

DEMOCRATIC LEFT

EDITED BY
MICHAEL HARRINGTON

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Holding Us All Together

By Patrick Lacefield

ON JUNE 12 NEW YORK CITY WAS owned by the peace movement. They came from all fifty states and another 10,000 from abroad. They were six-year-old Andrea from Vermont, perched on her father's shoulders a dozen paces behind an ancient, weary-looking Ben Spock. They waved the Lone Star flag and toted signs reading "Ronald Reagan: Think of what nuclear war will do to Nancy's wardrobe." They were democratic socialists and middle-of-the-roaders, self-styled revolutionaries and liberals, veterans and folks whose politics began with this rally.

And they were not alone. In addition to the 750,000 in New York, other June rallies pulled 90,000 at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, 40,000 in San Francisco, 15,000 in Seattle, 30,000 in Denver, a few thousand in Salt Lake



Robert Gumpert

City. In acts of civil disobedience against the arms race, more than 1700 people (including DSA National Chair Michael Harrington and thirty other DSAers) were arrested at the UN missions of five nuclear powers—the United States, the Soviet Union, France, China, and Great Britain—and another 1300 at the Lawrence Livermore nuclear weapons labs in California.

In his book *The Almost World*, Hans Koning wrote of the peace movement during Vietnam that though it was all too often right, the movement was also dumb. The same might be said of the June 12 coalition that organized the largest political demonstration ever seen in this country. From the outset of organizing last fall, the path was strewn with sectarian infighting—bitter even by peace movement standards. A look at the whys and the wherefores of the conflict may be

helpful in avoiding similar mistakes as the disarmament movement grows more influential.

Although there are many longstanding peace groups in the United States, there is no one moral or organizational center similar to the British Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament or the Dutch Inter-Church Council. Almost anyone—given money, initiative and a date for a demonstration—can present the peace movement with a *fait accompli*. This happened in May of 1981, for example, when a small Marxist-Leninist sect picked a date for a Washington demonstration on El Salvador and left the rest of the peace movement, unconsulted, to follow reluctantly.

Grassroots Strength

The real potential strength of the peace movement would not seem to be the national peace organizations, whose

memberships overlap and probably number less than 80,000 different people. Rather, the strength is at the grassroots level—in the churches and in the development of organizations such as Physicians for Social Responsibility, the Union of Concerned Scientists, and, more recently, occupation-based groups as diverse as Dancers or Insurance Executives for Disarmament. Trade union involvement in the freeze campaign is building. The June 12 action included participation by the Hospital Workers/District 1199, AFSCME, Clothing and Textile, Auto Workers, Machinists and the Communications Workers, to name only a few. Most of the demonstrators knew little of the infighting that had plagued organizing efforts. Other groups that did know may have stayed away because of it.

One of the first points of disagreement within the coalition (and a constant

LETTERS

To our Readers:

With this issue DEMOCRATIC LEFT switches to newsprint. This will save us about \$500 per issue and allow us to continue our 16-page format. We don't publish during July and August, but when we reappear in September we will have a new design as befits the publication of a new organization.

The Editors

To the Editor:

I was very disturbed by Philip Devine's letter to the editor in the April 1982 issue in response to the abortion debate. As a feminist and a religious person I am made uneasy by Mr. Devine's equation of pro-choice with a politics that has "contempt for the values of church, family, and neighborhood." Not only does this distort the feminist position; it misrepresents "church, family, and neighborhood" as uniform and monolithic communities. *What church, what family, what neighborhood does Mr. Devine have in mind?* Certainly not mine, nor that of countless others, black or white, single parent, dual wage earner, gay or straight, in church or synagogue, who affirm the right of a woman to make ethi-

cal choices about her body and sexuality that are neither dictated by the state nor forced upon her by economic or social constraints. Certainly we have profound disagreements within our ranks, but there can only be dialogue if we do not misrepresent each other's position.

Barbara Scott Winkler
Ann Arbor, Mich.

To the Editor:

I was disturbed by the item titled "DSA on the Freeze" in the April issue for two reasons. First, the item is not actually a DSA position; it turns out to be a DSOC resolution adopted last year. My recollection of the merger agreement is that past resolutions of both DSOC and NAM are now defunct, and do *not* automatically become DSA positions... I hope you will be able to clarify this matter for your readers in a future issue, and label pre-merger resolutions as such if they are used in the future.

Second, the content of the item mislabeled "DSA on the Freeze" is outrageous.... There is no task more urgent than preventing nuclear war. The only sensible position is to call for nuclear disarmament by all nuclear powers, as the European peace movement has generally done. In terms of proposing first

steps for the U.S. to take, the Boston Study Group's careful analysis in *The Price of Defense* found that a military budget \$80 billion or more below Reagan's present levels would preserve our ability to defend the U.S. and its allies, and our ability to blow the world up, many times over. A unilateral U.S. cut to the level proposed by the BSG would free immense resources for civilian uses, would not expose us or our allies to any military danger, and might well be a dramatic enough signal of our peaceful intentions to get substantive negotiations on further disarmament underway....

Frank Ackerman
Somerville, Mass.

Ed. Note: Frank Ackerman is right. All resolutions of the previous organizations are defunct. We apologize for the confusion. At the National Executive Committee meeting of the new organization held in May, DSA endorsed the Nuclear Freeze Campaign. For a discussion of strategy beyond the freeze, see the lead article in our May issue.

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

DEMOCRATIC LEFT

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thread throughout) was the question of political approach toward the nuclear powers. DSA, joined by most other organizations, emphasized that the action would have to call all nuclear powers to account for their weapons. While the special emphasis for Americans must be on their own government, the argument went, we dare not let any nation—neither the Soviet Union nor socialist France—off the hook. An independent position that addresses the nuclear arsenals of both superpowers is only logical. But it is much more. It is the only way the movement can build the broadest coalition against all nuclear weapons. The Communist party, through the U.S. Peace Council, argued that the blame for the arms race lay wholly with the U.S.—that since the June 12 action was in the United States, it should address only the U.S. government. However, as David Reynolds of the War Resisters League put it, why doesn't the Peace Council protest against Soviet weapons when meeting in Eastern Europe? Why is it that a Warsaw Pact country, Rumania, can sponsor an official demonstration directed against U.S. and Soviet nukes while the U.S. peace movement should not? After much wrangling, the position of addressing all nuclear powers, though ambiguously worded for the sake of those who did not oppose Soviet "peace missiles," was overwhelmingly affirmed. Still, the Peace Council worked to dilute the thrust and indeed publicized the action in its publication as one to "reduce our arsenals" (emphasis added). It openly opposed the civil disobedience at the UN missions because the Soviet mission was among the five targeted.

What position to take vis-a-vis the Soviet Union was not the only controversy rending the coalition. As is always the case, the question arose as to whether to broaden the politics of the demonstration beyond a call for disarmament. A second emphasis on adding a call for the transfer of some military funds to meet vital social needs was unanimously affirmed. Others sought to add such specific demands as condemning U.S. military intervention in the Third World, nuclear power, violation of American Indian treaties, and apartheid in South Africa.

This debate, which raged largely unnoticed outside the leftwing press and was unknown to most people outside of New York City, brought bitter charges of racism and threatened early on to split the coalition beyond repair.

There is no denying the wisdom of being as inclusive as possible in a coal-

ition, appealing to different constituencies, particularly those that have not felt welcome in the past. Thus, the logic goes, one should include diverse demands to appeal to diverse constituencies. Here, experience does not bear out the logic. Simply including a demand does not guarantee that the constituency will turn out.



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Instead, we see what I call the "Christmas tree" approach. Every group hangs its own ornament on the tree until the tree collapses from the weight of excessive baubles. The focus of the action blurs, both from the standpoint of the average Joe and Josephine we're trying to reach, and from the viewpoint of the media, which see it as a "collection of causes."

