

# DEMOCRATIC LEFT

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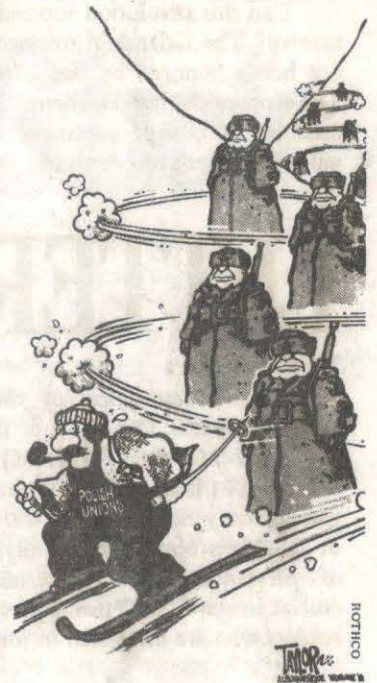
A new City Council member in Ann Arbor, Democratic party activity in New England, conferences and peace activities are some of this month's highlights.

# Settling Their Own Affairs

By Peter Steinfels

IT IS DIFFICULT TO WRITE ABOUT Poland. Will the situation there be dramatically changed by the time I finish this paragraph, let alone by the time these words appear in print? Indeed, has the situation already been dramatically changed since the last moment I glanced at a newspaper or listened to the radio?

It is also difficult to write about Poland for another reason. What needs to be said can be said simply, *should* be said simply. Of course, experts can enlighten us at length on the roots of the workers' movement for independent unions, on the special ways in which nationalism and religion have nourished Polish resistance and disciplined its expression, on the implications of the Polish events for all of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. They can, if they dare, try to locate that fine line that will divide a tug-of-war from war plain and simple. But identification with what has been happening in Poland does not turn on any such analyses, valuable as they may be. It springs from something more basic, almost visceral: a rejection of a system of lies, of bullying, of mean corruption and massive stupidity. To say the simple things that need saying about Poland we need language that has too often been debased by editorialists and politicians, East and West. "During these August days," one Polish journalist wrote after the Gdansk strike, "a host of words have suddenly come to life again; they have regained their weight and their radiance: the



“In a Communist country, simply to settle your own affairs is to make revolution.”

words 'honor,' 'dignity,' 'equality.' " One must add "freedom," and the word that became the workers' emblem, "solidarity."

The same journalist was asked to serve as interpreter for two Spanish Trotskyists who arrived at the Gdansk shipyards and announced their desire "to learn about your revolution."

"You are mistaken," they were politely told by a strike leader. "We aren't making a revolution here. We are settling our own affairs."

The reply was ironic. It was meant, on one level, to disabuse the Spanish leftists of whatever romantic notions of revolution they may have hoped to inflict upon the Polish reality. At the same time, the strike leader knew full well the further truth: in a Communist country, simply to settle your own affairs *is* to make a revolution.

Can this revolution succeed? Can it survive? The Gdansk Agreement is still not being honored by the government. The economic situation worsens. The momentum of change continues to build, with long pent-up demands and pain-

fully learned suspicions pressing hard against the extraordinary moderation and negotiating capacity of Solidarity's leaders. Already the idea of minimizing Russian fears by seeking to establish democracy in basic social institutions while leaving the Communist party and central authorities relatively intact has been outstripped. What was a division between people and party has become, as in Czechoslovakia in 1968, also a division within the party.

One can hardly exaggerate the challenge these developments present to the Soviet Union. Poland is the key nation in Soviet geopolitics. It is the cornerstone of the Soviet empire. And the costs—military, economic, and political—of a Soviet intervention and occupation will be tremendous.

Not a few Poles find this Western preoccupation with the Soviet threat irritating. They fear that our constant worry about Soviet intervention may turn into a form of resignation before the fact, that our repeated alerts may break rather than bolster the kind of steady resolve they need to negotiate the passage

to a greater freedom. Their irritation is understandable. Is it surprising that people edging their way along the side of a mountain do not appreciate constant shouts from afar reminding them that there is a canyon below, that the ledge twists, that the rocks are slippery?

A case can be made on the other side, to be sure—that to be low-keyed about the Russian danger risks the appearance of tolerating it. But the difference between Polish and Western perspectives in this regard reveals something deeper. The Poles are the actors, and action both requires and generates its own boldness. We, on the other hand, despite the marginal impact our policies can have on the outcome in Poland, are largely spectators. For Americans, accustomed to a major role in great world events, this is particularly frustrating, and our anxiety is linked to our frustration. It would be bad enough were the Poles waging a struggle in which their future alone was at stake. Our frustration is worse once we realize how much of our own future is at stake.

And our future is at stake, in a stronger sense than the one we have in mind when we say that freedom is indivisible, that assaults on human dignity, whether in Eastern Europe, South Africa, or Argentina, assault human dignity. The central issue is the disintegration of the Soviet empire.

### *End of Empire*

The Soviet empire is coming apart, which does not mean that it *will* come apart but rather that it can be kept together only by maintaining—no, reinforcing—all the mechanisms of surveillance, censorship, corruption, infiltration, arrest, and intimidation, in short, of pervasive intimidation and repression, backed ultimately by Soviet divisions. The government that oversees such an empire must inevitably be secret, paranoid, brutal; its leaders will be the products of the natural selection that such an environment en-

## LETTERS

To the Editor:

In the description of the "unity talks" between DSOC and the New American Movement (NAM) in the March, 1981 issue of *DEMOCRATIC LEFT*, you correctly noted that an active group of DSOCers opposes this unity, because of differences over a good number of crucial issues. DSOC members and other readers who are interested in joining this

*Letters to the editor must be signed. We reserve the right to edit for brevity. Please limit letters to less than 250 words. Letters should refer to articles that have appeared in DEMOCRATIC LEFT.*

group—the Committee Against the NAM Merger—or who wish more information about our Committee, which includes DSOCers such as Irving Howe, Jacob Sheinkman, Sol Stetin and Martin Gerber, may send their inquiries or contributions to:

Committee Against the  
NAM Merger  
1612 Eastwood  
Houston, Texas 77023.

We, too, are watching closely the developments in the proposed unity talks, and hope to play a crucial role in the resolution of this issue within DSOC.

The Committee Against  
the NAM Merger

**DEMOCRATIC  
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tails. National self-interest, especially in a nuclear age, will as always provide grounds for co-existence with such a regime; but those grounds will never be anything but narrow and precarious. Genuine détente between the superpowers and a qualitative reduction of the chance of nuclear war will not be guaranteed by a successful loosening of the Soviet empire; but they also cannot be expected without it.

The success of the democratic movement in Poland will also mean a blow to one of the chief props of our own imperial ministrations, namely the argument that between the *risk* of a Communist regime and the *certainty* of an "authoritarian" or "moderately repressive" non-Communist one, U.S. policy should always prefer the latter because it is amenable to evolution while Communist to-

talitarianism is "irreversible." The crushing of the Solidarity revolution by Soviet arms will have the contrary effect: it will push global tensions to the limit; it will burden for years even the most self-interested agreements—on arms limitation, for example—with the drawback of appearing to legitimize Soviet conquest.

