point out exactly how much work we have to do.

It is our government that unilaterally renounced the Kyoto agreement. It is our government that slavishly follows the WTO line and seeks to pass little NAFTA'S; it is our government that sells arms to both sides in too many conflicts. It is our government that proposes to initiate a destabilizing arms race by building a useless anti-missile defense system. It is our nation that rejects the notion of collective security by undercutting any international organization that we cannot bully into accepting our line.

And, of course, it is our country that has so far refused to adopt the standards of minimal human decency: health care, child support, strong labor standards that even poor countries in Europe, like Portugal, have adopted.

It is our responsibility to articulate and implement political projects that build a different American response on international affairs and to build a left capable of changing the shape of American politics.

At the same meeting that named me as your Acting National Director, the NPC voted to establish a priority around the conditions facing low-wage workers that our Honorary Chair Barbara Ehrenreich describes so well in her new book.

It is my job, whether I have it for six months or six years, to work with the elected leadership and the infrastructure of the organization to design political projects that fulfill that mission and find the resources that will enable us to expand our political horizons.

It is a challenge that I eagerly accept, and a responsibility all of us must share.

Frank Llewellyn

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# Globalization Without Representation: The Free Trade Area of the Americas

by Kathy Quinn

In April, the US television audience was once again treated to the sight of police, Darth Vader-like in their anti-riot gear, clashing with angry protesters, lobbing tear gas and hauling demonstrators off to jail. Except this time, the location wasn't Seattle or Washington, DC, or Philadelphia. This time the scene was Quebec City, where the Canadian government had launched, according to Canadian activist Maude Barlow, "the biggest security operation in peacetime Canadian history. Six thousand and seven hundred police, thousands of soldiers on standby, armoured tanks, plastic bullets, and 5,000 canisters of tear gas...were assembled." All of this—plus the building of a fence around the entire city—was in reaction to demonstrations planned to coincide with the Summit of the Americas, where heads of state from 34 countries were gathering to further negotiations for the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA).

As with earlier demonstrations against the WTO and the IME, it was nearly impossible to tell from the televised reports why anyone would be so upset about the FTAA. The Peoples' Summit, which drew over 3,500 people to Quebec for workshops, panels and forums on various aspects of the FTAA, was virtually ignored, as television newscasters avoided the issues in

favor of more "visually interesting" scenes of violence.

## The Background

Essentially the FTAA would fulfill a corporate dream of a free trade area stretching from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego. It would be the largest free trade zone in the world, with an area with 800 million people and a GDP of \$11 trillion. George Herbert Bush was the first president to voice this dream, but it took New Democrat Bill Clinton to move the dream forward in a series of negotiations stretching over several years. The April meeting in Quebec was for the purpose of starting to put together a complete treaty from working drafts compiled by the nine working groups created to hammer out specific agreements in specific areas.

The Republicans under George II have already made it clear that an early priority will be getting "fast track" authority for these negotiations. Fast track authority would restrict Congressional action in the treaty process to a simple up or down vote on the treaty—no matter what its flaws. Receiving such authorization is important to the administration since the goal for implementation of the treaty is 2005 and the US has been pushing for 2003.

The big business community is salivating at the prospects for new markets, cheap labor, and low regulatory standards; but the average person should be skeptical of negotiations that promise to extend the model of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)—a treaty that has brought the US job losses, lower wages and a ballooning trade deficit—to the entire hemisphere. In fact, what we know about the treaty drafts suggests that the FTAA will go beyond NAFTA, incorporating some provisions of the WTO, the proposed General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), and the abandoned Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI)—all agreements that promote globalization under terms extremely favorable to big business and largely heedless of the needs of the masses of the populations in the countries concerned.

This may be why the average person—and most members of the US Congress—were kept unaware of even the existence of negotiations until recently. Talks went on in secret, with documents closed to anyone without security clearance. Corporate representatives on the Trade Advisory Committee have this clearance, along with the government trade negotiators, and have been able to heavily influence the ongoing negotiations. Meanwhile, interested citizens groups have been denied access and restricted to submitting their concerns to a committee of government representatives who are supposed to transmit them to the negotiators.

The structure of the negotiating committees reinforced fears that public concerns were not being taken into account. Talks have been proceeding in nine working groups, and the mandates of these working groups make it clear that their role is to free up, as much as possible, international movement of capital. The demands of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for working groups on democratic governance, labor and human rights, consumer safety, and the environment were denied.

Earlier this year, under pressure from citizens groups and members of Congress, the governments of the US and Canada finally made summaries of their positions in negotiations public (although the summaries appeared incomplete and, in some respects, were later contradicted). The summaries confirmed the worst fears of NGOs about the provisions in the working group drafts. The treaty appears to be a virtual corporate wish list. Perhaps more



*YDSer Laura Deutch interviews (right to left) Alex Hilchuck (back from Quebec), DSAer John Coleman (back from Quebec), and John Tottey (back from Buffalo), who have just returned from demonstrations against the FTAA, on "Ithaca DSA Presents," produced at PEGASYS community access TV studio in Ithaca by DSAer Theresa Alt.*

importantly, the interests of big business would be backed by enforceable sanctions, while the interests of the public in such things as a clean environment and fair labor standards are acknowledged only in broad terms and are not backed by any enforcement mechanisms.

### The Problems

Here are just a few of the things that could happen under the FTAA:

‰ Lack of enforceable provisions on labor standards could force down wage levels and working standards throughout the hemisphere as corporations play off poor workers against even poorer workers in other countries. Under NAFTA, the percentage of Mexico's population living in poverty has gone from 49 to 75.

‰ The provisions of the infamous Chapter 11 of NAFTA would apply to every country in the hemisphere. Chapter 11 allows private firms and investors to sue governments directly for compensation for any law, court ruling or administrative regulation that arguably "discriminates" against foreign investors. This provision has already been used. For instance, in November 2000, a NAFTA tribunal found in favor of the Ohio-based waste disposal company S.D. Myers in its suit against the Canadian government challenging a law banning export of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs)—even though this law had been adopted to carry out Canadian obligations under another international treaty! Since governments must recompense companies for "violations," such rulings have cost Canada millions. Lawsuits like this, or threats of suits, could force changes, not only in environmental regulations, but also in a mul-



*San Diego DSA was a major participant in a weekend of binational protest events in the border cities of Tijuana, Baja California, and San Diego, California, including a demonstration in which between 1,500 and 2,00 people took part. On the Mexican side of the border, approximately 500 people gathered at Playas de Tijuana, situated next to the border fence that divides this Mexican neighborhood from Border Field Park in the US.*

titude of other laws and regulations designed to protect the public.

➤ Treaty provisions on services and government procurement policies could force the countries to allow private competition in every area of the economy, including the provision of healthcare, education and social security. Canadians especially fear the effect on their national healthcare system.

➤ Provisions on intellectual property rights would extend protections given by patents and copyrights in one country to all the other countries in the FTAA. The problem with this is obvious from the example of the pharmaceutical

industry. The strong protections given by US law to that industry have helped keep US prices for drugs the highest in the world. Under the FTAA, those patent protections would be enforceable throughout the hemisphere.

This is only the beginning of a long list of problems with the FTAA. Various US citizen and labor groups are gearing up for action, including a repeat of their successful campaign of pressure on Congress to block the passage of fast track authority. This must undoubtedly remain a major goal of opponents in the US.

Opponents are also elaborating their own trade proposals. The Hemispheric Social Alliance, the international labor-NGO network that sponsored the Peoples' Summit, released an alternative proposal that ran to nearly 100 pages.

