

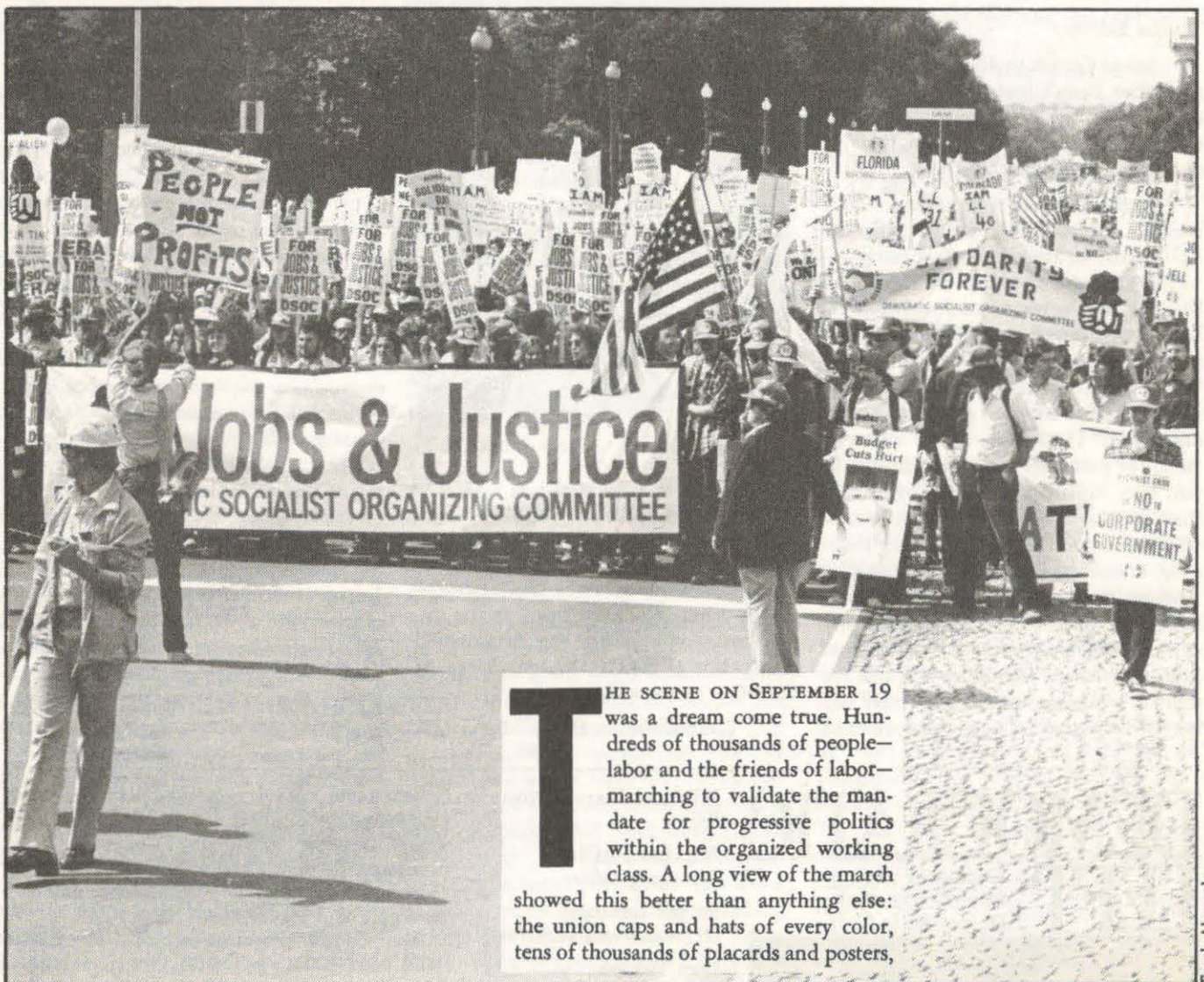
DEMOCRATIC LEFT

EDITED BY
MICHAEL HARRINGTON

Next Steps To the Dream

Oct. 1981 Vol. IX No. 8 \$1

By Ben Tafoya



THE SCENE ON SEPTEMBER 19 was a dream come true. Hundreds of thousands of people—labor and the friends of labor—marching to validate the mandate for progressive politics within the organized working class. A long view of the march showed this better than anything else: the union caps and hats of every color, tens of thousands of placards and posters,

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and the most racially, sexually, and age-integrated crowd since the civil rights march of 1963. The event truly showed the meaning of solidarity. For that day at least we could put aside our differences and concentrate on those areas where we agree. Chief among those points is the commitment to a strong and active trade union movement.

The numbers of the march were cause for elation. The press and police reported 260,000, estimates by other veterans of marches went as high as 400,000. Whatever the true figure, the Federation may boast of meeting and passing its most ambitious goal. Yet the strength of the assemblage lay in the diversity of the

unions and organizations represented. The two largest delegations belonged to the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) and the International Association of Machinists (IAM): the former representing blue and white collar public employees, the latter blue collar skilled and industrial workers. The large numbers of white and blue collar workers from the private and public sectors seemed to dispel the growing myth that there is a divergence of interest within the house of labor. Moreover, the presence in the march of non-AFL-CIO unions such as the National Education Association and the United Mine Work-

LETTERS

To the Editor:

James Cronin in discussing the British Labor Party's internal conflict (September) reminds us of how unresponsive the party leadership has often been to membership opinion.

There is indeed a great deal to this and I've always felt the party could shift its internal structure to an opening towards greater internal democracy. This being said I hasten to add that it is no less interesting what the Tony Benn faction stands for in terms of party platform. The left wing could, if it had won the internal power struggle (at present writing Denis Healey narrowly defeated Benn for party vice chairman) lead Britain into "splendid isolation" by leaving the Common Market and NATO. Britons who remember the last war might interpose, "standing alone is no good at all." Aneurin Bevan used to speak of "a policy for hermits." But Benn—and many of his followers who attempt to surpass him and perhaps each other in a zeal for military weakness—would go further and have Britain give up atomic weapons and

disarm unilaterally. This would in practice lead to further Afghanistan-like adventures by the Soviets and a likely invasion of recalcitrant Poland.

As to the Common Market, the Iron and Steel Community et al., no country—least of all one as dependent on international trade as Britain—can afford to isolate itself and raise tariff barriers again. Multinational corporations can best be dealt with by intergovernmental cooperation rather than taciturn withdrawal from the community. These are of course also points to consider in looking at the troubled Labor Party.

