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Photo by Jim West

TAKING TO THE STREETS

Special Issue: Central America and Southern Africa

EDITORIALS



Photo by Rich Reinhard

THE ISSUE IS DEMOCRACY

There's many a notion Ronald Reagan doesn't grasp. He can't fathom, for example, why he's expected to remember when he authorized an about-face in US relations with Iran or why he was pestered so much about keeping tabs on the National Security Council. Yes, the President's hold on these matters is loose, but there's another issue he doesn't seem to have made contact with, let alone grasped. It's called democracy.

The will of the governed, civil liberties, rule by law — these concepts lie beyond the sweep of Reagan's foreign policy considerations. The same holds true for the simpler idea that not every anticommunist thug is a freedom-loving democrat.

The President's deficiency on the democracy issue translates into cynical disregard within his administration, and nowhere is this more evident than in the conduct of foreign policy in Central America and South Africa. Here the handy rule of thumb is as follows: First divide all

the players into two teams — communist bad guys and anticommunist good guys — and then feed the latter to fight the former.

The administration has found freedom patriots ready to do battle against evil communist dictators in Nicaragua and Angola. Meanwhile, the trustworthy South African regime not only stands as a bulwark against the communist-front African National Congress, it also is willing to destabilize every government in the region that is unfriendly to apartheid.

It's all quite tidy. Why complicate matters with messy notions like democracy? The desire of Nicaraguans, El Salvadorans, and other peoples in Central America to determine their own destinies is irrelevant. It's also of little interest when these people claim that economic and political domination of the vast majority by a small elite or by the United States is undemocratic. In South Africa, what difference does it make that 85 percent of the population is denied every basic democratic right?

The Reagan administration's disregard for democracy abroad has led inexorably to its disregard for democracy at home, and this is the most important way to understand the Contragate affair. In a world where only the defeat of the evil empire

matters, government by law becomes a nuisance.

The Tower Commission report failed to address this question, the fundamental question. Instead it emphasized the President's inability to grasp details, to follow through, to develop an adequate management style. This was an anemic conclusion, and who knows if the continuing investigations will do better?

Perhaps they will. But leaving the opposition to Reagan's policies in the hands of a few senators and members of Congress is unacceptable for the left and for all small-d democrats. Instead, there must be a broad-based, popular voice of opposition.

The April 25-27 mobilization in Washington, DC and the April 25 march in San Francisco are the most important events now on the agenda for that mass opposition. This is the opportunity to say *no* to US intervention in Central America and *no* to apartheid in South Africa. It is the opportunity to say that democracy is fundamental to our concept of foreign policy, that we grasp this notion and, moreover, we hold it dear.

— JOANNE BARKAN

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The Times They Are Achanging' . . . Again

by Richard Flacks

C Wright Mills once remarked that Americans tended to be "inactionary" rather than "reactionary." This seems a particularly apt formulation for characterizing the student majority in recent years. Both left and right activists were often frustrated by the indifference, cynicism and political blankness of their peers, who appeared to be fixated on activity guaranteed to secure their futures or to provide a jolt of momentary fun. Moreover, students were not only ignoring politics, they seemed equally insulated from the purposes of liberal education as such. For many, flocking to majors in business economics, computer science, and communications, going to college meant an opportunity for upscale vocational training. The very word "idealism" had negative connotations for members of the post-sixties student generation, for it meant to them the opposite of practical realism. Because fulfilling jobs were scarce, and the price of a comfortable life was escalating, "idealism" threatened the only pursuit that was sure — the careful calculation of career opportunity.

The political sensibility of the most recent student generation then was shaped by the impact of stagflation on opportunities for the young, buttressed by a media nurtured disillusionment with the "sixties" and a media hyped enthusiasm for neo-conservative perspectives, and reinforced by parents who themselves had been students in the not too dissimilar fifties. In general, these students adopted the electoral preferences of their parents, abstained from following the news, and endorsed ideological perspectives that were comfortable for the relatively privileged. Clearly, the days when rich kids felt guilty about their advantages, and were attracted by images of rebellion and spontaneous self-expression were over.

Still, the student majority, even at the

peak of student inactionism, shared certain views that hardly fit with the claim of a conservative trend. Large majorities of students supported the basic tenets of feminism, and rejected virtually every element of Reagan's foreign policy — supporting detente and disarmament, opposing US intervention in Central America. Students represented a solid constituency

for environmentalism. Finally, students continued to endorse what might be called a student "syndicalist" perspective, favoring government student aid programs, supporting student voice in university policy-making, expressing a sense of student solidarity vis-a-vis campus administration and other centers of authority. And, throughout this period, there was a minority of



Demonstrators at the University of California, Berkeley.

