

# DEMOCRATIC LEFT

EDITED BY  
MICHAEL HARRINGTON

## Toward a New Beginning

March 1982 Vol. X, No. 3 \$1

By Michael Harrington



**D**ETROIT SYMBOLIZES WHAT'S wrong with the rightwing Reagan economic program: 20 percent unemployment; elimination of job training programs; cuts in education spending; reduction in such vital city services as road repair and police protection; cutbacks in



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Change the USA,  
Join the DSA  
(see center fold)

food stamps and health care at a time when people are most in need.

Detroit in 1982 is a monument to an economic system that puts corporate profits before the needs of people.

Detroit is a symbol. Its visibility is one reason it was chosen as the site of the founding convention of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA). At the March 20-21 unity convention, DSA will be born out of a merger of the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee and the New American Movement. We are joining forces to present a democratic socialist alternative—one that is positive, progressive, and possible.

## Are We Better Off?

During his campaign, Ronald Reagan asked the American people if we were better off in 1980 than in 1976. We ask now: Are we better off today than we were a year ago? Clearly, we are not.

The failures of the new right are not new. They are the same failures as those of Coolidge and Hoover, but Reagan and his advisers continue to cling to their erroneous ideas of "the way the world works," even when history has repeatedly proved those ideas wrong.

These failures can't be measured

simply by unemployment figures or crime statistics. Those are only representations of the real human cost—the ruined lives, lost opportunities, broken spirits, and broken homes.

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*“We can show the American people that there's a humane political alternative.”*

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In a time when the American people are hoping for direction and an alternative, we are in Detroit to show that these problems can be solved. They can be solved when people from all walks of life work together—feminists, minorities, trade unionists, community activists, parents, and all Americans who truly care about each other and our future.

Through a democratic socialist coalition we can show the American people that there is a humane political alternative. DSOC and NAM grew from the dreams of dedicated women and men outraged by the inequities of this system. Now we are joining those dreams. We come from different traditions. We have different strengths, different weaknesses. But what we have in common—a commitment to justice, equality and change—more than balances those differences.

It has not been easy for us to reach this point. Through almost three years of negotiations we have come to know each other—to debate, argue, respect, and appreciate these differences. Our preconceptions of each group have been challenged. We go into unification with no illusions. We know that we are a small band of activists. We know that we will not change the world tomorrow, or even by the end of the decade.

But we know that we will be stronger now than we were before, that by uniting our dreams, we can help change the nightmare around us. ■

# LETTERS

To our readers:

With this issue, DEMOCRATIC LEFT becomes the publication of the organization formed by the unification of the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee and the New American Movement. Readers who were once NAM members, and subscribed to the NAM publication, *Moving On*, may be seeing DEMOCRATIC LEFT for the first time. DEMOCRATIC LEFT readers will notice new names among our contributors, and a wider range of topics. We believe that this addition of creative and thoughtful

writers will strengthen DEMOCRATIC LEFT's ability to speak to the broad democratic left. We look forward to a continuing and expanded dialogue with our readers, both through the "Letters" column, contributions to the "On the Left" and "Jimmy Higgins" columns, and through articles.

—The Editors

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

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# DEMOCRATIC LEFT

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# Choosing Our Partners

By Steve Max

**T**HERE IS STILL A GOOD LAUGH to be gotten from the *New York Times* if you know what to look for. Recently, I came across this item. "Yesterday the conservatives' frustrations and feelings of betrayal boiled over into heated exchanges at a White House meeting between Mr. Reagan and representatives of rightist-leaning groups." Although I enjoy the far right's discomfort, I wish we had their problems. If one is to complain about a president, then a chair in the Oval Office is certainly the preferred place from which to do it. The fact is that over the last decade the far right has pulled ahead of us in the field where we on the left once had the lead—that of political strategy. They learned to narrow and focus their efforts on a small number of issues. They learned to use those issues to build grass-roots organizations and then to bring the organizations together in electoral coalitions.

As the right grows more proficient in strategy, the left flounders. Of course, the right has one big advantage. Its social base is more narrow and homogeneous. It can build unity around a common program more easily. We, on the other hand, are pulled in an ever increasing number of directions.

When in recent history has it been more frustrating to be a socialist? At no time in the last forty years has it been so clear that capitalism is floundering. Never mind that it is an evil and pernicious system: it simply doesn't work. Even in the heyday of the mass movements of the 1960s, the new left believed not only that it did work, but that it might work forever. That is why there was so much emphasis on the moral quality of life, on dropping out and on the counter culture.

Today, capitalism has become the number one nonperformer. It doesn't create jobs; 15 million is the true unemployment figure. It claims, though not with total candor, to be having such problems

with capital formation that massive government handouts are required. If capitalism can create neither products, jobs, nor capital, then what good is it and why do we continue to have it? Although this becomes more obvious every day, we are further than ever from a popular rejection of capitalism.



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*“Our strategic problem is the organizational and ideological collapse of the political center of the country. . . .”*

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Objective conditions, of course, are to blame. We tell each other that every week. While waiting for objective conditions to improve, we devote ourselves to various activities, and indeed there are more local issues requiring our attention than we can hope to deal with. Academic endeavors and our participation in unions and organizations of citizens, consumers, students, tenants, women, or minorities lay claim to the better part of our energy. These activities are so diverse that it is hard to piece them together into a program, much less a strategy. Nowhere is this more evident than in our work in the electoral arena. Sometimes we defend progressive incumbents such as New York

City Council member Ruth Messinger. More often, we are simply trying to elect Democrats just to strike a blow at the right. Occasionally they are outstanding Democrats, but many look good only by comparison and some are clearly the lesser evil. This approach makes sense, but it is not a strategy. It is not a plan to move the situation from A to B. It is, nonetheless, the start of a strategy. In the near future we will have to do much of what we have been doing, but with some important modifications. We will not find new and amazing solutions that have been carelessly overlooked.

## *Center Has Not Held*

Our strategic problem is the organizational and ideological collapse of the political center of the country, which, because it was housed in the Democratic party, has brought the party down with it. Both the Democrats and the moderate Republicans long ago ran out of answers to the problems of stagnation, inflation, unemployment, and the fiscal crisis of local government. It's no wonder that they did. Conventional economic theory taught them that the combination of inflation and stagnation was impossible and that the present economic conditions could never occur. With nothing to offer, the center was swept aside by the rightist advocates of supply-side economics, which, although crackpot, sounded new and even progressive to many people.

As 1982 brings the downfall of supply-side theory, we can expect that the Reagan bloc will start to crack. Many voters will be drawn even further to the right, crying that Reagan sold out the true program. Other voters, drawn away from the center, will start to drift back to it, and this process will continue in 1984. It is likely that government in many cities and states, and perhaps even the federal government, will return to the hands of the center—not because the center knows any better how to save the economy, but simply because the right will have failed. In this there is both a



danger and an opportunity. The danger is that the center is setting itself up for even greater losses later on when its total inability to deal with the situation once again becomes apparent. In those places where the right is dislodged from office, it is free to go on the attack, while the center gets stuck with a nonfunctional economy and all of the social problems that creates. Incumbency will be under attack everywhere and if the center returns to the White House in 1984, the next round of right wing resurgence will make Reagan look like a liberal.