To be opposed to adding demands *ad infinitum* does not mean opposition to those issues per se. Every situation is dif-

ferent. In this case, in response to the threat of a split that would result in two demonstrations planned by different coalitions, a call for an end to U.S. intervention in the third world was included. It did not seem to dilute the focus of the demonstration.

No issue, not even nuclear weapons, can stand alone. But this does not mean that there can be no nuclear disarmament without "socialist revolution." Quite frankly, we may not have the luxury of waiting that long. To say, as one speaker did, that "there can be no disarmament without independence for Puerto Rico" is foolish.

Just as we oppose linking arms talks with the Soviets to Soviet aggression in Afghanistan or complicity in Poland, we must equally resist this all or nothing-at-all approach in linkages with other concerns.

Despite enormous efforts to increase minority participation in the June 12 rally by allotting considerable power to black and Hispanic groups endorsing the rally, the minority turnout on June 12 was disappointing. In a city that is nearly half black and Hispanic, the usual 5-10 percent of the crowd on the Great Lawn was minority. A large portion of that turnout was in the various trade union contingents. A real problem here is the lack of a political organizing center in either the black or Hispanic communities. The NAACP did not participate. The Southern Christian Leadership Conference and Jesse Jackson's PUSH lent their names, but not, by and large, any bodies. Thus much of the organizing was left to groups ranging from Herbert Daughtry's Black United Front to Stokely Carmichael's All-African Revolutionary People's Party and the Puerto Rican Socialist Party.

If June 12 was an unqualified success—and certainly I'd judge it so even given the infighting—it was less a tribute to the movement and its turf struggles than to the issue. As the nuclear freeze hit the covers of the national news magazines, politicians staked out their territory pro and con and the Reagan administration continued its run of "nuclear war-fighting" inanities, the issue forced the June 12 organizing into a broader, less "left-er than thou, anti-imperialist" mode. Groups that had held back—some trade unions, the Union of Concerned Scientists, Physicians for Social Responsibility, the Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign and others—threw themselves into the fray and money for the effort was more easily forthcoming.

OPEN LETTER TO LEONID BREZHNEV

The following excerpts are taken from a letter sent to Soviet premier Leonid Brezhnev and the Soviet Peace Committee and released to the press in June.

As activists in the American peace movement—dedicated to the abolition of all nuclear weapons—we protest the actions of the Soviet government in detaining independent Soviet peace activists and seeking to prohibit their activities.

Such actions, taken even as the United Nations Special Session unfolds and after three-quarters of a million rallied on June 12 against all nuclear weapons, is a violation of the Helsinki Accords guaranteeing freedom of expression to which the Soviet Union is a signatory. We welcome the recent Soviet renunciation of first-use of nuclear weapons. However, it belies the Soviet claim to be "peace-loving" when independent Soviet peace activists—our brothers and sisters in the movement—are labeled "provocative, illegal and anti-social"...

As activists opposed to actions by the Reagan Administration that would escalate the arms race, we call upon you to release Soviet peace activists now detained, cease harassment of their activities and allow their voices, too, to be heard on this most vital of issues—the issue of survival in the shadow of nuclear war.

SIGNERS (partial list)

Gordon Adams	Robert F. Drinan, S.J.	Sidney Peck
Norma Becker	Randall Forsberg	Terry Provance
Richard Chartier	Michael Harrington	Wendy Schwartz
William Sloane Coffin	Patrick Laceyfield	Leon Shull
David Cortright	Rev. Paul Mayer	Cora Weiss
Rev. Richard Deats	David McReynolds	Beverly Woodward
Bogdan Denitch	Grace Paley	

Pitfalls after Success

Given the success of June 12, there are, it seems to me, two potential pitfalls the movement faces in the months ahead. One is the danger that the freeze/disarmament movement will be "co-opted" as it reaches deeper into the political mainstream. The second pitfall will be a reversion to the sectarian trench warfare of earlier this year, mired in a never-never land where Ronald Reagan is the only pol with his finger on the button, where there is no Soviet threat and where "anti-imperialism" is a code word devoid of all real meaning save to separate the "pure" radicals from the rest of us great unwashed. Although the first pitfall is more likely, the second is more dangerous. We must be able to co-exist in coalitions with people who hold our position on nuclear arms, but not on Cuba, on the transfer of funds from military uses to domestic needs but not on abortion. Such is the stuff of which political coalitions are made.

As to co-optation, it is inevitable that people with some power in the society will take up the freeze/disarmament banner as their own—perhaps for all the best reasons, perhaps not. It is worth remembering that most of Ted Kennedy's advisers urged him to stay away from the nuclear freeze as a risky proposition. Fortunately, he and others ignored such advice.

How, then, do we keep the movement from being "captured" for short-term political gain? The movement must

maintain itself as an independent force—tactically flexible, engaging in education, demonstrations, occasional civil disobedience, lobbying and elections. We should take a cue from the New Right, which has seized power far disproportionate to its real popular support. We must focus our resources on visible victories and play political hardball—punishing our enemies and rewarding our friends, passing referenda and honing our grassroots base. SANE is establishing a



Robert Gumpert

DSA member Rachel Haskell flashes a peace sign as she and others are transported in city buses after their arrest in front of the U.S. Mission to the UN. DSA contingents were arrested for civil disobedience at missions of five nuclear powers.

"Peace PAC" to aid pro-disarmament candidates in the fall elections and the Council for a Livable World is doing the same. The National Committee for an Effective Congress, the grand-daddy of liberal PACs, has announced that it will aid no senator or representative not in favor of the freeze or other serious arms control.

The June 12 coalition may or may not continue, but other coalitions of non-peace groups, such as the National Education Association, the American Nurses Association, and others, are in the works. Religious and scientists' groups are working toward a pre-election October 17 rally in Washington, D.C.

Inevitably, we'll be drawn into electoral politics. If the movement eschews the ballot box it will be irrelevant. Veteran peace leader Sidney Lens was quoted in the *Village Voice* after the rally as saying that the only difference between Reagan and Kennedy on disarmament was "arithmetic"—Reagan's in favor of 9500 warheads and Kennedy 6000." Ridiculous. This is from the same folks who told us there was no difference between George McGovern and Richard Nixon in the 1972 presidential sweepstakes. Sure.

The nuclear freeze is not an end in itself, but a means toward an end. It represents a significant first step toward the abolition of nuclear weapons. So, too, was June 12. Let us remember, however, that we can't beat something with nothing. Disarmament and peace are vital goals. They are not substitutes for an alternative defense policy or a new foreign policy. Once it was enough to just say "no." As we move beyond more protest to politics we must have some answers, some viable alternatives. The series of articles in *DEMOCRATIC LEFT* by Bogdan Denitch and Gordon Adams on defense policy represent a useful start.

The inscription on the memorial at ground zero in Hiroshima says it better than anything else. "Rest in peace," it reads, "man shall not repeat this sin." Whether humanity moves out from under that shadow of nuclear war after June 12 may well depend on the effectiveness of our peace movement in the coming period. ■

Patrick Laceyfield is a member of the DSA Foreign and Military Policy Committee and formerly a member of the national committees of both the War Resisters League and the Fellowship of Reconciliation. He is co-editor of *El Salvador: Central America in the New Cold War* (Grove Press).

Report Card for France

By Mark Kesselman

LAST JUNE, WHEN THE FRENCH Socialist party (PS) won complete control of the legislature, there was dancing in the streets and France bloomed with fists and roses. The PS, running on a radical reformist platform under the leadership of Francois Mitterrand, now controlled virtually every major political office in France's centralized political structure and, thanks to Charles de Gaulle's legacy of a stable presidential system, it could look forward to several years of political power.

A year later, the bloom has faded somewhat, and there is little dancing in the streets. How effectively has the socialist party's previous emphasis on *autogestion*—workers' self-management—begins, what difference has it made in factories, offices, and communities that a democratic socialist government replaced a procession of conservative ones?