Helmut Wenkart
New York, N.Y.

To the Editor:

I enjoyed very much reading the June 1981 issue of *DEMOCRATIC LEFT*. I should like to point out, though, a serious typographical error that appeared in the column "On the Left." In the second paragraph where the first annual convention of the DC/Maryland local of DSOC is mentioned, it reads:

"Councilwoman Hilda Mason out-

lined a progressive legislative strategy, opposing right-wing attempts to undermine the public schools, and proposed an initiative to allow tax credits for money spent sending children to public schools."

Not only did I never propose an initiative to allow tax credits for money spent sending children to any school, but I have very clearly stated my *opposition* to such an initiative which has been filed here in the District of Columbia. I believe such an initiative would virtually destroy our public school system. I am participating in community groups, made up of parents, public officials, and other citizens, which are vigorously opposing this tax-credit initiative.

Hilda Howland M. Mason
Washington, D.C.

Letters to the editor must be signed. We reserve the right to edit for brevity. Please limit letters to less than 250 words.

■ ■ ■
ERRATUM: The September issue was Vol. IX, No. 7, not No. 6.

DEMOCRATIC LEFT

Formerly the
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ers gave the gathering a special meaning.

The tone of the September march was also good. Concentrating on issues such as jobs, safety and health, civil rights for minorities, equal rights for women, and protection of Social Security makes the maintenance of the coalition much easier. Many of us, though, wished that mention of military spending and U.S. foreign policy could have found its way into the official speeches of the march, particularly in light of the recent unprecedented AFL-CIO Executive Council resolution saying that the defense budget should not have a blank check. (A recent poll published in *Time* magazine revealed that over 50 percent of the American people believe the defense budget should shoulder the burden of further budget cuts). There were organizations present that raised these issues, as well as such other important matters as gay rights, which weren't raised across the board.

Next Steps

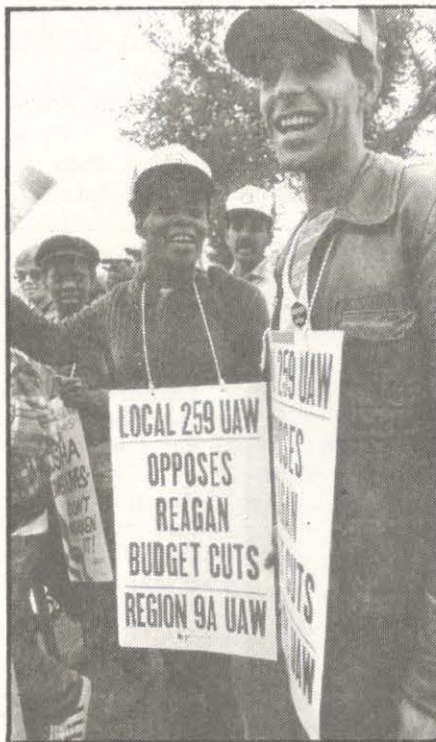
By far the most important question left hanging as people went home was: What is to follow? Rumors have spread that Lane Kirkland is contemplating a major labor effort around the 1982 elections, but little has been announced formally. There is also talk of putting together a labor mailing list from Solidarity Day participants to start a grassroots lobbying effort.

Some surprising changes in labor political action have occurred independent of Solidarity Day. AFL-CIO COPE, and the political arms of some of the affiliated unions have pledged formal assistance to the Democratic National Committee (DNC). This is a substantial change from the traditional union protestations of a "non-partisan" position, and the lack of seriousness of the national committees' political operations during the Carter years. Led by the Auto Workers and the Communication Workers, the unions are making major commitments of money and resources for the DNC's congressional and state efforts next year.

The unions are also looking for influence within the councils of the party. At the Democratic National Committee's reorganization meeting last January, labor was given more than a dozen seats on the DNC. At every DNC gathering, labor is caucusing; on every DNC commission labor is given a prominent role. In August the new commission on presidential selection rules held its first meet-

ing. The commission is known as the Hunt Commission, after its chair, North Carolina Governor Jim Hunt. The commission's co-chair is Douglas Fraser, president of the United Auto Workers Union.

What is the political basis of labor's renewed interest in the Democratic party as institution? One motivation must be a desire to secure a major role in the party's rebuilding effort following the debacle of November 4, 1980. The Democratic party's new chair, corporate lawyer Charles Manatt, has friends in the labor



Gretchen Donart

movement and they were a key constituency in his election. Beyond that, however, Manatt is perceived as a shrewd operator who will respond to pressures from those quarters that support the national party's efforts. A recent article in the *Washington Post* cited fundraising among labor as the single most successful aspect of Manatt's program to put the DNC on a firm financial footing. One worried politico commented that he feared labor would "take over the party." Were it only so. While Manatt has made clear his concern for "traditional Democratic values" his opposition to Reagan is rather eclectic politically. The *New Republic* recently quoted him as calling conservative Oklahoma Democrat James Jones "Captain Courageous" for his role in the recent tax debate. On this question,

as on others, there is a wide divergence between him and the labor constituency.

To give real meaning to its new involvements labor must help design a system of party accountability to avoid the problems we faced during the Carter years when the administration and Congress ignored a progressive Democratic platform that labor helped to frame. A good guide for labor would be the success of the women's movement at last year's Democratic Convention where a provision passed denying aid to any Democratic candidate who did not endorse the Equal Rights Amendment. This requirement played a major role in the defeat of conservative Democratic candidate James Locker in a special election this year in Ohio. Locker's opponent, an equally conservative Republican, squeaked out a 500 vote victory which could have been turned around had Locker received, say, \$5000 from the DNC. But Locker did nothing to earn such support.

Labor and its allies must be willing to be this tough on politicians on a broad array of issues. A recent proposal to give all Democratic members of the Senate and House automatic status as delegates to the national convention must be framed (if the proposal passes) in such a way so that Boll Weevils like Phil Gramm and Kent Hance do not benefit. Some obvious bread-and-butter issues will come before Congress over the next few years, such as the repeal of the Davis-Bacon Act, tuition tax credits, changes in Social Security, and further budget and tax retrenchment. But labor's interest lies in keeping alive the coalition that made Solidarity Day not just with a series of defensive demands, but with some proposals of its own about the continuing problems of inflation and unemployment. From Kirkland's initiative in building the budget coalition to this summer's Texas state AFL-CO convention, "solidarity" has been the theme of labor activity. The large number of "ERA Yes" placards at the march, and the presence of a large contingent from the National Organization for Women (NOW) reinforces the success of the coalition efforts. The long term success of the coalition will be its ability to work with other established progressive institutions such as NOW and the Congressional Black Caucus, and the ability to put together a program which would move labor from its current defensive posture and give its

actions a more aggressive tone.

