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# DEMOCRATIC Left

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## Divestment Strategies

## Reagan's Tax Plan

*Articles by Michael Harrington,  
Joseph Schwartz, Jeremy Karpatkin*



Photo by Jim West

# LETTERS

## Aid for Nicaragua

### To the Editor:

The Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade are seeking funds to send ambulances to Nicaragua.

As a combatant in the Spanish Civil War, I recall the enormous boost in morale every expression of support represented. For me, field hospitals, medical personnel and ambulances had special meaning. After being wounded at the Ebro river in August of 1938, I was evacuated in an ambulance with the words "FROM THE WEST VIRGINIA FRIENDS OF REPUBLICAN SPAIN" painted on its side. It was one of 18 ambulances sent by the Medical Bureau To Aid Spanish Democracy, headed by Dr. Walter B. Cannon of the Harvard Medical School.

The President of our country is unrelenting in his determination to destroy the Nicaraguan revolution. Although a political failure, the violent military intervention by the CIA's *contras* goes on daily and at a bloody cost. Ten thousand Nicaraguans have already been killed and medical aid remains crucial.

Our appeal, first made in December, produced an encouraging response. By April enough money was raised to buy seven ambulances. We are continuing to raise funds for additional ambulances. . . . Will your readers make this possible? Checks should be sent to: Ambulance Fund, Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, Room 227, 799 Broadway, New York, NY 10003.

Saul Wellman  
Seabrook, Md.

## Ignore Identity?

### To the Editor:

The January-February issue of DEMOCRATIC LEFT was more than a little troubling for a Jewish socialist to read. First we find Cornel West defining "full-fledged proponents of national self-determination" as those who support, among others, "democratic elements of the guerrilla forces in. . . the PLO." Which are those: the ones who vote for, rather than just call for, the destruction of Israel? One would think that a full-fledged proponent of national self-determination would call for Israel and the Palestinians to recognize each other's right to self-determination. Apparently West means national self-determination for all peoples—except the Jews. "Israel's right to exist," he tells us,

although "worthy of leftist support" is a "liberal, not leftist" stance: surely a double standard if I've ever heard one.

Then we have Paulette Pierce's apology for Jesse Jackson's antisemitism, wherein she:

1. portrays the "hymie" remark as a one-time gaffe, rather than one of many anti-semitic slurs which Jackson has uttered over the last decade

2. urges us to believe that Farrakhan "expresses (the) deepest feeling" of a segment of the black community, but that no one in that community takes his anti-Jewish remarks seriously

3. implies that Jews and other whites are racist because they refused to vote for a black anti-semitite.

Frankly, what attracts Jews to the *democratic* left is that they do not have to ignore their identity, divorce their people, and support everybody's self-determination but their own. Let's hope that, at least in DSA, it stays that way.

Jeffry V. Mallow  
Evanston, Ill.

### To the Editor:

I found the Jan.-Feb. 1985 special issue on "Prospects for Building Multi-Racial Coalitions" very enlightening. However, I had one difficulty with Cornel West's very good article entitled "Realign the Left."

If I read Mr. West's article correctly, he seems to imply, at one point, that the support of Israel's right to exist is a liberal position but not a radical one. In addition, he states that the support for Sakharov in the U.S.S.R. is a liberal stance and that it frequently happens at the expense of Nelson Mandela of South Africa and Father de la Torres of the Philippines.

I think there is a danger in making such statements. It is important for leftists to equally support a safe and secure homeland for *both* Israelis and Palestinians and the human rights of *all* political prisoners. Leftists do not need to take an either/or position; both positions can be held simultaneously.

It is true that those on the left have not adequately addressed issues such as racism and sexism. But it is equally true that leftists do not address the issue of anti-Semitism. It must be remembered that no oneism can be eradicated until all the isms are rooted from the face of the earth. We are *all* in the struggle to make this world a just one.

Steven Soifer  
Watertown, Mass.

### Cornel West replies:

I wholeheartedly agree with Steven Soifer. The right of self-determination applies equally to Israelis and Palestinians, just as the principled defense of the human rights of political prisoners applies to all such incarcerated persons. My aim was simply to note that liberals tend to highlight the self-determination of Israelis and the plight of Sakharov and *neglect* (or even deny) the self-determination of Palestinians and the plight of Nelson Mandela and Father de la Torres. We socialists should be consistent where liberals are hypocritical.

In regard to Jeffry Mallow, there are democratic elements of the PLO who do not call for the destruction of Israel—as documented in works by Edward Said, Noam Chomsky and others. I personally support the *national* self-determination of Israel, which is quite different from *Jewish* self-determination, given the presence of non-Jewish Israeli citizens. Furthermore, we must not succumb to the pernicious habit of conceiving of nation-states in racial, ethnic or religious terms—as did Hitler and as does Botha.

I do believe there are moral and political conditions under which one's allegiance to

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## DEMOCRATIC LEFT

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## Making the Economy Scream

by Joseph Schwartz

**A**S DEMOCRATIC LEFT goes to press, the United States Congress is on the verge of enacting the first American economic sanctions against the Republic of South Africa. Unfortunately, a watered-down Republican alternative to the Kennedy-Gray Anti-Apartheid Act of 1985 (which passed the House by a veto-proof vote of 295-127 on June 4th) is the sanctions bill most likely to pass both chambers. Even so, President Reagan may veto this legislation, as Secretary of State Schultz asserts that any sanctions would violate the administration's policy of "constructive engagement."

Thus, the fight for effective Western economic and diplomatic sanctions against South Africa will continue past this summer. But why has the anti-apartheid movement revived at this moment in American history, when other anti-racist struggles seem to be in retreat? First, the anti-apartheid movement in the West has always responded to the rhythms of resistance in South Africa. When resistance and oppression have been particularly overt—the 1961 Sharpeville massacre, the 1976 Soweto uprising and now the 1984-85 mass resistance to the "constitutional reforms"—there have been upsurges of anti-apartheid organizing in the U.S. But when brute repression has forced the South African liberation movement into quieter base-building activities, the solidarity movement abroad has often waned. In addition, a core of anti-apartheid organizers, many of them veterans of the 1977-79 wave of campus divestment struggles, and institutions such as TransAfrica and the American Committee on Africa [ACO] kept the flame alive after Soweto, focusing on divestment campaigns targeted at state, municipal and trade union pension funds. Working primarily in the black, religious and trade union communities, this movement received inestimable support from Jesse Jackson's bringing American complicity with apartheid into the mainstream of American political debate. Although the spring student upsurge has captured the attention of the mass media, it had its origins in the Free South Africa Move-

ment's mobilization of black and trade union activists in direct actions at South African government offices beginning in the cold of December.

### Resistance

In the past two years, there has been a permanent state of resistance to the apartheid regime. It began with opposition to the Black Local Authorities Act of 1982 which allegedly devolved powers for operating basic services (such as water and electricity and road building and fire and police duties) to local elected town councils. In reality, however, this law was only a slightly veiled attempt to cut back further on government support for the satellite industrial townships, rendering them "autonomous" of the wealthy urban centers and thereby dependent on their own revenue sources. In the face of soaring property taxes and alcohol prices, which were to fund the townships, resistance in the townships grew enormously. What began as a boycott of the November-December 1982 local authority elections (even Pretoria only claims a 21 percent turnout, while the opposition United Democratic

Front claims that under 10 percent participated) mushroomed into a general resistance to the apartheid regime. Hence, there were the frequent burnings of liquor stores, local council authorities and utility outlets. These are all symbols of a white-imposed rule that black South Africans in the townships reject.

Simultaneously, the student movement and trade union movement witnessed massive rejuvenations. In 1979 the Wiehan Commission recommended the legalization of independent black South African trade unions while severely restricting the right to strike) as the best means of controlling the rapidly growing wildcat strike movement. But the government did not imagine the wave of aggressive trade union organizing that would ensue. By this spring over 500,000 black South African workers had joined one of the major trade union confederations (the two most significant being the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU) and the Council of Unions of South Africa.)

Most significant—and also most costly in terms of lives—has been the wave of general strikes (joint community, school and labor boycotts) that broke out in the Transvaal



Jesse Jackson addresses April 20 rally against apartheid, intervention in Central America and for jobs and peace. DSA member Hilda Mason, a District of Columbia Councilmember, is on his right. Photo by Jim West

area and Eastern Cape in November and March. In November 1984 the Transvaal Stayaway Committee, loosely affiliated to the United Democratic Front (an interracial coalition of 600 groups representing two million South Africans which emerged from the resistance to the constitutional reforms of August 1983), called a two-day job and school boycott on November 5 and 6 in the Johannesburg area. The demands were myriad—protesting increased rents, higher property taxes, etc. But the message was clear—open declaration of resistance to apartheid. Over 300,000 workers stayed away from their jobs. The government responded by killing scores of demonstrators and by arresting 379 people in a one-day army sweep by the South African Defense Force.