What, then, to do? How exactly to balance the economic and political resources the West has at its disposal—economic agreements, financial credits, food aid, negotiations on theater nuclear weapons, pressures elsewhere in the world—how to offer and how much to threaten, on what conditions and at what stages—is far beyond this writer's competence to suggest. That such calibrations should be governed by how they serve the democratic forces in Poland, rather than, say, the banking and commercial interests of

the West, is essential. But these decisions are not now in the hands of the democratic left, at least not in the United States. The democratic left can only insist on the centrality, for the future of both freedom and peace, of the survival of the Polish democratic movement. The democratic left can only exert pressure in the same ways it declares itself on El Salvador, the draft, South Africa, or the MX missile system—that is, in the press, in meetings, in demonstrations, in front of Russian embassies and consulates, and even, if need be, in front of those of our allies who may be hesitant to join in unified economic sanctions against the Soviet Union. To assist the Solidarity revolution, we must begin with—solidarity. ■  
*Peter Steinfels is a member of the Advisory Committee of DEMOCRATIC LEFT. He is executive editor of Commonweal.*

# Back to the Big Stick

By Vincent P. Wilber

IT BECOMES CLEARER EVERY DAY that the Reagan administration intends to take a hard-line, militaristic, and nationalistic course in its relations with the governments and peoples of less-developed countries (LDCs) considered by Washington to be pursuing policies contrary to our interests. The official rationale behind this "get-tough" approach is that it is forced on us by Soviet-inspired terrorism, adventurism, and wars of liberation.

The President's claim that "all the social unrest and turmoil in the world can be traced to the doorstep of the Soviet Union" is, at best, simplistic. One must speculate that when the most powerful nation in the West finds it necessary to bully some one billion of the world's "poorest of the poor," it has reasons that go beyond purely political considerations connected with East-West relations.

What are the signs that such a notably militaristic spin is being put on the U.S. foreign policy ball in our dealings with the Third World? What are the motives behind it? Will such a policy work in our long range interests?

Secretary of State Alexander Haig's own views are clear. Asked in a recent interview with *The New Republic*, "Can Third World radicalism be tempered by more U.S. generosity and understanding?", his answer was "No." So far there has been no authoritative U.S. rejection of this view.

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*“One must speculate that when the most powerful nation in the West finds it necessary to bully some one billion of the world's 'poorest of the poor,' it has reasons that go beyond political considerations connected with East-West relations.”*

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The influential Office of Management and Budget also seems to think that a touch of the knout might help keep poor folks in line. In the future, an OMB policy paper declared, U.S. foreign aid should be channeled "to encourage selected countries to develop economic and

political systems compatible with U.S. interests." It added (in what might be interpreted as a tone of shock) that certain programs seem to have "supported state planning efforts in some countries and in recent years have placed a major emphasis on income redistribution."

Our allies in Japan and Western Europe, of course, practice a considerable amount of central planning both above and under the table. As for income redistribution, a bipartisan Presidential Commission on World Hunger appointed by President Jimmy Carter, concluded in early 1980 after two years of work that one of the best ways to forestall instability and revolution in the less-developed countries would be to spread the world's wealth around more equitably. The World Bank—not noted for its radicalism—determined some years ago that a 2 percent annual income transfer from the upper classes to the bottom 40 percent of the population of the LDCs would finance reasonable short- and long-term world development goals within 25 years.

## *Return to the Stick*

Unhappily, new executive orders issued from the White House, as well as formal legislative proposals, ignore these

directions. As of this writing the administration has:

- Called for a reduction of economic development assistance to the LDCs of one billion dollars, 26 percent below present programs, and an increase in military assistance of about the same amount to countries of strategic importance to the U.S., most of which also are in the undeveloped category. It is quite possible that the rightist-enhanced Congress will cut back aid of the developmental variety even further;

- Decided to send more than 50 military advisers and \$66 million worth of military equipment to El Salvador while simultaneously polishing old bones of contention with Cuba and Nicaragua;

- Supported renewal of overt and covert aid for anti-USSR factions in Angola;

- Called for what amounts to an ongoing U.S. military presence in the Horn of Africa and the Middle East;

- Renewed economic assistance and proposed joint naval exercises with the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile;

- Entertained in Washington the President-designate of Argentina, where, according to the United Nations Human Rights Commission, more than 2,300 people died, 10,000 were jailed for political reasons, and more than 20,000 have disappeared since 1976; and sent the U.S. Army Chief of Staff for a tour of Argentine military facilities that many fear may lead to relaxation of the ban on arms sales and military assistance to Argentina;

- Called back for reconsideration a just-completed complex and hard-bargained United Nations-sponsored Law of the Sea Treaty, on grounds that it favors the Third World and the Soviet Union;

- Cut off economic aid to Nicaragua;

- Offered a revised official view of racist South Africa so conciliatory as to cause political analyst Clayton Fritchey to report after a visit to Zimbabwe: "It is hard to exaggerate the dismay of black Africa over what it regards as the Reagan administration's tilt toward white South Africa."

Very few items on the above list have been presented to the American public in terms more complex than the necessity for politico-military anti-communist action. There is nothing new about such an approach. For centuries governments have found that the mobilization

of support for shifts in foreign policy is most successful when the threat of a foreign enemy is invoked. More complicated explanations involving the sometimes selfish goals of ruling political establishments are left unsaid.



The Sacramento Bee

Conflicts of economic interest between the U.S. and the Third World are such that no amount of military aid to prop up friendly regimes, or the calculated use of aid as a weapon, can resolve them. Most of these differences have little to do with the Kremlin or its intrigues. The governments—and in many cases the working people—of the poor countries are becoming aware of their growing economic clout in a world dependent on them for many vital raw materials and agricultural products, and are attempting to exercise it. Their leaders, whether rightist or leftist, also know (and most resent) the fact that the United States, with less than 6 percent of the world's population, consumes a third of the globe's nonrenewable resources. We look to the Third World for many of these, including such defense-related minerals as chromium, bauxite, nickel, cobalt and manganese. All are important bargaining chips in the ongoing game of world trade, leaving aside the special, complicated, and critical domain of oil.

Third World leaders whom the U.S. sees as dangerously radical include those who too insistently demand better prices than they are getting for many of their products, more control over the often U.S.-owned multinational corporations that produce them, and a more equitable sharing of the proceeds of sale within their populations. Denzil Peiris, editor of *Third World Media* of London, has written that the U.S. has been for years the most resolute of the industrial countries in opposing economic concessions to the poor nations, and accuses the Reagan administration in particular of seeking a relationship "in which U.S. industry will have unfettered access to the minerals and other raw materials of the Third World." "Assuredly," he adds, "some of the economic elites in the Third World could work out arrangements of collaboration with the transnationals and other foreign enterprises that would be highly profitable to themselves. But this is the road to social unrest."

Non-elite based, socially progressive political and trade union leaders in the LDCs (where they are allowed to exist) understand that the current approach of the U.S. government to North-South tensions will permit little latitude for constructive change or reform. Many of them would agree with Dr. R. Kothari, president of India's Social Science Council, that "As the industrial economies begin to show their fragility in dealing with problems, and as pressure from the (underdeveloped) South grows, we are likely to see a backlash. . . . As this happens, the only major resource and power left in the hands of the North-West will be military force. Doctrines of intervention will result."