The opportunities created by the failure of the right's economic program lie in the chance to change the terms of the debate and to use the electoral arena to strengthen the progressive organizational base. For the new Democratic Socialists of America, this means being more particular about the criteria for working in local election campaigns. The campaigns that are more important than others are those with some form of anti-corporate focus and the potential for coalition building.

### Choosing a Campaign

One thing for which we must, with some embarrassment, thank the right wing, is that it has reintroduced the concepts of ideology and economics into American politics. It is now generally recognized that something is wrong with the economy and the question asked everywhere is: What's wrong, and whose fault is it? The right supplies its well-known answers, but it can't make the economy work. The missing element in the liberal Democrats' response is an understanding of the role of corporate power in the economy. A massive misinformation campaign paints corporate America as aged, tired, and broke, yet saintly, unapproachable, and always just on the verge of providing a job for everyone if we will only accede to its one more dying wish. The reality is, there has been a massive redistribution of wealth to the large corporations, who have refused to use that money to make productive investments in America.

In electoral campaigns, the debate does not, of course, start with theory. It starts with day-to-day issues that bring into question the role of corporate power. We should give special attention to candidates who will raise issues of utility rates, corporate tax abatements, rent control, plant closings, preservation of Occu-

pational Safety and Health Administration requirements or the right of states to tax national corporate profits. Other issues around which grass-roots organizations are already mobilizing include opposition to toxic waste dumping, deregulation of energy prices, free enterprise zones, and the repeal of antidiscrimination laws.

Congressional candidates can join incumbent members of the House in asking exactly what the corporations have done with their tax cuts and how much modernization and job creation have been accomplished? Decisions about in-

*“A major consideration for DSA participation in a campaign, even above a high-minded program, ought to be the potential for coalition building.”*

vestment and the allocation of capital have become much too important to be left in private hands. America should at last join the rest of the industrial world in opening these matters to public debate and participation.

As the protest against cuts in public services and government programs continues, the question inevitably arises: Who will pay? We should look for those candidates who will point to the oil industry, the banking and finance industry, real estate and utilities and say, "That's where the cash is; that's who should pay." There is already some grass-roots movement in that direction. In New Hampshire, for instance, a citizens organization is trying to force the telephone company to give to the state two million dollars that were collected in phantom taxes. The money would help to offset budget cuts.

Election campaigns are a logical focal point for coalition building because one candidate can take a stand on many issues and appeal to many groups. Electoral coalitions are therefore somewhat more easily organized than coalitions in which diverse organizations must agree on a common program. Across the country it is now clear that there is a new openness to coming together on the part of labor

and citizen organizations of many kinds. The barriers built up during the 1960s are at last coming down, and not a moment too soon. The biggest single obstacle to progressive politics is the fragmentation of social forces that should be allies. Although the current is moving toward the birth of coalitions and alliances, a great deal of midwifery is still needed on the local level. A major consideration for DSA participation in a campaign, even above high minded program, ought to be the potential for coalition building.

In some states formal electoral coalitions are now being formed. In other areas it will be sufficient if organizations build up working relations during a campaign that they can use later on, as occurred during the mayoral elections in New York City when progressive groups backed Frank Barbaro against the Democratic/Republican candidate. This suggestion that DSA members focus their efforts on election campaigns that help to develop coalitions on anticorporate issues may not qualify as a full blown strategy, but it gives greater meaning to current action addressing economic trends that are starting to move very large numbers of people. The point is not that economic issues are the most important in some abstract or theoretical sense, nor that anticorporate politics is just one step away from class consciousness. It is simply that the recession and the Reagan administration have put economics at the top of the national agenda. In one way or another, hundreds of thousands of people now discuss these issues who never discussed them before.

Many in DSA will object to not seeing the issue that most concerns them mentioned here, such as peace, or reproductive rights, or civil rights. Are these not just as important criteria for backing a candidate? Of course they are important, as are other issues. In this period, many things must be done at once, and this is not a proposal that people stop doing what they consider useful in order to do something else. There is, however, a difference between a program—everything we are for—and a strategy—how to get from A to B. The former is not necessarily the answer to the latter problem. In practice, candidates who have an anticorporate issue focus and a coalition perspective also tend to take at least acceptable positions on other issues. Where they don't, we can forget them.

Continued on page 7



# DSOC/NAM → Democratic Socialists of America

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By Sandra Chelnov

**A**T LAST! ON MARCH 20-21, 1982 DSOC and NAM delegates from all over the country will come to Detroit to ratify the merger of their organizations and give birth to the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA). It will be a historic event that testifies to the determination of these two democratic socialist organizations to put behind them the long sectarian history of the U.S. left. In and of itself this event is worthy of celebration—and celebrate we shall. Yet there is more to this merger than its ratification. Now comes the hard work of making unification meaningful throughout our new organization. Our success or failure will be judged on how we build strong local organizations with grass-roots support and on how we create the basis for a new, much larger democratic socialist organization with national influence not only on the left but in the major political arenas and constituencies.

We are setting out to build something much greater than the sum of two parts.

## Merging at the Base

What problems do local organizations face in implementing such an ambitious project? The merger of NAM and DSOC brings together two national organizations representing different radical traditions and different generations. Although DSOC and NAM were both founded in the early seventies, the leaders and members of the groups were politicized under different circumstances. DSOC, heir to the radical socialist tradition of Eugene Debs, has emphasized work within the left wing of the Democratic party, within the labor move-

ment, on campuses, and within the religious community; NAM, a product of the new left, has emphasized work within the women's movement, community organizing, and organizing around specific issues such as energy. Perhaps most significantly for our discussion here, DSOC has placed more emphasis on strong national coalition work and national outreach conferences than has NAM, which focused first on building strong local chapters with influence in their cities.

Because of our different priorities, local activists in one group have sometimes expressed doubts about the other organization's commitment to a combined agenda. Another basis for misunderstanding has been our tendency to often use, as a result of our different traditions and generations, different language to say the same thing.

Rather than being stumbling blocks, these differences allow us to complement each other to establish the foundations of an organization that can attract an even

(women, labor, blacks, Latinos) branches and perhaps project-oriented branches (health care). The merged local is also planning to hire staff and to produce a local newsletter. Significantly, despite very different approaches to structure in the past, differences of opinion over these questions have not broken down along organizational lines. The local negotiations by and large are being viewed with excitement as providing an opportunity to experiment with new structures, since it turns out that neither organization was satisfied with its original structure.

Throughout the long merger process (almost three years), many NAM and DSOC locals began to work together. Joint work on electoral campaigns, forums, conferences, or the building of local coalitions proved to be the most effective cure for misconceptions that one organization may have had about the other. In particular, activists in both organizations have come to grasp how in so many cases the different strengths can be com-

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““ These differences allow us to complement each other, to establish the foundations of an organization that can attract an even more numerous and diverse membership. ””

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more numerous and diverse membership. This is what merger at the local level is all about. First there are the negotiations over a local structure that will allow for flexibility and growth. A case in point is Chicago, where NAM and DSOC activists are trying to devise a structure of sub-branches for a local with a sizable combined membership (now close to 300) and a high percentage of activists. Negotiations continue. There is talk of geographical branches, constituency

plementary in practice. For instance, NAM activists often have good contacts in local community organizations, while DSOC usually has them in the labor movement and in the Democratic party. Coming together creates new political opportunities, for these are some of the constituencies we seek to bring together behind a progressive platform.