The aftermath of a similar three-day "stay-away" in the Port Elizabeth area (led by workers employed by the allegedly progressive American auto firms) in the Eastern Cape led to the massacre of 43 unarmed funeral attendees on March 21, 1985 in Langa—on the 25th anniversary of the Sharpeville massacre. Since September 1944, over 400 unarmed black South Africans have been killed by the police authorities. Such violence has not daunted a resurgent student movement. Inspired by the political action of parents who had not been active during the last student uprisings in 1976 and 1980, an estimated 300,000 secondary school students have been on political strikes at any given moment during the past academic year.

One should not wax rhapsodic about the new level of resistance. Political tensions between the UDF and the smaller black nationalist Azanian People's Organization have led to some violent encounters. Although many political activists understand the visceral hostility towards the "puppet" town councilors, the physical violence against them has bothered many political leaders—particularly the key religious "patrons" of the UDF—Bishop Desmond Tutu, "coloured" leader Reverend Allan Boesak and the radical Afrikaner head of the South African Council of Churches Beyers Naude. While it is impossible to predict how long this wave of overt resistance can last, one can draw several tentative conclusions: 1) particular grievances on the part of the black South African population inevitably become political grievances against the system as a whole; 2) the emergence of strong trade union organizations (which still may be tested by severe repression) and the need of the South African economy for a black industrial workforce may be the Achilles heel of the apartheid system; and 3) a second generation of urban youth (following upon the Soweto generation) has decided that they will not live out

their lives under apartheid—no matter what the cost.

Whether or not the South African authorities can crush this new wave of political upsurge and still run a modern industrial economy is an open question. But the power of the South African armed forces and repressive apparatus should not be underestimated. A previous generation of mass resistance was snuffed out by the mass banings and imprisonments following the Sharpeville massacre. Only one thing is certain for those of us in the West—the more the South African regime fears that harsh repression will engender strong economic sanctions the less likely that repression will be.

## Divestment

No one should underestimate the moral and intellectual clout that university disassociation from firms doing business in South Africa would lend the anti-apartheid movement. But the recent wave of state and municipal pension fund divestment has also contributed heavily to American business

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*"Though lending to the South African government virtually ceased due to public pressure, lending to the private sector has soared."*

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weighing the public relations cost of its continued complicity in apartheid. In the past year over twelve billion dollars has been divested from corporations operating in South Africa—and only \$300 million of it has been by universities. New York City and San Francisco have enacted phased divestment plans for respectively \$650 million and \$375 million of municipal employee funds and Philadelphia, Boston and Los Angeles are finalizing divestment procedures. Five states have already partially or fully divested their state pension funds and divestment bills involving \$30 billion in pension funds are now before 27 state legislatures and 200 city councils. The role of multi-racial public sector unions has been critical, as their willingness to divest their own pension funds has lent great political strength to the movement. In May, a bill that would divest \$2.7 billion of New Jersey's \$10 billion pension fund over the new two years passed the state assembly, and Governor Mario Cuomo has introduced a bill that would divest New York State of \$4.4 billion in state pension funds over a five year phase-out.

Divestment campaigns, whether involving state and municipal pension funds or trade union, church or university investments, have the dual goal of heaping public opprobrium and economic pressure on corporations operating in South Africa, and building a moral and political climate for government sanctions. As firms begin to feel the heat of political protest, they may favor government sanctions as a means of excluding all competitors from South Africa. Divestment already has had an effect. Not only have banks virtually ceased loaning directly to the government but several firms, among them Polaroid, Weyerhaeuser and Pam-Am, have pulled out of South Africa and IBM and Motorola (in response to a Stanford University threat of divestment) have ceased sales to government agencies directly involved in the repressive apparatus. Although most companies publicly claim that they are withdrawing for economic reasons (Ford recently sold 51% of its South African subsidiary to South African investors), *The New York Times* of April 29th reported that corporate officials "acknowledge privately that the groundswell of university demonstrations, city council resolutions and congressional concern is taking a toll.

According to recent pieces in *The Wall Street Journal*, *Business Week* and *The New York Times*, divestment activity has altered bank lending policy. In the late 1970s numerous universities and pension funds heeded the calls of ACOA's "Don't Bank on South Africa" campaign and divested from banks (or refused to hold accounts in banks) that lent money directly to the South African government. The most notable actions were a \$50 million divestment from Citicorp debentures by Harvard University in 1982 and a pledge by New York City not to maintain any accounts in banks lending to the South African government. Today all but seven American banks have pledged not to lend money to the South African government and the American Bankers Association is officially on record opposing such loans. Outstanding American bank loans to the South African government have fallen from \$1.1 billion in 1981 to \$360 million in September 1984.

However, though lending to the South African government virtually ceased due to public pressure, lending to the private sector has soared. Lending by American banks to private South African firms jumped from \$495.2 million in June 1981 to \$1.1 billion in September 1984, while direct lending by American banks to South African banks (which can then lend the money to the South African government) went from \$1.08 billion in June 1981 to \$3.5 billion as of September 1984. This massive increase in American

loans to South Africa coincides with a severe recession and balance of payments crisis in South Africa. The slump in world gold prices combined with the Southern African drought that transformed South Africa from a net exporter to net importer of foodstuffs has led to a massive drop in the rand (by 50% since 1981, to the rate of 50 cents to the rand). Without massive American bank loans, South Africa's \$7 billion dollar balance of payments deficit (out of a total GNP of \$80 billion) would not be sustainable. Corporate and government apologists for apartheid claim we have little leverage over the Botha regime. Yet, the U.S. may have as much *financial* leverage over South Africa today as it did over Allende's Chile. The U.S.-led international financial boycott of Chile made, in Nixon's reprehensible words, "the Chilean economy scream."

Defenders of American economic complicity in apartheid adopt a schizophrenic posture of defense. On the one hand, they contend that American investment in apartheid is limited. American direct investment (American owned firms and subsidiaries) is \$2.8 billion dollars or 20 percent of direct foreign investment (though, as described below, this 4 percent of South African total capital is strategically critical). On the other hand, they argue that American firms that adhere to the Sullivan Principles of alleged fair employment practices are making a major contribution to the weakening of apartheid (despite the fact that capital-intensive American firms employ only 70,000 blacks—less than one percent of the black South African work force; and only half of them work for firms that have signed the Sullivan Principles). American corporate heads and university trustees continue to defend the Sullivan Principles despite the fact that every major independent black trade union in South Africa has condemned them for failing to address the essence of the apartheid system. They do nothing to end the brutal migrant labor system, Homelands policy or pass system, nor do they in any way speak to the basic political and civic enfranchisement of blacks.

Examining American corporate investment in the aggregate ignores the structural role United States corporate investment plays in the South African economy. American corporations provide South Africa with 50 percent of her oil, one-third of her vehicles and 70 percent of her computer sales. But the most pernicious contribution of U.S. technology is to South Africa's feverish drive for economic self-sufficiency, particularly in regard to energy. The Fluor corporation has already constructed two of the three coal gassification plants required in its massive \$4.2 billion contract. When fully operative,

these plants will supply close to 50 percent of South African domestic energy needs. In regard to nuclear energy, the Foxboro corporation has provided South Africa with the technology necessary to become self-sufficient in the production of enriched uranium. Allis Chalmers and Westinghouse have helped construct South Africa's nuclear power reactors and the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission until 1978 trained most of South Africa's nuclear physicists. Thanks to U.S. and Israeli aid South Africa has nuclear weapons capability, enabling it to militarily dominate all of Southern Africa. Small wonder that the most daring sabotage activities of *Umkhonto we Sizwe*, the armed wing of the African National Congress, have been the blowing up of a Westinghouse-built nuclear reactor and the SASOL I coal-gassification plant during the past two years.

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*"The most critical task, however, will be further educating the American public to the realities of apartheid."*

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If the U.S. were to withdraw its critical capital and technical resources, life would be much harder for the South African elite. But it is impossible to tell whether or not this would lead to substantive concessions or increased intransigence. A Western economic boycott would severely weaken an economy which at this point is still heavily dependent on foreign trade, resources and investment. This logic informs the call of all independent black South African trade union, religious and community organizations for economic sanctions. As Bishop Tutu recently put it, the "progressive force" argument is "humbug."

## Sanction Legislation

Though the Kennedy-Gray bill was not as strong as an immediate divestment and trade embargo bill introduced by DSA member Ron Dellums and backed by 77 House progressives, Kennedy-Gray contains some strong punitive measures. The Kennedy-Gray bill would ban all bank loans to South Africa, *including those to the private sector*. The act would require the U.S. to vote against all future IMF loans to the South African government (the financially plagued South Africa last drew a \$1.8 billion loan from the IMF in the summer of 1983). In addition,

it would ban all new investment in South Africa (while leaving existing investments and outstanding bank loans intact) and ban the sale of the Krugerrand, the South African gold coin, in the United States. Last year, over \$650 million worth of Krugerrands were sold in the United States, nearly 10 percent of total South African gold sales and almost 3/4 of one percent of South African GNP.