The new government has begun reforms in four spheres. First, it has attempted to repair the damage accumulated during decades of conservative rule. Some reforms here aim primarily at improving the situation of the poorest French citizens and include increases in the minimum wage, family allowances, pensions, and health benefits. Another set of reforms aiming to undo conservative mischief include liberalizing the criminal code and state-controlled telecommunications. The government repealed many antigay statutes still on the books from the Vichy regime. Jean-Pierre Chevènement, Minister of Research and Technology and former leader of the PS leftwing CERES faction, recently summed up the government's short-term aim by suggesting that, in the current period, the goal is not to achieve socialism but to modernize the French republic.

A second set of reforms seeks the more ambitious goal of overcoming the economic crisis. France had an early opportunity to witness conservative supply-side economics in action. Under prime minister Raymond Barre, it received a

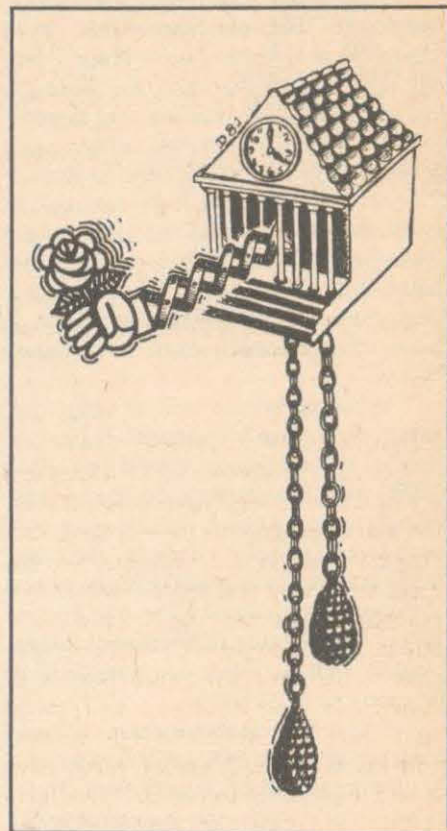
heavy dose of austerity policies. The rationale was that increased profits would make possible new investments, which would create new jobs. But the logic was no more sound in France than it has proved in England and the United States. While profits soared, private investment stagnated, and unemployment steadily increased—a major reason for the right's defeat in 1981.

Immediately after the elections, the socialist government announced that its first priority was to bring down unemployment. The welfare measures mentioned above sought to boost purchasing power in order to revive French industry. The government increased public sector employment, extended vocational training programs, and reduced the work week to share existing jobs.

These are what have come to be accepted as standard Keynesian techniques to achieve stable economic growth. However, for Keynesianism to work, there must be relative class harmony. This has rarely existed in France. As its third goal, the PS is attempting to forge new class alliances by bringing the working class into the political community. The government has sponsored measures to encourage French capital and labor to seek a tradeoff characteristic of social democracy, in which, as a result of benefits generated by collective bargaining and state welfare programs, workers are rewarded for labor peace and capitalists are encouraged to invest, innovate, and expand. The government has sponsored reforms strengthening workers' rights to organize and requiring employers to engage in annual plant-level collective bargaining.

Elusive Goal

These measures are not audacious by the standards of social democratic nations. For example, although the government rejected a union proposal to authorize safety stewards to halt production if they judged that workers were in imminent danger, this has been standard practice in Sweden for years. However, the socialist measures suggest that the international economic crisis need not dictate



abandoning the quest for equity. In an era when other nations have curtailed welfare programs, France has expanded them. But the socialist government has aimed much higher. Francois Mitterrand's claim, in his presidential inaugural address, that he seeks to unite socialism and liberty, can be considered the fourth socialist goal. Its success hinges on the ambitious nationalization of French banking and industry. The socialist nationalization reforms seek the classic socialist goal of public control over the commanding heights of the economy, a goal abandoned by nearly all other democratic socialist parties. If the PS can demonstrate the economic and social value of nationalization, it may help blaze a new trail—by returning to the original ideal.

Nationalization has been carried out in other capitalist nations. The government claims that France will be distinctive, however, because the nationalized sector will be larger, more efficient, and

better coordinated. As a result of previous nationalization measures and reforms sponsored this year, about forty percent of French manufacturing and nearly all banking and finance are publicly owned and managed. No comparable nation approaches this figure.

Further, the government has not nationalized lemons—French equivalents of Penn Central—but technologically advanced, dynamic industries, including petrochemicals, electronics, electrical equipment, and pharmaceuticals. They rank among Europe's major firms. Possibly even more important has been the nationalization of banking and finance, which gives the government enormous leverage over all investment in France. The state is also potentially equipped to coordinate the nationalized sector, along with the rest of the French economy, because France pioneered in noncoercive planning; and the planning apparatus is being strengthened to assure better supervision.

What difference will it make that many of France's industrial giants are public? Much depends on how the nationalized industries are organized and what investment and other policies they pursue. Until now, for example, there has been little to distinguish publicly owned Renault (nationalized after the Second World War because of its owner's collaboration with the Nazi occupation) from privately owned Peugeot.

Since the nationalization reforms have not yet been fully implemented, it is premature to make firm judgments. However, at this point, the government has opted for caution. For example, it issued instructions to the chief executives of nationalized firms to use traditional management methods and to assign high priority to profit maximization. Similarly, the Socialist party's previous emphasis on *auto-gestion*—workers' self-management—has been largely forgotten. All that remains is the creation of shop floor and office councils within nationalized industries. The councils would meet periodically to discuss working conditions. But the government has stressed that they would have merely consultative powers.

The project that emerges from this description is quite distinctive among the advanced capitalist nations by combining welfare statist and social democratic redistributive measures with substantial public control of production. Two questions can be asked. Is the new project desirable? Is it feasible?

When compared with conservative policies pursued in France until 1981 and

in most advanced capitalist nations, the French socialist government performance merits high praise. The government has courageously attempted to expand welfare state programs when they are under heavy attack elsewhere. The government's record in preserving personal rights and freedoms refutes conservative arguments that socialists cannot be trusted in this sphere.

However, measured by Mitterrand's own standard of democratic socialism, the regime thus far has been disappointing. It is true that international economic stagnation makes it difficult to redistribute wealth and power (although the government's reluctance to reform France's unjust tax laws is hard to defend). But what can be heavily faulted is the government's decision not to redistribute power more widely within communities and factories. The government-sponsored reform of France's highly centralized administrative structure will benefit mostly local elected officials. And strengthening trade unions, however praiseworthy, is hardly equivalent to moving toward democratic socialism. By failing to act more boldly in its first year, when it had extensive popular support, the government may have lost a rare opportunity.

The government's excessive caution in redistributing power provides a clue to why the socialist project does not have a strong chance to succeed: it redistributes enough to antagonize French business at the same time that it does not go far enough to attract strong working-class support. Workers I spoke to recently complained that the electoral change has made little difference in their day-to-day lives. Thus, the government has been left quite exposed as class polarization has increased in recent months.

However, it would be unfair to attribute France's rising tensions exclusively to governmental errors. The effect of international economic stagnation is crucial. After the government engaged in extensive reforms in its first year in office, it was forced to pull back this June. Govern-

ment social spending had boosted French demand. Yet the result, in the absence of expansion elsewhere, was increased imports, not a revival of French industry. Predictably, this produced rapid inflation, international trade deficits, and a falling franc—two devaluations within a year. The government abruptly reversed its reformist course in June to stem the massive outflow of its currency reserves. But the measures will probably provoke workers without placating business, and the government may end up more isolated than ever.

Yet, for all its faults, the French socialist government represents a breath of fresh air in a stale and embittered period. While hard questions remain unanswered at the start of Year II of French socialism, few regimes have accomplished so much in Year I. ■

Mark Kesselman is professor of government at Columbia University, specializing in French and American politics. His previous work has included: The Ambiguous Consensus and The Politics of Power. He is editing a forthcoming volume entitled The French Workers' Movement: Economic Crisis and Political Change, and writing a book on French workers and the socialist government.

RESOURCES

Carl Boggs and David Plotke, eds., *The Politics of Eurocommunism: Socialism in Transition* (Boston: South End Press, 1980).