There are some signs that this is happening. The Machinist's Union, under the leadership of William Winpinger, has adopted a pilot program borrowed from the Canadian Labor Congress called the "on-the-job canvass." This effort involves stewards and active members taking political action to the membership, trying to spark involvement by the members in the union and its projects. For years AFSCME's District Council 37 in New York has sponsored community associations for its membership to involve them in local civic and political affairs. In California the Service Employees Union is looking at a proposal to start local political clubs. In New Jersey labor and community groups have worked on "Campaign '81," an effort in coalition politics in this year's state and

local races which has brought labor together with environmentalists, the state's tenants' union, and the local NOW. The citizen's action movement has spawned a new effort which will target state and local races next year and will involve the labor movement and its coalition allies at its center. This year's New York City mayoralty race saw labor join with the broad democratic left behind Democratic assembly member Frank Barbaro in an effort to defeat incumbent Mayor Ed Koch. Labor is looking with real interest at proposals to use pension funds for a socially useful "reindustrialization" policy and at proposals that speak about methods of credit allocations.

Our own new DEMOCRATIC AGENDA effort will be an attempt to try to bring these factors together. Party accountability, coalition politics, and a bold

program in response to the economic crisis, are all part of the DEMOCRATIC AGENDA. But more, DA is an effort to keep alive the best spirit of Solidarity Day, the individual activity and involvement of union members and the activists of the democratic left. DA-type coalitions are springing up all over the country.

Solidarity Day brought to mind the dramatic August 1963 demonstration for civil rights and Martin Luther King's stirring speech. With Reagan in the White House, King's dream seems so far away. Yet the labor movement, an indispensable element for a progressive revival, has taken a big step toward building the kind of movement which may someday make the dream a reality, not just for those of us lucky enough to be in Washington one weekend in September, but for every working person, everyday. ■



Gretchen Donart

Top: DSOC banners waved in the air. Bottom: Youth and field organizer Penny Schantz chats with DSOC Chair Michael Harrington.

Solidarity Day marked a significant shift in the philosophy of the American labor movement. On September 19, 1981 labor functioned as a movement and as a potentially major force in American politics. The march and rally for jobs and justice demonstrated a potential revitalization of the trade unions—a realization that change and offensive action are critical if labor is to survive as a movement.

Democratic socialists throughout the country responded to labor's call for jobs and justice by making Solidarity Day the highest political priority for September. DSOC members in Albany, N.Y., for example, held a major Solidarity Day community outreach event featuring speakers from ACTWU, the NAACP, NOW, PATCO, SEIU, United University Professions, Vietnam Veterans of America and the National Association of Social Workers. Activists in Howard County, Md. DSOC initiated and organized a Howard County Coordinating Committee which included AFSCME, NEA, NAACP, League of Women Voters, NOW and several local religious and peace groups.

On the West Coast, DSOCers actively participated in Solidarity Day marches in San Diego, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. Numerous locals held Solidarity Day promotional meetings, forums, and labor education outreach events.

More than 1,000 DSOC activists from Detroit, New York City, Atlanta, Ga., Houston, Tex., Louisville, Ky., Madison, Wisc., Chicago, Fort Wayne, Ind., New Haven, Conn., Philadelphia, Pa., Boston, Denver, Colo., and elsewhere made their way to Washington, D.C. With "For Jobs and Justice—DSOC" picket signs in hand, Machinists caps on head, and fist and rose tee-shirts and buttons on their bodies, over 700 DSOCers along with the New American Movement contingent marched with the International Association of Machinists. In addition to 6,000 copies of the special Labor Day issue of DEMOCRATIC LEFT, more than 15,000 copies of our Solidarity Day labor leaflet were distributed to labor activists from throughout the country. Finally, a DSOC sponsored Solidarity Day reception after the rally drew over 200 activists representing a broad spectrum of the labor movement.

—Penny Schantz

Meeting on Socialist Turf

By Michael Harrington

THERE WAS AN UNDERSTANDABLE euphoria at the Paris meeting of the Socialist International Bureau on September 24th and 25th. It was the first time the leaders of the world's democratic socialist parties had come together since the stunning victory of the French Socialists in the presidential and parliamentary elections of the spring. A sense of new possibilities was in the air. This glorious city even cooperated with two days of sparkling sunshine, followed by the more traditional fall rain.

The 51 party delegations were greeted at the Assemblée Nationale by the leader of the Socialist parliamentarians and a dinner for party heads was held at the Hotel Matignon, residence of Prime Minister Pierre Mauroy. Mauroy reminisced about Leon Blum, who in the mid-'30s occupied the Matignon, but he, and several of the French leaders, emphasized the irony that leads them to hope to accomplish more than Blum. General de Gaulle created a seven-year presidency and a five-year parliament, never thinking that socialists might win the executive and, even more remarkable, take an absolute majority in the Assembly. Because of his system, this government has a greater stability than Blum's (or Giscard's, for that matter).

But there are no illusions. Everyone knows that the Socialist policy must develop within the framework of a society in which capital is still enormously powerful. At François Mitterrand's press conference on September 24th, one could see a clear determination toward structural change with a shrewd appeal to the corporate sector to accept the fact that the Socialists were guaranteed a long, long tenure. As *Business Week* regularly laments, Mitterrand is keeping his campaign promises: decentralization, a qualitative increase in public ownership, and so on. A paradigmatic case in point: Mitterrand pushed for higher inheritance taxes—but granted some exemptions to wealth generated by productive investment.

On Friday, Mitterrand met for lunch with a small group of SI leaders at the Elysée Palace. It is hard to describe the atmosphere of the event. The new president told us, as part of a moving toast, that he was happy to welcome us to the Elysée in the name of the French Socialist party—and happy to welcome us in the name of France. He and SI President Willy Brandt reminisced about a trip they had taken to where Mitterrand had been



imprisoned in Germany during World War II and to the escape routes he had followed in his three break-out attempts. The German who had courageously fought the Nazis and the Frenchman who had been the prisoner of those Nazis now met at a lunch in the palace of the one-time prisoner become president.

However, the main business of the Bureau meeting was neither nostalgia, euphoria, nor discussion of French domestic policy. The agenda was dominated by three issues: East-West tensions, particularly the question of the NATO Euro-missiles and the Soviet SS-20s; Southern Africa; Latin and Central America.