Although the Kennedy-Gray bill passed the House by a veto-proof margin, it failed in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee by a vote of 9-7 (8 Republicans and 1 Democrat voting against). The Republican substitute motion (drafted by Sen. Mitchell McConnell, R-KY, and Senator William Roth, R-DE) drops the ban on bank loans to the private sector, the ban on new investment, the ban on Krugerrand sales and the IMF provision. Instead, it only bans direct bank loans to the government; bans the sales of computers only to government agencies directly involved in internal security operations (Kennedy-Gray bans all computer sales to South African government agencies); bans the sales of nuclear related technology and requires the implementation of the Sullivan Principles by American firms employing more than 25 employees. The bill passed out of committee by a vote of 16-1, with Senator Jesse Helms (R-NC) being the only opponent.

Anti-apartheid activists should take solace from the realization that not even these mild sanctions would have passed without their efforts. Working to pass an updated Kennedy-Gray bill will likely be the anti-apartheid movement's top legislative priority in 1986. But as long as strong national economic sanctions have not been implemented, the struggle to withdraw institutional investments from firms operating in South Africa must continue. State and municipal pension funds constitute close to five percent of total American investment capital and union pension funds constitute another twenty percent (although only about one-fourth of this capital is controlled by fiduciaries responsible to elected trade union leaders. The divestment issue raises the issue of regaining effective union control over pension fund money which was placed in the hands of "independent fiduciary agents" as part of the Landrum-Griffith Act of 1959's attack upon "union corruption.") The struggle at the university level will continue to have a key effect on the intellectual and moral milieu in which the entire debate takes place. The most critical task, however, will be further educating the American public to the realities of apartheid.

Those who contend that other Western firms will replace U.S. corporations ignore the fact that without U.S. diplomatic and

*Continued on page 11*

## Staff Changes

# DSA Active in Campus Actions

by Jeremy Karpatkin

The new faces in the national office belong to DSA activists who have stepped into the staff positions of organization director and youth organizer. Guy Molyneux, formerly chair of the Youth Section and Boston organizer for the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee, will come on board in July as organization director. This post was created by the NEC when it passed a co-director model of administration at its June meeting. In this position Molyneux will be responsible for administration of the organization, fundraising, DEMOCRATIC LEFT, the Institute for Democratic Socialism, literature, and the labor, international affairs and religion and socialism commissions and committees. He will oversee development of the economic program. Jim Shoch, recently named as political director, will be responsible for field work, *Socialist Forum*, education, NEC and NIC preparation, the activists' bulletin *Organize*, special projects and the feminist, anti-racist, Afro-American and Latino commission. Executive director Maxine Phillips resigned in June in order to spend more time with her new daughter. She will continue as managing editor of DEMOCRATIC LEFT during a transition period.

In the second staff change, Bill Spencer replaced Jeremy Karpatkin, who stepped down after two years as youth organizer. Spencer, who joined the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee when he was 16, graduated from Dartmouth College this spring. He has been active in electoral politics, labor support work and anti-apartheid work. Karpatkin, who helped the Youth Section grow and initiate such major projects as the Central America Peace Tour and the anti-apartheid work of this spring, plans to remain active in the anti-apartheid movement.



Outgoing Youth Organizer Jeremy Karpatkin works the phones.

It's as though this campus all of a sudden woke up out of a deep sleep," said a divestment activist at Colgate University a day after a spontaneous building takeover at her campus in April. "They've been laughing at us radicals here for years. Now, all of a sudden, we're local heroes."

Activists throughout the country were going through the same experiences this spring. From Berkeley to Columbia, from Minneapolis to New Orleans, from Portland to Atlanta, students who were supposed to be apathetic, conservative and careerist spawned a wave of anti-apartheid actions that often involved occupying or blockading buildings for days and weeks at a time.

This movement did not emerge in a vacuum. The current wave of protests would not have been possible without the years of patient base-building and coalition-building around issues like disarmament, the draft, Central America and the fights to retain ethnic and women's studies. It also was greatly aided by conscious national coordinating and networking throughout the last year. April 4, the date the Columbia protesters began their three-week blockade, was a national day of activity scheduled months in advance on which campus groups were specifically encouraged to engage in direct action.

Nevertheless, the events of the last few months clearly represent a quantum leap in student activism. Thousands of students who had never been part of the organized campus left before are being politicized and radicalized. This new burst of activism presents great possibilities for DSA campus organizing. The DSA Youth Section (and its predecessor in DSOC) has a proud history of anti-apartheid and divestment work. During the last round of protests in 1977-79, our groups at many campuses played leading roles in the anti-apartheid efforts. Especially at Georgetown, Harvard and Cornell, DSA groups were at the center of local divestment efforts. In the last several years DSA groups at many other campuses have made anti-apartheid work a high priority. At Oberlin College, it was DSA and the black students organization that revived divestment as an issue in 1983, after it had been dormant since the spring of 1979.

This time around DSA was also in the forefront of the organizing. The Youth Section pushed anti-apartheid work to the front of its agenda in late December, partly in response to the developments in South Africa, partly in anticipation of what was to come on the campuses. More than other campus issues apartheid and divestment offer the potential for students to develop a deeper, more connected socialist politics. The struggle for divestment on campus combines many themes: fighting racism, opposing neocolonialism, opposing multinational corporations, fighting to expand democracy on campus, and recognizing the relationships

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*"It's not just South Africa and it's not just Nicaragua. We've got to start talking about gentrification, red-lining and police brutality."*

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between corporate connections between South Africa and the university and corporate power in so many other areas of American life.

At Harvard, DSA and DSAers were central to the activities of the South Africa Solidarity Committee (SASC). On April 4, DSA and SASC organized a demonstration of over 7,000 to hear Jesse Jackson, among others. The campus press was full of attempts by the administration to refute the arguments and charges of the demonstrators. Later in the month, DSA and SASC protesters participated in a day-long "study-in" at the Harvard Corporation office. Fifty students studied inside the building against the orders of the university.

At many other campuses nascent DSA chapters developed through their involvement in anti-apartheid campaigns. At the University of Virginia, University of Dayton and Cornell University, early and heavy involvement in the divestiture movements helped strengthen or spawn chapters. At Georgia State University DSA was largely behind the successful efforts to pass two student referenda, one calling for a full disclosure by the university of all holdings in firms that do business in South Africa, and another calling for a divestment from any South Africa ties revealed by the disclosure.

The Georgia State effort has been supplemented by strong support from the local Rainbow Coalition and sit-ins at local banks stocking Krugerrands.

At Central Michigan University, anti-apartheid work was one of the first activities of the new DSA group. A rally on the main campus mall sparked heated debate among students and lots of campus press. The experience at Boise State in Idaho was similar, where DSAers held the first public demonstration on a progressive issue in fifteen years. Although turnout was small, the organizers hope for more next time.

At Kent State University, a coalition largely initiated by DSA and including the campus black students group and community religious organizations held a series of activities that involved over 700 people. Organizers report that they were the most successful actions of their kind held in years at KSU. The campus daily, in assessing the week's actions, called Kent DSA "the most politically active organization currently at Kent State."

At other campuses, DSA groups continued an honorable tradition of anti-apartheid work. At Oberlin College, where student strikes and sit-ins in 1979, patient work through the committee structures in 1981, and multiracial coalitions in 1983 failed to move the college one inch, the general faculty finally gave in to student pressure and forwarded to the trustees a recommendation for a phased full divestment. The anti-apartheid coalition, with DSA playing a central role, held a one-day symbolic occupation of the administration building in celebration. In Lexington, Kentucky, where DSA has long played a role in the anti-apartheid movement, DSA on campus and in the community held a successful demonstration linking South Africa and Central America. Sandinista Ernesto Cardenal was to speak on campus, but the denial of his visa by the State Department coincided with a nationally declared day of student actions against apartheid. Anti-apartheid efforts in Chapel Hill, N.C. were fueled by the visit to campus of Secretary of State George Schultz, who provided a convenient foil for a protest on a wide range of issues. At SUNY Binghamton, DSA worked with several other groups in a boycott of Marietta Corporation, the company that runs the college food service and also has large holdings in South Africa. Anti-apartheid sentiment peaked at Binghamton when student protesters, including many DSAers, occupied the administration building demanding that SUNY Binghamton divest funds from South Africa, pressure the entire SUNY system to do likewise, and throw out Marietta. The result: a commitment from the SUNY Binghamton president

to divest from their common fund and to lobby at the SUNY regents meeting, plus a binding campus vote on Marietta in the fall.

Numerous other DSA chapters were also active in anti-apartheid work, such as Swarthmore, Bryn Mawr and the University of Rhode Island. DSA chapters at Berkeley, Rutgers and Columbia/Barnard played key supportive roles during the massive occupations and blockades at their campuses. DSAers at Princeton, Colgate, Vassar and the University of Chicago were at the center of anti-apartheid efforts. DSAers are currently playing leading regional and national roles throughout the country, especially in the West Coast where a major state-wide conference is planned for Santa Cruz.