R.W. Johnson, *The Long March of the French Left* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981).

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BOOK REVIEW

By Peter Dreier

WHICH SIDE WERE YOU ON? THE AMERICAN COMMUNIST PARTY DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR by Maurice Isserman. Published by Wesleyan University Press, 1982. \$19.95.

MAURICE ISSERMAN'S 'WHICH SIDE WERE YOU ON?' takes a new and exciting look at the American Communist Party (CP) during World War II, from the signing of the Nazi-Soviet peace pact to the beginnings of the Cold War. It was a critical juncture in the CP's history, a time when it appeared that it might shed its authoritarian and Bolshevik character and become a more realistic and democratic movement. When it failed to do so, not only did the CP lose whatever small influence it had in American politics, but a growing number of its members jumped ship.

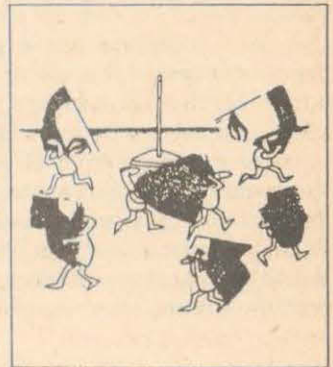
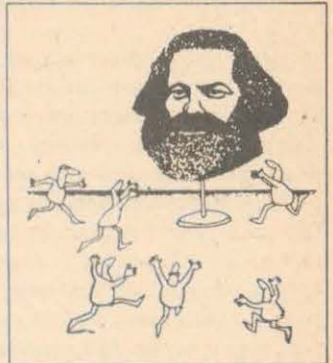
Isserman focuses on the generation of young Communists who joined the movement in the early Depression and, by the start of World War II, had risen to fill most of the second-level leadership posts in the party and its various front groups and outposts (such as the *Daily Worker*). Many individuals within this group were torn between their Bolshevik revolutionary tradition and their American democratic tradition—an insight Isserman mines with both elegance and critical sympathy. Active in the CP's wide net of political work—the trade unions, the Unemployed Councils, the youth and campus movements, the anti-fascist fronts, and within the Jewish and black communities, as well as in electoral campaigns (both for the party's own candidates and within the Democratic, Farmer-Labor, and American Labor parties)—these young Communists sought to "Americanize" the party and, Isserman observes, "abandoned or downplayed the more sectarian aspects of the party line when they could." In many ways they resented the power and priorities of the older leaders, and the overwhelming influence of the Soviet Union's shifting foreign policy. However, they never found a happy middle ground. Exhausted by the battle and willing to admit their mistakes in the light of the public exposures of Stalinist brutality, by the 1950s many of them had left the party.

The book explores the frustrating effort to steer that middle ground. During the war years these individuals faced a number of dilemmas. Whether, and how much, to support Roosevelt and his policies? How to explain and support two about-faces in the "party line" around the Nazi-Soviet pact? Torn between their roles as trade union leaders, rank-and-file militants, and supporters of the war effort to save the Soviet Union from Nazi victory, how should they deal with the CIO's leadership and the "no-strike" pledge? How to respond to political trials and witch hunts that threatened their existence and leadership? How to prepare for the post-war world, awaiting Soviet-American detente or an all-out struggle for socialist hegemony?

With these and other questions, Isserman presents the party not as a mindless monolith, but as a movement seeking to reconcile two contradictory impulses. It walked an ideological and political tightrope, and ultimately fell off. He concludes that the party's democratic impulses were overwhelmed by its Soviet links, and that whatever slim hopes it might have had to become a viable political movement were dashed when William

Z. Foster, the Moscow-backed leader, forced out Earl Browder as the party's head over the issue of postwar detente and the "peaceful transition" to socialism.

Destroyed and defeated by its own weight, the CP as an organization was of little use to the generation of New Left radicals who came of age in the civil rights, student, antiwar and feminist movements. True, a significant number were "red-diaper" babies, but the culture and politics of the New Left had little in common with that of the Communists. As a result of this gap, according to Isserman (himself a "red-diaper" baby and New Left activist, now a DSA member and Smith College historian), the New Left could learn from neither the CP's mistakes nor its successes. It is only now, with the emergence of a stronger democratic socialist movement, that the old wounds are being healed, and the lessons of the Communist tradition can be taught with some evenhandedness.



Two parts of this study are particularly compelling. The first is the experience of party members in the armed forces during the war and its impact on their political and social outlooks. It was in the service, their "rude immersion among the American people," in the words of one party member, that many came to rethink their views about political strategy and approach. Through unpublished letters and interviews, Isserman brings to light this neglected but crucial aspect of their experience. For many—when it became clear that the CP leadership was not going to bend to reality—it was the first step toward leaving the party altogether. The second topic is Isserman's portrait of Browder, a man who perhaps best reflected the party's conflicting impulses. Insecure yet egocentric, Browder led the party through many twists and turns, sometimes skillfully, but often incompetently. Influenced by the young Depression-era second-level leaders, Browder sought to Americanize the party. But his efforts came crashing down, in part because of external pressures over which he had little control, in part because of his own inabilities as a leader. Isserman's view of Browder—like his view of this entire episode of CP history—allows us to put ourselves in the places of these radicals and ask: If I were there, which side would I be on? Our answers to this question will surely stir debate, help us to avoid their mistakes, and give us much food for thought in our movement for a democratic socialist America. ■

Peter Dreier teaches sociology at Tufts University and is a member of DSA's National Executive Committee.

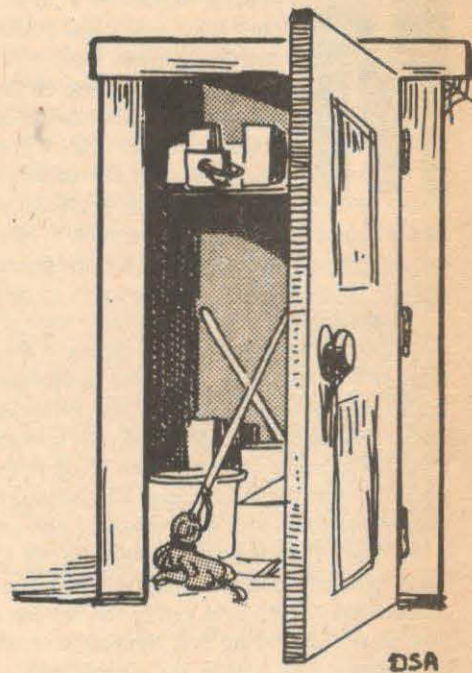
From Closet to Ballot

By Martha Fourt and Chris Riddiough

June 28, 1969—it was my 23rd birthday. I'd moved to Chicago the year before and was getting involved in the women's movement. During my college years in the mid-sixties I'd been in a small town in Minnesota and the move to Chicago was, for me, a chance not only to explore what I wanted to do with my life, but who I was. As for many young gay people, coming to a big city was a path to my coming out. At 23 I was just beginning to explore what dealing with my sexuality meant. Could I live my life as a lesbian? June 28 was important to me personally, but as the news came out of New York that night and the next day, it became clear that it would be important in other ways and to many more people as well. On that day, gay patrons at the Stonewall bar in New York's Greenwich Village faced a police raid. Raids were not uncommon for gay bars, but at the Stonewall the gay customers fought back. Sev-

eral days of rioting followed. And with that event, the gay and lesbian liberation movement of the seventies was born. Groups actively seeking equal rights and justice for gay men and lesbians sprang up around the country. Each year since then, that day in June is remembered by celebrations of Gay and Lesbian Pride Week around the world. From San Francisco to Fargo to Barcelona, Spain, gay people will mark the Stonewall riots with marches, forums, religious services. This year, on June 27, I'll be marching in Chicago with thousands of other gay men and lesbians and our nongay supporters in the DSA contingent of the Gay and Lesbian Pride parade. We'll be joined in spirit by the hundreds of thousands of people marching in cities across the country. It's been a long and sometimes difficult thirteen years, but an exciting time as well. And there are few, if any, of us who would go back.