Euromissile Controversy

There are, it is well known, divergences among the socialist parties of Europe on the question of theater nuclear forces. Indeed, a report of a private conversation between Brandt and Mitterrand, in which the two leaders disagreed, was widely reprinted in the European press. Brandt, along with the Swedish, Belgian, and Dutch socialists, has been quite critical of the Euromissile response to the SS-20s; Helmut Schmidt, Mitter-

rand, and others have supported that policy. There are, of course, strong tendencies within the German SPD toward reversing the party's position in this area.

At the Paris meeting these differences, though not straightforwardly debated, were certainly a factor in the discussion. There had been, it seemed to me, a decision on all sides to stress agreements where they existed. It is important for American socialists to understand the dispute. Mitterrand and the French regard the SS-20s as a conscious Soviet move to destabilize the European balance and are therefore for a tough, preventive response; the critics of the Euromissiles stress the fact that they will increase the danger of Europe's becoming the battlefield in what is supposed to be—but which no one believes will be—a "limited" nuclear war. But both sides are for pushing for negotiations with the Soviets now.

I told the Bureau that, from an American point of view, the European differences were significant and not to be dismissed. Nevertheless, they located everyone well to the left of a Reagan administration which only that week got around to talking to the Soviets on the issue. The common denominator of the different European positions, I suggested to them, provided the basis for a broad socialist campaign to seek the earliest possible, and the most serious, Western negotiations. My optimism was justified, I think, by the final communiqué of the meeting adopted unanimously by the Bureau with the explicit approval of the French. It said, among other things, "While opposing the present deployment and future introduction of theatre [nuclear] weapons into Europe on both sides, the Socialist International also rejects the production and deployment of the neutron bomb."

The SI, as I have explained in earlier reports to *DEMOCRATIC LEFT*, is a consensus organization with no centralist pretense to dictating the policies of national parties. The muted discussion in Paris (although in conversations in the corridors and cafes everyone was frank, and even militant, in debating the differences) was not an evasion but an observance of the common sense rules that

have made the SI so effective in recent years. That sentence from the communiqué makes it clear that everyone in the SI is critical of the Reagan stance.

Third World Support

The second area of discussion was Third World policy, with special attention going to Southern Africa. There were observers present from SWAPO of Namibia, the African National Congress and Angola, who addressed the Bureau. On the whole, the Bureau's attitude was self-critical. The SI had sent a mission headed by Olof Palme to Southern Africa. It had done some significant political support work for the struggle for freedom in Zimbabwe (as we convened in Paris, Robert Mugabe was in Sweden, meeting with Palme, among others). But everyone felt that too little had been done recently and that even the previous activities had not been sufficiently substantive. Brandt reported on the forthcoming Cancun summit, which owed so much to his own International Commission and to the work of Austria's Socialist chancellor, Bruno Kreisky, as well as to SI friends in Mexico, including President Lopez Portillo. And yet the Swiss, the Germans, the French, and the Swedes insisted in their turn, there was need for much more.

Michael Manley, who lost power in Jamaica (despite gaining more than 40 percent of the vote, it should be noted) was quite candid. When Third World leaders who are socialist, or who look to socialists, lead governments, will socialist leaders in the advanced countries answer with more than rhetorical sympathy? As Manley's point was discussed, the new French foreign minister was in New York telling the UN of the need for a genuine, and significant, transfer of funds from North to South. Still, the issues Manley posed—the structural limits of advanced socialist solidarity and of developing world socialist capacity for change—were placed on the agenda, not settled.

The Bureau authorized Brandt and the general secretary of the International, Bernt Carlsson, to convene an SI meeting on Southern Africa as soon as possible in order to discuss and determine a renewed and deepened commitment to the struggle there. It was agreed that the Caracas leaders' meeting in February would hear the report of a committee which would try, with Manley's help, to organize a serious debate on the extremely important points he raised.

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That Caracas meeting should be particularly important given the SI's continuing support to the Revolutionary Democratic Front in Salvador and to the defense of the Nicaraguan Revolution. Guillermo Ungo, leader of both the SI member party in Salvador and the Front itself, participated in the meeting, which vote unanimously in favor of the French-Mexican initiative and the search for a negotiated political settlement in that tragic land. Everyone agreed on a critical point which was perhaps best formulated by Ed Broadbent, the leader of the Canadian New Democratic Party, who had toured Central America on behalf of the SI this spring. Holding "democratic" elections in an atmosphere of terrorism which made democracy impossible is to stage a farce.

Felipe Gonzalez, head of the Spanish socialists, reported on the meeting of the SI's Committee to Defend the Nicaraguan Revolution in Managua in June (which I attended as a member of the Committee). Gonzalez stressed the openness of the Sandinistas and the extreme economic difficulties they face in carrying out their commitment to pluralism.

At the press conference after the

Bureau meeting, Brandt reported on all of these matters. He also told of the recent SI mission to Uruguay and Argentina, of new relationships with political tendencies in Brazil, and of the decision to hold the next SI Congress in Sidney, Australia, in 1983. That will mean an opening to the area in which the SI is probably least strong (although there are significant member organizations such as the Australian Labor Party and the two Japanese socialist parties), Asia and the Pacific. The SI also announced that it is stepping up its campaign on behalf of freedom for Kim Dai Jung of South Korea (it had played a role in the worldwide campaign to save him from the death sentence). In short, the extraordinary process which began in Geneva at the 1976 Congress of the SI—the same year in which DSOC was admitted to membership—is proceeding apace. The Socialist International is now more truly international than at any time since the founding of the International Workingmen's Association in 1864. It is not a centralist command post on the Leninist model, but its information and consensus functions are becoming more and more of a force in world politics. ■

DSOC National Directory

Key: Locals, unless otherwise noted; OC—organizing committee; B—branch of a local; C—contact.

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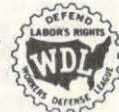
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Prop 13: Nightmare Takes Form as Surplus Dries Up

By Harold Meyerson

IN THE TRICKLE-DOWN WORLD OF Arthur Laffer, the University of California's keeper of the supply-side faith, California should be enjoying an unparalleled boom. Thirty billion dollars that would have gone to the state over the past three years have been re-routed by Proposition 13 back into the private sector. A state that ranked fourth in its tax burden has fallen to 22nd. As every supply-sider knows, it follows that investment should be increasing, jobs burgeoning, and—bolstered by record levels of personal income—services fairly soaring. Laffer's own career has taken off: according to the local press, he is selling his services as consultant to any statewide candidate who can come up with a cool quarter million.