Perhaps the biggest reason why our work in this area has been so fruitful is because of the way the issue helps move people in our political direction. Discussions are already underway for a campaign in the fall around the theme of "Embargo South Africa, not Nicaragua." Student activists at numerous campuses are strategizing on how to link up the efforts against CIA recruitment, university investment in South Africa and U.S. policy in Central America. As one student at a major urban university said, "It's not just South Africa and it's not just Nicaragua. We've got to start talking about gentrifica-

tion, redlining and police brutality." At campuses like Yale, Columbia and Ann Arbor, student alliances with activist clerical workers recently involved in union struggles were crucial to the anti-apartheid activities.

So far DSA has played a critical role in the new anti-apartheid movement on campus. Whether the anti-apartheid movement will take thousands of students further towards a full embrace of socialist politics is by no means sure. Our role must be to continue to help build this movement, and to help push those students that extra bit to a full socialist analysis. ●

*Jeremy Karpatkin was DSA Youth Organizer for the past two years and is still involved in anti-apartheid work.*

### Computer Craze Continues

We promised we wouldn't run any more items about our crazy computer. Oh, that life were so simple! On the last printout of the labels for DEMOCRATIC LEFT we lost a large part of California. If you didn't receive the March-April issue, please write to us and we'll send it immediately.

## Get ready...

### for the 10th annual DSA Youth Section Summer Conference!

Thousands of students across the country mobilized this Spring in the struggle against apartheid and against U.S. intervention in Central America. At this conference, hundreds of us will gather to discuss the future strategies of these movements. How can issues be linked? What strategies should we take back to our campuses in the Fall? How can we build a national student activists' network? How can we deepen our understanding of these issues and how they interrelate?

For more information contact: DSA Youth Section, 853 Broadway, Suite 801, New York, NY 10003. 212-260-3270.

**Michael Harrington ● Ruth Messinger ● Jim Shoch**

- Central America
- Socialist-Feminism
- The New Campus Right
- Economic Democracy
- Students and Labor
- The Rainbow Coalition
- The Campus Divestment Movement

### Save the Dates: August 22-25

Site: California University of Pennsylvania (Pittsburgh area)

# TAX FOLLIES REVISITED

by Michael Harrington

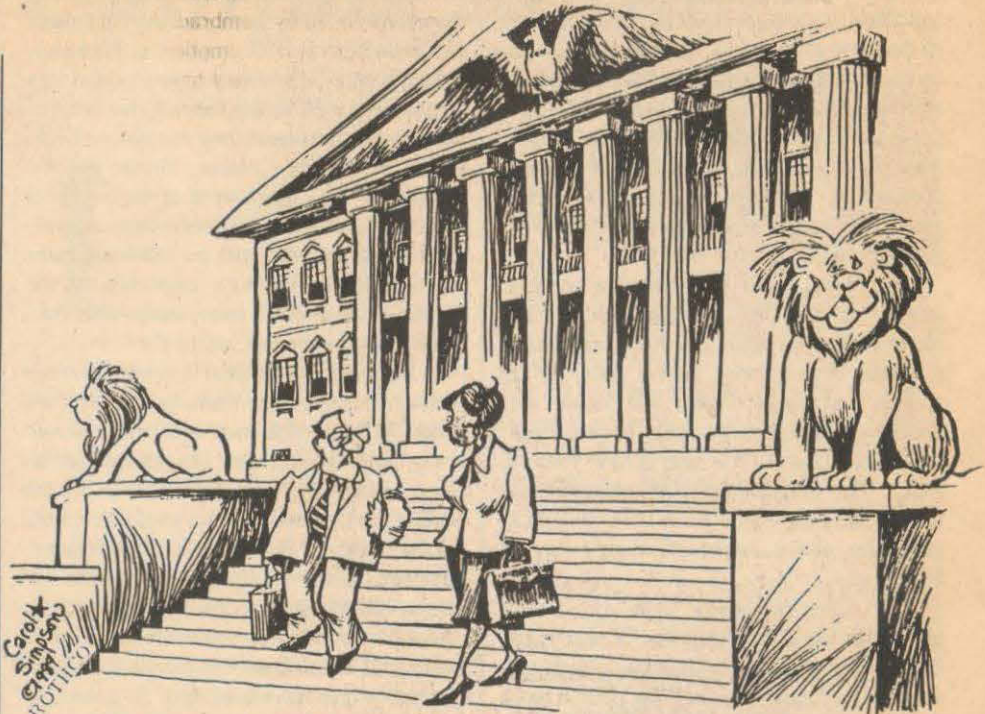
**R**onald Reagan told the American public another fairy tale when he unveiled his tax plan and the Democratic party at first seemed to fall for it. Representative Dan Rostenkowski, the ranking Congressional Democrat on this issue, called Reagan "a Republican President who's bucking his party's tradition as protectors of big business and the wealthy."

Fairly quickly, however, there were those who denounced Rostenkowski's illusion. Richard Conlon, executive director of the House Democratic Study Group said of Reagan's tax proposal, "If you're well-to-do, you do very well." The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities released a study showing that the plan would give an average tax reduction of \$9,254 to the 441,000 tax payers in the \$200,000 plus bracket, and an average tax saving of less than \$150 to those in the \$30,000 and less category. Some of the governors of big states with high taxes that would no longer be deductible, like Mario Cuomo, joined in the debunking, at least on this count. And, last but not least, the DSA National Executive Committee adopted a resolution denouncing both Reagan and Rostenkowski at its June 1-2 meeting.

Even now, though, there are still some illusions around, such as the widely repeated claim that the proposal will help both the poor and the rich. That is much too kind an interpretation of what Reagan is doing. One reason why even some progressives miss this point is that they fail to put the 1985 proposals into a historic context.

Until the rise of supply-side economics in the seventies, the conservative position—which Ronald Reagan put forward in his 1976 campaign for the presidency—was that higher taxes and "belt tightening" were required if the presumed prodigality of the liberals were to be countered. Then Arthur Laffer sketched his famous curve on the back of a napkin "proving" that tax cuts, particularly for the rich, would so stimulate investment that, even with drastically lower rates, federal revenue would increase because of the enormous growth in the GNP and income being taxed. Supply-side mystic George Gilder announced that a "free lunch" had finally been discovered.

In 1978, the Republican party and Ronald Reagan and the Democratic party and



**Of course we have a government of the RICH. You don't expect us to waste government on the poor, do you?**

Jimmy Carter embraced variants of this idea. The faltering economy, almost everyone agreed, was due to too much social justice. "Across the board" tax cuts, which by definition reduce the progressivity of the system since they treat the rich and the poor in the same way, would get the private sector moving again. Welfare for the rich was thus transformed into public-spirited economics.

In 1981, Reagan proposed the Economic Recovery Tax Act [ERTA], which was based on these supply-side principles. The Democrats, with Rostenkowski very much in the lead, then tried to compete with the White House in giving money away to the wealthy and the corporations. So it was that some of the worst handouts for the wealthy in the ERTA came from... the "opposition." More to the point of an analysis of the 1985 tax proposals, the tax base of the federal government was structurally reduced, particularly because of the giveaways to the privileged.

In 1984, studies by the Urban Institute (which has a number of prominent Republicans on its board) found that, between 1980 and 1984, the disposable income of the lowest one-fifth of the people declined by 7.6 percent, that of the next fifth dropped by 1.7 percent and that of the top fifth rose by 8.7 percent. There was, the Institute study said, "a transfer of disposable income to the top

quintile from other income groups of \$25 billion overall... [which] translates into an extra \$2,000 per family for this group." The 1981 tax cut saved the top fifth an average \$2,429 in 1984 and reduced the liabilities of the bottom fifth by \$3.

Thus, within a historical context, it is not accurate to say that the new proposal helps the poor. It is indeed true that the tax burden of those with less than \$10,000 a year would be cut by two tenths of a percent. But that does not even begin to restore the loss in income suffered by this group under the prior Reagan tax and social policies. However, the other part of the equation—that the rich come out very nicely under Reagan's scheme—is quite accurate.

In the not-so-long-run of 1981-1985, if the new Reagan proposal goes through, the richest Americans will have seen their maximum tax rate cut in half—from 70 percent to 35 percent. And when one adds in the impact of the new subsidies to those with capital gains, concentrated, of course, among the rich, that is only the beginning of their good fortune.

But what about the corporations? Hasn't the President attacked some of their privileges by taking away some of their savings from the accelerated depreciation scheme adopted in 1981? And doesn't he phase out the investment tax credit altogether? These



measures are not as "populist" as they first might seem. To begin with, Reagan's "reform" of the depreciation system, according to Laurie McGinley and Alan Murray of the *Wall Street Journal*, represented a major retreat from the original Treasury proposal. The latter would have raised \$80 billion in new federal revenues by 1990; Reagan's proposal will yield \$20 billion. Whatever sadness business might feel over that \$20 billion is assuaged by the fact that Reagan cut the top corporate tax rate to 33 percent (from 46 percent) and came up with the capital gains subsidy.