—CRR



UNTIL 1969, THE GAY MOVEMENT in the United States consisted of pioneering semi-underground "homophile" organizations. The earliest was the Society for Human Rights formed by Henry Gerber and friends in Chicago in 1924. In the 1950s, groups like the mostly-male Mattachine Society and One, and the all-female Daughters of Bilitis were formed. Inspired by the black civil rights movement, these groups staged picket lines in the nation's capital, published magazines, provided social activities for their members and worked with the local police departments to combat police harassment and anti-gay crimes. In addition to being the only organizations to promote the political rights of gay people, they provided one of the few social alternatives to gay bars.

These groups focused their efforts on helping gay people cope with the discrimination and harassment they encountered after "coming out." Thus, an early statement by the Daughters of Bilitis indicates a desire to help lesbians adapt to the roles

set for women in society. But with the fighting at the Stonewall, a dramatic change took place in the focus of gay rights efforts. No longer content to try to fit in, gays formed such organizations as the Gay Liberation Front in New York and the Chicago Gay Alliance to work to end the oppression of gay people by changing society.

Political Groups

Since those days in June 1969 there have been significant political and social changes in the gay and lesbian movement and in society. Society now accepts gay rights as a political issue. Three years ago a hundred thousand supporters of gay rights rallied in Washington, D.C. Many organizations have been formed to wage political battle for those rights. On a national level, the primary groups are the National Gay Task Force (NGTF) and the Gay Rights National Lobby (GRNL).

Rights-oriented organizations such as the Illinois Gay and Lesbian Task Force (IGLTF), the Michigan Organization for Human Rights, the Florida Task Force and the Minnesota Committee for

Gay and Lesbian Rights, have long histories of agitating for passage of gay rights legislation, working with public officials and opposing anti-gay efforts. In 1981, the IGLTF brought over 200 gay people to Springfield (the capitol of Illinois) for hearings on gay rights legislation; that lobbying effort paid off in passing the bills out of the committee and onto the House floor. Testimony by gay activists on Chicago legislation has resulted in protection of gay rights for employees of cable television companies. Similarly, the Florida Task Force was successful in mounting a campaign to have the antigay Bush-Trask bill thrown out in court. In Minnesota, MCGLR has worked with openly gay legislators Allan Spear and Karen Clark for gay rights bills on a state level. In Seattle, gay rights activists were successful in defeating an antigay measure on the ballot.

Recently the formation of gay Democratic clubs and gay political action committees has moved the focus from legislation to the electoral arena. In 1974 Elaine Noble of Massachusetts became the first openly gay person to win a statewide leg-

islative race. Since then other openly gay candidates, including DSA Vice Chair Harry Britt and Minnesota legislators Clark and Spear have also been elected. Perhaps more importantly, politicians are beginning to recognize gay people as an important voting bloc. Much of this political activity takes place within the Democratic party. In 1976 the first openly gay delegates were elected to the Democratic National Convention. In 1980, the number of delegates increased 38-fold to 76. At that convention the Democratic party became the first major U.S. political party to go on record in support of gay rights; it also enacted a prohibition against discrimination in party activities on the basis of sexual orientation. This year, in conjunction with the Democratic party conference, a meeting of gay Democratic clubs has been called to form a national organization of gay Democratic clubs.

New Coalitions

Of course, the news is not all good. Particularly since 1977 there has been a major backlash against gay rights. Brought into prominence by Anita Bryant's "Save Our Children" Campaign, the backlash resulted in the repeal of gay rights legislation in several localities and in the introduction of virulent antigay legislation in California, Oklahoma, the U.S. Congress and elsewhere. The most outrageous example of the backlash is the Family Protection Act (FPA), first introduced into the U.S. Congress by Paul Laxalt. The bill strikes at gays, women, labor, and minority people. It prohibits use of federal funds for programs that "promote" the homosexual lifestyle as acceptable, for litigation of gay rights and so on. It also prohibits funding of education programs that do not show traditional sex role differences and for unionized schools. Although unlikely to pass as a whole, it could easily be passed in small chunks. Groups like NGTF, GRNL and local rights organizations are working to defeat such antigay measures. In opposing the FPA, these groups have taken steps for the first time to work with non-gay groups such as labor, women and minorities.

These efforts at coalition are an important step. With the exception of the women's movement, which has generally supported gay and lesbian liberation, there has been little positive interaction between gay and lesbian groups and other political forces. Sometimes there has been conflict. For example, since most gay organizations are urban and since the gay and lesbian community is a predominantly urban one, issues relating to hous-

ing have sometimes come between gay people and minority people. "Gentrification," the renovation of neighborhoods with the subsequent forcing out of poor and minority people, is often linked by the media and some political groups to the influx of gay people, creating barriers between these communities. For many gay activists, talk about "gentrification" has become almost a code word for homophobia. Often, too, the gay and lesbian movement has isolated itself. There has been a reluctance to become involved in "other people's issues." This, too, is changing; particularly with the formation of gay Democratic clubs, there is a willingness to not simply demand of other groups support for gay rights, but also to support the efforts of other activists. Several recent examples include the support of the IGLTF for Solidarity Day last fall, and the endorsement by NGTF of the June 12 peace rally. GRNL recently initiated a project to work with labor unions.

Flourishing Culture

Religious groups are one of the largest and fastest growing institutions in the gay community. These groups range from the Metropolitan Community Church (MCC), a new Protestant denomination with a special mission to the homophile community, to Dignity, a gay Catholic group, to a network of gay synagogues, affirmation for gay Mormons, and caucuses in all other major Protestant denominations. These groups have social and political as well as religious aspects. MCC, with at least 200 congregations worldwide, is the fastest-growing Christian denomination and is also probably the world's largest gay organization. It is applying for membership in the National Council of Churches. Caucuses within other denominations hold religious services for their members and lobby to change the practices of the churches toward gay men and lesbians. In addition, these groups often work with gay rights

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organizations in support of gay rights legislation. Some have social action committees that also work within the peace movement.

Gay community centers and newspapers provide communication, information, and social support for gay people. Among lesbians, the most popular aspect of the newly diversified community and culture is the women's music network. The Michigan Women's Music Festival regularly draws 8,000 women, mostly lesbians, to hear Holly Near, Teresa Trull and other openly lesbian musicians.

Such events as the music festival also

indicate one of the divisions within the gay and lesbian community—that between lesbians and gay men. Many of the organizations of the community tend to be dominated by gay men, while lesbians have tended to work in predominantly female groups ranging from the National Organization for Women to lesbian separatist organizations. The split has occurred for several reasons. The economic differences between men and women mean that the lesbian community has less money than the gay male community. And for many lesbians, the primary form of oppression they face is sexism. Antilesbian attitudes, behaviors and institutions are seen as being more closely linked with the general oppression of women. The anti-gay backlash of the late seventies has made cooperation between men and women both necessary and more possible.