The unabashed use of U.S. foreign policy—and particularly foreign assistance—as a weapon rather than a constructive instrument to achieve a peacefully interdependent society, probably marks only the first phase of intervention. Gunboat diplomacy, the big stick and new concepts of the old manifest destiny ride again. None of these devices, however, ever has worked well for very long, even in the days when the American writ ran unchallenged around the world. There is no reason to think they will prevail now. ■

*Vincent Wilber was formerly a Foreign Service officer and legislative assistant for foreign affairs in the U.S. Senate.*

# Cuts Cannot KO Citizen Organizing in this Decade

By Steve Max

*How the citizen movement might evolve in the 1980s and beyond depends on developments in society and in the world. But it is clear as a new decade begins that . . . formerly silent Americans have learned that they can fight (and sometimes take over) city hall, and the world is not simply dog-eat-dog, that ordinary people can learn the public skills necessary for exercising some control over their lives and institutions, and can rebuild community in an often depersonalized society.*

Harry Boyte  
*The Backyard Revolution*

**C**OMMUNITY ORGANIZING DEVELOPED into a major arena of social change activity during the 1970s. Today it faces a challenge to its basic methods of operation, and a period of adjustment to new conditions.

The Reagan administration is already beginning to cut off a major source of funding for organizing staff—the VISTA and CETA programs. In addition, the economic downturn has meant fewer foundation grants and smaller contributions. If trends continue, there will be a crisis of resources in this very effective but labor intensive and expensive form of organizing. Fortunately, many changes that will have to be made for purely practical reasons also fit the new political priorities of the 1980s.

Visiting activists from Europe often express surprise at the way we organize in this country. In their experience, most organizing is linked to the left political parties. Issues that lack a short-term solution are tied into the campaign platform and candidates promise help if the party is put in power. Although the European parties have their functionaries, the profession of full-time community organizer is largely unknown there. In post-war America, community organizing has



West Side Citizen Action march in New York City to save the transit fare.

developed in a very different way. Here, there is no connection with political parties and no formal participation in elections. European organizers are volunteers who work at other jobs; here there are probably close to five thousand full time organizers, if all types of community work are considered.

During the last decade, community organizing took a qualitative leap forward with the development of statewide citizen organizations in about 35 states. These state organizations take on very local issues referred to in the organizing trade as "stop sign" issues. They also wage campaigns on much larger issues such as utility rate hikes, delinquent corporate taxpayers or overassessment. The Connecticut Citizen Action Group won its campaign to tax oil company profits in the state; Massachusetts Fair Share has been campaigning for limitations on utility fuel pass-alongs; and in New York, the Citizens Alliance is forcing the utilities to do free weatherization audits for small home owners. The great significance of the statewide organizations is that their size and strength enable them to move beyond "stop sign" issues to di-

rectly confront corporate power. Their membership of blue- and white-collar working people is developing a deep populist anticorporate sentiment which the organizations actively encourage. To these organizations has fallen the task of bringing middle America into a progressive activist movement.

Two characteristics of the citizen organizations make them vulnerable at this time: 1) They are expensive to keep up; 2) They require very large staffs. Their members are people who answered the door bell and found an organizer outside who convinced them to attend a meeting. If they didn't find an organizer on the doorstep, then they already belonged to the neighborhood association, senior club, church, or union before which an organizer appeared to appeal for affiliation with the state organization. In either case, participation was staff initiated and usually needs to be staff maintained.

## Types of Organizations

There are two basic types of statewide citizen organizations. One is a coalition of already existing independent groups that unite to work on statewide

campaigns, but are on their own with local issues. These organizations usually include unions at the local or district level. The second type is made up of individual chapters that the organization itself creates and maintains. Of the two, the chapter approach is the more staff intensive. Typically, one chapter organizer works with from one to three chapters, perhaps one hundred active members and several hundred less active ones in all. At this rate, the number of staff required to organize any large city is very high. In coalition organizations, the local groups maintain themselves day to day and draw less on the resources of the state staff. However, because most of the local affiliates were not set up for action, they need help with planning, membership turnout and mobilization. The state staff has the job of putting together all of the big events and activities, rallies, lobby days, hearings, and fundraisers. In both types of organization, the staff does the research, drafts legislation, and produces publications.

Many of the organizing staff come through VISTA or CETA. Ten to twenty VISTAs is common and some state organizations have more than thirty. Reagan's cuts pose considerable problems.

One response by the citizen organizations is to put more emphasis on coalition building. Citizen Action, the seven-state network formed to aid organization in new states, is now encouraging the use of the coalition approach, even though half of its affiliates are chapter based. This shift not only reflects the need to conserve staff, but the changing mood among the progressive forces in the country and a new openness to cooperation. It is part of a program to rally popular forces after November's setback.

Though politically appropriate, the coalition approach does not, in itself, solve the problem of staff reductions. It is still very staff intensive, and, in any event, the chapter based organizations intend to continue in the present form.

Organizations belonging to the Industrial Areas Foundation network, otherwise known as the Alinsky network (IAF was the training school founded by Saul Alinsky) have a different approach to staffing. Instead of subsistence wages, their people get rates comparable to those of a union organizer. Its organizations are therefore able to insist on long term commitments and more mature, experienced staff. This results in fewer staff

administering more extensive organizations. In the long run, the IAF approach seems to reduce staff size and costs; and it is effective. The obvious problem is raising the money. The method is to form a sponsoring committee for a new neighborhood organization. The committee is composed of local institutions, usually churches, which agree to put up the first year's budget. Thereafter, the members do extensive fundraising. The sponsoring committee device is highly successful on the neighborhood level where only one or

Westway Interstate Highway in New York City waged by our organization, West Side Citizen Action, confirms the value of long campaigns. Until recently, we functioned without organizing staff, although we relied on a public interest organization for issue research.

Another example of a long campaign is the National Organization for Women's ERA ratification campaign in Illinois. During a six-year battle with the legislature, NOW built up 30 chapters and 130 action teams covering all of the

*“An activity that can involve a large number of people, has high political clout, and requires the smallest relative number of staff is the election campaign. To those who have been working in elections all along, this statement may seem like a long buildup to an obvious point, but citizens organizations have consistently avoided electoral politics.”*

two staff positions are involved, but it is not always applicable statewide, and it has the drawback of limiting organization to places where sponsors can be found. IAF staff have become skilled at training their local leadership, many of whom are clergy, to do the actual member-to-member organizing. This type of intensive leadership development is now being considered in other networks where the initial organizing of new members is done entirely by staff. Unfortunately, because of the high VISTA staff turnover, most state organizations have few people experienced enough to do this kind of leadership development. It could take several years to become general practice.

### **Fewer Staff, New Approaches**

The reality of reduced staff levels may lead to some very different methods than have been used in the past. Instead of moving from issue to issue in fairly rapid succession, sometimes spending no more than a few weeks or months on a local campaign, organizations may exploit the advantages of long-term campaigns that last for several years. These lessen the need for continual re-education of the members, researching of new issues and reforming of coalitions and allow the leadership time to become confident, articulate speakers on the issue, which lessens the need for constant staff coaching. The seven-year campaign against the

state's 59 legislative districts. The chapters and teams functioned as organizing units to build pressure on the legislators. At the height of the campaign last year, NOW had no more than 15 staff people in the state.

An activity that can involve a large number of people, has high political clout, and requires the smallest relative number of staff is the election campaign. To those who have been working in elections all along, this statement may seem like a long buildup to an obvious point, but remember that the citizen organizations have consistently avoided electoral politics, and not without good reason.