Still, there is a point to the theory developed in *Business Week* that Reagan is tilting away from smokestack Big Business towards high tech, entrepreneurs, and the like. That is of a piece with the supply-side fantasy—shared by many neoliberals in the Democratic party—that salvation (full employment and/or growth) is to be found in that sector. The problem is, the supply-side theory doesn't work.

It is well known that the 1983-4 recovery did not come because of an investment boom, which was what the supply siders predicted. The despised (liberal, Democratic, classically Keynesian) demand side sparked a consumer surge on the basis of huge deficits, cheaper money from the Federal Reserve and an insane military escalation. Then there was an investment boom, with 50 percent of the benefits going to South Korea,

West Germany and Japan because of the "strong dollar" used to club inflation and the automobile and construction industries.

## Abandoning Ideals

So when Democrats credit Reagan with "Populism" they are embracing a tax plan based on values and assumptions contrary to everything for which they have stood since the days of Franklin Roosevelt. This can be seen most clearly in Reagan's proposal to end the deductibility of state and local taxes.

Isn't it true that this deduction disproportionately benefits the well-off tax payers who itemize their returns? No doubt about it. That is why progressives have long argued that it is a bad way to accomplish a good end, i.e. of giving federal support to those states and communities that voluntarily tax themselves to maintain a humane level of social services. The left has never called just for an end to the deduction for state and local taxes. To do so would be an assault upon the poor. We argued that we should substitute some direct form of federal subsidy for the tax deduction.

But Reagan, champion of states' rights, wants to use federal power to force New York, California and the other big states to be as socially mean as he is. He justifies his cruelty by arguing that, in that long run in which we are all dead, it will benefit the poor by promoting economic growth. Indeed, Jack Kemp, the supply-side true believer who

likes to think he is even more populist than the President, wanted to cut the top tax rate to 30 percent, which would have provided even more for the rich. The White House rejected this move because it was too patently reactionary.

Does the left then simply respond to all of this by a critique of Reagan? Do we have an alternative?

I, like the Congressional Black Caucus, am hopelessly old-fashioned on this count. Reagan's plan and Kemp's and Bradley's and Gephardt's are all "revenue neutral." That is, the regressive, "across the board" principle which was a reactionary rallying cry in 1977 has become the consensus wisdom of both parties. But it is a consensus wisdom that means further and vicious attacks on the welfare state. If populism is so appealing that even a rightwing President cloaks himself in its mantle, why not some genuine populism from the democratic left? The notion that citizens should pay taxes on the basis of their ability to pay is not a bad place to start.

Isn't that antigrowth? No. We should respond by calling for extremely generous tax treatment of any corporate or personal investment which creates new jobs, and particularly generous treatment of those investments in areas of high unemployment and poverty and not one cent of tax deductibility for those who make their gains gambling on used stock certificates, greenmailing corporations, or engaging in other forms of economically wasteful behavior.

We can take populism away from Ronald Reagan. That should be our strategy. ●

## Letters

*Continued from page 2*

democratic socialism and one's longing for identity clash. Just imagine a democratic socialist Afrikaner supporting a version of self-determination which denies basic rights of fellow black inhabitants of the same geographical space (or even nation). Although the analogy is a bit strained, does this not hold in some sense for democratic socialist Jews who defend a form of self-determination which relegates Palestinians to second-class citizens, military abuse and cultural degradation. It is quite understandable that a separate call for national self-determination emerges among Palestinians, as with the PLO in 1964, after repeated yet unsuccessful efforts at entering the mainstream of Israeli society on equal terms. Last, does not the mere fact that 3.5 billion dollars from an aggressive imperialist USA to support the state of Israel cause some suspicion for a democratic socialist regarding the moral and political conditions under which one sustains one's identity?



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# REVIEWS

## *Beach Reading for Democratic Socialists*

by Maurice Isserman

**W**ant to stand out amidst the surf and sand set this summer? Then leave the swashbuckling sword-and-sex sagas at home. It's a well-known scientific fact that reading about KGB plots to conquer the world, or about the anguish of handsome parish priests tempted to violate their vows of celibacy, or reading any book concerning weight loss, inner peace and/or money markets, destroys hundreds of thousands of brain cells an hour, even in the shade. In the sunshine it can prove fatal. Don't risk it. Read the following books instead.

• **THE POLITICS OF EUROMISSILES, EUROPE'S ROLE IN AMERICA'S WORLD**, by Diana Johnstone, Verso, \$6.95 paperback. In *These Times's* European correspondent Diana Johnstone provides a good historical introduction to the current debate over stationing U.S. nuclear weapons in Europe. What's more, one puts this book down knowing a good deal more about the political complexities of the European left, including why Socialist France is the only major European nation lacking a significant antinuclear movement.

• **THE SIXTIES PAPERS, DOCUMENTS OF A REBELLIOUS DECADE**, Judith Albert and Stewart Albert, eds., Praeger, \$17.50 paperback. When Judith and Stewart Albert were prominent Bay Area Yippies, I'll bet they never thought that one day they'd be editing \$17.50 paperbacks. This is a useful collection, although heavily weighted towards the countercultural side of the sixties' movements. The best-selected section is the first, subtitled "Prophetic Visions: Formative Ideas," including excerpts from Allen Ginsberg's poem "Howl," C. Wright Mills's essays "The Causes of World War III" and "Letter to the New Left," and Norman Mailer's prophetic and disturbing essay "The White Negro." What follows is a decent if predictable selection of the high (Tom Hayden's "The Port Huron Statement") and the low (Jerry Rubin's "Do It!") points of New Left thought and prose. There was a self-critical strain within the New Left which never seems to make it into these anthologies: someday I hope some shrewd editor gets around to resurrecting articles like Carl Oglesby's "Notes on a Decade Ready for the Dustbin" (1969) and Elinor Langer's "Notes for Next Time" (1973).

• **WORKING DETROIT, THE MAKING OF A UNION TOWN**, by Steve Babson, et al., Adama Books, \$11.50 hardcover. This is a richly illustrated narrative history of Detroit workers, their jobs, and their unions. The authors make no secret of their sympathy for the workers' struggles, but within the union movement they don't play favorites, and offer a balanced account of the battle between Walter Reuther and his opponents in the United Auto Workers in the late 1940s. *Working Detroit* also traces the sometimes warm, sometimes cool relationship between the union movement and the civil rights movement: Coleman Young and John Conyers were among the black leaders produced by the interaction of those two movements.

• **BLACK MILWAUKEE, THE MAKING OF AN INDUSTRIAL PROLETARIAT, 1915-1945**, by Joe William Trotter, Jr., University of Illinois Press, \$24.95 hardcover. Trotter's book is of interest for several reasons: first as a case study in "the making of the black working class," and second because Milwaukee blacks generally voted for Socialist candidates in the years between the two world wars, despite the sometimes unenlightened racial attitudes of white Socialists. "As for the Socialists," a local black newspaper declared in a somewhat tepid endorsement of the Socialist ticket in 1918, "we are yet to be convinced they are all rascals."

• **IN HER OWN RIGHT, THE LIFE OF ELIZABETH CADY STANTON**, by Elisabeth Griffith, Oxford University Press, \$17.95 hardcover. This book is an antidote to premature political burnout. Stanton devoted nearly a half century to the cause of woman's suffrage, and died before her dream was realized. But who now remembers the names of those benighted creatures who opposed her? Phyllis Schlafly, take heed: a century hence no one will know or care about you save a few historians who will relegate you to the footnotes in their accounts of the eventual triumph of the Equal Rights Amendment.

That's it. Have an enjoyable and a healthy summer. And if you must read Ludlum or Michener, at least wear a hat or sit under an umbrella. ●

*Maurice Isserman is not at the beach, but wishes he could be. He's at home writing a book about the American Left in the 1950s, and would like to hear from veterans of the YSL, the YPSL, the LYL, and the SPU. Drop him a card (no beach scenes, please), c/o History Department, Smith College, Northampton, MA 01063.*

### **AMERICAN SOCIALIST STRATEGY IN TRANSITION: THE NEW AMERICAN MOVEMENT AND ELECTORAL POLITICS, 1972-1982.**

Doctoral dissertation by Arnold James Oliver, Jr., 1983, 374 pp. softcover. University Microfilms International, 300 No. Zeeb Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48106. \$25.50, academic price; \$35, non-academic purchaser. Add \$2.25, postage; indicate #83-17687 when ordering.

by Jim Miller

**A**ll organizations need a sense of their own history, debates, successes, failures. DSA's predecessors, the New American Movement [NAM] and the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee [DSOC], were scarcely ancient entities when they merged in 1982, yet probably not one DSA member in twenty knows much about their early years.