Photo by Mel Rosenthal

students that continued to identify with "idealism," often hungering for ways to publicly confront the inactionary stance of their contemporaries.

The question of divestment provided the opportunity for such a confrontation. During the height of the student movement in the sixties, it was typical that large numbers of students were most likely to protest when an issue arose that linked their particular institutional fate or setting to a larger social concern. University complicity with the war and the draft, with racism or the CIA, provided most of the focus for campus confrontations in those years. In the same way, the relationship between university investments and apartheid provided the most immediate opportunity for those students who felt restless with the prevailing political climate to find a public means to challenge it.

The university divestment movement has been quite effective. It has helped compel widespread reexamination of attitudes and policy, and heightened the public sense of urgency about South Africa. In a number of cases, most dramatically at the Univer-

sity of California, students succeeded in winning divestment, often against considerable odds. The South Africa protest indicated that student leftists were not as isolated as they (along with everyone else) had assumed, that a significant proportion of the student body might well be ready to respond to social injustice or to contribute to processes of social change.

Other signs suggest the arrival of a new generation on the campuses — a generation more receptive to "idealism", less vocationalist, readier to explore alternatives than the one now departing. For example, here at UCSB, students last year elected a self-conscious yippie as student body president, in the largest turnout in 15 years. In the same election, they voted no-confidence in a chancellor who had repeatedly expressed his contempt for student government and student opinion. This

versity weapons lab and university-military connections in general, environmental threats posed by oil industry exploitation off the southern California coast, evidence of racism on campus, date rape and other evidences of violence against women. I've noticed more interest this year than I have in a long time in discussions of the nature and purpose of education and the moral character of the institution. I am not talking about a massive uprising of the great majority but I am claiming to detect an emerging climate in which activists feel a more confident assertiveness, "idealism" begins to lose its negative connotations, and political ignorance becomes less fashionable. And, incidentally, this shift seems to be detectable in data from recent surveys of student attitudes conducted here at Santa Barbara and elsewhere as well.

Where does student activism and

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campaign revealed strong student readiness to identify with each other and to respond to their collective interests. The chancellor, incidentally, was forced to resign by the end of the school year as a result of multiple revelations of abuse of authority. This year, at least on my campus, the left activists, many of whom hold high positions in student government, continue to set the tone. Student interests include: the plight of Indians at Big Mountain, the uni-

idealism come from? One of the most important factors historically has to do with family upbringing. Many of the student radicals of the thirties grew up in the politicized atmosphere of working class Jewish families; many of the early New Leftists were reared in Old Left or liberal homes. Indeed, by the sixties, it was clear that a kind of liberal, intellectual subculture had developed in parts of the "middle class"; kids born into that milieu predominated in

the founding cohort of the New Left. If this sort of analysis holds any water, then the time is right for a new generation of student activists — if for no other reason than that the children of those who went to college in the sixties are not thronging the campuses. Many of these young people, having imbibed social concern with their mother's milk, are eager to share opportunities to express it.

The activist energy that can flow from such eagerness can influence large number of other students, especially because of the opportunities for communication and discourse that the residential campus provides. As I suggested above, mass student protest is likely to be ignited when students discover local links to large moral issues — in other words, where their power to influence their own institution can have an impact on consciousness of their group interests is activated — by threats to free expression, to student rights, or to their collective well-being.

Most of the time, of course, the conditions for such widescale mobilization aren't present. This frustrates activists yearning to see an immediate community response to their concerns. But politically conscious students play useful, if less earth-shaking, roles when they bring to their campuses information and ideas not readily available through conventional channels of communication. The new student generation is likely to be more attentive to such news than was its predecessor. Not only are they the children of the children of the sixties, but, like the rest of America, they have experienced the breaking of Ronald Reagan's spell. Meanwhile, world events — including the escalating struggles in South Africa and Central America, and the uncertainties of the economy — may make it harder to remain willfully inactionary.