Republicans and Democrats co-exist within citizen organizations, an increasing occurrence as the major parties become irrelevant to the problems of people's daily lives. Electoral activity brings these divisions to the surface, and can be highly destructive. The very act of endorsing a candidate changes the public's perception of the organization. Citizen organizations are "good guys" precisely because they are not "political in these times when politics is a dirty word. Once in the electoral arena, motives become suspect, and members who entered citizen organizations as an alternative to electoral politics feel betrayed and leave. The community watches for the leadership to be offered jobs on the public payroll, and opportunists join the organizations in the

hope of launching political careers. Our experience in several campaigns for anti-Westway candidates in New York is that the organizational benefits of electoral campaigns outweigh the disadvantages. Elections are still the events in which far more people discharge their civic duty than any other activity. This means that an issue raised in the context of a campaign gains a wider audience than at another time. People who don't understand other forms of organizing understand elections, which makes recruitment of volunteers and members easier for the leadership to do on their own. Another advantage is that the day-to-day work of the membership in an election campaign is fairly representative and mechanical. It requires minimal training and minimal supervision compared to the usual activities of a direct action, community organization. Election campaigns also bring more visible and longer lasting results than would the same effort put into most other kinds of activity, and have clearer power implications. More important for this discussion, a campaign can involve more people with less staff than any other activity in which citizens organizations now engage.

### Avoiding Divisions

The basic question remains. How does a citizens organization make local endorsements without having destructive divisions arise? There are several circumstances under which this is less of a problem. One is in the many blue-collar communities where the shift to Reagan was not reflected in local politics that remained Democratic. Another is in specific communities where a local political figure has become so identified with the organization's issues that electing or defending that person seems natural to the membership. In the fight against Westway, DSOC members Councilwoman Ruth Messinger and Assemblyman Jerrold Nadler fit into this category.

For most organizations, the real key will probably turn out to be something different. Candidates will have to come out of the struggle to win a specific issue and will be from the ranks of the citizen organization itself or of one of its close allies. The theme will be that since we can't get support from those currently in office, we will have to elect one of our own people *in order to win this issue*. If the reason for the candidate is to win the issue, then the question of party be-

comes a tactical one. With which party is there the best chance to win? In most communities where organizations exist, this will be the Democratic party, but the emphasis will be on the coalition of organizations backing the candidate, and not on the party identification.

Will citizen organizations actually move in this direction? There is not yet a trend, but discussions are underway in the Citizen Action network and elsewhere. Plans are being examined to build electoral alliances with labor, senior organizations, and the organizations of women and minorities in order to challenge the right in local elections in 1982. The Illinois Public Action Council, a member of Citizen Action, and often an innovator, has already set up its own political action committee to create a progressive political apparatus in Illinois. Heather Booth, Director of the Citizen/Labor Energy Coalition and President of the Midwest Academy, is circulating a proposal for integrating citizen organizing efforts with recruitment of volunteers who will work in various state and local election campaigns. All of these plans are in the initial stages of discussion and will probably be changed many

times. By fall, the response of the citizen organizations to the new economic and political situation should be clearer.

VISTA, CETA and other government grants did make possible a great expansion of citizen organizing during the Carter years. Before concluding that citizen organizing is dependent on government support, however, we should recall that almost all of the major organizations were started during the Nixon administration when VISTA and other forms of aid were generally not available to them. Community organizing flourished under Nixon, and it will survive Reagan. In fact, if Reagan were smart, he would triple the number of VISTAs going to citizen organizations, and continue to prohibit them from working in elections. Instead, he will make punitive cuts, and as has happened so many times in history when government attempted to stifle people's organizations, he will only succeed in forcing the struggle to a new and higher level. ■

*Steve Max is on the staff of the Midwest Academy. He is co-chair of the West Side Citizen Action Chapter of Citizens Alliance in New York City.*

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# A SPECIAL REPORT

## Is It Honduras Next?

By Peter Shiras and Leyda Barbieri

**A**PPEARING BEFORE THE HOUSE Appropriations Subcommittee last February 25th, ex-U.S. ambassador to El Salvador, Robert White, wondered out loud, "I don't know why we have twelve [U.S. Army] helicopters in Honduras at this time." White could have asked why Honduras, a country of three million inhabitants, was the second largest recipient of U.S. economic assistance to Latin America last year, receiving almost one-fifth of all aid to Latin America. Why has Honduras received over \$3.5 million in U.S. military aid since April of last year as well as increased military training funds? Why is all of this American largesse and military hardware going to a country traditionally exempt from the violent upheavals of its Central American neighbors: Guatemala to the west, El Salvador to the south, and Nicaragua to the east?

White's query went unanswered and ignored by the press. The question, however, of U.S. policy towards Honduras and the role of Honduras in the Central America drama is becoming increasingly important. It has implications both for Honduras's internal evolution towards civilian democracy and for the eventual scope and outcome of the war in El Salvador.

Part of the answer to the sudden U.S. interest in Honduras lies in the geography of Central America. Honduras occupies a strategically vital position bordering on all three of the region's actual or potentially explosive nations. Honduras's border with Nicaragua has been the scene of numerous confrontations between ex-Somocista National Guardsmen and the Nicaraguan armed forces. Along the Honduras-Salvadoran border, thousands of refugees have fled in terror from the counterinsurgency tactics of the Salvadoran military. Recently, the U.S. State

Department charged that Honduras is being used as one of the major routes for arms deliveries from Nicaragua to the Salvadoran insurgents. Finally, along the Guatemalan border, officials from Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador regularly meet to discuss their respective security needs and problems.

Immediately following the election of Ronald Reagan in November, U.S. Ambassador to Honduras, Jack Binns, said that "the United States is looking for a vigorous Honduran role in Central America." The nature of that role has been twofold. On the one hand, U.S. officials cite Honduras as a model of peaceful social change and laud the transition process underway from military to civilian rule. On the other hand, the U.S. has been fortifying the Honduras military with large amounts of new assistance and weaponry, thereby strengthening the role

of the military both in the region and within Honduras itself.

Honduras is beset with an array of economic and political problems that are rapidly polarizing political forces within the country and show signs of leading to the same kind of political violence that has convulsed other Central American nations. U.S. policy, as it has consistently done in other parts of Latin America, contributes to this polarization by strengthening the hand of the military as opposed to civilians and forcing concessions from Honduras to shore up the faltering Salvadoran regime. The dangers of this policy are not only that of increasing the threat of a regionalization of the war in El Salvador, but of threatening the process of democratization underway in Honduras. Indeed, much evidence indicates that these threats have already become realities.



If our military advisers aren't successful, we bomb Hanoi and mine Hai-phong; then we set up strategic hamlets around Saigon; then we . . .



The roots of Honduras's current crisis date most immediately to the elections for a constitutional assembly held in April 1980. Under pressure from the Carter administration, the military allowed free elections to be held and voters turned out in record numbers. The provisional military regime, which still rules under the leadership of General Policarpo Paz Garcia, was duly rewarded with large amounts of military assistance from Washington.

Since then, the elected constitutional assembly has been working under the shadow of constant threats and rumors of a military coup d'état that would interrupt if not terminate the democratization process. As a result, the process has gone very slowly and large segments of Honduran society, particularly trade unions, student groups, peasant organizations, and opposition political parties have been excluded from the transition process. The military has purged from its ranks left-leaning military officers and has kept the political "opening" within the limits it finds acceptable. Whether the military will honor its pledge to hold presidential elections this year is debatable; what is clear is that despite public statements to the contrary, the U.S. is strengthening the military's position and thus no government will rule without its approval.