In some cases, such as in Berkeley/Oakland, California, a year ago, and Madison, Wisconsin two years ago, joint



work led naturally to the formation of Democratic Socialist Alliances, united locals in which all activity was carried out together. These two "premature" DSAs were important because they took a leap in faith that the national merger would happen eventually and provided the two separate organizations with successful examples that encouraged joint work elsewhere. These early local mergers demonstrated that merger would work. Membership and activism increased. These DSAs emerged as an important left presence in their communities.

However, members of the East Bay and Madison DSAs are also the first to point out that joining forces is just the beginning. Growth brings with it new opportunities and new difficulties . . . among them the ever increasing need to serve, educate, and involve a growing membership in further outreach to the constituencies with which we work. Each new success and level of growth brings new crises and most of these crises must be resolved by local activists usually without the aid of any paid staff. It is at these crisis points that a strong national organization and leadership are necessary to provide new insights and facilitate communication among locals.

A condition that many merging locals will face is that of geographical distribution of the membership: DSOC has a higher percentage of members on the East Coast, NAM on the West Coast and Midwest. Although from a national perspective this distribution is complementary and provides the new organization with a more equal presence across the country, the local variations in memberships present a challenge.

In many cases, DSOC locals have a significantly larger membership than the NAM local group or vice versa. This situation may leave the larger group perplexed as to how to "merge with" a much smaller group wondering how to avoid being engulfed by the larger. In some instances, DSOC has a larger membership, but a smaller number of members active in the local. In San Francisco, for example, DSOC has over a hundred members and, although many of these members are active and/or have contacts in the labor movement and the Democratic party (in particular through the gay Democratic Clubs), few of them are able to be also active in the local itself. In still other locations, merger at the local level is even more problematic: there may

## HANGING TOGETHER

Unity—a seductive word for everyone, particularly for those on the left. All too many times, however, the promises of unity and a bright future have been belied by the grim realities of post-union history. But some unions have succeeded, bringing in their wake great triumphs for the groups that united. Two of the most positive cases in this century were the union of the American left in 1901 that created the Socialist Party of America, and the union of the French left in 1969 that created the *Parti Socialiste*.

On July 29, 1901, 125 delegates, representing 6,500 socialists, met in Indianapolis. Most of them were from Morris Hillquit's so-called "Kangaroo" faction of the Socialist Labor party, which had left the party because of its rigid adherence to positions taken by party leader Daniel De Leon. Some were independent socialists, but the majority of the other delegates represented the Social Democratic party, whose best known leaders were former Populist Eugene Debs and Milwaukee socialist Victor Berger.

Within a decade of this convention, the unified group, the Socialist Party of America, had attracted 100,000 members. In 1912, Debs received a higher percentage of the presidential vote than did the British Labor party in the elections of 1910. Despite the crises of the World War I era, which split and destroyed the old Socialist party, that party remains the most successful expression of American socialism to date.

In 1969, delegates representing various factions of the French left came together to create the *Parti Socialiste*. The old French Socialist party, the SFIO, had remained the largest left party even after the break-off of the French Communists, but in the years after World War II the SFIO's share of the vote steadily declined from about one-quarter to an eighth. The Communists were the dominant force in the post-war French left. During the 1960s, the SFIO's decline continued apace, culminating in a disastrous 5 percent showing in the presidential election of 1969.

The 1969 unity brought together the SFIO, François Mitterrand's CIR (Convention of Republican Institutions), elements of the old French Radical party, and most of the independent socialist "clubs" that had sprung up during the decade. A few years later, Michel Rocard brought his faction of the PSU (the Unified Socialist party) into the new PS. Within a dozen years of its founding, the PS elected the first left president of the French Fifth Republic, as well as an absolute parliamentary majority.

What distinguished these successful mergers from the many unsuccessful ones that litter left history? The most important factor was an agreement on a strategy. The American Socialists of 1901 agreed on the concept of an independent, electorally oriented party which would combine a program of immediate demands with a long-run socialist goal, and would work with the existing labor movement. It was the collapse of this strategic agreement in later years that led to a collapse of the party. The French Socialists of 1969 agreed on the Mitterrand strategy of a broad electoral coalition with the French Communists, but a coalition in which the Socialists would keep their identity distinct from that of the Communists. It was the continued prosecution of this strategy for a dozen years that finally led Mitterrand to the president's chair.

The DSOC and NAM delegates meeting in Detroit represent as many socialists as were represented in the Indianapolis meeting in 1901. They represent people who have come from all the main intellectual and organizational currents in the American left of this century: Socialists, Communists, Trotskyists, new leftists, liberals, labor, the women's movement, and the civil rights movement.

The future lies before us, and only time and what we do will determine whether Detroit in 1982 will have the historical resonance of Indianapolis in 1901.

—Jim Chapin

not be a local chapter from the other organization to merge with! In New York City and Washington D.C., DSOC's largest locals, NAM has little or no organized presence. In these cases it will

be more important than ever for the new national organization to provide leadership for making the most of the opportunities for outreach.

Providing this leadership for locals



won't be easy. The national organizations will be trying to provide assistance to the merging locals while the national offices themselves undergo the unavoidable confusions of transition.

The National Youth Section of DSOC plans to publish an organizing manual that should be applicable to many locals. Regional offices are on the agenda, along with the National Office in New York.

The DSOC and NAM Feminist Commissions, while still undergoing their own merger discussions, have in general agreed to put out two publications: one for outreach will be along the lines of NAM's *Women Organizing*, and the other, more for DSA members and Commission supporters, will be similar to DSOC's current Feminist Commission Newsletter, *Not Far Enough*. There are also plans in the works for a national "Recruit-a-Feminist" campaign. The DSOC Hispanic Commission and the NAM Anti-racism Commission are discussing appropriate structure, along with national leadership, and how to take advantage of the merger to significantly increase the involvement of minorities in the new organization. The merger will be a time of major local outreach events

coordinated with the National Office in New York and the scheduled tours of national DSA notables.

### Southern Strategy

In the South, where locals are small but growing, the major merger celebration will take place on May 29-30 in Nashville, Tennessee, at the second annual jointly sponsored southern regional conference. Issues such as labor organizing and progressive electoral strategies in the South will be major topics of discussion. After turning people away last year when more than 100 turned up, organizers expect at least 200 this year. The South's example is not lost on the rest of the country, where plans are well under way in a number of locals to celebrate the merger by a new commitment to creating an active socialist presence in local communities. In Chicago, activists plan to announce the local merger with a public fundraising bash, a special Debs-Thomas Dinner, honoring longtime activist Carl Shier, with some 500 expected guests and Machinist President William Winpisinger as the keynote speaker. The dinner will follow a more down-to-earth conference strategy in the afternoon.

Boston has similar plans for a merg-

er celebration in late spring: an afternoon conference and a "gala extravaganza" in the evening to include speeches and a fundraising auction. All this is to be coordinated with an outreach and membership drive by a systematic phone and mail campaign using local contact lists as well as subscription lists of progressive publications such as *In These Times* and *The Progressive*.