Skip Oliver, a DSA member from Sandusky, Ohio, has produced a readable and well-organized account of the New American Movement's political history as viewed through the prism of one

central issue, electoral politics. NAM was founded by a youthful remnant of the New Left and inherited much of that current's libertarian skepticism regarding U.S. electoral politics in general, and the Democratic party in particular. Oliver traces NAM's evolution through the watershed year of 1975 on to the DSOC/NAM negotiations of 1980-81 and eventual merger.

He makes clear that NAM's nearly 180-degree turn on electoral politics in less than a decade's time was a product of a prolonged (in my opinion, almost excessively so) and intelligent debate within the organization. In the end, this evolution in thinking and practice was not limited to the arid question, "Do we work for Democratic candidates or not?" It came to center on a gradual re-evaluation by NAM activists of the various levels of government and large mainstream organizations such as NOW and the AFL-CIO as viable arenas for political organizing. The writings of theorists Antonio Gramsci and Nicos Poulantzas influenced this ideological sea change.

Apart from the electoral question, we learn quite a bit from

Oliver's history about other aspects of NAM's political culture. We should note, though, that viewing NAM from the vantage of electoral politics hardly gives the best impression of the organization's strengths. Focusing the book on NAM and feminism (or NAM and community organizing) would have produced a more flattering portrait.

For younger activists who want to learn about the roots of DSA, for former DSOC members who wish to come to a clearer understanding of their merger partners, and for former NAM members who would appreciate a chance to reflect back in a systematic way on their own political choices, Skip Oliver's *Socialist Strategy in Transition*, with its down-to-earth tone and avoidance of academic jargon, is well worth searching out.

*Jim Miller was a charter member of NAM who opted out of NAM in friendly frustration during the mid-1970's, rejoining in 1978.*

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## Divestment

*Continued from page 5*

economic strategic support South Africa would have an extremely risky economic environment. If the South African regime were unperturbed by the prospect of U.S. economic withdrawal, it would not engage in a multimillion dollar lobbying campaign against divestment and U.S. sanctions. Their spending \$300,000 to hire a leading Boston law firm to lobby against Massachusetts' divestment of \$91 million of public pension funds shows how obsessively South Africa fears Western economic and diplomatic ostracism. The South African government knows that U.S. public opinion already makes banks and corporations think twice about expanding their operations in South Africa. As John Chettle of the South Africa Foundation (the overseas propaganda arm of the South African government) admitted in the *Johannesburg Financial Mail* of February 1, 1985: "In one respect at least, the divestment forces have already won. They have prevented—discouraged, dissuaded, whatever you call it—billions of dollars of new U.S. investment in South Africa."

## Cracks in the Elite?

When first dealing with South Africa many American liberals often react incredulously to the near unanimous call of South African anti-apartheid organizations for American and international economic sanctions. They always ask "won't the blacks suffer most?" What they do not know is that black South Africans living in the homelands (50 percent of black South Africans) or employed as domestic servants (10 percent of the black workforce) or as agricultural laborers (20 percent of the black workforce) have living standards no higher than that of the poorest nations in Southern Africa. Black

*Continued on page 16*

# ON THE LEFT



by HARRY FLEISCHMAN

## NATIONAL ROUNDUP

### California

Los Angeles DSA gave its Debs-Sinclair Award to Raoul Teilhet at a dinner June 9. Teilhet, president of the California Federation of Teachers, is a DSA member who played a key role in strengthening the ties between labor and other progressive movements... Sacramento DSA's May Day meeting featured Bob Kloss on the history of May Day and an economic policy discussion led by Jack Lamplough... San Diego DSA discussed "Spirituality and Socialism" at its April meeting... Jim Crotty, DSA member and Bay Area carpenter, was recently in Nicaragua building houses in the war zone. He spoke on his experiences at San Francisco DSA's May meeting.

### District of Columbia

National DSA joined with the National Urban League, Congress of National Black Churches, Jobs With Peace Campaign, Church Women United, Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy and many other groups in urging Congress to back the Alternative Budget prepared by the Congressional Black Caucus... DSA co-chair Barbara Ehrenreich spoke May 5 at the DC/MD and Northern Virginia DSA affiliation party. Both locals will share expenses for staff, *The Washington Socialist* and other activities... Ron Aronson of Wayne State University spoke May 17 on "Dialectics of Disaster: Reason for Hope" at a forum sponsored by DSA and New Jewish Agenda.

### Illinois

DSAers at Western Illinois University in Macomb, led by David Miller, Everett G. Hughes and Thomas Conley, joined with PULSE (People United for a Long-Standing Earth) in a demonstration for peace and nuclear disarmament on the same day the ROTC put on its annual show of military goods. Reagan country was surprised by the protests, which drew strong publicity in the *Peoria Journal-Star*, *Western Courier* and *Macomb Daily Journal*.

### Kentucky

DSA members Joe Bella and Flo Estes of Lexington and Peter Reilly of Hindman held a press conference April 15 to announce their refusal to pay that percentage of their taxes used for military expenditures... For the second year in a row DSA member Martha Moore was named Outstanding Woman of the Year by the Bluegrass chapter of the American Association of University Women... The University of Kentucky DSA Youth Section hosted a presentation by farm organizer and DSA member Hal Hamilton on the current farm crisis.

### Maine

DSA member Harlan Baker, a Maine state legislator, has introduced a bill to divest state pension funds from banks and corporations doing business with South Africa. He pointed out that the University of Maine, which three years ago dropped its investments in South African-related businesses, is "making more money now with its non-South African investments than they did with their South African investments."

### Massachusetts

More than 200 people heard Machinists Union president, William Winpisinger speak at the Boston Debs-Thomas-Bernstein Award dinner, at which awards were given to Carol Doherty, Jack Davidson, David Slaney and Tommy Evers. The local netted over \$3,000... DSAer Tom Gallagher is campaigning for the 1986 Congressional seat that will be vacated by Tip O'Neill.

### Michigan

Mildred Jeffrey, a pioneer in the UAW, a leader in the Democratic party and National Women's Political Caucus, and a member of Wayne State University's Board of Governors, received Detroit DSA's 1985 Debs-Thomas Award at a dinner June 7 at UAW Local 174 Hall. An Activist Award was given to Helen Samberg, a founding member of AFSCME Local 1640. Keynote speaker was Barbara Ehrenreich, DSA co-chair... More than a hundred DSAers met in the same hall June 8-9 for a conference sponsored by the DSA Labor Commission... Detroit DSA joined the Nuclear Freeze Walkathon at Belle Isle on Mother's Day. In 1972, Mother's Day was founded by feminist Julia Ward Howe as a time for mothers to come together and voice their protests against war... The New Jewish Agenda will hold its national convention July 18-21 at the University of

Michigan, Ann Arbor. For details, write Evelyn Neuhaus, 1516 Park Place, Ann Arbor, MI 48104.

### New Jersey

DSAers Joseph Schwartz, Cornel West and Jeremy Karpatkin spoke at anti-apartheid rallies at Rutgers... Several DSA Youth Section activists, including Joel Sipress, played a leading role in the Princeton Coalition for Divestment and Joe Schwartz, resident in Princeton for the year, spoke at several rallies and teach-ins... Peripatetic Youth Organizer Jeremy Karpatkin stopped by the Princeton "Encampment for Divestiture" in between rally talks at Lafayette College, Pa. and Penn State.

### New York

Democratic Alderwoman Nancy Burton spoke to Albany DSA in May on her re-election campaign for the Albany City Council... The Student Association of the State University has been in the forefront of vigorous efforts to get SUNY's board of trustees to support divestment against South Africa apartheid. Meanwhile, on the SUNY/Albany campus, two referenda dealt a crushing blow to conservative groups. One, supporting a Nuclear Freeze, passed with 85 percent of the vote. Another, to provide continued funding for NYPIRG, hotly contested by campus Young Republicans and the head of the Young Democrats, sailed through with 69 percent of the vote. And the head of the Young Democrats was promptly impeached by that group's membership... DSAers Tim Reilly, Larry Wittner and Myron Taylor were recently re-elected president, vice-president and secretary of the Albany Chapter of United University Professions, AFT... Cornell DSA members were largely responsible for organizing the divestment demonstrations on the Cornell campus. Over 1,200 arrests were made and 200 face trespass charges. The *Cornell Sun* did a feature story on the DSA youth section... The Ithaca DSA helped elect four school board candidates who back community involvement, minority programs and teachers' concerns... DSA planned a forum April 29 with speakers including William Herbst, senior vice president of Cornell, and Manning Marable, DSA vice chair and Colgate professor... Joanne Barkan spoke on problems facing socialist governments in power at Nassau DSA last month. On May 27, Memorial Day, Nassau DSA held a barbecue social at the Ehrenreich-Stevenson home in Syosset... DSAer Gary Stevenson, organizer

for Teamsters Local 810, helped 130 women at Van Bourgondien's tulip bulb farm, the nation's largest distributor, organize, strike and win a good contract... Margo Jefferson and Kate Ellis spoke in May at a meeting of the Democratic Socialist Club at the City University of New York on "Recent Cultural Theory from a Feminist Perspective." Bogdan Denitch spoke to the Club on "What Should Socialists in America be Doing Now?" on May 30.