Working with Socialists

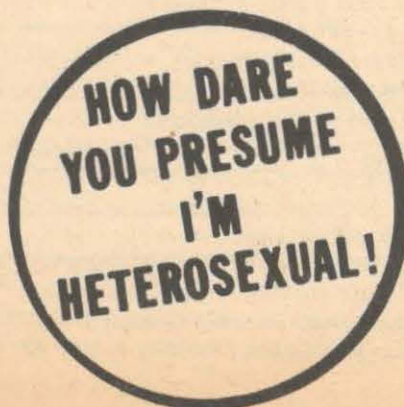
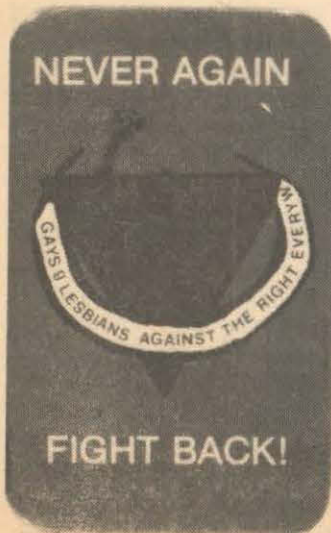
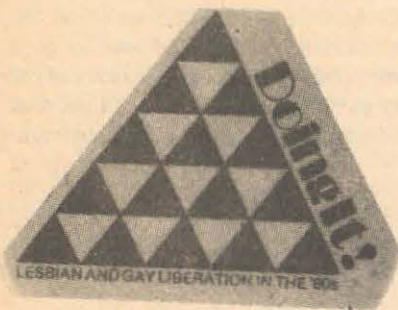
The entry of gay people, organizations, and issues into the political scene, the development and diversification of the gay and lesbian community and culture, the response of nongay politicians, the Democratic party and others pose a challenge to socialists. Socialist organizations have an erratic history with regard to gay rights. Around the turn of the century, some groups, especially in Britain and Germany, supported gay rights. English socialist Edward Carpenter, a gay, worked to link the two movements. Emma Goldman also spoke out for gay liberation, and sexual freedom more generally. In Germany before 1920 the Socialist party and the Communist party supported the repeal of several antigay measures. Here formation of gay organizations in the late forties and early fifties was sparked by members of the Communist party. Harry Hay, the founder of the Mattachine Society, was a party activist for many years before organizing Mattachine.

The modern gay movement has brought a variety of responses ranging from "homosexuality is sick" and "ho-

mosexuality is petit-bourgeois individualism" to support for gay rights, gay and lesbian liberation, and sexual freedom. DSA is in the tradition of the latter. We oppose the oppression of lesbians and gay men because we are against discrimination in any form and also because we are aware that homophobia, the fear and hatred of homosexuality and homosexuals, is a part of the sexist institutions of our society. DSA's Feminist Commission has a Gay and Lesbian Task Force that coordinates work around gay and lesbian issues. This has included in our predecessor organizations, work against the Briggs Initiative in California, work on the Family Protection Act, and education on gay and lesbian liberation. Plans for the next year include developing a DSA presence at national gay events such as conferences, work in gay Democratic clubs, and publication of a new working paper on gay and lesbian liberation and socialism.

Socialists and socialist organizations should support efforts to pass gay rights legislation, either through active involvement in gay rights organizations or in the context of other political work. We must also work through the efforts of gay Democratic clubs and gay candidacies to achieve the empowerment of gay men and lesbians in society. These two kinds of efforts can also provide an opportunity, through work on antigay measures such as FPA or work in the Democratic party, to build coalitions with nongay groups. This integration of the gay and lesbian struggle with other struggles is vital. Finally, in our work in nongay political arenas we must be ready to combat homophobia through education and consciousness-raising. These efforts must be undertaken by socialists and nonsocialists. The opportunities for them are present now. ■

Martha Fourt and Chris Riddiough are members of Chicago DSA's gay and lesbian branch. They have also both been co-chairs of the Illinois Gay and Lesbian Task Force.



Right Sees Dashed Hopes



By Jim Chapin

EIGHTEEN MONTHS INTO THE Reagan administration is a good time to take stock of what the administration has wrought, and what its prospects are. Most of the signs are negative, and those of us on the left look eagerly for portents of the unpopularity and failure of the administration. We don't have to look far: Ronald Reagan at so early a point in his administration is the most unpopular elected president ever; and his policies clearly have not worked.

To say this is not to say that Reagan himself or the Republicans in general will lose the 1984 elections: after all, the signs were as negative in many respects for Richard Nixon in 1970. The same polls that show Reagan so weak also show that most Americans still believe him to be a more successful president than Carter was.

The difference between Reagan's unpopularity and Carter's is that Carter was seen as personally incompetent while it is Reagan's policies that don't seem to work. The question of the working of Reagan's policies must be central to us.

Aside from the particular atrocities committed by the administration—so much suffering for the poor, so much ruin to the environment, so much money thrown away on useless armaments, so many crooks in office—what has been the success of this administration in reshaping America on a more permanent basis?

Alignment Out of Sync

That's the question "new majority" Republican analyst Keven Phillips addressed when he wrote that "the question for the political analyst is no longer whether Ronald Reagan will succeed or fail. He is failing, and attention must now focus upon the ramifications and dimensions of that failure." The danger of a new Republican majority coalition, if it ever existed, has passed.

There was a time in the last two years when it looked as if the 15-year stalemate that began with the Republican victories in the off-year elections of 1966 (in reaction to the Vietnam war and the urban riots) was about to end, in the face of Reagan's 1980 electoral sweep and his equally sweeping 1981 congressional victories. But the stalemate has returned, and the Republicans will be weaker after the 1982 elections.

The problem that Reagan faced was that his coalition, like that of his predecessors, was built on sand. Its two main operating ideologies, monetarism and supply-side economics, work directly against each other. Supply-side tax cuts for the rich result in huge budget deficits, while monetarism restricts the money supply and keeps interest rates up. The end result is a truly remarkable economic formula that combines record unemployment with record interest rates.

Economic failure weakened support among the less affluent components of the Reagan coalition at the same time that social stands and foreign policy issues alienated moral majoritarians and liberal Republicans alike. The Moral Majority lives in an America that has evolved away from its central ideas for half a century or more, and its futile attempts to muster opposition to Sandra Day O'Connor's nomination to the Supreme Court show just how weak its real power is. Meanwhile, liberal Republicans are increasingly alienated by anti-environment, anti-civil liberties, and hawkish foreign policy stands. Conservatives and Podhoretzian neoconservatives are equally angered by what they see as the victory of "Haigism" over the fanatically single-minded anti-Communism they prefer.

Despite the triumphalist rhetoric of the right and the alarmist rhetoric of the left for the past two years, it is clear that the 1980s are nothing like the previous conservative eras of the 1920s and the 1950s. The liberal Democratic contingent of Congress is more than a quarter, a huge proportion compared to those earlier dog days. Culturally, the climate of our times is in no way comparable to those of the "Red Scare" twenties or the McCarthyite fifties.

He has done an enormous amount of damage, but when one compares Reagan's actual achievements with the programs advocated by conservatives, neoconservatives, and moral majoritarians, one can see that the hopes for a rightwing "reconstruction" of society are further from reality than ours are.

Keven Phillips, in his new book *Post-Conservative America*, argues that the failure of Reaganism may put "apple-pie authoritarianism" on the American agenda next. It is an old trick of the right (and

DSA ON THE CONFLICT IN LEBANON

Excerpts from a resolution passed by the National Executive Committee at its June 20 meeting appear below. For a copy of the complete resolution, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to the DSA New York Office, 853 Broadway, Suite 801, N.Y.C. 10003.

The National Executive Committee of the DSA concurs with the June 15 declaration of the Secretariat of a fraternal party in Israel, the MAPAM, that: "Only a political solution can solve the problem of the Palestinians, one that is based on mutual respect for the legitimate rights of all the peoples in the area" as well as its statement that "MAPAM objects to the use of military strength to force a new political order or other frameworks in Lebanon." We especially concur with MAPAM's stress that "massive bombardment with no consideration for concentrations of the civilian population harms the moral image of Israel and damages her political and security interests."

We continue to call for negotiations based on the right of self-determination for the Palestinian population through its own elected representatives and on the right of the state of Israel to a secure existence....

The NEC calls for a cease fire and the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Lebanon, as well as the withdrawal of all non-Lebanese armed forces from that country (Israeli, Palestinian and Syrian armed detachments). We condemn both the massive bombing of civilian population centers in Lebanon by the Israeli forces and the continual reckless use of the civilian population as shelter by the Palestinian combatants.... At this time we support a moratorium on further military aid to Israel until it withdraws from Lebanon. Continued arms sales by the superpowers prevent substantial negotiations toward a real and substantial peace.

The local organizations of DSA should join in protest against the Israeli policies in the occupied territories and in the conflict in Lebanon, but only under circumstances where our support for both Palestinian self-determination and the right of Israel to a secure existence is made clear.