To establish a socialist organization that is *national* means establishing a force both in politics affecting the whole nation and also in local politics in all parts of the nation. If the DSOC/NAM merger takes us a giant step closer to these goals, socialists may eventually be able to go beyond current efforts to develop "progressive" politics and coalitions to the creation and leadership of an openly socialist mass movement in the United States for the first time in decades.

Taking some liberties with NAM's motto from Antonio Gramsci, that goal is worth not only a little skepticism of the mind, but a lot of optimism of the will. ■

*Sandra Chelnov is active in the East Bay DSA and editor of Not Far Enough.*

### ELECTORAL STRATEGY, from page 4

Independent campaigns have come under serious reconsideration in recent years and are being discussed by many people who have always thought the Democratic party to be the only arena in which to work. I don't think that the issue is an ideological one, and I disagree with friends in the Citizens party that it is even a strategic one. It is too early in the process of the decay of the political center to have a plan for the realignment of political forces. That realignment could take place within or outside of the Democratic party. Probably it will be both. We don't yet know. Independent campaigns are, therefore, a local tactical question.

If there is no Democrat worth supporting one year, and if for some reason a primary is not possible or the election is nonpartisan, then independence is an open question. The first points to consider are the importance of the office and who will be offended by an independent campaign. If the race will determine which party controls the legislature or the city council, stay away. If the Repub-



“Embers of discontent thought dead since the 1930s are showing sparks of life.”

lican wins, the independent will be blamed no matter what the true situation is. If important allies back the Democrat, again stay away. Stay away if the campaign will attract only a grab bag of marginal groups with incomprehensible

issues. The real criterion is an estimate of the potential vote. For a third-party candidate, 15 percent of the vote is the least to try for and even that is so low that it raises grave doubts. Twenty-five percent would be worthwhile for a campaign intended to educate and raise issues. In a primary, 30 percent to 40 percent makes sense for a long-shot insurgent.

New social forces are now in motion. Embers of discontent thought dead since the 1930s are showing sparks of life. People who always considered themselves to be the contented middle class appear by the thousands at demonstrations and protest meetings. Reagan is picketed in the heartland of his support. If, as it now appears, the main battles of the 1980s will be fought in the electoral arena, then the biggest contribution the merged organization can make is the development of its electoral strategy. ■

*DSA member Steve Max is co-chair of West Side Citizen Action in New York City and on the staff of the Midwest Academy.*



# New Allies for Feminism

By Christine R. Riddiough

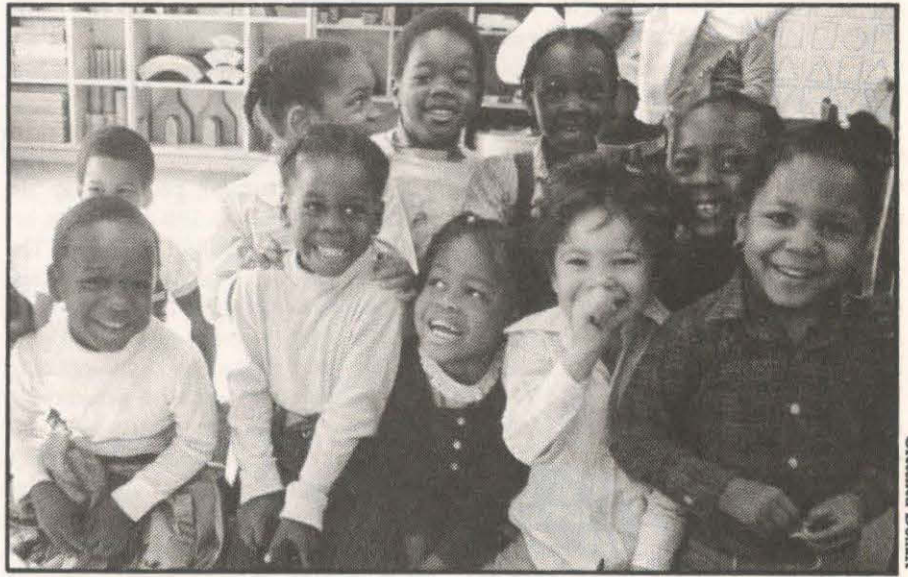
**A**S WE READ, AD NAUSEUM, about the Reagan administration, the National Right-to-Life Committee, the Moral Majority, the threatened "Human Life Amendment" to the U.S. Constitution, the Family Protection Act, the possible end of affirmative action, we might despair for the feminist movement. Pushing through the eighties, socialist-feminists must be realistic about the forces against us, but ready to build on the substantial gains made in the seventies. For, despite the publicity given to anti-feminist forces, the truth is that the women's movement has had an impact on every aspect of our lives—from our jobs to our relationships with friends and lovers, to elections and political movements.

Some of the most visible changes are quantifiable. Today, many more women, both married and single, are part of the paid labor force than just a decade ago. This change is, of course, due in part to economic necessity, but it is also related to the rise of feminism. Although women are still not paid the same wages as men, equal pay for equal work has the support of a broad spectrum of people. More than that, equal pay for work of comparable value has become a major focus for many women's and labor organizations. Women are more of a significant force in the labor movement.

Not only in the workplace have women's lives changed. The status of reproductive rights in the U.S. has altered dramatically since the sixties. In 1973 the U.S. Supreme Court, in effect, legalized abortion, virtually eliminating the back-room coat hanger abortions that had cost so many women their lives.

Despite efforts of the so-called "right-to-life" movement, three-fourths of the American people oppose a constitutional amendment to ban abortions and almost 60 percent believe that any woman who wants an abortion should be able to have one.

Feminists have forced society to take a new look at sexuality and sexual rela-



Gretchen Donart

*“ This changing view of women as workers has meant that issues once not of concern to labor, such as child care, are becoming more important. ”*

tionships. Although at times a matter of controversy, feminist support for gay and lesbian rights is now a given. Gay and lesbian rights are seen as another aspect of the general issue that feminists address—that of sex and gender equality. There have been major changes in the status of gay people over the last 20 years. In 1961 Illinois was the first state to repeal its sodomy laws, which were primarily enforced against gay people. Since then, almost half the states have followed Illinois in such repeal. About 40 communities have passed laws protecting the rights of gay people in jobs, housing, and public accommodations. Recently, gay men and lesbians have entered the electoral arena through groups such as the Gay Democratic Clubs. In 1980 there were 76 openly gay delegates at the Democratic National Convention and that convention passed a plank supporting gay rights.

Other feminist concerns have been brought to the electoral arena. More women are entering and winning political races and politicians are being forced to deal with women's new role.

As voters, women are taking a close look at the stance politicians take on feminist issues. The Democratic party has become a major arena for feminist activists. In 1980 hundreds of delegates to the Democratic National Convention were feminists from the National Organization for Women (NOW), the National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL) and the National Women's Political Caucus. This led to the convention's adopting profeminist planks on a variety of issues. In the 1980 elections, women voted very differently from men. Exit polls suggested that both fear about war and concern about women's rights lost Reagan support among women. Women were evenly divided between Reagan and Carter, while men supported Reagan by a 54 to 37 percent margin.

## Changing Consciousness

More striking than some of the quantifiable changes has been the qualitative way the women's movement has changed people's consciousness—made us question

Continued on page 13





# DSA

## the New Socialists

### Democratic Socialists of America\*

#### We Are the New Socialists . . .

. . . fighting the cruel, unworkable policies of Ronald Reagan by working to build a new American left that will go far beyond traditional liberalism.