#### Ohio

Kent DSAers are active in the unionization campaign by Communications Workers of America/Council of Public Workers among clerical workers at Kent State University. DSAer Rob Shuler is the chief CWA/CPW organizer and opened the effort by successfully organizing the campus police department. DSAers Steven Thulin and John Logue were named to the Blue Ribbon Commission created to monitor unfair labor practices by the KSU administration... Kent DSA and the Kent State History Department held the Second Annual Conference on the History and Politics of Socialism, attracting 62 people from 10 colleges and universities.

#### Oregon

Corvallis DSA held a May Day meeting at the Old World Center... Rhys Scholes of Portland DSA spoke May 8 about the sales tax issue... Citizens for Fair Taxes, initiated by Portland DSA, is addressing ways of achieving a progressive tax structure for Oregon... Project leader Rhys Scholes was campaign manager in the November 1984 passage of a Citizen Utilities Board initiative for Oregon ratepayers... Portland DSA held a forum on the left and minority movements May 17, followed the next day by an anti-racism workshop.

#### Pennsylvania

Dick Shoemaker, a retired AFL-CIO official and DSAer, spoke on "National Health Care" to Central Pa. DSA at Camp Hill May 19... A Mid-Atlantic DSA Leadership Training School will be held in Philadelphia June 22... A report by Pittsburgh economists on taxes and military spending revealed that for fiscal '83 the city paid \$341 million in military taxes, while receiving \$301 million in Pentagon contracts... The report was required by an amendment to the City Charter overwhelmingly approved by voters in 1982 in the Jobs With Peace referendum... Reading DSAers joined in opposing the unsuccessful attempt by Philadelphia Electric to purchase 16 million gal-

## RESOURCES

The Long Island Coalition for Full Employment, in which many DSAers participate, has just issued a *Survival Handbook for the Unemployed*, which describes the rights of the unemployed, and lists available services for training and counseling. Copies are available from Center for Social Policy, Adelphi University, School of Social Work, Garden City, N.Y. 11530.

The Spring 1985 issue of *Religious Socialism* features a symposium on "What is Socialism? And What is Religious Socialism?" Subs at \$5 per year available from Institute for Democratic Socialism/Religious Socialism, 1 Maolis Road, Nahant, MA 01908.

*The Gospel According to Reagan* by James P. Friel (Justice Books, 41 Greenwich Avenue, NY, NY 10014, \$3.95) is a humorous look at the President's actions in Biblical tone.

*Let the People Decide: Neighborhood Organizing in America* by Robert Fisher (Twayne Pub., \$7.95) examines the history of grassroots neighborhood organizing from 1890 to the present. Fisher, a DSA member, examines the features that bring success to 20th century neighborhood organizing.

DSA member Kim Scipes has written a small pamphlet called *Industrial Policy: Can It Lead the U.S. Out of its Economic Malaise?* Copies are \$5 from him at P.O. Box 5036, Berkeley, CA 94705. The pamphlet is adapted from an article that appeared in *New Labor Review*, No. 6. Scipes is also the North American representative for *International Labour Reports*, a new progressive labor journal published in England. Readers interested in the journal should write to him for more information.

*El Salvador in Crisis*, by Philip L. Russell, with a foreword by Charles Clements, M.D., covers the history of El Salvador, the economy, organization of the society and focuses on events of the eighties in a comprehensive and readable manner. Available from Colorado River Press, Box 7547, Austin, TX 78712, (512) 459-8087 for \$9.95.

*Workers as Owners*, published by Midwest Center for Labor Research, is available at \$4 from the Center, 3411 W. Diversey, #14, Chicago, IL 60647. The issue discusses cases where unions have used worker ownership to stop plant closings and includes a debate on the implications of worker ownership for the labor movement.

lons of water daily from Lake Ontelaunee to use for its Limerick I Nuclear Generating Station.

#### Rhode Island

The Providence DSA local held a successful May Day party... The local meeting May 14 heard State Representative Nick Tsiongas and CLOC executive director Tom Connell on options for a jobs program in Rhode Island.

#### Tennessee

Tennessee DSA is actively working in two coalitions. Tennesseans for Fair Taxation opposes Governor Alexander's attempt to reimpose a sales tax on food... Tennessee's Right to Know Campaign backs a bill to force companies to disclose to workers the nature and side effects of chemicals used in the workplace.

#### Texas

DSAer Gregory Davis hosted a Houston DSA radio show in April over KPFT. Discussing the future of the Democratic party were Sandra Shafton, Harris County Democratic party organizer; Gertrude Barnstone, feminist and former school board member, and Diane Brown, DSA co-chair.

## IN MEMORIAM

*Nat Weinberg*, retired research and special projects director for the United Auto Workers, and active DSA member, died recently in the Washington area. Working as a brain truster for Walter Reuther, Nat sparked many innovative collective bargaining approaches, including pensions for auto workers which stimulated auto company support for federal pensions. He joined the Young People's Socialist League in 1931 and remained an active socialist throughout his life.

*Mark Starr*, education director of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union for 25 years and an active Socialist, died last month in New York of pneumonia. He was 90 years old. Starr started work as a hod carrier at age 13 in Somersetshire, England. He began his teaching career with the miners in Wales, then came to the United States in 1928. He headed Brookwood Labor College in the early 1930s and then ran the ILGWU education department from 1935 to 1960.

# LESSONS FROM THE WAR

by Jim Miller

In late January Cleveland DSA realized that the tenth anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War was fast approaching. We speculated then that there would be considerable publicity around the anniversary during April. If we hurried we could piggyback on the mass media with a program of our own that would be a serious review of the war, its aftermath, and its continuing role in the debate over an interventionist U.S. foreign and military policy. We were certain that an antiwar, let alone a socialist, perspective would be totally absent from the upcoming April media blitz. (On that we were so right.)

After two and a half months of frenzied phone-calling and proposal writing, April 16 saw the kickoff of a four-week long series of talks, films and panels we called "Lessons of Our War: The Legacy of Vietnam—Ten Years After." As it turned out, our series was probably the most ambitious such undertaking in the country under any auspices. The Cleveland State University DSA chapter served as primary sponsor, fueled by a core organizing committee of four frantic activists, a budget of some \$3600, and the support of sixteen other campus organizations.

"Lessons of Our War" touched on a wide range of topics, with five events focused on veterans, two on Kampuchea, four on Vietnam, two on the antiwar movement, and two on U.S. foreign policy.

In all we brought in five speakers from out of town: historian Gabriel Kolko; Lady Borton, author of *Sensing the Enemy: An American woman among the Boat People of Vietnam*; Murray Hiebert, co-director of the Indochina Project of the Center for International Policy; Don Mills, a national board member of the Vietnam Veterans of America; and Jacqui Chagnon, associate director of the Asia Resource Center in Washington, D.C. In retrospect, though, the highlight of the series was a local panel of antiwar activists and veterans brought together to talk about whether the "Vietnam generation" continued to be divided by the war. The intended dialogue quickly turned into a heated debate which demonstrated vividly the divisions which exist "ten years after."

We received only spotty media and, as time went on, we saw that our piggyback gamble wasn't going to pay off. Rather than riding the wave of national media, we were

being buried beneath it. We did get some good local radio and TV coverage.

In the end, *Lessons* had a total attendance of 480; not a washout, but not a breakthrough, either. Very few former antiwar activists attended any of the sessions, a major surprise for us. We had counted on them as a solid base to be built upon. Instead, our audiences were made up largely of present-day college students and Vietnam-era veterans. These were people new to us.

We have tried to understand why so few of the "old" activists showed up to a re-evaluation of a historical process that once consumed much of their lives. Some, no doubt,

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*"Few have wanted to re-examine the war and its aftermath, preferring to retain some images of those vast determined marches and to put everything else aside as past history."*

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were too preoccupied with the Freeze, Central America, South Africa and other projects to have time to look back, but that doesn't explain why so many said they were coming and yet a mere handful came.

The war years for many activists were an emotional, heartwrenching time in which their best efforts never seemed enough to stop the carnage. The war appeared to trail off inconclusively after 1972 for most activists, as they turned their attention elsewhere. When it finally ended in 1975 with the dramatic liberation of Saigon, few of them felt directly connected to the event. After, the immense tragedy of Pol Pot's Kampuchea and the ambiguous fate of Socialist Vietnam cast a pall over the preceding years of struggle. Few have wanted to re-examine the war and its aftermath, preferring to retain some images of those vast determined marches and to put everything else aside as past history. Like the veterans, but less conscious than they, many antiwar activists have yet to come to terms with the war and its outcome.

The most hopeful "lesson" we ourselves carried away from the series was a sense that dialogue and joint work was possi-

ble with the Vietnam veterans, specifically veterans organized by the Vietnam Veterans of America. VVA is a bold initiative on the part of a core of sober antiwar Vietnam vets. It now has 20,000 members, a substantial staff, a good thick monthly paper (*VVA Veteran*, \$21/year, non-members), and a progressive program which is immensely disturbing to old line veterans groups and the Reagan Administration.