There is nothing new in California's rewarding its charlatans. Seldom, though, has it gone to such lengths to punish its poor, its sick, its blacks and browns, its old and sick. Never has it been so gratuitously cruel.

For California is not a poor state. It continues to grow at a rate of over 300,000 new residents a year. It has largely been spared the sweeping economic dislocations that afflict the Northeast and Midwest. Yet since June of 1978, when Jarvismania took hold, it has waged a war of attrition on its welfare state and those who need its help. Since July of this year, when the surplus with which the state has been bailing out counties and cities for the past three years finally ran out, it has been waging that war very nearly to the death.

If California's last three years hold any portent of America's next four, there is cause for alarm. An inventory of Jarvis's effects calls into question every claim made by its supporters save one—that it would lower property taxes. That it did, though in such a way as to tilt the tax

even more in favor of business and against homeowners.

Whatever else business may have done with its share of the Jarvis rebates—a share come to over half the amount rebated—it has not been using it to put Californians to work. Economist Pauline Sweezy of the California Department of Finance detects "no discernible stimulus from Proposition 13. In fact, private job growth was greater before Proposition 13 than after." Table I gives the figures for new private sector jobs in California, first in the year immediately preceding 13's enactment, then in the years following passage:

In the last pre-Jarvis year, California created 100,000 more new private sector jobs with a tax rate 27 percent higher than the national average than it did in the following—non-recessionary—year with a tax rate only 1 percent above the national average.

of the failure of the rebates to bring rent reductions. City governments, under pressure from tenants, have circumvented the market and imposed controls. So, too, with prices: the only corporations to have passed on even a portion of their rebates through lower prices have been utilities forced to do so by the state utility commission.

Jarvis's effects on the services afforded Californians over the past three years have been building slowly into a human disaster.

In years one and two of Jarvis, for reasons both demographic and fiscal (60 percent of school funding came from the property tax), the largest cuts came out of the schools. In 1978-79, the budget for public education in California declined for the first time since 1934. California ranked fifth in per capita spending on education in pre-Jarvis days; today, it ranks 45th.

TABLE I

YEAR	NEW PRIVATE SECTOR JOBS
May 1977-78	587,400
May 1978-79	490,100 (83 percent of '77-'78)
May 1979-80	202,100 (34 percent of '77-'78)
May 1980-81	204,500 (35 percent of '77-'78)

“Whatever else business may have done with its share of the Jarvis rebate, it has not been using it to put California to work.”

If the rebates have not created more jobs, neither have they yielded lower rents or prices. Though rebates reduced landlords' taxes by an average of 55 percent, rents in post-Jarvis Los Angeles rose at about the same yearly rate they had in pre-Jarvis days—about 10.7 percent. Stable rents have been realized in many California cities, including Los Angeles and San Francisco, only because

There is a depressing uniformity to the sequence of cuts in school after school. Most districts began by eliminating such "supplementary" programs as music and art and, in the first Jarvis summer of 1978, all summer school programs as well. In the second summer, a few districts restored them, although, with a good deal of embarrassment, at a fee of about \$100 per course. In the Jarvis sum-

mer just past, shame gave way to necessity, and districts charged children for summer school as a matter of course. Junior high schools around the state have had to cut their regular session day from seven periods to six, high schools, from six to five. Community colleges have cut their course offerings this year by around 10 percent; and the University of California's 1981-82 budget is only 1 percent higher than that of 1980-81.

The approach of most California cities to cutbacks in the Jarvis age is typified by Oakland's—one of California's older and poorest cities, but with a priority list common to most. Oakland began by cutting back on maintenance and has had to continue cutting, so that its pre-Jarvis street upkeep budget of \$8 million stands today at \$600,000. Where once Oakland repaved its streets every 20 years, its current repayment schedule has entered the realm of the hypothetical: streets are to be repaved every 200 years.

Oakland is also representative in its library cuts. Three of the city's 22 libraries have been closed this year, a figure common to California cities. In Los Angeles before this year's squeeze, branch libraries were open an average of only 32 hours a week; this fall, that figure has fallen to 22 hours.

Death-Dealing Cuts

When Oakland drew up this year's budget, then, there remained little left to cut except police and fire, which accounted for 60 percent of city expenditures. With the crime rate rising, Oakland was forced to reduce its uniformed officers by 8 percent and to turn off another 1,000 street lights. Los Angeles has a firmer tax base than Oakland's, but it has seen its police department fall from a pre-Jarvis figure of 7,465 to today's 6,600. (Chicago, a city of almost identical size, has a police force of 18,000.) Murder is up 60 percent in Los Angeles since the mid-seventies, and Jarvis's handiwork has compounded the crisis. The overtaxed police department made 21 percent fewer burglary arrests this year than last. Fully 10 percent of the calls that come into the police emergency line go unanswered by the understaffed switchboard.

In the barrios and ghettos of Los Angeles, where hundreds of thousands of immigrants have come from Latin America, Asia, and the Pacific, the pharmacies and clinics where the poor and

undocumented could afford — financially and legally — to be treated have been closed. At Martin Luther King Hospital in Watts, at County General in East Los Angeles, there are no longer outpatient drugs for tuberculosis (TB is up 900 percent in the county in the last two years) nor painkilling drugs for patients discharged after major surgery (a sadistic Board of Supervisors has limited them to a three-day ration when discharged).

Within the hospitals, there is an acute shortage of new machinery (which interns and residents are now expected to purchase) and a chronic understaffing of nurses. County can muster only 2,700 of its complement of 3,350, and recovery rooms, according to one physician, are



periodically without nurses altogether. The nurse shortage is a key reason why San Francisco General has lost its accreditation. For one effect of Proposition 13 has been to limit public sector nurses' pay to \$300 a month less than that of their private sector counterparts.

The cutbacks are not limited to hospitals. Eight of Los Angeles County's 80 neighborhood clinics have been closed; 32 have had their services curtailed. "We cannot see sick people anymore," says Steve Tanzynski, a pediatrician at an East Los Angeles clinic whose work the county has limited to routine check-ups. The sick have been re-routed to other clinics, the nearest of which is ten miles distant. "Who knows," asks Tarzynski, "where the sick kids are going?"

The same question is being posed 250 miles away in the San Joaquin Valley's Tulare County, an area with the second highest concentration of agricultural migrant workers in the nation. Tulare is one of two counties (five more wait in the wings) that has responded to 13 by simply closing down its public hospital. But, charges Randall Lyon, a

Tulare legal services attorney, the private hospitals don't want to admit low-income, state-subsidized MediCal patients: the subsidies are too low. Patients are accepted only in "life-saving emergencies."