First and foremost, however, what is necessary is an injection of democracy into the negotiating process. The provisions of the draft treaty must be made public. Participation in the process of negotiations must be extended beyond the closed group of government trade representatives and their business "advisors." And any treaty must take into account the interests of all the peoples of these countries—not just the interests of a favored few.

***Further information on the FTAA and suggestions for citizen action are available from many organizations, particularly from the Alliance for Responsible Trade ([www.art-us.org](http://www.art-us.org) 202-898-15660 and Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch ([www.trade-watch.org](http://www.trade-watch.org) 202-546-4996).***



*The United Steelworkers' new president, Leo Gerard (above left), was the keynote speaker at an anti-FTAA rally and march in Chicago, endorsed by Chicago DSA, which donated a 5,000 postcard mailing to publicize the event. Greater Philadelphia DSA endorsed a similar rally at Philadelphia's City Hall at which DSA Steering Committee chair Kathy Quinn was a speaker. Both rallies featured a group of "radical cheerleaders."*

# Defeating the DLC: Left Strategy after the Bush Victory

by Joseph M. Schwartz

After a 5-4 conservative Supreme Court majority handed the throne to the pretender George II, many political observers predicted his administration would not be able to carry an ambitious political agenda through a nearly evenly divided Congress. Yet four months later, the administration rather easily passed the most upwardly redistributive “tax reform” since Reagan’s 1981 give-away to the rich. What these analysts forgot is that Bill Clinton’s “triangulating” centrist leadership prepared the mainstream leadership of both parties for the real Republican version of Clinton’s Republican policies of balanced budgets and shrinking of government.

To combat the Democratic Leadership Council’s movement of the fulcrum of American politics to the Right, the democratic Left needs to educate “moderate progressives” about the extreme price “moderation” has brought. Secondly, in an age when government is widely mistrusted, the Left has to re-envision a politics defending an expanded role for progressive taxation and public provision. Thirdly, we need to ask around what strategy and program a majority could coalesce around a sense of the nation as a community in need of democratic, accountable government. The Left will have to follow a two-track strategy to shore up its potential majority status: increasing the ranks of organized labor and empowering communities of color, particularly new immigrants, while hiving off more middle strata centrist voters alienated by Republican extremism.

## Clinton-Gore’s Contribution to Republican Common Sense

After Wall Street complaints led Clinton to abandon a moderate program of public investment in his initial 1993 budget, he subsequently made balancing the budget and trimming government his major domestic priorities. Now that an alleged surplus is in sight, the Republicans argue, we can give taxes back to the people (even if the upper 1% of “the people” receive 40% of the tax-cut benefits). The Republicans have proposed cuts in environmental and health and safety regulations that the (often taken-for-granted) labor and environmental base of the Democratic coalition would not stomach under Clinton. But we should not forget: the Democratic Leadership Council taught the electorate that the age of big government is over and that the politics of class warfare is counter-productive. Bush promises to fulfill these adages.

DSAers should not underestimate the damage that the neo-liberal fiscal orthodoxy of balanced budgets, deregulation, tax cuts, and downsizing the public sector has done to mass politics. These are the politics of Clinton’s “third way” cousins in Europe and of the dominant center-right of our sister social democratic parties. The neo-liberal fiscal orthodoxy of Right and ‘Left’ global elites biases the international system in profoundly deflationary ways. This logic of global capitalism places downward pressure on living standards and on the social safety net, creating structural tendencies towards over-production and under-consumption (as rising productivity and stagnant wages means workers cannot buy the products they produce). The 1997-98 crisis wiped out the middle class

of East Asia and Latin America. The next crisis may not spare the working and middle classes of the advanced industrial democracies.

This Democratic embrace of balanced-budget conservatism serves as a major barrier to the creation of the high-quality, universal public provision that alone can redress the radical nature of inequality in the United States. On average, public expenditure in Western Europe reduces pre-tax child poverty from 12-15 per cent to under 5 per cent after government programs kick-in. In the United States, our attenuated welfare state only reduces pre-tax child poverty from 28 per cent to 22 per cent after government expenditure. Yet these very same children are mis-educated in our shabby schools to believe that America is the greatest country on earth! In the perverse logic that is American federalism, what is good social policy for affluent suburbs—high per-student expenditure on public education—is denied children unfortunate enough to live in cities without comparable real estate tax bases.

**“This Democratic embrace of balanced-budget conservatism serves as a major barrier to the creation of the high-quality, universal public provision that alone can redress the radical nature of inequality in the United States.”**

## A Stealth Attempt to Gut Medicare and Social Security

Even if one mistakenly accepts the rationale of balanced-budget conservatism, Bush’s numbers fail to add up. Not only is the projected surplus predicated upon optimistic estimates of 2.8% annual growth for the next decade (a growth rate which would yield sufficient payroll taxes that Social Security could be funded indefinitely); the Bush “endless surplus” also does not include a projected 25% increase in real defense spending, nor the costs of his minimal Medicare prescription drug plan.

So as not to project deficits ten years or more down the road, the Bush tax bill “requires” the abolition of the “death tax” and the lowering of marginal tax rates to end in 2011. Upper-income marginal tax rates do not fall until the 2004 and 2006 fiscal years and by 2006 (without further Republican tax relief) increasing numbers of upper-middle class taxpayers would be subject to the higher “alternative minimum tax rate.” Of course, the Republicans do not plan to raise taxes in either 2006 or 2011. Rather, they know that once tax rates are lowered, they are rarely raised again. To sustain these tax cuts, Bush will propose the “partial privatization” of Social Security and Medicare as a means for lowering tax contributions to the Medicare and Social Security trust funds. In 1982, David Stockman told the truth: slashing domestic spending was the true aim of Reagan’s equally fuzzy tax-cut math. That the nation may get fooled again further indicates DLC complicity in renewing this anti-government “common sense.”

The Bush administration will propose the gutting of Medicare through the creation of “vouchers” that would purchase inadequate insurance for working class retirees and allow wealthy retirees to top-up their health care premiums with personal funds. To avoid such an outcome, the public needs to be re-exposed to a coherent defense of social insurance programs. Individualizing such risks inevitably leads to private insurers “cherry picking” the low-risk members of society (the young and healthy) and gouging the vulnerable (the old and unhealthy). Under a scheme of private accounts, even young affluent (continued on page 13)

# spotlight on: ithaca college



Kristin Samplere/The Ithacan

**IC-YDS co-chair  
Kia Kozun  
leads a 36-hour sit-  
in while supporters  
rally outside.**

When Ithaca College - a private liberal arts college in the same small city as Cornell University - signed a five-year deal for food service with Sodexho-Marriott last spring, they didn't bargain for a battle with student activists. But when the newly-formed YDS chapter found out that their college was using their tuition dollars to pay Sodexho Marriott, a heavy investor in private prisons, they knew they had to take action. "How can we willingly give money to the college if they're going to turn around and consciously give money to private prisons?" says Laura Deutch of YDS.

The group took their concerns to the college's administration, and by late spring 2000, were getting friendly reassurances. "They assured us that, over the summer, Sodexho would divest from its investments in the prison-industrial complex," says Mark Frank, a junior politics major. Sodexho Marriott's parent company, Sodexho Alliance, owns stock in the Corrections Corporation of America, a private prison company. But when students came back for fall semester, Sodexho was still heavily invested in CCA.