The American economy is in the deepest trouble it has known since the Great Depression. We face a structural crisis of the system in which corporate decision makers in such industries as rail, auto, and steel maximized their private profits and helped wreck the heartland of American capitalism, destroying entire communities as well as individual jobs. Reaganomics is the latest manifestation of this crisis. It is on the way to self-destruction, but traditional Democratic party liberalism is clearly inadequate to oppose it or offer anything new in its place.

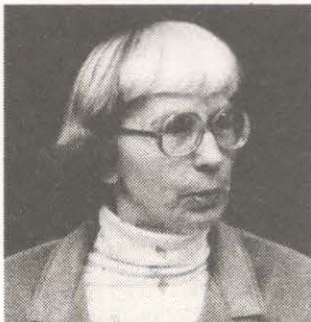
There are signs of the beginning of a response—the Alternative Budget presented by the Congressional Black Caucus last year, and the AFL-CIO proposals in February 1982 to take the rich off welfare, move in the directions we have advocated.

#### We Are the New Socialists . . .

. . . and we believe in freedom and justice, not simply for the U.S., but for the whole world, and above all, for the hundreds of millions of black, brown, red, and yellow people who live in a poverty so absolute that it destroys the potential of human beings.

We are for the genuine national security of our country, which is why we oppose escalating the arms race and threaten-

\*Formerly the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee/New American Movement

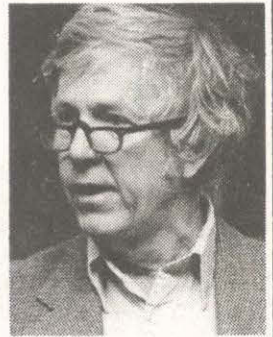


*“The only way we can make progress as socialists is to do it together, not alone.”*

STELLA NOWICKI  
union activist, CIO organizer

*“We have to go beyond the New Deal in order to fight Reagan's Raw Deal.”*

MICHAEL HARRINGTON  
Chair, Democratic Socialists of America



*“Being a member keeps me in touch with struggles all over the country, and at the same time provides me with a network of local activism.”*

BARBARA EHRENREICH  
feminist author, activist



*“DSA is an important part of the movement to guarantee everyone, not just a privileged few, the full benefits of our society.”*

RONALD DELLUMS  
U.S. Representative, California







*“I'm proud to be a member of DSA because it has been on the front lines of working people's struggles. DSA members have earned my respect because they don't just raise issues—they act on them!”*

**LILLIAN ROBERTS**  
New York State Commissioner of Industrial Relations, formerly associate director, District Council 37, AFSCME

*“Here I have found an organization deeply committed to both justice and freedom and willing to engage in the struggle for those ideals in an atmosphere of ideological pluralism.”*

**MICHAEL G. RIVAS**  
theologian, activist



*“We need an organization that can promote unity while welcoming diversity, that can speak out against the crimes of our times and that can work actively for a more democratic and just society. DSA can be that organization.”*

**ROBERTA LYNCH**  
feminist writer, activist  
Past NAM national secretary

*“DSA will be the largest movement of democratic socialists since the thirties.”*

**STANLEY ARONOWITZ**  
author, professor



*“By working to build a national movement for socialism in the U.S., the DSA will help us build an economic and social context for carrying out our progressive program locally.”*

**MIKE ROTKIN**  
Mayor, Santa Cruz, California

ing the planet earth itself. Our best defense is in unilateral initiatives toward multilateral disarmament, both nuclear and conventional. Real defense lies in a truly democratic foreign policy that identifies America with the freedom movements of Salvador, South Africa, and Argentina as well as with the magnificent struggles of the working people of Poland.

## We Are the New Socialists . . .

. . . living in a society fundamentally marred by a racism that has become ingrained in our institutions, social patterns, and consciousness. . . . a racism that perpetuates divisions among us that undermine collective action. . . . As socialists, respecting the goals of blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans, and other minorities, we seek a socialist society that values cultural diversity, that places a high priority on *economic* justice in order to eradicate the sources of inequality and on *social* justice to change the behavior, attitudes, and ideas that foster racism.

## We Are the New Socialists . . .

. . . with a vision of a society that has at its core a feminist conception that insists on full equality for women. Socialism is more than a transformation of economic structures. It encompasses a transformation of social relations. We seek a world without sex roles that channel women into subordinate positions at home and at work. We seek a world that no longer oppresses women through violence, through lack of reproductive choices, through denial of their sexuality and through undervaluation of their work. The socialist society we seek would value sexual relationships based on mutual respect and the enhancement of human dignity, be they gay, lesbian, or heterosexual.



*“Trade unions need a new philosophy, a new strategy and a renewed fighting spirit to resist attacks on working people and their unions. Being a socialist makes you a better trade unionist.”*

**WILLIAM WINPISINGER**  
President, International Association of Machinists



“DSA is principled but undogmatic. I'm proud to be a member of an organization involved in the day-to-day political struggles of this country.”

RUTH MESSINGER  
City Council member,  
New York City



## We Are the New Socialists . . .

. . . leaving behind the suicidal divisions of the American left, building upon the strengths and traditions, not only of the left, but of religious, labor, civil rights, community, and feminist movements. Democratic Socialists of America was born of the merger between the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee and the New American Movement. Each group brings with it a commitment to democracy and socialism, a willingness to put aside political quarrels, to be greater than the sum of its parts.

We are working to build every mass movement where working people, minorities, feminists, and other progressive forces are organizing for their rights. We are committed to working at all levels of the labor movement, the most potent force for progressive change in the U.S. We join with the liberal-labor wing of the Democratic party, that unstable alliance of some of the worst and most of the best people in the land. We see this reaching out as the road toward the creation of a new first party of the American left.

## We Are the New Socialists . . .

. . . struggling to bring democracy to every aspect of American life. We believe that critical investment decisions have to be taken out of the board rooms and made democratically. New industries have to be created by planned, public initiatives—a new rail system under regional ownership, a solar energy industry—and any subsidy to corporations must be made conditional on performing within the framework of that plan. We have to take the rich off of welfare and restore the cuts in social programs, achieving fiscal responsibility by full employment and tax justice,

Our vision is of a society in which people have a voice

“Where else are people willing to move from complaining about Ronald Reagan to really offering America a better alternative?”

HARRY BRITT  
Supervisor, City of San Francisco,  
gay activist



“I am a DSA member because I find its idealism contagious, its atmosphere tolerant, its thought undogmatic, and its future hopeful.”

IRVING HOWE  
author, critic



“I appreciate the way DSA brings together different generations, with respect for different cultures and traditions.”

DOROTHY HEALEY  
radio commentator, activist



“DSA can chart the path toward a more fundamental democratic transformation of American society for the future.”

MANNING MARABLE  
syndicated columnist,  
professor of political economy



“DSA gives us a base from which to reach out to those who haven't yet been able to find a socialist organization with which they feel comfortable.”