Opposition to the government has galvanized around two issues: the Honduras-El Salvador peace treaty and the treatment of the Salvadoran refugees entering Honduras. That these involve neighboring El Salvador testifies both to the key role that El Salvador plays in Honduran politics and the importance of Honduras in the region.

### **Disadvantageous Treaty**

The circumstances surrounding the signing of the peace treaty on October 30, 1980 indicate that the United States exerted strong pressure to bring the two countries to terms. After eleven months of frustrated talks, the treaty was rushed through hurriedly as a diplomatic feather in El Salvador's otherwise unadorned hat. The Hondurans caved in on their demand that the border issue be resolved and agreed to the terms of the treaty that were highly favorable to El Salvador. El Salvador gained Honduran markets for its cheaper manufactured products, use of Honduran highways, and an escape valve for its burgeoning population by reopening the border between the two countries.



Unitarian Universalist Service Committee

### **Salvadoran refugees exist in limbo in Honduras.**

In addition, the treaty grants both armies license to clear the border zone of guerrillas, thus creating the kind of anti-guerrilla united front the U.S. hoped to achieve in bringing the two sides to the bargaining table. In short, the treaty bestows on the Salvadoran government a late but not immediate economic crisis, and certain political legitimacy, may alleviate its military position.

The Honduran military and elite have also benefited from increasing military and economic aid, but this has come at the cost of strong domestic protest from opposition groups and some business sectors. The business sectors fear the economic consequences of cheap Salvadoran products flooding the Honduran market. Other protests have focused on the U.S. military aid to Honduras that has come as a result of the treaty and these sectors oppose Honduran involvement in the U.S. and Salvadoran war against the insurgents. As former ambassador White said, "Why do we have twelve helicopters in Honduras?" The reason can only be understood in the context of Honduran military actions against Salvadoran guerrillas in the border zone. By sealing off the border, the Salvadoran military forces can more effectively combat the insurgency.

The irony and tragedy of the peace treaty is its role in broadening and internationalizing the war in Central America. Immediately before the treaty was

signed, in anticipation, Honduran and Salvadoran troops collaborated in "rastreros," cleanup operations, against suspected guerrilla bases. Refugees along the border report that since the treaty was signed there have been more attacks in the zone as well as incursions by Salvadoran troops into the refugee centers themselves to attack alleged guerrilla sympathizers. Furthermore, American and Chilean officers attached to the Organization of American States (OAS) observer force make weekly flights across the border and maintain constant communication between the two armies. Whereas this communication served to mediate past disputes, the OAS force is now acting as a bridge between two armies carrying out joint military activities against what they perceive as a common enemy. In attempting to justify such military actions, the U.S. military representative to the OAS force in Honduras explained, "Although I hate to raise the specter of Southeast Asia, the guerrillas are using the 'bolsones' exactly the way the Viet Cong used Cambodia for base camps."

While it is still too early to assess the economic impact of the treaty, the Honduran economy is already in deep trouble. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) issued a report late last year indicating that Honduras's foreign reserves had decreased by \$50 million in the preceding two months and that as a result no new aid would be forthcoming. The

report generated widespread concern among Honduran businessmen and reports of large-scale capital flight have been circulating once again.

Meanwhile, for the general population, prices are climbing, shortages of some basic products are appearing, demands for higher salaries are increasing, and strikes becoming more widespread. Symptomatic of the malaise of the Honduran economy is the 75,000 ton shortfall in domestic basic grain production for a country with tremendous agricultural potential. As a result, Honduras is having to import food and increase taxes.

The foreign debt of \$550 million is almost as great as export revenues of \$575 million in 1980 and public debt servicing accounts for 15 percent of government expenditures. For 1981, it is expected that fully 25 percent of the government budget will be derived from foreign loans which, although they might relieve short-term budget problems, will contribute to large budget deficits, indebtedness and dependency. A report in the Mexican daily *Excelsior* blamed the present economic crisis on increased imports, administrative corruption (particularly notorious among the military), and beefing up of the military budget. Despite an IMF-approved stabilization plan instituted in 1979, economic minister Rubén Mondragón admits to an inflation rate of 50 percent and a 1981 budget deficit of \$175 million. For the Honduran peasantry and working class, already suffering from the lowest per capita income in Central America, the IMF plan is likely to bring no relief, but only more hardship. From 1971-1978, the real wages of Honduran workers declined by 30 percent.

On May 14, 1980, some 300 to 600 Salvadoran refugees were killed at the Río Sumpul river along the Honduran-Salvadoran border in a joint military action by the two countries. Local priests in the Santa Rosa de Copán diocese learned of the massacre and, after being unable to attract serious press coverage, published a statement on the massacre implicating Honduran forces. The government reacted angrily, charging the priests with being leftist sympathizers and threatening to expel all foreign priests. One priest, Father Earl Gallagher, an American, received death threats over Radio El Salvador and another, Father Fausto Milla, was recently arrested and detained for three days for allegedly car-



Unitarian Universalist Service Committee

Congresswoman Barbara Milkulski, I, and aide interview Salvadoran refugees during visit in January.

rying subversive material. Clashes between the church and the government have become increasingly bitter this year with even the conservative Archbishop of Tegucigalpa calling for fundamental changes in the society.

### *Refugees an Issue*

Underlying the conflict between the priests of Santa Rosa and the military government is the highly politically sensitive issue of the Salvadoran refugees and the strategically important border area between El Salvador and Honduras. In 1969, the two countries fought the famous "Soccer War" over a border dispute and the influx of Salvadoran settlers into Honduras. Now, even with the peace treaty signed, the border disputes have yet finally to be settled. A six-kilometer wide demilitarized zone along the border is still under OAS observation to guarantee its neutrality. It was, however, in that zone that the massacre of the refugees occurred, despite the statements of the head of the OAS force at the time to the contrary.

According to U.S. military intelligence, the Salvadoran guerrillas have established bases in the demilitarized zone which they are using as supply camps. Honduran officials are concerned about

not only arms shipments across the border which were recently described in the State Department's White Paper, but also about shipments of food and medicines that refugees may be supplying to the guerrillas. According to relief workers in the area as well as the testimony of the refugees themselves, the food distributions do not even meet the needs of the refugees, let alone allow them to transport supplies to the guerrillas. According to a report in a Honduran newspaper, the weapons that the State Department claims were destined for El Salvador were in fact for Honduran rebels.

The refugees are undeniably sympathetic towards the left because it is the government security forces and right-wing paramilitary forces that have made them refugees in the first place. A recent congressional delegation visited the border area and though members questioned the refugees as to who was committing the acts of terror found no evidence that leftist guerrillas were engaged in such actions. According to their report, the Salvadoran strategy, as articulated by one commander, runs as follows: "The subversives like to say that they are the fish and the people are the ocean. What we have done in the north (of El Salvador) is to dry up the ocean so we can catch

the fish easily." "Drying up the ocean" entails waging a campaign of terror against the rural population which has resulted in approximately 500,000 refugees, 30,000 of whom have entered Honduras.