Student activists of the eighties and nineties will have resources that their sixties counterparts lacked. First, students collectively have a good deal more power now than they did then — power derived from the gains of the sixties movement. Students have the vote and the potential clout that an electoral constituency can wield if it is so mobilized. This clout is enhanced in many states — and perhaps even at the federal level — by the fact that some now in key political office formed their political identity in the sixties. In California, for example, most of the legislators with central roles bearing on higher education have such roots; whatever changes they have personally gone through, their sense of identification with student constituencies

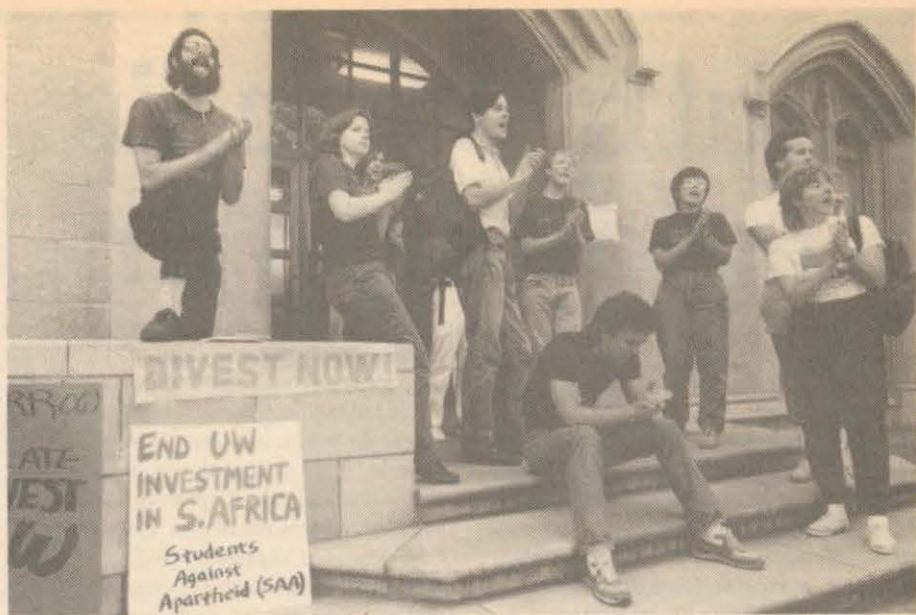


Photo by Jim Levitt/Impact Visuals

and interests remains strong.

Another resource available to student activists now is the far greater development of "adult" activism compared with the sixties. New Leftists tended to think that we had to remake the entire left; we found only a precious few older folk to look to for direction and only rare opportunities for easy alliance with off-campus action. Today's students are less likely to be in the vanguard of collective action; instead, they are likely to respond to initiatives begun in other milieux, like the church based resistance to Central American policy, or community based environmental or anti-nuclear activism. These wider movements can provide a high degree of expertise and material support to on-campus activists; on the other hand, because campus experience can be self-isolating, and students are often restless with "adult" leadership, opportunities for making links to such off-campus activism can easily be missed.

Finally, student activists of today have the (mixed?) blessing that many faculty are themselves veterans of sixties activism. Again, such people can provide valuable resources; indeed as the Berkeley anti-apartheid movement showed, militant faculty participation in some protest can occur and can be of fundamental strategic importance. On the other hand, faculty are notoriously resistant to the demands of organized politics, and are often likely to disappoint students by being unwilling to share their passion or urgency.

Because any new student movement will have more opportunities for influence through established political channels, it will probably lack much of the drama, militancy and passion characteristic of the six-

ties movement. As a result, both sixties veterans and some of the young may be tempted to find the new generation wanting in comparison with the earlier one. Yet, despite the capacity of a confrontational, "revolutionary" student movement to shake up the whole society, we ought to have learned from the sixties movement and its aftermath that passionate generational revolts have certain severe inherent limitations. These limitations were rooted in the fact that the campus is a kind of privileged sanctuary, whose members are cut off from the everyday needs and interests of the rest of society, and who accordingly can fail to make the links required for effective change. For students, such self-isolated politics can end up in disillusionment, because the student movement in its isolation failed to show members pathways toward post-student commitment.

A new student movement, however, can be a potent force in grassroots revitalization if it is linked to the already developed Left activism in the larger society. Student activism can be a crucible for preparing a new cohort of community activists, organizers and intellectuals to help build the next democratic wave in America. The feeling seems to be growing among progressives that we are at a turning point in which new possibilities for collective action are likely to open up. The fulfillment of these possibilities may depend on how well the new student idealism is nurtured. ●

Professor Richard Flacks teaches sociology at UCSB. He has been active in the Santa Barbara community for years and has written widely on progressive politics.