RICHARD HEALEY  
Past national secretary, NAM





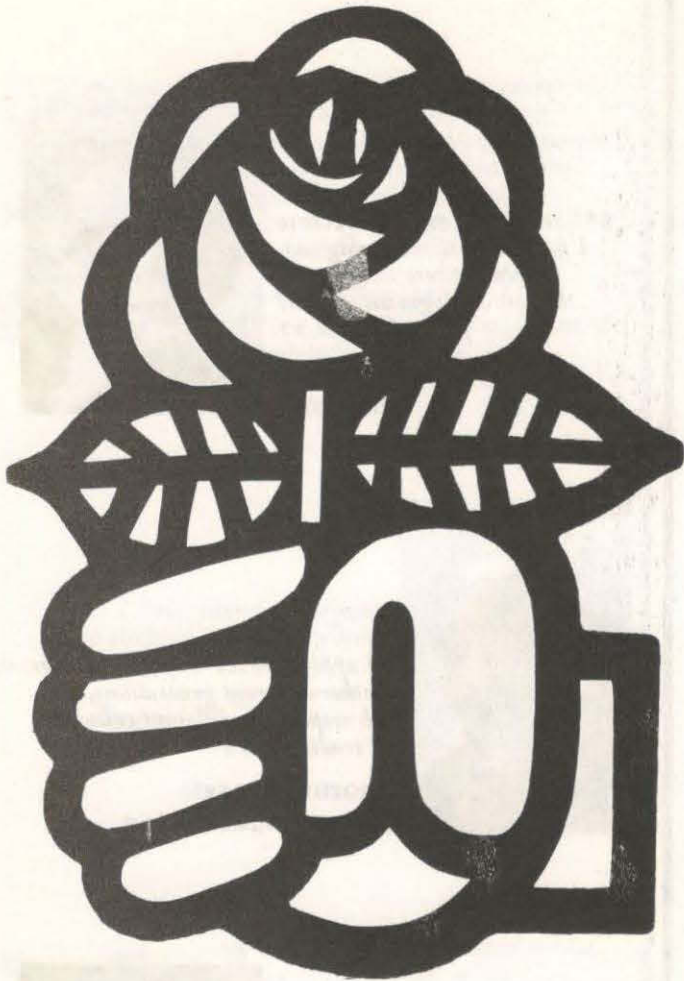


Photo credits: Scott Cagan, Gretchen Donart, Marshall Mayer,  
Wester Dick Photography, Scott Von Osdol

in the programs that affect the entirety of their lives. We live within a system that has done more than impoverish us materially. It impoverishes the human spirit and human interaction. We are committed to a society in which people are free to develop to their fullest potential, assured of individual liberties that safeguard against the dangers of an intrusive state.

We new socialists—opposed to *all* dictatorships, no matter what name they choose to give themselves—thus see democracy, not simply as a critical political value, but as a means of restructuring the American society.

## We Are the New Socialists . . .

. . . because, like democratic socialists all over the world, we have learned that socialism is not simply economic planning but democratic, bottom-up planning—new forms of social ownership.

We are not a religion, even if deeply religious people are a part of our movement. But all of us see a moral dimension in our politics . . . the search for a society and a world that will encourage people to rediscover their own spiritual and cultural values.

## We Are the New Socialists . . .

. . . starting out with a combined membership of 6,500, which makes us the largest democratic socialist organization in this country since the 1930s. But we can be more. We believe that the merger of DSOC and NAM presents a historic opening for the American left. At last there is an organization in which thousands of unaffiliated socialists can find root. Not because we have *the* solution to the problems facing our society. But because this combination of people offers hope that solutions can be found. Because we are ready to start anew.

**JOIN US!**

-----  
 Yes, I want to join the new socialists. Enclosed are my dues (includes subscription to **DEMOCRATIC LEFT**) of:  
 \$50 sustaining       \$30 regular       \$15 limited income       \$500 life

I also want to subscribe to *Socialist Forum*, the DSA Discussion Bulletin:  
 \$10 regular       \$5 limited income

Please send me more information about DSA and democratic socialism.

I want to subscribe to the DSA monthly, **DEMOCRATIC LEFT**. Enclosed find:  
 \$15 sustaining/institutional subscription       \$8 regular (10 issues per year)

I would like to be active in the local in my area. Please send information.

My special interest area is \_\_\_\_\_

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Mail to: Democratic Socialists of America, Suite 801, 853 Broadway, NYC 10003



## FEMINISM, from p. 8

George Meany declared, "I am a feminist." That decade of change and movement by women made Meany's statement possible and even necessary. Today everyone from labor to politicians to the right wing takes seriously the women's movement that brought about these changes. But the process has also changed the women's movement itself.

what we once thought of us as commonsense ideas, made us expand our view of what is political.

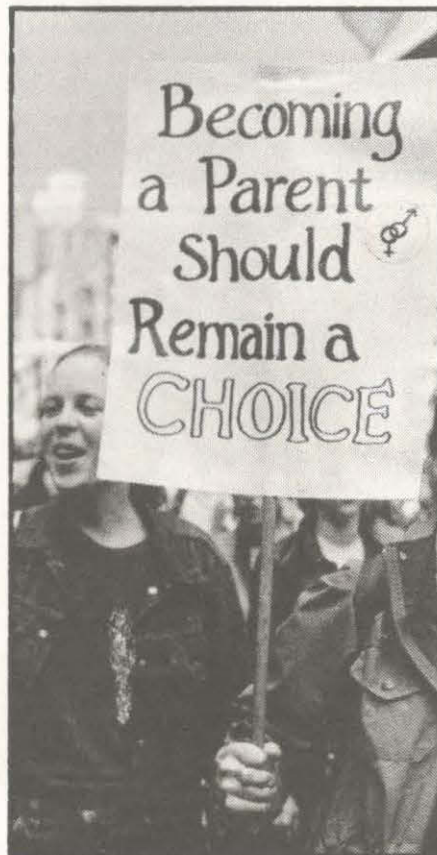
When we think back to the expectations we had of women in the fifties—as portrayed in the women's magazines, on "Father Knows Best" or in the advice of high school guidance counselors, clergy, parents, and friends, we can begin to grasp the extent of the change. Then we expected women to be wives and mothers, or, if that failed, to be old maid schoolteachers.

We no longer expect women to go to school only to find a suitable husband or that mothers will not work. Growing numbers of women identify themselves primarily as workers outside the home. Issues of wages, job conditions and so on are now of more direct concern to women and thus women are and will be a more significant part of the labor movement than in the past. This changing view of women as workers has also meant that issues once not of concern to labor, such as child care, are becoming more important.

Although women remain primarily responsible for maintaining the home, increasingly, men are expected to take some part in child care and homemaking tasks. The husband is no longer the clear patriarchal head of the household.

Some of the most significant changes have come in regards to homosexuality and lesbianism. Only a few years ago the isolation and invisibility of gay people were taken for granted. Today, gay issues receive regular coverage in the newspapers and on television. More people are willing to at least tolerate the existence of gay people and there is an openness to the idea that gay men and lesbians deserve at least basic human rights. What was once thought of as unnatural and unmentionable, "the love that dared not speak its name," is now a topic of conversation and debate.