This year's Jarvis crunch held the cost-of-living allowing in MediCal repayments to 6 percent. Repayments for non-MediCal patients are running 18 percent over last year. Moreover, should the state health care budget go into the red this year—a distinct possibility—the law mandates reducing reimbursements by 10 percent and postponing for up to six months all elective surgery. Fewer hospitals will admit the poor, and among the few (largely county) that do (28 of California's 700 hospitals accept 44 percent of all MediCal patients), services will grow even skimpier.

What can counties and cities and school districts do to restore services to pre-Jarvis levels? Unless they can get a two-thirds vote of registered voters—a near-impossibility in stagflationary times—they are enjoined by 13 from raising taxes and floating bond issues. As in the case of summer school, most of them are charging fees for things to which free access was until 1978 considered an index of civilization. It costs now to drive through city parks and visit county museums (where attendance has plummeted). Once you've made Piedmont High's varsity football team it costs \$50 to play on it. "We charge fees," says Oakland Budget Director Donald Bierman, "for everything we can. We used to hold them steady, but now we raise them to keep up with inflation."

The other progressive strategy for service preservation and job creation is to increase public control over state pension funds, an area in which Jerry Brown appears in his most enlightened incarnation. Brown's task force on pension fund investment is emerging as a focus for those who represent constituencies that cannot wait for the Laffer curve to restore living standards. Together with labor's new willingness to work in coalition, the pension fund development constitutes one of the few hopeful alternatives to the growing polarization—and celebration—of private splendor and public squalor that is the real spirit of 13. ■

Harold Meyerson, a Los Angeles-based writer, is a DEMOCRATIC AGENDA coordinator and a member of the DSOC National Executive Committee.

Socialism Canadian Style: A Province's Experience

By Laura Berg and Bill Thomas

IN 1961 THE NEW DEMOCRATIC Party (NDP) was formed from the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) and the Canadian Labor Congress (CLC). From the party's roots in the CCF to the present, its vision has been socialist—in the early years described as cooperative commonwealth, later social democracy, and in recent years democratic socialism. In 1981, the NDP, with 20 per cent of the popular vote, gained 31 seats in the federal parliament. The party has governed in Manitoba and British Columbia, and has been the official Opposition in Nova Scotia and Ontario. But only in Saskatchewan has the NDP sustained its hold on provincial power long enough to move from oppositional politics to the concrete accomplishments of governance.

There the CCF—a union of farmer, labor, and socialist organizations with a populist appeal—won an overwhelming victory in 1944 and remained in power for 20 years. It won again in 1971 as the New Democratic Party. The Saskatchewan NDP has more than 34,000 dues-paying members in a province of nearly one million.

The following interview with the current Saskatchewan NDP Premier, Allan Blakeney, took place in Vancouver, British Columbia, in July, at the party's federal convention celebrating its 20th anniversary.

DL: What major accomplishments of the Saskatchewan party have made it mainstream?

Blakeney: I think you have to cut it up into three or four slices: welfare socialism, economic socialism, agricultural socialism, and human rights socialism.

In terms of economic socialism, the power and telephone utilities are totally owned by the government. In 1955, we made the decision that natural gas would



“If you just want to talk about policy, we might as well be a debating society. If you only want to talk about how we're going to get elected, we're nothing but a political machine. If you're serious, you've got to have both for the long haul.”

be distributed publicly. The inter-city buses have been operated by the province since 1945. A provincial insurance company was organized not only for compulsory automobile insurance, but for ordinary fire and casualty insurance as well. We went into fish marketing. Then there was a forest bill, in which we virtually took over development of timber resources. We also have an airline. We made our first tentative moves into resource development in sodium sulfate and bought ourselves a brick plant. We have interests in a packing plant, a steel mill and an oil refinery. We also had some small ventures in tanning, shoemaking and blanket making, not all of them successful. In the area of agricultural socialism, there has been a great deal of support for the co-operative movement, particularly credit unions, but also co-op marketing and co-op stores.

However, the government really made its reputation on welfare socialism. The big winners were medical—free cancer treatment in '45, air ambulance serv-

ice in '46, and hospital insurance in '47. Total medical care came in '62, after a tremendous social battle.

DL: Why was welfare socialism so successful?

Blakeney: Ours is a prairie society. It's a harsh climate, and people live out there and grow grain—God-fearing, hard-working people, but with all the fears of isolation that anybody living in that environment would have. And so, over a period of ten years, the government says, "It's not your fault; it's circumstances and we will provide. If your child is sick, or your mother gets cancer, don't worry an airplane will be down to pick them up and take them to a hospital. Don't worry if you don't have money; there are no more hospital bills. We will relieve you of that nagging fear you must have."

DL: What percentage of the economy is publicly owned?

Blakeney: The government is a major employer; we have 4,000 employees in tele-

phone; 3,500 in power, a couple of thousand in potash, another 1,200-1,500 in insurance. These are big numbers for a population of one million. Yet the public sector is only around 11 per cent of the economy, because of the huge private and co-op farm sector. Saskatchewan is an agricultural area, with an agricultural industry organized in large groupings. The only grain company operating—the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool—is a farmer-owned co-op which markets, I would think, 70 per cent of the grain. The sales are done by the Canadian Wheat Board, a federal farm corporation.

DL: Sometimes you call yourselves democratic socialists, sometimes social democrats. Which are you?

Blakeney: I don't think we've very good ideologues, and therefore I don't think anybody would draw a lot of distinctions. We just believed in public ownership where it was sensible, and organizing medical care and those things that need to be done. We want to give the people of Saskatchewan greater control over their own destiny. There's no necessary way to do it; you don't have to do it with public ownership. If we owned the farm lands of Saskatchewan, we wouldn't be adding a jot or tittle to people's control of their destiny—so that doesn't make sense. However, we do want to assist young people to get on the farms, so we bought a bunch of farm land and are leasing it out. If they stay on it five years, they can buy it. It's a high level of pragmatism.

DL: Has Saskatchewan been a model for other provinces?

Blakeney: Yes. Hospital insurance started here in '47 and it was across Canada by '58. Medical care insurance came in with tremendous travail in '62. We lost an election on it in '64, not because people voted against medical care, but because the coalition that organized against us created fears of what this was going to do. Nonetheless, once it was in, the people saw that it worked. It took eight years to get across Canada. NDP governments in Manitoba and British Columbia put in compulsory automobile insurance and the conservative governments can't take it out because it's obviously a good idea.