South Africa's Regional War

by Lisa Crooms

South Africa is waging a war on the black-ruled countries of southern Africa. The victims of this war number in the millions, and the stakes are high. The apartheid regime is waging this war as part of what it calls its "Total Strategy" for maintaining military, economic, and political dominance in the region. By "Total Strategy" South Africa means that it will use every means at its disposal, including internal repression and the exertion of economic, political, and military pressure against its neighbors, to preserve its system of racial dominance. Apartheid is fighting for its very existence, and this heinous system is pitted against those determined to see it dismantled and to have peace and

stability in the region.

South Africa's regional war has directly inflicted suffering on every one of its neighbors in the frontline states (FLS) — Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe — and the broader Southern Africa Development Coordinating Conference (SADCC) — the FLS states plus Lesotho, Swaziland, and Malawi. Some of the problems facing the nations in the region are the result of natural disasters and their own policy mistakes. But South Africa's regional policy of economic, political, and military destabilization is particularly designed to hurt countries already burdened with weak economic infrastructures, relatively underdeveloped political systems, and depressed world markets for their major export goods. In short, the apartheid regime is unabashedly exploiting the legacy of European col-

onialism, which made South Africa the industrial and transportation locus for a system that provided raw materials and luxury goods for the "mother countries," while steadily deteriorating the conditions of the indigenous populations.

South Africa's Dream Deferred

South Africa's Total Strategy of regional hegemony and maintenance of colonial structures of domination suffered a double blow in 1980 with the independence of Zimbabwe and the launching of SADCC. The apartheid regime rightly perceived these developments as a threat to white minority dominance, not only in the region but within South Africa as well.

South Africa had hoped that a sympathetic government under Bishop Abel



Mozambican family flees to Gasankulu homeland.

Photo by Tony Savino/Impact Visuals

Muzorewa would be the first to run majority-ruled Zimbabwe. But with the resounding victory of Robert Mugabe and his ZANU-PF party in the first Zimbabwean elections, South Africa was now confronted on its northern borders by three countries governed by movements that had waged successful guerilla wars against white minority rule. Faced with the complete failure of its political strategy for protecting its regional security interests, the government of P.W. Botha turned even more to the military and economic components of Total Strategy.

Shortly thereafter, the black-ruled nations of the region formed the Southern Africa Development Coordinating Conference. SADCC had three goals: 1) the liberation of the member nations' economies from their dependence on South Africa, 2) the eradication of inherited economic fragmentation, and 3) the coordination of their efforts towards regional and national economic stability and growth. Thus, SADCC stood in direct opposition to economic components of the Botha government's strategy of making southern Africa safe for apartheid and, in particular, for South African exports, investment, profits, and procurement. The more progressive countries were known to find apartheid abhorrent and a menace to regional stability, but the inclusion of the more conservative nations of Malawi and Swaziland in SADCC made it clear that even those black nations presumed to be more sympathetic to the South African government (vis-a-vis the other countries in the region) despised apartheid more than the "threat" of socialism.

In the early 1980s, South Africa's leaders were faced not only with the collapse, in the space of five years, of its regional military alliance with Portugal and Rhodesia, and a significant challenge to its economic hegemony over the region, but also with the resurgence of black rebellion at home. In response, and at the expense of both the black majority of South Africa and Namibia and the sovereignty, development, and true independence of its neighbors, the Pretoria regime stepped up its destabilizing activities through its proxy forces (UNITA in Angola, MNR in Mozambique, super-ZANU in Zimbabwe, and the Lesotho Liberation Army). By assisting insurgents fighting to overthrow legitimate and sovereign governments, launching cross-border attacks on its neighbors, and creating a climate of civil turmoil in southern African nations, South Africa sought to destroy regional and national economic infrastructures in order to force their

neighbors back into a position of dependency.

Apartheid's Partners

South Africa is not solely responsible for regional destruction and destabilization — the Reagan Administration's policy of "constructive engagement" has provided tacit support for South Africa's Total Strategy. Through this "quiet diplomacy," the US government allows South Africa to continue applying internal and external pressure on its "enemies," while punishing the victims of South Africa's attacks for defending themselves against aggression.

Two of the major cornerstones of "constructive engagement" were the signing of a non-aggression pact between South Africa and Mozambique and a ceasefire agreement between South Africa and Angola. Although the particulars of the agreements differed, both demanded that the black nations stop providing bases of operations for the South African and Namibian liberation movements in return for a South African pledge to halt its aid to the anti-government guerillas in their countries.