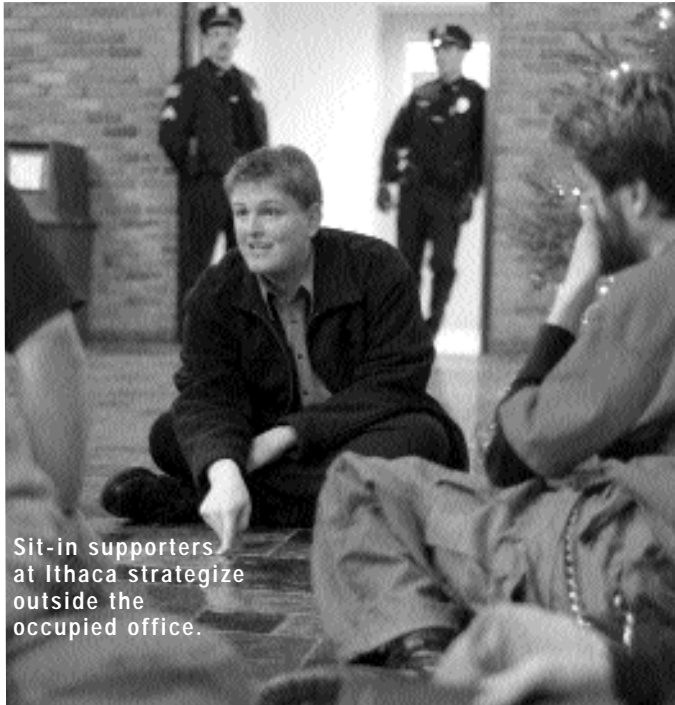
In response to the continued concerns of students, the administration held periodic meetings with YDS, says Frank, "but they didn't take anything we were saying very seriously." So Ithaca's YDS did what students often do in that situation: they

took over. On December 5, Frank and six more activists sat in the administration building for 36 hours. "Our sit in was our last resort to get an honest audience," explains Frank.

Their stand helped lend fire to fifty other campus-oriented struggles against Sodexho-Marriott, and generated letters of solidarity from local unions and the Ithaca Coalition for Global Justice, as well as France's Young Socialists party. "The support was really great," It also earned them a spot in the New York Times, on numerous websites, and all over the campus newspaper. After thirty-six hours, the administration agreed to seven demands, including conducting independent research on private prisons, holding a public forum on the issue, and facilitating a way for YDS to discuss their concerns with the college's trustees.

The campaign boosted YDS into the local spotlight, and the organization rapidly became the largest political organization on campus," according to Frank. When the public forum was held in February, the auditorium was crammed, and YDS came out on top. "Sodexho's hired gun, was soundly out-argued by Kevin Pranis of the Prison Moratorium Project."

Indeed, a student poll, held jointly by YDS, the student paper, The Ithacan, and the Student Government Association (SGA), came out with 54 percent against the



Alex Morrison/The Ithacan

Sit-in supporters at Ithaca strategize outside the occupied office.

continuation of the contract, but only 33 percent supporting continuation. “More people voted than in the (SGA) elections,” says Frank proudly. In the end, Ithaca College President Peggy Williams announced her decision to keep the contract - fomenting another protest rally. But Frank wasn’t daunted, and said the campaign was still productive: “A large portion of the students, if they don’t identify with YDS, at least sympathize with us. [Her decision] is good because it shows the administration really doesn’t give a shit about what students think.”

YDS is taking on the Student Government Association with a developing student group coalition. And, to keep YDS from turning into “the Sodexho Group,” says Frank, “We’re remaining an intellectual group that discusses why Harrington is better than Trotsky, for example, but we can also kick ass on a campaign.”

While the Ithaca College battle may have faltered, the broad struggle recently won a serious victory: Sodexho Marriott announced that its parent company, Sodexho Alliance, would be selling all of its stock in Corrections Corporation of America. “That just proves that all the schools put enough pressure on them that they don’t want their name associated with CCA. It wasn’t worth it to them to keep their stock, ‘cause every college they tried to get contracts at, it was a problem,” explains Deutch. “It really speaks to the power of students to hold their administrations responsible for different contracts on their campuses.”

**DANIA RAJENDRA**

## spotlight on: arizona state university

When Fabricio Rodriguez, a student at Mesa Community College in Phoenix, took office in student government, he didn’t plan on spearheading a piece of legislation in state government. But when he took office, Rodriguez found he had to sign an oath that he would never join the Communist Party if he wanted to get paid for his work. Instead of caving, Rodriguez enlisted the help of the ACLU, and the Arizona legislature is now considering a repeal of this portion of the state’s loyalty oath.

Taking on big fights is nothing new to Rodriguez, who heads the Arizona State University YDS chapter with Matt May. Since founding the YDS chapter last April, the duo has spearheaded successful battles around a myriad of local and national issues. Rodriguez even snagged the state NAACP’s Freedom Fighter Award for his work.

“YDS and DSA have been a great support and network. At the beginning we were typical student activists, mostly rhetoric and radicalism without a well-thought-out political analysis,” explains Rodriguez. “In the year we’ve been affiliated with YDS, we’ve done a lot of background reading, such as Harrington and Martin Luther King, and people are coming into democratic socialism rather than a vague sense of politics. Our activism has really matured.”

May agrees that partnering up with YDS was a good decision. “Having a desire —a true will— to see democracy extended is rough before it carves into a practical politics. It’s humbling to meet people and find an organization that is doing that,” muses May. “I’m also empowered to develop a link between that desire for justice and a practical politics that allows me to organize locally and gives me a voice on an international level.”

Their first success was winning Worker’s Rights Consortium oversight for the workers who make ASU apparel. Now, four students (two of them YDS members) sit on a panel with several administrators to monitor the university’s compliance with the code.

They’ve also been working to rid their campus of Sodexho-Marriott, taking over administration offices for a day and winning concessions from the administration. They’ve tried more formal means of redress as well: They introduced a bill in the student government this spring, but it died in committee. Still, says May, “the issue was useful for screening the candidates for student government, and in doing so, helped to shape the broader campus political discussion.”

Having already taken over MCC’s student government, the chapter (comprised of both ASU and MCC students) is also strategizing to run a YDS slate for student government at ASU next year.

But that’s not all. The chapter keeps busy by working with Phoenix’s Earth First! to lobby against corporate grazing on public lands; meeting with the League of United Latin American Citizens; and solidarity actions with the UFW, who have a recognition campaign going at the Picksweet mushroom farms. The biggest challenge, though, will be a forthcoming living wage campaign at ASU. “ASU first, Phoenix metro area second,” says May.

A good indication of the organization’s strength: Chicano & Chicana activists approached YDS to work on the campaign together. “We’re going to build off Sodexho and engage a successful living wage campaign,” says May. “It’s a good time to strike.”

**—DANIA RAJENDRA**



# growing pains

Thirty years ago, student activism crumbled when issues of race came to the fore. Will today's young activists meet the same fate?