In assessing these kinds of changes we have to understand clearly their immense nature. It is not merely that there are different images of women on television, that women's magazines now discuss issues such as jobs and child care, that women are entering a variety of workplaces and political forums: but that all of this represents a drastic change from commonly held ideas of just a few years ago. In 1968 feminists were derided as bra-burners; some ten years later



Gretchen Donart

### Changing the Changemakers

NOW was formed in 1967. At about the same time hundreds of consciousness raising (cr) groups were also forming. For the first part of its life, the women's movement was primarily organized on a local level—small groups that met and talked, that initiated projects on abortion, child care, rape. From these groups grew the concept that "the personal is political"—issues of day-to-day life were not simply personal problems for individual women to deal with, but political issues to be addressed by the women's (and all political) movements. For the most part, these groups were made up of young, white, college-educated women. For the most part, too, these groups were isolated from one another and from other political movements.

Today the women's movement has changed drastically.

In its early years, NOW was also small and primarily white. Today, with 150,000 members, it is a powerful political organization and one of the primary focal points of feminist activities in the United States. At this time it is the best organized and most effective force for progressive political change in the U.S. It, and with it, the women's movement as a whole has moved out of its isolation and into coalition with other groups, no longer viewing "women's issues" as narrowly as in the past. This fall NOW president Eleanor Smeal was a major speaker at both Solidarity Day and the biennial AFL-CIO Convention. She said, in part, "We stand in solidarity with the trade unionists, determined to protect the victories of the last 50 years for workers' rights, minority rights and women's rights. Had this statement been made ten years ago, it would have been met with incredulity. Today it shows the direction NOW has taken in allying with labor.

NOW's minority membership is more diverse than at its founding. At the same time minority women's and gay organizations such as the National Alliance of Black Feminists and the National Coalition of Black Gays, as well as many local groups, are playing a major role in political efforts. This in turn has broadened the concerns of the women's movement about issues and approaches to issues that are relevant to minority women. For example, affirmative action has become a concern for women as attacks on it have grown; it is also an issue for minority people and labor. The intersection between feminist and minority concerns on this issue has begun to bring together activists from these two movements.

Another important organization is the National Abortion Rights Action League. With its 125,000 members, NARAL is central to the prochoice movement. NARAL's focus is on blocking ratification of any anti-abortion amendment that comes out of Congress. It uses a grass-roots electoral strategy to line up state legislators to oppose such amendments. Other prochoice formations, including the Reproductive Rights National Network (a coalition of local and national groups) are also working on blocking anti-abortion measures. National gay organizations, especially the National Gay



Task Force and the Gay Rights National Lobby, are working to pass gay rights legislation and to oppose anti-gay measures such as the Family Protection Act.

The women's movement has grown in other ways as well. Traditional women's organizations ranging from the Girl Scouts, to the YWCA to the League of Women Voters must be seen as part of the women's movement. The "Y" is home to many women's services programs such as rape support groups and women's advocates. The Girl Scouts and others have endorsed the ERA and have started programs encouraging young women to go into nontraditional activities. In many community groups women are organizing similar support services. The National Congress of Neighborhood Women is a national forum for women involved in community activities.

The agreement between NAM and DSOC to place a high priority on feminist organizing and to strengthen the Feminist Commission of the DSA reflects these strategic priorities. Work in NOW, on reproductive and gay rights, and on women and labor issues are concrete examples of what the commission and the organization as a whole will be undertaking over the next year.

### A Feminist Strategy

These changes, in women's lives, in society, in people's consciousness and in the women's movement, must form the basis for the development of a strategy for socialist feminists in the eighties. We must recognize the threat of the right wing, certainly, but in the context of the progress made by women in the last decade. If abortion were still illegal, a "human life" amendment would not be necessary; if "women's place" were in the home, Hatch's efforts to prevent affirmative action would not be needed (at least as far as women's jobs were concerned); if gay people were still invisible, the Moral Majority would not be viable in the way it is now.

Thus our program and strategy for responding to the right, for effecting feminist changes in society must be based on the reality of these changes as much as on the reality of the ascendancy of the right. We cannot relegate feminist issues to the fringes of the political spectrum. They are central to the political debate going on in this country; they touch the deepest part of our being, and they must be central to our political program. Fem-

inism touches issues that relate to the deepest fears and hopes that people have for their lives; feminism also gets at the very structure of the capitalist system. It demonstrates the interconnectedness of social, economic, and ideological issues. As socialists, our concern for a new economic order cannot be fulfilled until that order includes women. And that means at the very least beginning to deal with issues such as equal pay, child care, the connections between home life and work life in ways that we have not in the past. As feminists, our concerns for a new social order for women, for new ways of living, cannot be addressed outside of the context of economic issues.



Gretchen Donart

We must therefore be concerned with program and strategy on several levels. We must enter coalitions with an agenda that includes, as a central part, feminist issues. We cannot segregate feminist concerns from our other concerns. This concept is not really very rad-

ical. Feminists and others have already recognized that coalitions must address feminist issues. In linking concerns, we must recognize that we are not taking a chance. Feminist issues have the support of the majority of the American people, more so than many of the other issues that socialists advocate.

Along with including feminism in our coalition work, we must also put a priority on participation in feminist organizations and activities. NOW is a vitally important part of the progressive movement, and support for NOW and other feminist organizations is the second aspect of our feminist work. We must work with them in their arenas—legislative, electoral, etc. Local work for equal rights for women and gay people, for reproductive rights, comparable worth, are vital projects for democratic socialists.

Finally, just as we want to develop a presence nationally and locally for democratic socialism as a political idea and movement for our time, so too must we develop a presence for socialist feminism. Through our educational work, our public presence, we must make the connections between these ideas. We must show that the movement we represent does not aim at a simple change of economic structure but rather at a restructuring of society so that every person—women and men, gay and non gay, everyone—can lead a life of human dignity. ■

*Christine R. Riddiough served on the Political Committee of the New American Movement. She is co-chair of the Illinois Gay and Lesbian Task Force and has been active in the feminist movement for over a decade. She would like to thank Holly Graff for political and editorial suggestions.*

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"ASNER — AN ACTOR WHO MAKES SENSE," "FREEZE NUCLEAR WEAPONS," "BEWARE THE ACTOR (Reagan Graphic)," "U.S. OUT OF EL SALVADOR," "LET THE EAT JELLYBEANS," "SOLIDARITY (Polish or English)," "POLITICALLY CORRECT," "QUESTION AUTHORITY," "TAKE THE TOYS AWAY FROM THE BOYS — DISARM," "I'M PRO-CHOICE AND I VOTE," "MONEY FOR JOBS, NOT WAR." Buttons: 2/\$1.00; 10/\$4.00; 100/\$25.00. ELLEN INGBER, BOX 752-Z, VALLEY STREAM, NY 11582.

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# ON THE LEFT

By Harry Fleischman

**J**ERRY WURF, THE PRESIDENT OF the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, who died last December, was a socialist from 1935 until his death. He was a member of DSOC and on its National Advisory Council. In 1974, I met with him as part of a series of oral history interviews with people active in the Socialist party in the thirties and forties. Celebrated as labor's last angry man, Jerry showed some of the same characteristics in the party. But when I asked him what the Socialist party meant to him and did for him, he was more of a pussycat than a tiger. True, he said, when he worked fulltime for the party, "There was no money involved. It was just the pleasure of driving your colleagues crazy." But, he added, "They were good days. They were useful, on a selfish basis, in terms of stretching my mind and making me think reasonably about the world we were in, developing a sensitivity to social dynamics of the society we are in.