I often wonder why it is not possible in the U.S. to mount some of these things on a state basis. The whole perception there is that it ought to be put in federally.

DL: You were out of power for seven years. What happened to bring you back in?

Blakeney: A number of fortunate circumstances. The Liberals came in with a government that prided itself on being right of center. They talked about a friendly economy—development, jobs, prosperity, a "Saskatchewan open for business." They had three or four good economic years, then all of a sudden there weren't jobs, and businesses weren't operating. So they were very vulnerable. We were a good opposition and we organized well.

In the first term, we went right at it and repaired the damage of the wrecking crews. They had undermined a number of social programs for example, they put in deterrent fees for medical care, and raised the family premium. They did it just for ideological reasons; the government did not need the money, they just believed that "It makes people get well faster if they have to pay." So we eliminated the medical premiums.

“If we don't remain in power for another ten years, it will be because we've done it badly.”

Then we had a great stroke of luck—resources began to be worth some money. The OPEC price rise started in about September '73 and by December '73 we had legislation passed to recapture the windfall profits which we saw were going to accrue. It was a frontal assault on the profits of the oil companies, and we had a long battle with them. They didn't drill wells, so we formed Saskatchewan Oil Company, our own oil company—"They don't drill, we will!"

In '75, we announced that we were going to try to own 50 per cent of the potash industry. We went to work to buy mines, and we were prepared to expropriate if we weren't able to buy. Now, we've bought about 40 per cent of the industry using money from the oil royalties and surcharges.

DL: What are the limitations of provincial NDP governments? What could you do if you were the governing party of Canada?

Blakeney: You could do a great deal more economic planning. Provincials can't do monetary planning or fiscal planning on a mass scale because our budgets are not big enough to influence things, or

anything that might be done internationally by way of tariff regulation or exchange controls. We could run an interest policy independent from that of the U.S.

DL: As a socialist government in the mainstream, what are your priorities and prospects for the next decade?

Blakeney: The priority for Saskatchewan continues to be to diversify the economic base. This will involve further publicly-owned industrial ventures. There need to be further refinements in welfare socialism, such as more dental care, getting at the profiteering by drug companies, major moves in day care, and a guaranteed income for working people with children, and other work on income security.

DL: Is there a tension between what people want their government to accomplish and what government leaders think is possible?

Blakeney: In most areas, we're ahead of what the public wants. We're not meeting a demand, we're *creating* a demand. But in other areas, we're always fighting greater demand. The amount required to run the universities, to build the highways people want, and to run the hospitals would seem to be infinite. So there's always been tension on those fronts.

DL: What will keep you in power?

Blakeney: If we don't remain in power for another ten years, it will be because we've done it badly. No group is building up against us. We are perceived as a small "c" conservative government; we are good managers. We've tried very, very hard to cultivate that. We started with a Standard and Poor's A rating, and then it was an AA rating and then last month it was an AA+.

DL: What about the future of the party?

Blakeney: I keep telling my people, "We're a political movement; if you just want to talk about policy, not the nitty gritty of building an organization and getting elected, we might as well be a debating society. However, if you only want to talk about how we're going to get elected, we're nothing but a political machine. If you're serious, you've got to have both to be a political movement for the long haul." ■

Laura Berg is on the National Interim Committee of the New American Movement. Bill Thomas is on the National Executive Committee of DSOC.

ON THE LEFT

By Harry Fleischman

EDDWARD ASNER, KNOWN TO MILLIONS AS LOU GRANT on television, is also a militant trade unionist. In a *Playboy* interview, Asner talks of working on the assembly line in a General Motors open-shop plant, where he was "treated like a piece of crap." Then he worked in a union shop where he was "treated with respect." Right then, he adds, "I knew I'd be a union man to the day I died." Praising the Polish unionists who created Solidarity, Asner enthuses: "What a phenomenal demonstration to the world and particularly to capitalist America that the first freedom to be sought in a totalitarian regime was the freedom to organize labor. What magnificent proof that unions and communism are, to risk an awful pun, Poles apart." Now Asner has joined DSOC and told the nation, on Tom Snyder's *Tomorrow* show, of his pride in joining the ranks of U.S. democratic socialists.

THE WEST COAST REGIONAL RETREAT OF DSOC OVER LABOR Day weekend was a smashing success, with more than 125 participants. It was so crowded that some had to sleep outdoors in the Sonoma countryside. The retreat stressed the importance of coalition building and the role of the left in strengthening family life. Among new DSOCers in attendance—*Mother Jones* editor Deirdre English, *In These Times* publisher Bill Sennett, and economist Martin Carnoy, co-author of the book, *Economic Democracy*. DSOCers also played a prominent role in a conference of the California Project, a tax-exempt research and resource center for the democratic left in California. Among the speakers at its opening session were DSOCers Raoul Teilhet, president of the California Federation of Teachers; San Francisco supervisor Harry Britt; Representative Ron Dellums, economist Richard Parker, and Berkeley Mayor Gus Newport.

CARL MARX IN SWEDEN. The Swedish Metal Workers Union newspaper carries a full-page article on "Carl Marx—an American Socialdemocrat." The Carl Marx they write about is Carl Marx Shier, formerly a vice-chair and now a member of DSOC's national executive committee. The article tells of Carl's work as an international representative for the United Auto Workers and for DSOC, and gives a considerable amount of information about DSOC's work throughout the nation. . . . Youth Section representatives Joe Schwartz and Patrick Lacefield were written up in the paper of the Bonn university system after they toured Germany this summer in conjunction with attending the International Union of Socialist Youth congress in Vienna. . . . DSOCer Martin Dunleavy has been elected to the New Haven, Conn. City Council.

LABOR'S TROUBADOUR, JOE GLAZER, WILL BE AWARDED THIS year's Debs-Thomas Award by the Washington-Maryland local on December 8. Co-chairs of the dinner are Murray Finley, president of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers, and Esther Peterson, former presidential adviser on Consumer Affairs. . . . *Chicago* DSOC held a joint picnic with NAM on August 30. . . . The local held a benefit for Alderman David

Orr on October 1. Orr has led the fights for a rent control commission, public employee collective bargaining, and integrated low income housing. . . . Ben Meskin, who has been active in the Amherst DSOC local, has taken a leave from Hampshire College to become New England DSOC organizer. . . .