By Daraka Larimore-Hall and Tracie McMillan

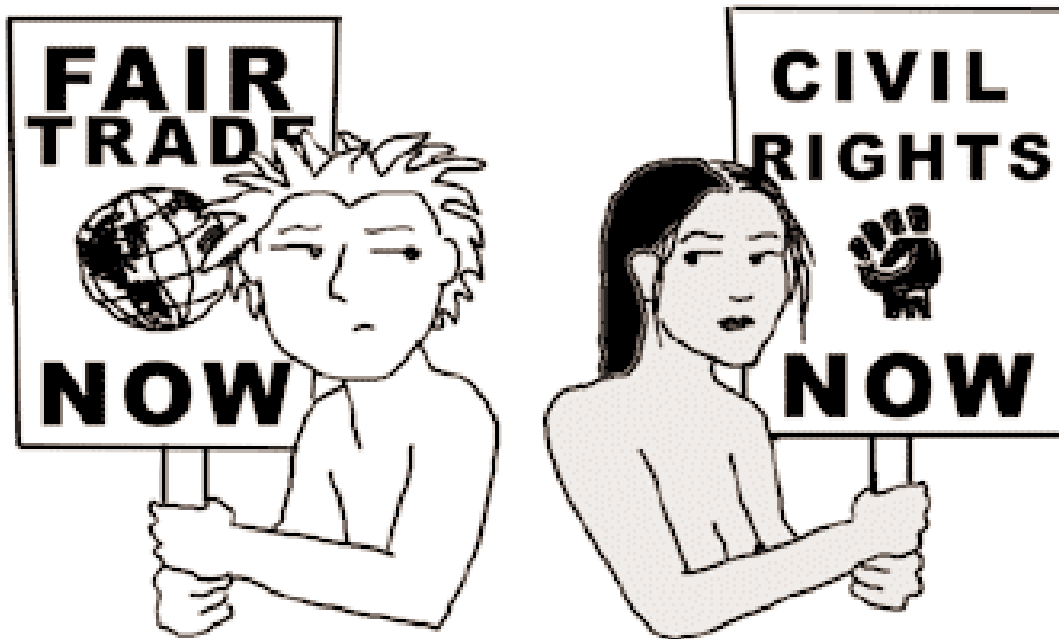


Illustration by oscar owens

College students spending their summers working side-by-side with union organizers. National attention on issues of free trade and globalization. International meetings being shut down amidst clouds of tear gas. Universities insisting on sweatshop-free apparel. It's all part and parcel of the young activist landscape in 2001, but just a few years ago, the student movement was merely sputtering.

"Except for the occasional flare up around attacks by the Right, there wasn't much going on on the national scene," explains Jessica Shearer, a former Young Democratic Socialists co-chair and now an organizer with the Service Employees International Union. "In those days, getting students to do any kind of activism was like pulling teeth. Especially anything to do with labor rights or globalization, two of the issues I was particularly interested in."

Media coverage of student activism over the last few years will show you without flinching that labor rights and globalization are the bread and butter of today's college activism. In just the last two years, the World Trade Organization meetings collapsed in a cloud of tear gas, Harvard students forced their administration to the bar-

gaining table with SEIU janitors, and "sweat-free" campuses (where no apparel bearing the university logo is made under sweatshop conditions) have practically become a household word. Kids today are active, engaged, and taking on struggles that span the globe.

But for all its successes, the new student movement is facing some heady problems—and they're not exactly new ones. Activists' lack of attention to issues of race and racism, as well as a tendency to de-emphasis of strategic, "broad picture" thinking in favor of action for action's sake, has generated growing debate within, and criticism from outside, the movement. As the "new movement" grows up, one thing is crystal clear: issues of race and strategy will be what make or break the movement.

In 2001, student activism is sharply divided along racial lines (save for some large public schools in California), with a predominantly white anti-corporate sector and a people of color-based movement focused on anti-racism and defense of civil rights. But while activists of the former have graced the front pages of everything from the

## Socialism and the New Student Movement

Eight years ago, student activism looked mighty bleak. “The campuses are silent,” wrote a University of Chicago activist with the DSA Youth Section (now called the Young Democratic Socialists). “There is barely a civil society, let alone a public sphere. Youth Section activists who cut their teeth on the altogether different Reagan/Bush era have yet to adjust.”

In many respects, campus activism rebounded while YDS was still mid-adjustment. Over the last few years, the student movement has emerged from slumber, proudly (and loudly) flying pro-labor, anti-corporate banners. This new explosion is often doggedly anti-ideological or vaguely anarchist, and presents new challenges for us as young socialists. One thing is clear: The old strategies of being a “mass” organization of the student left, one which had ties to labor, is neither unique nor viable. With hordes of opportunities for youth to join the labor movement, and an increasing tendency towards multi-issue work, socialism no longer has the automatic appeal that it did in the 1980s. Indeed, eight years of Clintonomics have left many younger activists suspicious of “mainstream” politics – and organizations which engage with or discuss them.

With this landscape as a backdrop, members of YDS have been struggling to find a relevance for socialist politics on US since the organization’s re-birth in 1994-95. After a few false starts and missed opportunities, YDS has begun to find its place in the new student movement. In place of working to build a mass organization, YDS has chosen to play as a defender of politics and political strategy in a somewhat anti-political activist culture. At a time in which it is almost heresy to state that some activism is not as good as other activism, YDS attempts to bring a theoretical and analytical framework to its on the ground work. “Instead of chasing trends or focusing on what we are all against, what I see in YDS is an organization that helps to use a broader perspective to make decisions about what activism is most needed,” says Adam Berg, a YDS member and sophomore at Haverford College.

Concretely, this has meant challenging the student movement to look more critically at its relationship to anti-racist struggles, publishing the only national magazine on student activism that encourages debate and discussion about controversial issues, and training activists to become political leaders. Through conferences, national coalition-building, publication and, most importantly, internal education and debate, YDS has been able to create a national identity and profile based not only on good activism, but also on the ability to provide perspective and analysis.

While this has put YDS at odds with some of the dominant cultures in student and youth politics, it has also earned it both respect and important visibility. Though our numbers are small compared to organizations like the United Students Against Sweatshops, which has over 100 chapters nationwide, YDS is known throughout the student left as one of the few organizations pushing the student movement to think and act as a movement. “YDS frequently leads the charge in the fight for a just society,” says Elyse Hogue, a campaign director at the Rainforest Action Network, a major player in the anti-corporate movement. “YDS is an important partner, not because of size, but because of vitality and style,” she adds.

Perhaps the most stunning recent example of the strategy has come in the growing fight against private prisons. The anti-Sodexo Marriott campaign coordinated by the Prison Moratorium Project, a now-independent spin-off from the work of the ‘94 “rebuilding” generation of the DSA Youth Section, has galvanized students across the country. YDS chapters and the national organization poured energy into the campaign, leading sit-ins at two universities and providing support for the campaign nationwide. As a result, YDS has been featured not only in the mainstream and activist media, but has earned a reputation among student activists as an organization that made a political choice to shift from a focus on globalization to a focus on anti-racist work, and put its money where its mouth was.

-DL-H

*New York Times* to the *Nation*, far less attention has been paid to the rise of student and youth resistance to the conservative rollback of civil rights throughout the United States. In California, New York and elsewhere students have mobilized to fight education cuts, increased criminalization and the attack on affirmative action

The divide isn’t just a matter of media portrayal. “They are distinct movements,” says Chris Day, who works with the Student Liberation Action Movement, a student activist organization based in colleges of the City University of New York. “There’s a white movement, and there are movements based on—sorry for the jargon—oppressed nationalities. And the political priorities of the white movement are such that they’re failing to build the kinds of alliances they should be building.”

The fact that these two movements *are* more parallel than intertwined is nothing new. A quick read of documents and memoirs from the last three decades of youth politics reveals a racial cleavage that reflects the divisions in society at large. In recent years, the fault line emerged full force when activists organized around the 1999 WTO meetings.

“Seattle was organized with a particular culture, a very white culture,” explains Colin Rajah, director of the San Francisco-based global justice youth organization Just Act. “That led to folks centering the message on turtles rather than issues that were relevant to youth of color. Globalization is certainly relevant to the people we organize, but we did not feel included in the mobilization itself.” Indeed, the mobilization in Seattle brought to the surface a weakness of the anti-globalization left: by and large, questions of race are subsumed under the “big tent” of globalization instead of being addressed forthrightly.

In the months after Seattle, organizations and organizers of color called for increased activism within their own communities on issues of globalization, as well as increased attention to the culture and experiences of communities of color by the white-led sectors of the new movement. First on the agenda, says Rajah, is to stop behaving as if white activists are the arbiters of what is universal: “Being told what to organize around is incredibly alienating.”