South Africa's detente victory was short-lived. Soon after the signing of these agreements, evidence was found that South Africa had not lived up to its end of the bargain and, in fact, had completely

To the Reagan administration, "constructive engagement" also meant supporting South Africa's effort to link the question of its occupation of Namibia to the continued presence of Cuban troops in Angola. The US has repeatedly echoed the South African argument that the Cubans present a threat to the furtherance of democracy in the region, thus rationalizing the need for US and South African assistance for UNITA. But both the US and South Africa ignore the fact that Angola invited Cuban assistance only after South Africa invaded that country in 1975, nor will they acknowledge that Angola has pledged that the Cubans will depart as soon as the South African army retreats from the border area and the US and South Africa stop aiding UNITA.

The majority of the victims of the warfare being waged by UNITA and the MNR (and indirectly, by South Africa and the US) are civilians, many of them children. According to the recently released "Children on the Front Line" report compiled by UNICEF, the devastation suffered by the children of Mozambique and Angola is alarming. In 1986 an estimated 140,000 Mozambican and Angolan children lost their lives because of the war and its indirect effects (drought, malnutrition, hunger) in both countries. The report had other disturbing findings:

* the mortality rate of children under one in



Ten-year-old after a UNITA raid in Angola.

disregarded the terms outlined in the US-initiated agreements. They continued to provide assistance for the MNR in Mozambique and maintained a military presence in Angola.

both countries is 200 per 1,000 live births (the highest in the world, tied with Afghanistan);

* 30 percent of the population has access to health services;

Photo by Cason/Fleishman/Impact Visuals

* 13 percent of Mozambicans have access to safe water.

Economic Isolation Key

SADCC is attempting to reorganize regional economic relationships through the initiation of economic development projects designed to lower the costs of services essential to economic growth for individual member nations. Transportation and communications projects are SADCC's major priorities since these are the two areas where SADCC members are most vulnerable. For example, their largest project is the refurbishment of the Beira Corridor, the primary transportation route from the Mozambique port of Beira to the interior, which the MNR rebels have rendered virtually impassable. The successful completion of such projects significantly help the region to lessen its dependence on South African transportation links. But for these projects to succeed, the sabotage campaigns of UNITA and MNR must be halted, which in turn means cutting off South African, US, and other Western support for these bandits.

Inextricably linked to the implementation of SADCC projects is the question of the imposition of comprehensive international sanctions against South Africa. Only if South Africa is isolated from its export markets, and denied crucial imports such as high technology and petroleum products, will the members of SADCC be able to tend to their own development needs. Complete economic isolation would force South Africa to redirect funds presently used to carry out and support regional destabilization toward internal uses. It would place South Africa in the position of having to bolster its own economy and ward off increased internal rebellion, as opposed to having a free hand to continue destabilizing its neighbors.

But in order for international economic sanctions to be of help to those countries who must oppose apartheid at the front lines, the West must also provide assistance to the members of SADCC. This assistance must be fashioned so as to respect SADCC's right of self-determination as well as to offset the effects of current and future "counter-sanctions" imposed on SADCC members by South Africa. Such a package of policies would signal a major reversal of US and Western policy toward SADCC and, indeed, toward the region as a whole. It would at last indicate a decision to truly stand with the people of southern Africa. ●

Lisa Crooms is research director for the American Committee on Africa.



Photo by Afrapix/Impact Visuals

Funeral of a squatter killed in Crossroads fighting.

New Directions In Divestment

by Brooke Baldwin

When Hampshire College in Amherst, Massachusetts divested its small endowment portfolio of stocks in companies doing business in South Africa just one decade ago, headlines did not appear in the pages of the nation's newspapers. No financial analysts predicted this would set a trend that would, within the next several years, result in divestments by dozens of schools, cities, and states. Few anti-apartheid activists dared hope that this first small divestment would multiply into so many successes. So, one might ask, if the US anti-apartheid movement has come so much further than we once thought possible, why should we now seek new directions? Why don't we just concentrate on adding to the constantly swelling list of divested institutions? Why tamper with suc-

cess?

The answer lies in the way we define success in accordance with the goals we have set. Every divestment surely is a success for the awareness it raises, the focus and catalyst it provides for organizing, the moral statement it makes, the solidarity it expresses to the oppressed and struggling people it supports, and the pressure it exerts upon the power brokers in the corporate and political world. However, unless the combined divestments have the effect of exerting enough pressure to force a significant reduction in the US corporate presence in South Africa, the ultimate goal of the movement's divestment strategy remains unachieved. And, unfortunately, large-scale US corporate withdrawal from South Africa does not appear imminent despite increased divestments.