The group is preparing to undertake some inevitably controversial projects which include a campaign to send medicine and medical supplies to selected hospitals and orphanages in Vietnam. It is also likely that VVA, perhaps in conjunction with other veterans groups, will embark on systematic lobbying for normalized relations with Vietnam. These projects come out of a desire to solve the MIA and Amerasian children questions once and for all, and, surprisingly, to meet a genuine need which is just now current among many Vietnam veterans to revisit Vietnam.

DSA locals might well think this year about holding a program focused on veterans and Vietnam, perhaps a dialogue between vets and activists. Beyond that, DSA locals could contact local VVA chapters to see if common work on the hospital aid project might be feasible. (Bear in mind that local VVA members might have a distinctly different view of the Vietnam war than do DSA members, although common ground on Central America is very likely.)

For more information on the VVA "Aid to Children in Vietnam Project," contact Ginny Richards, Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation, 2001 S Street N.W., Suite 703, Washington, D.C. 20009. 202/332-3103.

## Two Essential Books

*Who Spoke Up? The Antiwar Movement in the United States, 1963-1975.* Nancy Zaroulis and Gerard Sullivan. 1984. Doubleday. The first full-length history of the Movement, it places A.J. Muste, Sid Peck and Norma Becker at center stage, rather than Hayden, Rubin, and Hoffman.

*Cambodia: 1975-1982.* Michael Vickery. 1984. South End Press. The best book, by far, on Kampuchea under Pol Pot. Vickery is fluent in all Khmer dialects, lived in Cambodia for six years in the sixties and seventies. This is our first solid set of answers, intelligent and nuanced.

—J.M.

# THE LAST WORD

## Don't Fall for Media Madness

by David Garrow

In the aftermath of this spring's important anti-apartheid protests, American progressives ought not to forget two important lessons that earlier social protest movements offer us. First, that obtaining news coverage and achieving social change are very different things that ought not to be confused. Second, how often even progressive organizations can become so caught up in "organizational maintenance" activities that they have far less substantive political effect than they might—a tension that civil rights veterans often speak of as a struggle between "movement" and "organization."

The widespread, often implicit assumption that obtaining news coverage is a substantive achievement in and of itself increasingly has led political activists, progressives included, to mold their efforts with more of an eye toward winning the media's short-term attention than toward producing longer range political results. Too often activists celebrate one-shot coverage alone—"Look, we made the *Times*!"—and thereby devalue if not dismiss the often greater worth of political change efforts that seem too mundane to make the evening news.

Perhaps the most important and least appreciated lesson of the 1960s' southern black freedom movement is that the activism that received the least coverage from the national news media—the grassroots, local

level political organizing and voter mobilization that over twenty years propelled committed movement alumni into hundreds of elected offices—has achieved far greater tangible results than the more ephemeral but dramatic demonstrations staged in large part for media consumption. Although highly visible protests contributed greatly to the movement's national legislative achievements, it is erroneous to think that the southern movement's most tangible, long-term goals came largely from winning national coverage rather than from the years of unpublicized grassroots organizing by little heralded local activists. For the American left to become too caught up with political strategies chosen primarily for their newsworthiness would be to forsake one of our most crucial historical lessons.

Similarly, progressive organizations often unwittingly can fall victim to another costly error—an excessive preoccupation with internal affairs and organizational functioning that results in activists devoting far more of their time and energy to "institutional maintenance" than to political outreach and substantive organizing work. The civil rights groups that had the greatest effect during the movement's heyday were those that had the smallest central office staffs and a far higher proportion of field workers; those that made the least contributions were those that maintained top-heavy New York bureaucracies that preoccupied themselves with internal functions. Progressive groups that spend most of their time talking among themselves may find it a satisfying way to

remain busy, but will have little long-term political effect.

Symbolic exercises built around "easy" issues, where there is progressive/liberal unity about the desired goal plus a widespread strategic consensus, may well give participants a feeling that they've "done their part" at minimal personal cost. But if such symbolic efforts actually have little tangible effect, the long-run result may be that activists who have assuaged their consciences through such low-cost involvement are not inclined to consider a more serious commitment that would be likely to produce substantive change.

Any organization that is serious about achieving basic political and economic change in America must commit itself to assembling and sustaining a cadre of field organizers who will pursue tangible political work. Discussion societies and symbolic exercises may have an underlying radical content, but they will pose a militant challenge and begin having a real effect only when they move beyond media-chasing and organizational maintenance to support real organizing for political change.

*Dave Garrow is associate professor of political science at the City University of New York and the City University of New York Graduate Center and the author of several books on the civil rights movement, including the forthcoming Bearing the Cross, a comprehensive study of Martin Luther King, Jr. This article is based upon remarks he made at the early June NEC meeting.*

## CLASSIFIED

### SAVE THE DATES

DSA Socialist Feminist Conference November 8  
DSA National Convention November 9-10  
Berkeley, California

The Union for Radical Political Economics is holding its annual summer conference August 21-25 on Cape Cod near Sandwich, Mass. This year's theme is "Racism in the Americas." For more information, contact URPE Summer Conference, 155 West 23rd St., 12th floor, New York, NY 10011 (212/691-5722).

NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER?  
Information: Brandt Commission Research, Box 2619, North Canton, OH 44720.

SOCIAL CHANGE JOBS-COMMUNITY JOBS, a nonprofit newspaper, lists progressive jobs/internships nationwide you can believe in. Current listing \$3. COMMUNITY JOBS, Box 807, 1520 16th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036.

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"JOBS FOR THE POOR, TAXES FOR THE RICH" bumperstickers 50¢. Free catalog of books, buttons and bumperstickers to aid agitation, education and organizing. Socialist Party Favors, Box 8211-D, Des Moines, IA 50306.

*Reflections on the Legacy*, articles on Martin Luther King by Ethel Shapiro-Bertolini and David J. Garrow with an introduction by Paulette Pierce. \$2 from the Los Angeles Democratic Socialists of America, 2936 W. 8th St., Los Angeles, CA 90005.

PRISONER IN FLORIDA wishes to correspond with democratic socialists in order to learn more about socialism and keep up with events on the outside. Write to Alton D. Brown, #038704, Florida State Prison, P.O. Box 747, Starke, FL 32091.

# Send Us a Message



The Labor Day issue of DEMOCRATIC LEFT is your opportunity to show your support for DSA and its publication by taking out personal greetings and/or display advertisements and asking your friends and colleagues to do the same. This is the only fundraising that DEMOCRATIC LEFT does throughout the year. Help us make it a success. Deadline: July 30. Make checks payable to DEMOCRATIC LEFT.

## Personal Greetings

	Rate
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_____ Name only	\$15
_____ Name in boldface	\$20

## Display Advertisements

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_____ Quarter page (3½ x 2¾")	\$ 250	\$ 225
_____ Eighth page	\$ 150	\$ 125
_____ Sixteenth page	\$ 75	\$ 50

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Mail to: DEMOCRATIC LEFT, 853 Broadway, Suite 801, NYC 10003.

# Divestment

*Continued from page 11*

industrial workers make significantly higher wages, but they are only 1/5th that of their white counterparts. The majority of industrial laborers either live in hostels apart from their families or commute from impoverished shantytowns or Bantustans up to three hours each way. Economic sanctions obviously threaten the prosperous white population much more severely than they do blacks.

The white South Africa elite knows this and the growing threat of effective sanctions is a major reason for the recent cosmetic reforms. The South African Afrikaner elite is showing its first serious divisions since the Boer War. Conservatives fear that the abolition of the Immoralities Act (which forbade miscegenation and intermarriage) and other

forms of "petty apartheid" means that the move down the slippery slope towards racial equality has begun. The Conservative split from the governing National party has condemned the abolition of the Immoralities Act and called for the banning of the UDF. On the other hand, progressive Afrikaner church leaders such as Beyers Naude and some young English and Afrikaner draft resisters (who do not wish to fight in Angola or Namibia, let alone South Africa) have called for unconditional negotiations with the African National Congress.

President P.W. Botha, Beyers Naude and Bishop Tutu all have stated recently that South Africa is in a state of civil war (even if the balance of armed force counsels mass strikes, school boycotts and industrial sabotage rather than classic armed guerilla war-

fare). America is in the process of choosing which side it is on. The choice for democratic socialists should be clear. If only the Western left had been strong enough to impose tight economic sanctions in the early years of Hitler's Germany or Franco's Spain. The right often claims that economic sanctions are ineffective. But what of Iran in 1953, Cuba in 1959, Chile in 1973? Given South Africa's balance of payments crisis, a Western cut-off of financial capital could make her economy scream. Our job is to transform a political balance of power in America which has our government imposing an embargo on Nicaragua while cozying up to apartheid. Our work has only begun. ●

*NEC member Joseph Schwartz has been active in the anti-apartheid movement since 1977.*