DSOC LOCALS FROM *New York State*, northern *New Jersey* and southern *Connecticut* will hold a regional meeting and social get-together open to all members, November 14-15 at Deerpark Lodge in Cuddebackville, N.Y. (in the Catskills—70 miles from New York City.) The gathering of sociable socialists will exchange success stories, discuss how to mobilize grassroots support, build coalitions and create a visible DSOC presence in the region. Those wanting to attend should send a check for \$40 (made out to Deerpark Lodge), which includes Saturday lunch and dinner and Sunday breakfast, to Helene Lambert, 10 Mohegan Road, Larchmont, N.Y. 10538, by October 28.

PAINESVILLE, OHIO WAS THE SCENE OF THE SIXTH ANNUAL DSOC Youth Conference. With more than 125 participants it was the most successful ever, bringing together young activists from every section of the country. Buses, carpools, trains, hitchhiking (no planes because of the PATCO strike) got the young people together. Mostly students and unionists, over 40 percent of the attendees had never attended any national DSOC gathering, and of those over half were nonmembers. Almost all joined by the end. . . . Angie Fa was elected national chair of the DSOC Youth Section, Guy Molyneux organization secretary, Miriam Bensman corresponding secretary, and Jeremy Karpatkin secretary-treasurer. Executive committee members elected were: Gerald Hudson, Bill Engeler, Dan Lashof, Mike Phillips, Shelley Pendleton, Mary Babic, Penny Von Eschen and Deirdre O'Shea.

DSOC'S FEMINIST COMMISSION has just issued its first newsletter, "Not Far Enough." Headed by Kathleen M. Bartle, the commission is planning the production of feminist literature. . . . The Los Angeles chapters of NAM and DSOC are working on a socialist feminist conference for next spring, while New York DSOC chapters are working on an East Coast conference this fall. . . . The Commission has developed a new button, inserting the feminist symbol *within* the fist and rose. Bulk orders 50 cents each, plus postage. Write Kathleen Bartle, 3400 Centinella Ave., Los Angeles, Calif. 90066.

DSOCER ERNEST CALLOWAY'S BOOK *Architects of an Unfinished American Dream* has just been published. It's a series of short biographies of 15 Americans who made "Invaluable Contributions to the American Dream." Ranging from Roger Williams and Frances Wright to Sam Adams, Eugene V. Debs and Martin Luther King, Calloway's essays stress those who fought for a better America. Nine of the 15 either were threatened with jail for their views or saw the inside of prisons. Copies are available at \$4.45 from Marcus Albrecht, 4161 Cleveland St., St. Louis, Mo. 63110.

JIMMY HIGGINS REPORTS



THE PATCO STRIKE DRAGS ON. Despite airline and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) attempts to paint a rosy picture, the absence of the controllers from their towers is having a decided effect. Massive delays have hit the Northeast corridor, and passengers on the hourly shuttle between New York and Washington have taken to reassuring one another with statements like, "This flight's not bad; it will only be an hour late in taking off." The September 24 *New York Times* quotes an FAA official: "We'd rather have delays than incidents." At the end of September, the FAA announced further cutbacks in scheduling to make the airways safer this winter. All of this may be a bonanza for the airline industry, which has been feeling the recent pinch of competition. For air travellers, there is at least inconvenience and possibly great danger. Reagan invokes a high cause for this immediate inconvenience and potential catastrophe. He is fighting to take U.S. labor relations back to 1890 when unions were ruled constraint against trade. There's still a chance to fight him. Write the White House and your Congressional and U.S. Senate representatives to protest the government's union-busting. Send us copies of your letters; we'll forward them to PATCO.

REMEMBER THE "NEW AMERICAN REVOLUTION"? That was Richard Nixon's catch phrase ten years ago when he announced his schemes to dismantle social programs and turn power back to the states. Ronald Reagan makes Tricky Dick look like a closet liberal, but this time supposed liberals are buying the used car. All around us we hear that things have changed. Power really has to revert to the states. But without some very ambitious federal programs, including some that cut back on reactionary economic competition between states (your business will pay lower taxes in New York, but have fewer labor problems in North Carolina, but less environmental regulation in Michigan), the power to the states program is every bit as reactionary now as it was in those pre-Watergate Nixon days. There are important fights to be fought at the state level, and the left must pay attention to who sits in Boston, Austin, and Boise as well as in Washington. However, when it comes to solutions to unemployment, inadequate health care, lack of housing, the left's basic constituencies will and must continue to look to Washington. And we'll

look there for the same reasons Willie Sutton robbed banks: that's where the money is.

WORRIED ABOUT WALL STREET and the lack of confidence the investor class has shown in the economy? Relax. Syndicated pundit Bill Buckley assures us that the big bucks boys aren't backing out on Reagan. There was, Buckley says, "A crystallizing lack of faith" shown by the capitalists during August. Lack of faith in Reagan? "No. In the democratic system," quoth the sage of the *National Review*. Later in that same September 29 column, Buckley claims that the timid investor is paying attention not to "minor misforecasts in the White House. He is listening to Lane Kirkland, the Black Caucus and CBS and the clergymen and the humanitarian lobby. After all, they controlled the government over the past fifteen years." Let's see, 1981 minus fifteen gives us 1966. Since then, we've had the fragmenting of the liberal Johnson coalition; eight years of Nixon-Ford, and four years of Jimmy Carter (who was so attuned to the Black Caucus and the labor movement that in 1980 the Republicans scored their highest vote among blacks and blue-collar workers in two decades). It's too easy to criticize Buckley on mis-statement of fact. In this case, though, his premises are even more shocking than his disregard for truth. Capitalism and democracy are incompatible. Therefore down with democracy.

THE LAST REFUGE OF SCOUNDRELS—more on the courage of our Democratic representatives in the U.S. Congress. They're standing strong for the national interest against that well-known foe, Canada. Canada? Our northern neighbor plans to reduce foreign (mostly U.S.) ownership of its energy assets. Foreign ownership of Canada's energy resources now stands at 70 percent: the Ottawa government would like to get that figure down to 50 percent foreign ownership. The Mines Subcommittee of the House (under leadership of the Dems, natch) approved a nine-month freeze on the foreign purchase of any U.S. company that has mineral leases on federal lands. The freeze would have affected the Canadian-based Seagram Company's bid to buy Conoco. Protection of our natural resources against foreign ownership would be a fine thing if we were extending protection of the people's right to own and control those resources. As it is, we leave the valuables under the trusteeship of multinational concerns with head offices here and loyalties only to their own profit statements.

DEMOCRATIC
LEFT

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