Change the USA Join the DSA

Members of the Democratic Socialists of America, formerly DSOC/NAM, work in every day-to-day struggle for social justice. We bring a strategy for building alliances among all the movements for social change. And we bring a vision of a society that can satisfy the demands for dignity and justice—a socialist society.

Join the people working to bring together all the movements for social change... and to bring together day-to-day battles and long-term strategies and visions.

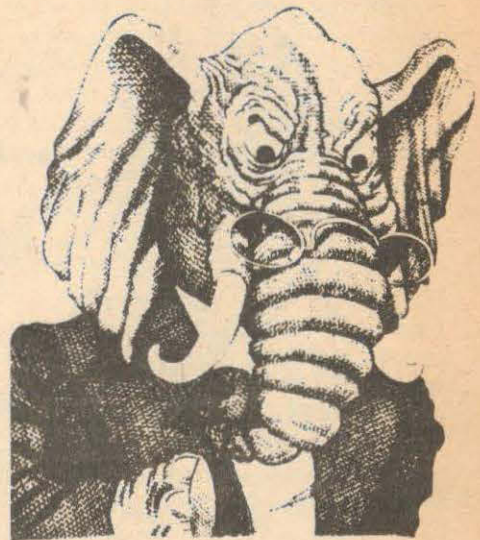
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of the left) to argue that they are saving everyone from a worse version of their philosophy in the wings. No one has won any money in this nation by betting against our politicians' ability to defuse such mass movements.

There is no majority at present for any of the several possible courses out of America's current difficulties; that is the problem with which all politicians must deal. It is a problem which applies equally to foreign policy and domestic policy.



Despite Reagan's success so far in increasing military budgets, the most striking result of his foreign policy has been the rebuilding of a mass peace movement, and his actual policy has come more and more to look like that of his scorned predecessor.

Pollster William Schneider has suggested that the confusing nature of public opinion on foreign policy simply reflects the nature of "unenlightened" public opinion on the subject. The "elite" concerned with foreign policy is divided into liberal internationalists interested in detente, peace, and world economic progress and conservative internationalists interested in strength, order, and anti-Communism. Post World War II support for U.S. foreign policy was based on a coalition of these two groups behind "Marshall Plan" politics, a coalition that dissolved over Vietnam. But "non-elite" opinion fits with that of *neither* elite: it supports at once isolationism, unilateralism, nonintervention, and American supremacy. As one pollster put it, the really representative bird for most Americans over Vietnam was neither the hawk nor the dove, but the albatross—they supported either winning the war and getting out or losing the war and getting out—but did not want to deal with the ambiguities of

permanent involvement overseas.

Since Vietnam, liberal administrations in power have united conservative elites and mass opinion against them because they seemed to dilute American power and engage in softheaded "dogoodism." Similarly, conservative administrations turn the masses toward their liberal opponents by seeming to support intervention in foreign wars.

In a much more complicated fashion, the American middle class has been react-



ing in a similar way to the conflicting parties of the "rich" and the "poor": uncertain of which class to hate more, and unhappy with any administration that favors either.

Fertile Ground for the Left?

If Reagan has failed in terms of either a basic restructuring of the American economy or its political system and the stalemate continues, then, to use left jargon, what has been the effect of this administration on the "balance of social forces"?

In terms of popular mobilization, the effect has been to favor the left. Many rightwing activists will be discouraged and demoralized by the failure of yet another administration to bring the new Jerusalem; much of the left has been mobilized by the discovery that it *does* matter who is president.

But in terms of institutions, his administration has accelerated the decline of labor which has gone on since 1945. The combination of the "Watergate reforms" and Justice Powell on the Supreme Court using the 14th Amendment to defend "corporate freedom" has ensured big business control of the political

Continued on page 15

WHICH WAY THE WEST?

1982 DSA Western Regional Conference
Friday, August 27—Sunday, August 29
San Francisco, California

Join Michael Harrington, William Winpisinger, Barbara Ehrenreich, Guillermo Ungo, Harry Britt, Dorothy Healey, Mike Rotkin, Stanley Aronowitz, Judy McLean, Greg Akili, David Plotke, Barbara Epstein and many more activists and friends. Discuss and debate directions for the organization in the region during the coming year.

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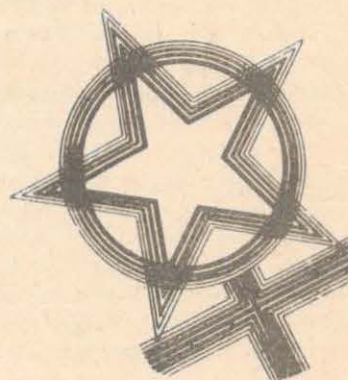
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ON THE LEFT

By Harry Fleischman

THE TINY INDIAN OCEAN DEMOCRACY OF MAURITIUS voted so overwhelmingly for the opposition Mauritius Militant Movement and its ally, the Mauritian Social Democratic party, that the conservative Labor party was left without a single seat in Parliament. The victors, who campaigned for limited nationalization under a program of "Socialism with a Mauritian face," are closely linked with the French Socialist party, and are pledged to stop letting the Soviet Union and the United States use their harbor at Port Louis for warships.



EAST BAY DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISTS OF AMERICA (DSA) SPONSORED a talk by Stanley Aronowitz on "Takeaways, Layoffs and Plant Closings" at the Oakland Labor Temple June 11. A hundred unionists attended the meeting, at which officers of the Service Employees International Union and the United Auto Workers also spoke. Thirty unionists signed up for the East Bay DSA's labor committee... On June 12, over 150 Northern California DSA members marched in the San Francisco Disarmament Rally, which attracted 40,000 people—the largest political rally there in over a decade... Harry Britt, San Francisco supervisor, spoke on "Urban Politics in the '80s" on June 17 at a meeting sponsored by Chicago DSA, the Illinois Gay and Lesbian Task Force, and the Second City Socialist School.



A DSA MID-ATLANTIC RETREAT WILL BE HELD ON JUNE 25-27 at the Claggett Center, Buckeystown, Md.... More than 350 people attended a Boston-area DSA Unity Celebration at Boston College on June 4, featuring Mike Harrington, Earl Bourdon and folksinger Fred Small. The event, featuring an enlarged edition of *The Yankee Radical*, raised over \$1,000... Chapter activists are working on the election campaigns of State Representatives Tom Gallagher and John Businger (both DSA members), State Senator George Bachrach and Representative Barney Frank... Jerry Rubin, a Mass. Fair Share staffer, and psychiatric nurse Kate Comeau were elected co-chairs of the local... *The Maine Paper* features a special article on "State Rep. Harlan Baker: Legislature's Unabashed Socialist," which highlights his pro-labor and community views.



DETROIT DSA IS CELEBRATING BASTILLE DAY WITH A PARTY ON July 12... Many members are active in DSAer Maryann Mahafey's campaign for Congress... Ann Arbor DSA is working on leaflets on "The Most Common Misconceptions People Have About Socialism," "What is Democratic Socialism?," "Democracy in the Workplace and Democratic Planning," and "Why Socialists are Members of the Democratic Party"... Jim Schiebel, DSA member in St. Paul, Minnesota, and the Democratic-Farmer Labor candidate for city council, campaigned heavily on neighborhood issues and won narrowly.