Had party membership helped him in becoming a union leader? "You learn to deal in group situations, you learn how to give leadership, you learn how to mount a demonstration. You learn how to write a press release, you learn how to write a leaflet. You learn how to use a mimeograph machine. You learn how to



Bob Adelman

*“We built a tremendous union because of the pedestrian things you had to do in a party like the Socialist party . . .”*

get a small group going. (We once had four people in New York in DC 37.) We literally built a tremendous union because of the pedestrian things you had to do in a party like the Socialist party or the Young People's Socialist League, when there were no resources other than our own resources. The thinkers and the writers were also the mimeograph machine operators and leaflet distributors, and then when you got to the meeting, you made the speech too. You know, with that kind of background, obviously, you learn things. Also, you subtly learn the way people react, inter-personal relation-

ships. You learn the business of dealing with groups and individuals, developing and holding the confidence of large numbers of people.”

When Jerry attended his first meeting of the AFL-CIO Executive Council and took on George Meany on the question of American bombing of Cambodia, "I did it with respect and concern, feeling perhaps a little shaky, but I could do that, and I don't think that without my Socialist experience or my Yipsel background, I would have done credit to what was perhaps the most important obvious cause of the unrest and difficulty of our times, perhaps as important as the rise of Fascism in pre-World War II.”

What did being a socialist mean to Jerry? "I consider it *the* ultimate experience in my life. . . . It was where I was awakened to what the role of a trade union movement is, what it's capable of achieving. . . . Much that I have done that was useful, the independence, the unwillingness to become a hack . . . springs from the kind of personal independence, the willingness to stand up and be counted (and there have been times when I was a fink, too, I don't want you to misunderstand), but when I'm decent, in a very substantial measure, it was the Young People's Socialist League and the Socialist party that implanted in me those things.”

■ ■ ■  
WELCOME, NAM. AS THIS COLUMN GOES TO PRESS, DELEGATES are assembling in Detroit for the unification convention of the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee and the New American Movement. The merger into the new group, to be known as *Democratic Socialists of America* (DSA), will create the largest democratic socialist organization in the United States since the thirties. Future columns will reflect activities of chapters of the merged organization. Send items for the column to me at: DSA, Suite 801, 853 Broadway, NYC 10003.

■ ■ ■  
VERMONTERS OVERWHELMINGLY BACKED A NUCLEAR FREEZE this month in votes at town meetings in 155 of the state's cities and towns. The proposal for a mutual nuclear freeze by the U.S. and the Soviet Union was rejected in 22 towns. Voters in Burlington, the state's largest city, gave Mayor Bernard Sanders, a self-proclaimed socialist, a major victory by electing three of his supporters to the Board of Aldermen.

■ ■ ■  
ROSA PARKS NAM IN MOBILE, ALABAMA WAS PART OF THE citywide coalition celebrating International Women's Day in March. . . . A Food First Action Alert on Nicaragua has just been produced by the the Institute for Food and Development

Policy, 2588 Mission St., San Francisco, California 94410. The Alert reports both on Nicaragua's efforts to build a more just food system and on U.S. efforts to destabilize the country. It can be used to mobilize Americans against U.S. intervention there. . . . The first issue of the NAM/DSOC Human Services Newsletter has been published.

■ ■ ■  
AT THE ALL-DAY TEACH-IN AGAINST REAGANOMICS at Harvard University organized by *Working Papers* magazine and *Harvard-Radcliffe DSOC*, folksinger Mary Travers, formerly of the Peter, Paul, and Mary group, was asked by young people "What was it like in the sixties?" According to the *New York Times*, she replied, "If you get involved today, you'll find out. You'll make your own movement. When I read Upton Sinclair as a girl, I thought I had missed all the excitement. But it was just around the corner.”

■ ■ ■  
BUFFALO NAM HELD ITS FOURTH ANNUAL "LIZARD BALL" in January, mocking the upper class social event, the "Blizzard Ball." . . . Chapel Hill, N.C. DSOC joined the February 27 coalition, composed of groups and individuals in the state protesting the training of Salvadoran soldiers at Fort Bragg.



# JIMMY HIGGINS REPORTS



FROM TIME TO TIME a curious reader asks, who is Jimmy Higgins, anyway? This column has been a part of **DEMOCRATIC LEFT** since its founding in March 1973. But Higgins, whose "portrait" appears at left, has been around longer. He's the archetypical socialist and trade union rank-and-filer. In 1904, Ben Hanford, Eugene Debs's running mate, began his existence. Many party faithful were convinced that a Socialist party victory was at hand. They credited success

to the leadership of those like Debs and Hanford. But Hanford knew better, as the portions of his essay on Higgins printed below reveal. Since then, Higgins has stood as a symbol for the rank-and-file. Upton Sinclair wrote a novel about him. His name on this column indicates our interest in reporting on the struggles of all the movements we're involved in on the democratic left. Our hope is to present some new, or little-known information in a lively and provocative manner. Several readers have also raised the charge of sexism, noting that the name might well be Janie Higgins. We agree, and assure our readers that Janie, too, will report on interesting items. For a historical perspective, this is what Hanford had to say about the first Higgins.

JIMMIE HIGGINS is neither broad-shouldered nor thick-chested. He is neither pretty nor strong. A little, thin, weak, pale-faced. . . . What did he do? Everything. He has made more Socialist speeches than any man in America. Not that he did the talking; but he carried the platform on his bent shoulders when the platform committee failed to be on hand. Then he hustled around to another branch and got their platform out. Then he got a glass of water for "the speaker." That same evening or the day before he had distributed hand-bills advertising the meeting.

Previously he had informed his branch as to "the best corner" in the district for drawing a crowd. Then he distributed leaflets at the meeting, and helped to take the platform

down and carry it back to headquarters, and got subscribers for Socialist papers.

The next day the same, and so on all through the campaign, and one campaign after another. When he had a job, which was none too often, for Jimmie was not an extra good workman and was always one of the first to be laid off, he would distribute Socialist papers among his fellows during the noon hour, or take a run down to the gate of some factory and give out Socialist leaflets to the employees who came out to lunch.

What did he do? Jimmie Higgins did everything, anything. Whatever was to be done, THAT was Jimmie's job.

First to do his own work; then the work of those who had become wearied or negligent. Jimmie Higgins couldn't sing, nor dance, nor tell a story—but he could DO the thing to be done.

Be you, reader, ever so great, you nor any other shall ever do more than that. Jimmie Higgins had no riches, but out of his poverty he always gave something, his all; be you, reader, ever so wealthy and likewise generous, you shall never give more than that.

Jimmie Higgins never had a front seat on the platform; he never knew the tonic of applause nor the inspiration of opposition; he never was seen in the foreground of the picture.

But he had erected the platform and painted the picture; through his hard, disagreeable and thankless toil it had come to pass that liberty was brewing and things were doing.

Jimmie Higgins. How shall we pay, how reward this man? What gold, what laurels shall be his?

There's just one way, reader, that you and I can "make good" with Jimmie Higgins and the likes of him. That way is to be like him.

Take a fresh start and never let go.

Think how great his work, and he has so little to do with. How little ours in proportion to our strength!

I know some grand men and women in the Socialist movement. But in high self-sacrifice, in matchless fidelity to truth, I shall never meet a greater man than Jimmie Higgins.

## DEMOCRATIC LEFT

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