Despite all the discussion after Seattle, getting white activists to take the concerns to heart has been slow-going. At protests against the Republican National Convention last summer, activists of color were told by white activists that “their issues” would be front and center in the protests. But then the fault line cracked.

“Two positions emerged,” recalls Day, who helped to organize the protests from New York. “One side argued for the importance of having a direct action around the criminal injustice system as a way of building links with the struggles of communities of color, and on the other side of that were people who wanted a continuation of the politics of the anti-corporate, globalization actions that had taken

place in DC and Seattle.”

The final face of the RNC protests, blighted by a police raid where the puppets, signs, and banners for the criminal justice action were confiscated, along with dozens of arrests and outrageous bail, ended up being punchy “Billionaires for Bush or Gore” street theater. “The ‘Billionaires for Bush or Gore’ ended up being the sort of default pole for the people with deracialized politics,” says Day. “I don’t think that’s what they set out to do, but nothing else came together and people could just plug into it.”

But while many student activists talk about anti-corporatism as the rosetta stone of radical social change, others aren’t so sure. “What can be so frustrating about the anti-corporate movement

ested in action than analysis, tends to confuse tactics with strategy, and is often unsophisticated in its approach to working with other movements. Analysis often gets reduced to simplified, bombastic slogans: The WTO is bad, so smash it. The politicians are corrupt, so vote against them all (or don’t vote).

Many student activist organizations exist almost exclusively to mobilize for mass actions, and do little beyond teach ins and propaganda campaigns about whatever the loose, white-dominated consensus has deemed “the next big thing.” But while these mobilizations bring attention to an issue and force politicians, corporations and civil society to consider complaints, they do little to indicate what should be done in between mass actions. What student anti-corporate activists *don’t* want is abundantly clear. It is not clear that

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## what student anti-corporate activists *don’t* want is abundantly clear. what it is that they do want is another matter

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is the disconnect,” says Pari Zutshi, a 20 year-old activist with the Prison Moratorium Project, a national youth activist group focusing on prison justice issues. “It ends up being ‘It’s the corporate people who oppress you,’ instead of acknowledging that daily interactions are racist, sexist. Those things get sidelined, and it ends up being all about the corporations.”

Often, the only time students approach activists of color is when they want more “diversity” at their rallies, their conferences, or on their panel discussions. Instead of actively supporting the campaigns and discussions happening within campus communities of color, white activists look to convince people of color to join their struggle. Instead, many activists and commentators have said, the movement should be spending more time listening to and supporting existing struggles, especially those led by people of color.

The new movement’s racial blindspot is more than a product of racism; it also belies a serious lack of strategic thinking. “In a lot of ways, it’s a matter of vision,” explains Zutshi. “When students are talking about changing the system, but not thinking about the process by which they’re doing it, not being aware that when you’re having a meeting and everyone who shows up is white, that’s a huge problem.” Throwing up defenses against policies you don’t want requires all hands on deck—anyone will do. But when activists stop for a minute to think about exactly how to build a powerful movement, race is an obstacle that can’t be avoided.

But strategy isn’t nearly as sexy as dodging rubber bullets and raging against the elites. This younger generation of activists, defined by the smoke-filled streets of Seattle, is often more inter-

the new movement knows either what it does want, or that it has done much serious thinking about how to get it.

There are, of course, exceptions. The often union-trained foot-soldiers of the anti-sweatshop and campus labor movements are increasingly nuanced in both perspective and organizing culture. And, as these concerns are raised, both internally and externally, the student anti-corporate movement is changing. When a caravan of activists, rallying support for the anti-FTAA protests in Quebec, came through Cincinnati for a week-long, the midwestern city was in the throes of riots responding to a police shooting of an unarmed man. Instead of carrying on FTAA teach-ins, the activists shifted gears and spent their time focusing on community-based work. “I was really impressed to hear about that,” says Zutshi. “They were like, ‘Organize in your community, know that first.’”

Questions of race and strategy are trickling up through the student movement, however. Case in point: at an “Alternative Spring Break” camp put on this past February, activists not only learned direct action tactics and skills, but went through a four-hour workshop on anti-racism and got schooled on the importance of strategy. But the incorporation of such concerns is a new development, and represents a response to criticisms from both within and outside the organizations.

The camp was organized by the Ruckus Society and the Rainforest Action Network (RAN), two of the big players in the continuing mobilization of opposition to the corporate free trade agenda. Ruckus’ specialty is direct action training, while RAN, a radical environmentalist group, is building a campaign against Citigroup. The camp aimed to train activists to support the Citigroup campaign.

In the past, Ruckus has also come under fire for its failure to address issues of race and racism. A pre-WTO training generated criticisms from organizers of color participating in the program. A year later, at an action camp for the Democratic National Convention, workshops got derailed when activists of color called out other participants on racism. To its credit, Ruckus stopped its camp and broke into caucuses to deal with it.

The clashes ultimately led to Ruckus' inclusion of a four hour mandatory session on the need to include anti-racist analysis and practice in anti-corporate activism at their February camp. The camp also grappled head-on with the movement's tendency towards fetishizing tactics.

While this attempt to change gears has been imperfect, attendees at the camp who came from people of color-based youth organizations were guardedly positive about Ruckus' attempt to address race issues and to draw a clearer distinction between strategy and tactic. "There is an infatuation with tactics," says Chris Day, who attended the camp as a presenter. "But they're critical of it as well, and I think they can be forgiven for it since that is part of what's going to make people come to the camp."

Whether Ruckus will expand its "client" list to include organizations of color is the next question on the docket. SLAM activists who attended the February RAN camp is positive about the possibility. Important direct action, media and campaign skills would be made available to organizations and communities who do not always have access to the resources that white students do. But, cautions Peter Chung, an activist with SLAM, the cultural differences between activists of color and white anti-corporate activists could prove formidable barriers. "I think (activists of color) would enjoy the skills part but not the culture part," says Chung. "I think there'll be a lot of clashes."

**T**he dynamics at work in the Ruckus camp are playing out in other campaigns and struggles. The hugely successful "Dump Sodexo!" campaign of the Prison Moratorium Project—aimed at urging campuses to drop Sodexo-Marriott, a food provider with heavy investment in private prisons—presents substantial opportunities to fight domestic power structures that thrive and expand utilizing racism and inequality.

The campaign has struggled with dynamics around race and class. On one hand, the campaign appeals to anti-corporate activists, who tend to be mostly white, but in dealing with issues around prisons and incarceration, it runs head-on into issues of race. "What we're doing is trying to expand it from just a corporate campaign, but also using community work and grassroots organizing in it, rather than just corporate," explains Zutshi. "I don't think we've figured out the answer to that yet. But it has been good just in that,

before, a lot of corporate campaigns were on behalf of other people—divestment from South Africa, the anti-sweatshop movement. This campaign is more national, and changed the target because it was here in our own backyard."

Other signs of change are surfacing. Call to Action, one of the handfull of travelling "roadshow" activist training projects which kicked off after Seattle has considered seriously the claim that a taken-for-granted set of cultures and priorities skews the movement away from the broad, multi-racial base needed to enact real change. "Call to Action has decided to transition directorship to the hands of youth of color led movements," says Laura Close, a Portland, Oregon-based activist "We recognize our responsibility as white activists to be supporters of anti-racist struggles that we don't ourselves lead."

These are significant changes, not just because of their potential impact on the student movement, but because of its potential to have an expansive affect off-campus. While labor and non-student NGO's have played the roles of coordinator and fundraiser for the movement, young people have provided much needed energy and numbers to the cause. As the movement develops, however, there is no doubt that young people will continue to play an important role.