ALMOST 300 PEOPLE ATTENDED ALBANY, N.Y. DSA'S FIRST Eugene V. Debs award dinner June 11 honoring Bob Redlo, regional director of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers... Albany DSA and the Capitol Full Employment Council sponsored a teach-in on Reaganomics with Joyce Mil-

ler, president of the Coalition of Labor Union Women, as the keynote speaker... A major conference of Socialist scholars and academicians will be held in New York City in mid-November. The conference, initiated by the Democratic Socialist Club at the City University of New York, will attempt to bring together radical caucuses in the academic disciplines, independent socialist scholars and journalists from the Northeast, along with some participants from the European workers' movements. For details, write to Bogdan Denitch, Ph.D. Program in Sociology, CUNY, 33 W. 42 St., New York, N.Y. 10036... The 50th Anniversary Reunion of Veterans of Norman Thomas's 1932 Socialist Campaign for President will be held November 19-20 at the Norman Thomas High School, 111 E. 33 St., New York, N.Y. 10016. For details, write Harry Fleischman at that address... Hundreds of DSAers—the largest political contingent—marched in the mammoth disarmament demonstration in New York... The New York local has organized a N.Y. Democratic Socialist Political Action Committee, NYDSPAC, to raise funds for its endorsed candidates.



MIKE HARRINGTON SPOKE IN MAY AT A DSA PUBLIC MEETING IN Pittsburgh, and made appearances at two campuses and a fund-raising party... The Greater Providence DSA joined with many other union and community groups in sponsoring an Accountability Day at which Senators and Congressmen answered questions on Reagan's programs and their responses... Chapel Hill, North Carolina DSA heard Professor Nell Painter of the Univ. of N.C. history department on racism and the Voting Rights Act last month, before Congress adopted its extension.



THE SOUTHERN DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST CONFERENCE ATTRACTED 160 people from 10 southern states to Nashville last month. Noting that DSA locals now exist in eight southern states, the conference voted to try to create a regional structure. Continuity was shown by the fact that 75 of the 90 who attended last year's conference returned this year. The *Nashville Banner* carried several long stories on the meeting... Nearly 5,000 anti-nuclear demonstrators marched through Austin, Tex., in April in what police said was the largest demonstration since the Vietnam-era marches. More than 60 groups, including the DSA, union and church groups participated... Not surprisingly, the top five lawmakers receiving nuclear industry contributions were all from Texas. Number one was Representative Jim Wright (\$13,150), and Wright obliged by voting against a nuclear construction moratorium, a ban on exporting enriched uranium, and for the Clinch River breeder reactor project. Other Texans on the nuclear alms list were Representatives Gramm, Leath, Fields, Loeffler and Hall.



THE DSA NURSES CAUCUS WILL HAVE A BOOTH AT THE AMERICAN Nurses Association convention. DSAer Barbara Ehrenreich is a speaker there... A remarkable book on *The New Nightingales* by DSAer Patricia Cayo Sexton tells the important story of hospital workers, unions and new women's issues. Published by Enquiry Press and written for the Coalition of Labor Union Women, the book features the stories of scores of women hospital workers and shows how central the growth of

process at a level unheard of for sixty years. And the number of organized activists on the right continues to far outweigh those on the left.

In this context, even the substantial possibility that the Democrats will win the 1982 and 1984 elections may not make much difference. Many labor leaders still seem content to become "junior partners" without a vote in a corporate-business coalition, and the Democrats themselves have enough ties to capital that they will make no further attempt to strengthen the labor movement.

As for the left, we should not be too self-critical. As John Atlas of the New Jersey Tenants' Organization points out, we are accused of lacking ideas because we lack the power to put our ideas into effect. We face in an exaggerated form the same problem as other majority coalition builders: the lack of any operative social majority to put our ideas into practice.

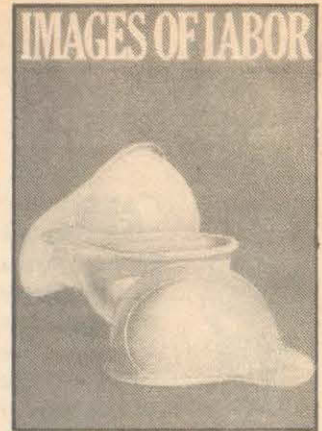
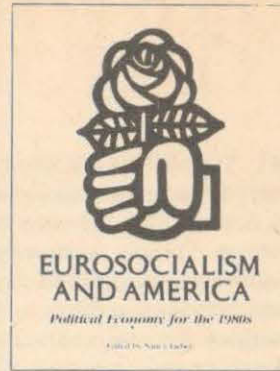
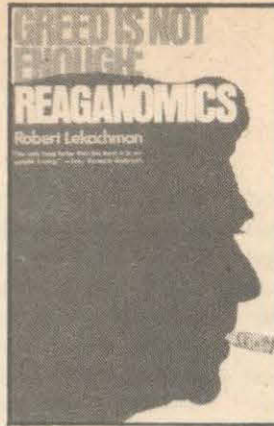
The combination of political incompetence and divided public opinion has propelled America on a downward spiral for a long time: Johnson's failures led to Nixon, Nixon's to Carter, Carter's to Reagan. Reagan's failures may lead back to the Democrats, but they have yet to show that they have any politics that will work. If the cycle continues long enough (another 20 years or so), it is possible that dangerous forces on the right may indeed get their chance. It is at least equally likely that we will. Will we be ready for such an opportunity? ■

Jim Chapin is a former national director of the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee and a member of the National Interim Committee of DSA.

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JIMMY HIGGINS REPORTS



TAKE THE IRT TO VERSAILLES—New York City subways became an international issue in the last two months. A bid by New York's Metropolitan Transit Authority to purchase new subway cars resulted in the lowest bid for manufacture coming in from Budd, a U.S. company. But the contract went to Canadian manufacturer Bombardier. Why? The Canadian government offered a financing package that made the delivery price cheaper even though the actual manufacture was slightly more expensive. That kind of government financing of below-market interest rates was a major point of discussion when Western leaders gathered for the economic summit in Versailles.

SUBSIDIZED BORROWING represents one form of credit allocation. The Reagan Administration opposes any allocation of credit except by "the free market." Often that ends up meaning that mega-dollar corporate takeovers get favorable financial treatment while productive investment in job-creating industries gets short shrift. **DEMOCRATIC AGENDA** has said for a long time that more democratic decision-making in allocating credit would work better than the current mess. In the May-June issue of *Challenge*, Amitai Etzioni argues: "We've Been Allocating Credit All Along." Citing programs that benefit farmers, students, and veterans, Etzioni notes that credit is not really allocated by the market. He comes to neoconservative conclusions, i.e., that we should stop pampering students, the housing sector, etc., and concentrate on the "sunrise" high tech industries. But the point he makes is welcome. Let's debate how our interest rates are set and who gets priority to borrow money. Credit represents a political set of decisions.

THE SUBSIDIZED STUDENT LOANS Etzioni worries about are rapidly becoming a thing of the past. Apparently

entry into the middle and upper middle class jobs associated with those high tech growth industries is going to be limited to those who can afford entry to high-priced education. **PEOPLE** recently discovered a way for young women or men to finance their educations—join ROTC. The militarization of education spreads. No more do we hear protests about army training on campuses. And Reserve Officers Training has even entered public high schools. DSA member and UAW Local 259 President Sam Meyers earned kudos by resigning from a New York City Board of Education occupational advisory committee. Brother Meyers complained that militarism was being offered as a substitute to young people who need jobs.

RAYMOND BONNER, THE NEW YORK TIMES correspondent in El Salvador has done an excellent job of reporting there. He did a lot of the work uncovering the vote-padding in the March 28 elections and the new government's plans to gut the already meager land reforms. On May 31, he ran a major feature on the increased violence and daring of rightwing death squads since the election, quoting Salvadoran leaders' fears in the wake of the murder of 12 Christian Democratic officials. The State Department responded that levels of violence in El Salvador were down; the June 1 announcement claimed that only 250 Salvadorans are being killed each month. Extrapolated to the U.S. population over a one year period, this reduced level of violence, if true, would translate to 142,800 dead, two and one half times the American deaths in Vietnam, equivalent to all U.S. deaths in World War I. And the deaths still come from the right, the para-military death squads associated with people like Constituent Assembly President Roberto D'Aubuisson. Yet on May 27, Deputy Secretary of State Walter Stoessel rejected negotiations with the Salvadoran left because to set up power-sharing talks would "give the guerrillas a special place at the bargaining table because they bear arms."

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