Recently, the Honduran government has come up with its own plan to "dry up the ocean," a plan to move all the refugees away from the border area and into tightly controlled camps. This would remove the refugees from the border and rid the area of troublesome journalists and relief workers who act as witnesses to military actions. Without these constraints, closer coordination would be possible between the two armies in mopping up any guerrilla bases on either side of the border. Such a scenario of increasingly regionalized conflict would be met with strong protest within Honduras but would probably be supported in Washington. After all, to paraphrase Lyndon Johnson, why not let Central American boys fight the war instead of American boys?

Salvadoran guerrilla leaders and Guillermo Ungo, head of the Demo-

cratic Revolutionary Front, have already charged that Honduran troops are massing along the border and operating in collusion with Salvadoran troops. In Marcala, some 50 kilometers from the Salvador border, a major counter-insurgency force has been assembled and a military airstrip built in the last six months. Significantly, Marcala is located on the major highway into El Salvador's northern region where the fiercest battles between government troops and leftist insurgents have occurred. Recently, General Wallace Nutting, commander of the Southern Command, visited Honduras and made a special trip to Marcala.

The signs of domestic polarization in Honduras are unmistakable. The first right-wing death squad, appropriately named MACHO (Movimiento Anticomunista Hondureño Organizado) recently made its presence known—threatening students supporting the Salvadoran struggle and peasants complaining about their conditions. In December, unknown assailants kidnapped Paul Vinelli, a high-level banker who had spoken out against government policies. New leftist

groups have split off from the traditional left opposition parties to form groups advocating armed insurrection and have been organizing to prepare for such an eventuality. It is all too reminiscent of Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala.

The aspirations and legitimate rights of the Honduran people, and one might add, the Salvadoran people also, are being sacrificed to achieve U.S. geopolitical objectives. At the same time that the U.S. attempts to crush the guerrilla offensive in El Salvador, it is sowing the seeds of revolution in Honduras. By frustrating genuine reform and blocking expression of popular will, U.S. policy can hope to keep the lid on the explosive situation in Central America from one election year to the next, but it is a policy in the long run that can only lead to increased instability in the region and more spilling of blood. ■

*Peter Shiras, formerly a consultant to the Inter American Development Bank, recently traveled to Central America. Leyda Barbieri is a staff member of the Washington Office on Latin America.*

## First Step to the Pits? Into Reaganland

A lively bunch of short pieces by Robert Lekachman, Michael Walzer, Thomas B. Edsall, Roger Wilkins, James Sleeper, Joseph Clark, Bernard Rosenberg, Luther Carpenter, Howard Weiner, and others on prospects for the Reagan-run economy; the panacea of supply-side economics; the chilling effect of Reagan's victory on Blacks; the rightward turn of the next Congress; the growing troubles of the unions; Ed Koch as spirit of the times; the chimera of "Urban Enterprise Zones;" etc., etc.

## BREAKING FAITH

*Commentary and  
the American Jews*

Bernard Avishai

The Spring/1981 issue of **Dissent** brings a déjà vu look into the Reagan administration by some well-known demand-side observers. **Also** some lively reviews and articles: *Naming Names*, by Murray Hausknecht; *Equal Opportunity and "The Race of Life"*, by Isaac Kramnick; *From Holocaust to "Holocaust"*, by Claude Lanzmann; *The Corruptions of Science*, by Gerald Cavanaugh; *The Ambiguous Legacy of Eduard Bernstein*, by Henry Pachter.

# Dissent

### DISSENT

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# Bread and Roses



By Patti Simpson

**H**EARTS STARVE AS WELL AS bodies, give us bread, but give us roses," wrote James Oppenheim in his poem about the 1912 Lawrence textile mill strike. In 1981, as workers face struggles just for bread, that vision of a union movement that nurtured body and soul has not been lost.

For almost two years, District 1199, National Union of Hospital and Health Care Employees-RWDSU and the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU) have carried on different, but far-ranging cultural programs that have been enthusiastically received by the rank-and-file.

Why would unions whose workers are among the most exploited and underpaid in the country put resources into the arts? Because, "At a time when people are saying the labor movement is irrelevant and obsolete," says Moe Foner, executive director of 1199 and director of its cultural program Bread and Roses, "We're building coalitions around cultural issues that reach not only our members but carry a sense of workers' history and importance into other cultural institutions."

The largest cultural effort ever undertaken by a U.S. labor union, the \$1.3 million Bread and Roses project (funded by federal and state agencies, the union, churches, and foundations) has included art exhibits, theater productions, concerts, conferences, and two annual Labor Day street fairs. Foner estimates that it has reached more than 150,000 people, including "thousands of hospital workers and their families who have had limited access and exposure to the cultural arts." District 1199's 70,000 members are 70 percent black and Hispanic and 85 percent women. They have rarely had the time, money, or access to enjoy cultural events. Bread and Roses has brought free, noontime performances to work sites, made low-price tickets available for events outside the workplace, and involved members in its programs. It has

also sponsored forums on labor and health care and dialogues on civil rights issues.

"More than 400 members are involved in four subcommittees that meet regularly to determine their own and their co-workers' role in the programs," Foner commented. Subcommittee members also serve as hosts and rank-and-file organizers of membership support for programs.

In addition to bringing artists such as Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee, the Howard Roberts Chorale, the late humorist Sam Levenson, and New York City's Labor Theater to workers, Bread and Roses has generated artistic works. Like a mini-

WPA, it has engaged visual and performing artists in the production of songs, plays and paintings. Its latest exhibit, "Images of Labor," includes original paintings commissioned by the project. The book from the exhibit has been bought by other unions for distribution to members. The Smithsonian will take the exhibit on tour for two years.

One of Bread and Roses' most innovative creations was *Take Care*, a musical revue based on the lives of hospital workers that first toured 1199 hospitals in New York City. Like the Broadway show *A Chorus Line*, to which the media often compared it, it was drawn directly from the experiences of workers on the job. Fifty 1199 members participated in an oral history workshop led by writer-historian Lewis Cole. This raw material was fashioned into a lively production by a team of professional playwrights. DC 37 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees sponsored additional showings to its own members in New York City hospitals. Other unions in the Midwest arranged for showings there.

## Benefits of Culture

Workers who took part were thrilled to have their lives appear on stage. But the benefits were more significant than that, notes Sarah Allayne, who was in the workshop and is a member of one of the Bread and Roses committees. Having the chance to talk about their work allowed participants to air noncontractual grievances against supervisors. In some cases the problems were cleared up informally.

Labor educators have long argued for cultural programs, stressing the practical benefits to unions. Bread and Roses proves the point. It has been effective in countering member apathy. In addition to creating more identification with the union among its own members, it has been a good outreach tool. Organizer Pat Battelle told a *Village Voice* reporter that a union-sponsored concert at a geriatric center was influential in convincing the registered nurses to vote union in a cer-



Tom Tuthill/District 1199

At the Labor Day Street Fair



Milton Glaser

"It is true, indeed, that they can execute the body, but they cannot execute the idea which is bound to live."

Nicola Sacco

### From "Images of Labor"

tification election. When workers have not had much experience with a union, she pointed out, they are afraid that they may be giving up more than they are getting. The positive contact with something like Bread and Roses helps break down that distrust.

From its beginning in 1959, District 1199 has held to its belief that unions are more than "bread and butter" organizations. It built an art gallery and theater in its headquarters, and every year scheduled performances by artists such as Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee, Odetta, and Miriam Colon. But until the increased funding became available, it could not mount anything as ambitious as Bread and Roses.