Building a strong, coherent, and powerful student and youth movement could bring the voices of younger activists into steady dialogue with larger progressive circles. If what they say is that globalization activists should listen to and take leadership from communities of color, and that we need to concentrate on pro-active rather than re-active politics, it could be a step towards building a powerful, broad-based movement.

The emphatically decentralized nature of student activism means that any response to criticism will be a slow process. The 100 activists at the Ruckus camp, or the leadership of national student organizations, only have so much influence on the thousands of student activists neither affiliated to national groups nor in attendance (an overwhelming majority). With luck, however, the process of confronting the movement's racial blindspot as well as its aversion to strategic thinking will also lead to better, more coherent organization.

Whether today's young activists manage to wade their way through the quagmire of race—or fall flat on their face—has yet to be seen. "This 'movement,' is just the newest front of fighting slavery, colonialism, oppression that's existed of people in the South," sighs Zutshi. "That history was blatantly ignored by the people who made this 'movement' popular. I hope that students who are involved in this process learn the meaning of allies and standing in solidarity, rather than taking up space and appropriating the struggle." 1

# friend or faux feminism? taking a look at destiny's child



Destiny's Child is a curious creature. When they first hit the airwaves in 1999 with "Bills, Bills, Bills," they sounded like any other set of girls trying to get their shit paid for. When Beyonce (the Diana Ross of Destiny's Child's Supremes) crooned that her love was to "Pay my automobills, my telephone bills..." or else "you and me are through," the threesome wasn't breaking new ground—Missy Elliot played that game with "Hot Boys" and "All N My Grill" the same year. But recent developments may give them a bit of feminist credit.

With "Bills" still hitting the airwaves, DC dropped a track for last year's 70's T&A throwback "Charlie's Angels." Between the girly, Third Wave feminism of the movie, and the message of "Bills," it was hard to suspend judgement. DC's soundtrack contribution, suspiciously entitled "Independent Woman, Part I," had pop-feminist appeal ("The rock I'm rocking, I bought it, the house I live in, I bought it") but, at best, indicated a slowly maturing consciousness. To be cynical, it was simply inconsistent, a random blip.

In "Bills," DC asserted themselves by ending a relationship because their man was broke. With "Independent Woman," they're celebrating their own independent status and power. At first listen it sounds like recent fame and class-climbing have given DC a hint of feminist consciousness a la Camille Paglia: we can do anything men can do, but have no concern for other women. To be sure, Beyonce's bragging on "Independent Woman" vies with commercial hip-hop prince Jay-Z's boasts of jewelry and prosperi-

ty. But surprisingly—and to their credit—Destiny Child's latest single, "Survivor," builds their feminist credibility.

The single, which rocketed up the Billboard charts, is a straightforward celebration of independence from a bad relationship—not unlike the classic "I Will Survive." Despite its roots in the godawful show of the same name, "Survivor" leaves cash and class out of the discussion as the protagonist declares herself a survivor of a rotten relationship who will "be here for the years to come".

Naturally, it's not all good. The group still purges out their members and exalts Beyonce as the star of the group. Time will tell if they continue on the same track; maybe "Independent Woman part 2 (or 3)" will show DC uniting with women from throughout the class strata. But in an industry where artists like Jay-Z and Puffy have turned commercial hip-hop into a bragging contest over personal wealth, and VH1 brings us "Divas" every year that are respected more for their sex appeal than their talent, it's good to hear that female independence hasn't lost its appeal.

—PAUL FITZGERALD

## cartoon: *survivor II: capitalism*

Welcome to survivor III: Capitalism! Our 4 billion contestants will ruthlessly vote each other out of economic security, and only a fraction of one percent will be going home with \$10 billion!

Of course, everyone has a "chance" to win. With that in mind, contestants sell each other out every day, leaving many without adequate food, education, or healthcare while a few move closer to the big prize.

### ON THIS WEEK'S EPISODE:





## a knight's tale

released: summer 2001  
director: Brian Helgeland

*A Knight's Tale*, starring sexy-as-hell Heath Ledger, is one damn fine little joyride. But there's more to this than eye candy: Cleverly hidden between the macho jousting story and the sexy love story, we find a nice lesson on the evils of class hierarchy.

A mere peasant, William serves a nobleman who competes in jousting tournaments. When his boss dies before a match, Will jumps into the suit of armor and jousts to victory. Seeing an opportunity to rise above his class, William decides to fake nobility and enter jousting tournaments. Predictably, he spends the rest of the movie winning all of the competitions.

Luckily, the heart of the film lies not in the action, but in the actual characters. Will falls hard for Princess Jocelyn—played smashingly by newcomer Shannyn Sossamon. But once again, class struggle rears its ugly head.

The film also does a nice job of incorporating modern music into the medieval scenes; Willam and Jocelyn, for example, get down to David Bowie on the ballroom floor.

Thankfully, "A Knight's Tale" doesn't fall victim to the Hollywood pit-fall of super-irony, which is so fashionable in film these days. Instead, director Brian Helgeland crafts a movie that is pure, lovely fun, and skillfully balancing romance, action, fraternity and class struggle. Huzzah!

—COLIN TAYLOR

## train of thought

reflection eternal  
rawkus records

Politically framed by an introduction by Nelson Mandela, the recent release of Reflection Eternal (comprised of Talib Kweli, half of the hip hop duo Black Star, and DJ Hi-Tek of Cinnccinnati), "Train of Thought," tears through Kweli's conscious politics throughout its 78-minute length. Personal, political, angry, inspired and determined, Kweli weaves a fierce, beautiful scene, where politics stem first and foremost from love; of music, of a special someone, of people in general.

Kweli's lyrics flow along with Hi Tek's masterful beats: "Now cats drop out of school to get fiends high on a pipe./Seems like that's the ghetto way of tryin' to fight/the system that's based on trying to stop you from shining your light." Though Kweli also approaches anti-capitalism, he's already made his point without naming systems: people are strong, good, worthwhile and beautiful, but something is crushing our spirit.

The wide range of guests doesn't hurt either. Old schoolers Gil Scott Heron, Lennox Louis, and Rick James all make appearances. Contemporaries Mos Def, Xzibit, and Rah Digga come along for the ride as well.

Armed with Kweli's conscious lyrics and buttressed by Hi-Tek's amazing beats and production, the duo fights for beauty and freedom with their best weapons and keeps the party moving and well-informed. What more could one ask for? Highly recommended.

—PAUL FITZGERALD



## cartoon: radical cheers for all

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|  | <p><b>ANARCHIST</b></p> <p>"Anarchy! Anarchy! We Hate All Authority!"<br/>                 "No One Tells Us What To Do! Our Puppets Are Bigger Than You!"<br/>                 "Hiegherarchy, Thats Our Feel! Don't Let Leaders Run The Show!"</p>  |  | <p><b>LIBERTARIAN</b></p> <p>"No Rules! No Rules! Let People Do What They Please!"<br/>                 "The Market Share Knows What to do,<br/>                 If You Starve, Too Bad For You!"<br/>                 "Go! Go! Fight! Fight! Win! Win! Win!"</p> |
|  | <p><b>REVOLUTIONARY TROTSKYIST VANGUARD PARTY</b></p> <p>"Go Reds! Smash the State! Lead the proletarian workers in armed struggle against the forces of fascist capital in a united international front of workers democratic centralism guided by the correct class analysis from the revolutionary party!"</p> |  | <p><b>DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST</b></p> <p>"One Two Three! A B C! Build A Progressive Majority!"<br/>                 "Commun! That's The Way! Socialism Tomorrow, Reform Today!"<br/>                 "Rose! Bread! Cloth! Unity! There All And Kool Some Aot!"</p>   |

## NPC Resolution on Vieques

The American Navy's systematic destruction of the environment, economy and health and safety of the residents of the Island of Vieques is an affront to any standard of humane conduct. The coercive sentencing of peaceful protesters including Reuben Barrios, the leader of our sister party and Americans of conscience like the Reverend Al Sharpton and members of the Democratic Party establishment in the Bronx are an affront to any standard of justice.