Interestingly, the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), one of the major funding sources, has come under attack by conservatives for giving money to organizations and people who have probed working class themes and culture.

On a smaller scale, ACTWU's THREADS builds cultural programs into union activities rather than importing or generating them. The program, operating in New York City, Knoxville, Tenn., Detroit, Mich., and New Bedford, Mass., makes use of available community resources. Small seminar groups of active and retired members meet to discuss trips to museums, film showings, poetry readings, and other events. The discussions focus on workers' lives and the themes of family, community, and work life. Proj-

ect Co-Director Victoria Lebovics regards the small groups as essential to aid workers in gaining skills to better control their lives.

The Reagan administration, in pushing for cuts in funding for the arts, has emphasized the role of the private sector. Business, of course, has long seen the advantages of being linked in the public mind with music and the arts, but is unlikely to be sympathetic to projects such as these.

What of the future of these programs? District 1199 has received funding from NEH through 1982, and the National Endowment for the Arts through 1981. THREADS Co-Directors Lebovics and Marvin Ciporen are pessimistic about continued grants for their program. They are preparing a booklet for locals and how to hook into existing

networks in order to continue programs like THREADS at little cost.

The early history of labor in the United States is one of rich cultural traditions. "It was a way of creating cohesiveness," says labor historian Herbert Gutman, who has worked with both projects. "The current notion that culture has always been alien to working people simply isn't true, although it has become alien to them over time," he charges.

Now that inroads have been made to reclaim that culture and create a new one, unions have another tool for forging unity in the conflicts ahead. ■

*Patti Simpson is a labor educator who teaches at the Center for Labor Studies in New York City and Cornell University. She is also an active unionist with experience in several organizing campaigns.*

### RONALD REAGAN RECRUITMENT DRIVE

Have friends been telling you that Reagan's programs might yet drive them to socialism? Give them some help. Tell them about our Ronald Reagan Recruitment Drive. At the time of our national convention we will publish a statement with the text shown below. Attached to it will be the names of well-known activists. Do you know someone who should be on that list? Don't delay. Act now to make sure that name is there.

We have joined the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee (DSOC) since the election of Ronald Reagan and are making this statement on the occasion of DSOC's Fifth National Convention.

We are trade unionists, activists from the minority, feminist and various political movements, intellectuals and writers. We have many individual reasons for joining DSOC but we all share a common view at this time.

That the Reagan program—billions in welfare for the rich, cuts aimed at the black, the brown, the female, and the young and all the other vulnerable people in this society, and cold war simplifications in an increasingly complex world—are both reactionary and inadequate is obvious. But we do not believe that a return to the traditional liberalism dominant in American politics from Roosevelt to Carter offers a real alternative. The current crisis, both domestic and international, is structural in character and requires new departures which go as far beyond Rooseveltian liberalism as Roosevelt went beyond Hoover's conservatism. Above all, we believe that the dominance of corporate priorities within America and the world must be challenged by a democratization of economic power in this and every other society.

Given these convictions, we feel it important to join the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee, which is the major organization in the United States working for such a perspective in the mainstream of American political life. We call upon all of our friends and associates to join us in this new beginning for the American democratic left.

\_\_\_\_ Yes, I want my name to be there. Here is my check (\$25 regular; \$10 limited income; \$50 sustaining (includes a subscription to DEMOCRATIC LEFT).

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# ON THE LEFT

By Harry Fleischman

**LAST CHANCE**—If you want to display your memorabilia of DSOC's political history and traditions at the DSOC National Convention in Philadelphia Memorial Day weekend, bring with you your mounted posters, photos, pins and letters of Gene Debs, Norman Thomas and other Socialist, union and civil rights leaders.

YEAR OF SOCIALIST WOMEN? FIRST IT WAS NORWAY, where a woman, Gro Harlen Brundtland, was selected by the Labor Party as Prime Minister. Next, the same thing happened in San Marino, the world's oldest and smallest republic. For the first time in its 1,680 year history, San Marino (population 20,000) elected a woman, Socialist Maria Lea Angelina, to head the government as Captain-Regent for the next six months. What Socialist woman in what country will be next?

ED BROADBENT, leader of Canada's New Democratic Party, will be the major speaker at *Chicago DSOC's* Thomas-Debs Dinner May 3, honoring Egidio Clemente, editor of *La Parola del Popolo* (Voice of the People), Italian-American labor and Socialist publication which he has edited for decades. Mildred Jeffrey, former chair of the National Women's Political Caucus, will also speak. . . . Chuck Mueller, chief steward of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 46, spoke to a well-attended DSOC meeting in *Iowa City* about "Worker Ownership—the Rath Experience." The Rath packing plant in Waterloo, Iowa, with over 2,000 employees, is now the largest worker-owned and (almost) controlled plant in America. Lynn Feekin of *Iowa City DSOC* helped inform UFCW union leaders in Waterloo of the practicality of worker-ownership as an alternative to plant closings, and also enabled them to reach helpful economists and other experts. . . . DSOCers in Massachusetts elected 38 delegates from 15 cities to attend a Democratic party issues convention in Springfield. DSOC played a leading role in the DEMOCRATIC AGENDA style Progressive Caucus at the convention.

A VARIED FARE OF DSOC LOCAL ACTIVITY IS UNDERWAY throughout the nation. Here's a sample: In *Suffolk County, N.Y.*, DSOCer Hugh Cleland, history prof at the State University of New York-Stonybrook, assistant Catholic chaplain Mike Quinn, and Nancy Greenfield of the Jewish Association of College Youth formed a speaking team on "El Salvador—Another Vietnam?" at every dorm on campus last month. . . . *Nassau County DSOC* on May 3rd hears Mike Harrington speak on "Politics in the 80's—A New Beginning?" . . . *C. W. Post DSOC* held a meeting on "The Sperm Count is Down," a dramatic exploration of the effects of chemical contamination of the environment. . . . *Green Mountain DSOC* joined with other groups in hammering out a draft of an Economic Bill of Rights for Vermont which was scheduled to be adopted at a coalition conference in April.

**NOTE:** The June issue of DEMOCRATIC LEFT will be delayed in order to include coverage of the DSOC National Convention.

THE MAINE STATE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE has come out fighting in opposition to a bill, LD 790, to "provide workers and communities with reasonable notice and compensation upon certain plant closings" sponsored by DSOCer Harlan Baker and Martin Hayden. In *The Maine Paper*, it claims that DSOC "agitates for programs similar to the platform of the Communist Party USA. The plant closing issue was a major 1980 CPUSA plank." (No mention of AFL-CIO strong support for such legislation!)

DSOC AND 40 OTHER ORGANIZATIONS CO-SPONSORED a conference on "Military Spending—Who Loses?" organized by the American Friends Service Committee in Cleveland. The conference heard a major address by William Winpisinger, president of the Machinists Union, who also addressed a DSOC reception at the John Marshall College of Law. . . . *Cleveland-Akron DSOC* is backing Bruce Allen's campaign for Cleveland City Council. . . . Four DSOCers sit on the Kansas Democratic State Committee and are working there for a progressive state platform. Among recent new DSOC members is Pat Lehman, Machinists' political action director, who was co-chair of Ted Kennedy's campaign in Wichita. . . . Kate Ellis spoke on "Women, Work and the Family" at a *Greater Providence DSOC* meeting, as well as at meetings of the *University of Rhode Island* and *Brown University DSOC*.

A COALITION FOR DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM has been organized on the University of Washington campus in Seattle. Paul Gill, vice president of the Young New Democratic Party of British Columbia, spoke at the first meeting. DSOCers, NAM, Citizens' Party members and Washington Democratic Council people are attempting to organize a Washington Commonwealth Federation along the lines of the one that existed from 1935 to 1945, which helped make Washington one of the most progressive states in America during that period.

DSOCer Lowell Peterson won his race for Ann Arbor City Council April 6 despite low voter turnout and poor Democratic showing. . . . Ann Arbor DSOC is involved in El Salvador support work and the Michigan DSOC Feminist Initiative. . . . The Washtenaw County Democratic Party has formed a Committee on the Future, whose agenda is revitalizing the party through formulation of a new program.

WEDDING BELLS ARE RINGING FOR four DSOCers this spring. Best wishes to DL's managing editor Maxine Phillips on the occasion of her marriage to Tom Roderick on May 2 in New York, and to DL contributor Harald Meyerson and Kathleen Bartle who will celebrate on April 26 in Los Angeles.

DSOCER ANDREW TWADDLE, A UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI professor, is running for city council in *Columbia, Mo.* . . . The local has put out a clever recruiting flyer on "Ten Reasons to JOIN" plus a comparison of what you can get for \$25, e.g.,

buy 23 Big Macs at MacDonalds or JOIN DSOC; pay for one 39th of a Nancy Reagan suit by Adolfo or JOIN DSOC; buy 16 issues of TIME (plus \$1 left over for Roloids) or JOIN DSOC. . . . DSOC joined the Congressional Black Caucus, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Non-Violent Social Change, 26 members of Congress and 60 religious, labor, civil rights and public interest groups to sponsor seminars, meetings and teach-ins April 4 throughout the nation on rediscovering Dr. King's moral and political legacy in the 1980s.

■ ■ ■

BAY AREA DSOC WORKED CLOSELY with San Francisco NAM in co-sponsoring a two-day conference on "Urban Politics in the 80's" in mid-March. The conference drew 350 activists, stressing the themes of building urban coalitions around issues of full employment, fiscal crises and housing/land use. . . . DSOCers worked hard in the Berkeley city council campaign to help elect a slate of socialist-oriented candidates. Four of the eight seats were up for election April 21. Three of the four holdover seats are occupied by members of the progressive Berkeley Citizen Action group, plus a BCA mayor. DSOCer

Claire Greensfelder is campaign manager for one candidate.

■ ■ ■

NEW YORK CITY DSOC had a busy five days April 9-13. A lively local convention was held Friday and Saturday featuring such speakers as DSOC member and City Councilwoman Ruth Messinger, *Commonweal* editor Peter Steinfelds and Mayoral hopeful, State Assemblyman Frank Barbaro. Then on April 13, more than 400 New Yorkers crowded into the Village Gate for a tribute/roast honoring *Village Voice* writer (and DSOC founding member) Jack Newfield as "The conscience of New York." The entertainment was first-rate, from the singing Chapin brothers, Tom and Harry, to Tom Paxton, an old Newfield friend. The humor was effective, sharp and warm, and the guests made up a *Who's Who* of New York politics: Attorney General Bob Abrams; members of Congress Geraldine Ferraro and Ted Weiss; State Senator Franz Leichter; Ed Wallace and Ruth Messinger from the City Council; Frank Barbaro and five other members of the state assembly (Joe Ferris, Denny Farrell, Jerry Nadler, Eileen Dugan and Dick Gottfried) and even the "mystery rogue roaster," Stanley Friedman, the boss of the Bronx. Overall, a terrific event. ■

# CLASSIFIED

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# JIMMY HIGGINS REPORTS



**FROM GDANSK TO CHICAGO**—In October this column stated that the Polish workers' movement inspired the world. That claim is quite literally true for the labor movement here. In early March, the UAW in Chicago overcame a vicious campaign conducted by an anti-union consultant and won a representation election 2-1. One reason for the victory, according to veteran organizers, was the enthusiasm for the Gdansk Agreement of August 1980 which the UAW distributed along with its organizing leaflets. Posters of Lech Walensa, the Polish Solidarity leader, have been spotted in several factory locker rooms and union halls outside Chicago as well.

**ANDREW YOUNG'S** career as UN Ambassador was cut short because of an unauthorized meeting with a representative of the Palestine Liberation Organization. Current U.S. Ambassador to the UN, Jeane Kirkpatrick seems immune to such problems. She met with South African security personnel who were in the U.S. illegally. Despite official denials, she reportedly has bragged that she knew that the South Africans were in the country illegally and decided to meet with them anyway. No reprisals seem forthcoming from the Reagan administration, and one rumor has it that Kirkpatrick is in line to succeed Alexander Haig should he be dumped.

**THE MOVEMENT AGAINST U.S. INTERVENTION** in El Salvador continues to grow. An April 6 *New York Times* ad in support of American policy drew a notably thin list of endorsers. Particularly absent were major union leaders. Even in the usually hawkish International Ladies Garment Workers Union little enthusiasm exists for U.S. aid to the Salvadoran junta. Some observers point to the activism of Hispanics and secondary leaders in the ILG as having a strong influence. Trade union meetings against intervention have been held in several cities and have drawn larger than expected crowds. A congressional resolution calling for a complete cut-off of U.S. aid has won 55 co-sponsors. Join the movement against the war by writing your Senator and Representative and expressing your support for H.R. 1509 and S. 728 to cut off military and economic aid to the current government in San Salvador.

**FROM TIME TO TIME** readers wonder about the origin of this column's name. We quote from Upton Sinclair, 1918: "Jimmy Higgins symbolizes members who cheerfully and loyally do the dogwork—ringing doorbells, addressing envelopes, running errands—all the tedious, unrecognized chores that are quite as necessary as, but much less glamorous than, the speechmaking and the going to jail."

**SEEDS OF SUPPLY SIDE'S DEMISE** were reported in the April 13 *Business Week* Economic Diary. Powerhouse Washington lobbyist Charls Walker, once a true disciple of the Gospel According to Jude (Wanninski), criticized supply-siders for paying insufficient attention to reindustrialization policies geared toward specific sectors. *Business Week* agreed heartily with his call for a new Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC) to loan public monies on strict terms to ailing companies and possibly cities. That idea has been developed most fully by Felix Rohatyn, the famed architect of New York City's bailout and a proponent of the RFC because it provides a means of enforcing a social contract with labor on business's terms. Robert Lekachman, a left-wing economist (and a DSOCer) whose work graces these pages occasionally, has been predicting that Reagan will move away from the true faith and toward a managed economy, complete with wage-price (emphasis on first syllable in this case) controls.

**HERE AND THERE**—A convenient fact or two for arguments with those favoring the Reagan program: 44 percent of the benefits in the tax cut program fall to just 4 percent of the taxpayers; and those poverty families living it up on food stamps and sometimes "double dipping" by collecting the food stamp allotment and letting the kids eat a school lunch receive a munificent \$1.32 per person per day for a food allowance. . . . Over at the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, the Reaganites are burning a book on worker safety because of its alleged anti-employer slant. The offense, according to new OSHA head Thorne Auchter, is that the booklet featured a cover picture of Louis Harrell who worked 44 years in the textile industry (for J.P. Stevens) and died of job-related brown lung disease. Auchter has ordered recall and destruction of 100,000 copies of the book.

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