The National Political Committee of the Democratic Socialists of America reaffirms our historic support for the independence of the Puerto Rican people and

- calls on the American Navy to rescind its plans to resume naval bombardment and other military exercises and calls for the return of all land held by the American Navy to the people of Vieques;
- calls on the judicial system to reverse the draconian sentences imposed on peaceful protesters by releasing them immediately;
- calls on Congress and the President to take immediate and effective steps to repair the environmental damage to the Island of Vieques.

workers who are disabled or die prematurely will not have adequate "private" accounts to provide for their dependents. Pooling social risks is not only the moral thing to do, but also the most economically efficient.

### How'd we get into this Mess? The Role of the Socially Liberal, Affluent Wing of the Democratic Coalition

Neo-liberal Democratic politicians, along with the remnant of fiscally and socially conservative white Southern Democrats, provided the dozen or so Democratic votes needed to pass the Bush tax plan in Congress. (Leftists who revile all wings of the Democrats forget that 90% of Democratic House members and 80% of Senate members did vote against the Bush tax plan.)

The Republican Party is rife with internal tensions between working and "lower middle class" cultural conservatives (home schoolers, Right-to-lifers, gun-advocates, etc.) and "upper middle class" suburbanites who are social moderates, but fiscal conservatives. The Democratic Party is also split between its progressive wing, rooted in communities of color, leftist social service providers and educators, and organized labor, and its centrist wing of "middle class" social liberals. These "soccer moms and dads" adhere to the Democrats because of their pro-legal abortion, anti-gun control, and secular outlook, but they are fiscally moderate to conservative (except, if they have children, when it comes to funding their suburban school districts). Over a third of the Democratic vote consists of these disproportionately-single, secular, sexually tolerant, and educated voters. These voters are alienated from the "traditional values" adhered to by the overwhelmingly Republican small-town and rural Protestant heartlands of the South, lower-Mid West, and Rocky Mountain states. But these "centrist" Democratic voters are less supportive of activist government than is the party's trade union and communities-of-color base; nor do they feel a shared sense of community with the working class and people of color.

To offset this neo-liberal base of the party, the Left must strengthen organized labor within our society (including among middle strata professionals, whose politics often shift Left with union membership). Citizenship rights for new immigrants is another means of expanding the base for democratic Left politics. Why not press for a policy that allows anyone (regardless of their legal status) who contributes to the wealth of American society for one year to be granted full citizenship? Our restrictive naturalization laws not only create millions of vulnerable, undocumented workers, but also lead to ludicrous realities: while the majority of Los Angeles's workers are Latino, the electorate is only 22% Latino! In a truly democratic vote, Antonio Villaraigosa would have won in a landslide!

Yet it remains the case that moving a part of the "socially liberal" middle strata to the Left on socio-economic issues is a crucial element of building a majority US Left. That is why the student anti-sweatshop movement,

anti-corporate globalization, and living wage campaigns' greatest promise is *not* in making students aware of the exploitation of the work force. Student Leftists and their allies in the community and academy need to argue that only democratic government can regulate the power of capital.

Restoring middle-strata faith in the public sector (similar to "the great generation's" faith in the GI Bill, state universities, Social Security, and Medicare) may be the hardest row to hoe in reconstructing a progressive majority in America. Yet, there are opportunities for the Left here. Not only are baby-boomers confronting the tremendous time and financial burdens of caring for elderly parents, but they will soon confront their own retirements. Thus, DSA should make organizing for universal health and elder care an integral part of organizing against the explosion of low-wage work in the United States, the hardships of which are poignantly illustrated in DSA co-chair Barbara Ehrenreich's *Nicked and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*.

The right may have already pushed a considerable sector of the middle strata back towards the Democrats in their aggressive assault on environmental regulation. The California energy crisis has revealed strong financial and family ties between the Bush-Cheney-Big Oil administration and the Southern energy suppliers (Enron, Duke Power, El Paso gas, etc.) New York State also deregulated its energy industry at the very moment of supply shortages. One need not be a socialist to recognize that it is against the interests of hugely capital-intensive utilities to invest in adequate production when they can gouge consumers through monopoly power.

The Bush administration is trying to use the energy crisis to make inroads into the core Democratic base—hence, their promise to the building trades unions and Teamsters that their "screw conservation, build a reactor a day" policy will provide oodles of construction jobs. The Left will again have to demonstrate that ecologically sound energy and economic policies, in the long run, produce more high-wage jobs than do environmentally destructive, capital-intensive power plants. The Republicans may also have reached beyond the bounds of public consensus in their advocacy of a costly, impractical missile-defense system.

The socialist belief that democracy must regulate the economy so as to insure that it benefits rather than dominates society informs the work of DSA locals participating in struggles for living wage ordinances and labor and immigrant rights; for the right to universal health care; against the price-gouging of private utility monopolies; and to bridge labor, environmental, and youth demands that the global economy serve human interests rather than corporate profits. DSA may not be able to be present in every struggle, but we can choose strategically to be present in some. We can make a unique contribution by illustrating the inextricable relationship between economic and political democracy. Developing the capacity of DSA's locals to engage in this grassroots work will profoundly influence the Left's ability to combat dominant neo-liberal and Republican ideology.

# Locals Report

## ► Albany

Albany DSA meets with the local chapter of the Alliance for Democracy to work against corporate globalization. In fall 1999, they launched CRAFT, the Capital Region Alliance for Fair Trade, a coalition of labor, environmental, religious, student, and community groups. CRAFT organized demonstrations in Albany as part of national protests against the WTO meeting in Seattle and the IMF/World Bank meetings in April of last year.

DSA also works with AfD and Citizen Action to support public financing of political campaigns through a Clean Money/Clean Elections law. DSAers also play leading roles in local peace, women's, and labor solidarity groups in the Capital District.

In the electoral arena, DSAers active in Citizen Action participated along with unionists in the Working Families Party campaigns.

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## ► Boston

Boston DSA was active last fall in several successful city council and state rep races. DSA mobilized for the winning primary campaign of long-time progressive activist Frank Smizik, a stunning upset which led to an unopposed November win. DSA also helped former Boston DSA chair Jim Marzilli win his primary, which meant a November victory.

DSAers mobilized around three November ballot questions: in opposition to two proposals for tax cuts that benefited the rich and threatened state services (one passed, one failed), and in support of a universal state healthcare system (it failed after legislators passed compromise health reform legislation to head it off).

Boston DSA worked with the AFL-CIO on a number of issues. They also co-sponsored a series of forums on the global economy.

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## ► Chicago

Chicago DSA did not participate directly in the Fall elections as there was no consensus about the Presidential candidates and none of the really good candidates for other offices were endangered. They did, however, organize a forum, co-sponsored by the Open University of the Left and *In These Times*, debating whether the left should support Nader or Gore. A standing room crowd heard, along with DSA's Dr. Quentin Young, speakers from the United Electrical Workers, Hammerhard Media Works, the Steelworkers, the Black Radical Congress,

and *In These Times*. The local also cosponsored three educational forums that examined extra-parliamentary direct action. A new, second YDS chapter, Metropolitan Chicago, has been doing readings on democratic socialism and organized "guerrilla" caroling in Chicago's loop to protest sweatshops.

The local endorsed the April 21 anti-FTAA rally and march, and several University of Chicago YDS members participated in the nerd-chic "radical cheerleaders." In addition, the University of Chicago YDS was a co-sponsor of the Chicago stop of Call to Action's nation-wide education and training tour on the FTAA.

Chicago DSA was involved in organizing a May Day rally and march, which linked contemporary struggles in labor organizing with the tradition of May Day—appropriately enough, as May Day had its start in Chicago.

Chicago DSA's 43rd Annual Debs-Thomas-Harrington Dinner, on the theme of "Building Coalitions for Social Justice," honored Henry Bayer, Director of AFSCME Council 31, and Kim Bobo, Director of the National Interfaith Committee on Worker Justice. The featured speaker was Illinois State Senator Miguel del Valle.

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## ► Colorado

Colorado DSA co-chair Dave Anderson was the first speaker at the May 1st rally in Boulder; he emphasized how the American labor movement started May Day, now an international holiday. The rally coalition also included the local labor council, a peace and justice center, an immigrant rights coalition, the Green Party, a living wage campaign, United for a Fair Economy, and the domestic partner benefits campaign.

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## ► Columbus

Columbus DSA works to build coalitions with local groups, such as United Students Against Sweatshops and the more active local labor groups. Last fall, several members worked in support of Nader. Members also work on School of the Americas protests, Iraq sanctions, Palestinian issues, and the Free Peltier drive, and are active with local chapters of Jobs with Justice, Amnesty International, and NOW. One member is involved with a community access TV show; another recently ran for Congress, and a third co-sponsors a college NOW group.

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## ► DC/MD/Northern VA

The DC/MD/Northern VA Local held a meeting for endorsements in DC races. The endorsed slate included many candidates from the Green Party (formed from a merger of the DC Statehood Party and the Green Party) which pushed progressive ideas (but lost). The local also endorsed two Democrats, who won easily: Eleanor Holmes Norton as delegate to Congress (serves on committees and speaks but cannot vote) and Florence Pendleton as shadow senator (in essence a lobbyist).

The DSA local is a member of the Stand Up For Democracy in DC Coalition, a racially diverse group working to gain DC residents the same rights that all other Americans have.

*Pleasant Mann (202) 483-3299; dcdsa@chesapeake.net.*

## ► Detroit

In addition to holding a "Nader or Gore?" discussion in October, Detroit DSA's energy last fall was directed at electing progressives to the State legislature. The local negotiated directly with these candidates to canvass for them if they agreed to support Living Wage Initiatives and Universal Health Care 2000, as well as to co-sponsor the Single Payer Health Insurance Bill. Also, DSAers got their agreement to help form a Progressive Caucus in the State Legislature. The local worked continually on their campaigns and hosted a highly successful fundraiser for one of the candidates.

The local also co-sponsored a cross-border demonstration between Detroit and Windsor, Ontario, against FTAA on April 21st. Approximately 400 people participated.

Their annual Frederick Douglass-Eugene V. Debs fundraising dinner honored Detroit City Council member (and DSAer) Maryann Mahaffey and UAW Vice President Richard Shoemaker. The keynote speaker was Representative David Bonior.

*David Green (248) 855-3169; dsagreen@aol.com.*

## ► East Bay

The local's fall projects were work with Campaign for Labor Rights and Global Exchange—e.g., picketing Target Stores. In May, Berkeley Campus DSA held a successful rally and teach-in on campus about the Bush tax plan, with Daniel McFadden, the 2000 Nobel Prize winner in economics, and political satire and music by the Wealth Wielding Waiters. The event made the news and was, according to DSA NPCer Michele Rossi, "the most fun I've had doing political education/activism in ages."

East Bay DSA's Progressive Electoral Project, a coalition of Bay Area progressives, is planning an October outreach conference



blending direct action tactics with electoral and issue-based organizing strategies.

*Karl Knobler (510) 524-3247, (415) 789-8497; banjo@lanminds.com.*

➤ Greater Philadelphia

The Greater Philadelphia local is deeply involved in coalition work, including the Philadelphia Area Committee to Defend Healthcare, People Against Sweatshops, the anti-sweatshop Caravan for Justice, the April 21 anti-FTAA rally, and the "Hail to the Thief" anti-inauguration rally. Representatives of the local—particularly local co-chair John Hogan and NPC Steering Committee chair Kathy Quinn—are frequently featured speakers. The local has recently inaugurated the Free Speech Cafe, an open-to-the-public bi-monthly (soon to be monthly) presentation and discussion at a local taproom; topics so far have included FTAA and the upcoming Pro-Democracy Convention and Voters' Bill of Rights. The local has also been very busy preparing for this fall's DSA National Convention, which it is hosting: workshops, presentations, mini-conferences and more will supplement the Convention itself.

*John Hogan (215) 351-0151; Philadsa@aol.com*

➤ Ithaca

Ithaca DSA hosted two meetings devoted to the elections: one with DSA member and former Ithaca Mayor Ben Nichols on the Working Families Party, one with NPC member Joe Schwartz on strategic voting. Among its programs on community-access cable television, the video team likewise presented interviews on

the WFP and on voting strategically.

The local participated in inaugural-auction protests and covered the arguments and protests against the FTAA, including a report by DSAer John Coleman, who had just returned from Quebec.

*Petra Hepburn (607) 272-4628; petra@ecovillage.ithaca.ny.us*

➤ Madison

Last fall, Madison Area DSA sponsored an event on "Prisons and Politics in Wisconsin" for the local Prison Awareness Week. The local also helped organize a concert at the University of Wisconsin of the Prison Moratorium's "No More Prisons" rap tour. This spring the chapter was well-represented at the Midwest Radfest.

*George Robson (608) 592-5437; george@lodiumc.org*

➤ Sacramento Valley

On April 28 the Sacramento Local hosted a regional Harrington-Hamer Institute training in media skills and community organizing featuring John Nichols of *The Nation* and Salim Muwakkil of *In These Times*.

*Duane Campbell (916) 361-9072; campd@pacbell.net*

➤ San Diego

The local participated in the April 20-22 bi-national anti-FTAA protests. They were the prime movers in organizing a forum on April 20, attended by approximately 450 people, which featured workshops on such topics as Environment and the Border, Alternatives to FTAA (led by speakers from DSA and ISO), and

Human Rights and the Border. During the protest, DSA members helped organize WTO Alert booths to distribute information and to collect signatures opposing Fast Track authority.

Members worked on the anti-voucher initiative with Californians for Justice and the California Teachers' Association, campaigned for Nader, and fundraised for Medea Benjamin.

The local held a well-attended meeting this fall around the utilities deregulation fiasco, featuring Craig Rose from the *San Diego Union Tribune*, who was instrumental in getting the issue out locally; DSAers are presently meeting with important people connected with this issue, and they hope to be part of a movement toward creating a municipal utility.

*Virginia Franco (619) 276-6023; vfranco@simplyweb.net*

➤ Twin Cities

Minnesota DSA decided to focus all of its efforts as a group the next two years on re-electing Senator Paul Wellstone, who is closest to DSA's ideology. Although divided on Gore vs. Nader, they are 100% united behind Wellstone. Wellstone is being targeted by the Republicans and Bush administration for defeat.

The Twin Cities Local has also started a Social Democratic Action caucus in the Democratic Farmer/Labor Party. SDA canvassed regularly for Dayton and Gore.

*Dan Frankot (651) 224-8262; mndsa@hotmail.com*

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**DSA 2001 National Convention  
November 9-11**

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drunk and gave us the Electoral College)**

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