Indeed, in the past few months this goal may well have moved further from our grasp, because of a clever corporate counter strategy. The strategy is actually

quite simple. A growing list of companies whose most notable members are IBM, GM, and Coca Cola, have announced that they are disinvesting from South Africa, selling their subsidiaries there for a variety of ethical and business reasons. The sales are calculated to gain the corporations at least two advantages: an improved public image no longer tarnished by charges of underpinning apartheid, and their removal from divestment "hit lists." By appearing to have met the conditions for corporate withdrawal, these "disinvested" corporations would become eligible to have their stocks purchased by institutions covered by divestment policies and laws.

However, the companies have obscured the fact that these "divestments" are simply paper withdrawals which have not interrupted for one minute the manufacturing or sales of their products in South Africa nor the profits and taxes they generate. The appearance of withdrawal threatens to allow companies to continue to operate with impunity, free from legal sanction or public disapproval. It is in answer to this counter divestment strategy that new directions are being sought by the anti-apartheid movement. And, as often occurs, this obstacle placed in the way of a long-overdue goal has actually provided the opportunity for the movement to clarify and strengthen its position.

In a cooperative effort, five major national anti-apartheid organizations forged a set of guidelines for divestment designed to enable investors and consumers to judge whether companies are still supporting apartheid. The American Committee on Africa, the American Friends Service Committee, the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility, Trans Africa, and the Washington Office on Africa noted in the preface to the guidelines:

"As a result of both the growing internal resistance to apartheid and the expanding divestment movement in the US, an increasing number of US companies have moved to end their direct investment in South Africa. However, we feel it is essential to distinguish between those corporations for which withdrawal means the termination of all economic ties to South Africa, and those for which withdrawal merely indicates a restructuring of economic relations."

Under the guidelines, those companies continuing to sell products or services in South Africa through licensing and franchise agreements are still considered to be operating in South Africa, and are still to be targeted for divestment and protest action. Of the recent pullouts, only Kodak, Boeing, and Ecolair meet the guidelines; companies

that have merely restructured their relationship include IBM, Coca Cola, Exxon, Honeywell, and Proctor and Gamble.

Assemblywoman Maxine Waters of California, who was central to the framing

as activists realize the power this type of legislation wields over government contractors.

But perhaps the most interesting new direction the movement is taking is a bank

"Companies that have merely restructured their relationship include IBM, Coca Cola, Exxon, Honeywell, and Proctor and Gamble."

and passage of California's divestment legislation, has pledged that she will "work overtime to ensure that our legislation reflects these guidelines and continues to target any and all US companies that are doing business in or with South Africa." And student groups nationwide are responding to the danger that universities will reinvest in companies that have undertaken sham withdrawals. For instance, the University of Illinois Anti-Apartheid Coalition is drafting a new divestment resolution which explicitly covers any company with licenses or franchises in South Africa, because some trustees have already indicated they're ready to buy IBM and GM stock.

Various community and university groups have also recognized the need to support more than the divestment of pension and endowment funds. Selective purchasing bills, which cut off lucrative government contracts for offending companies, are being proposed in more and more cities

campaign directed at cutting off the correspondent banking relationships many US banks still maintain with South African banks. These are the relationships that facilitate international trade; should they all be cut off, there would be a de facto trade embargo. In the absence of federal legislation or a UN resolution, mandating comprehensive sanctions, both unlikely candidates for passage under the current administration, an effective cut-off of correspondent banking would be a major victory.

Thus, the struggle continues, not on a straight, unswerving path, but in new directions designed to avoid the obstacles set up by corporate elites. The shortest distance between two points is not, in this struggle at least, always a straight line. ●

Brooke Baldwin works with the American Friends Service Committee's Southern Africa Program.



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A Better World in Birth

by Michael Harrington

“**W**omen, the victims of the most ancient and continuous form of oppression, have learned the same basic lesson as the European workers of the nineteenth century who won the right to vote and then had to press on for economic and social democracy, or the newly independent nations of our own time which had to take up the struggle for economic decolonialization... Even with full political rights, and particularly in the welfare states of the West where there have been social gains, women remain second class citizens as long as they are segregated in inferior occupations and/or in unpaid labor in the home, and are nearly excluded from the corridors of political power.

“In the Third World, women’s rights are not merely a matter of democratic principle... They are also a potentially powerful force for economic development, a liberation, not simply of the individual woman, but also of an untapped social and economic resource.

“So we are trade unionists, anti-colonialists and feminists for the same reason: that we seek economic and social liberation in every sphere of life by means of political democracy.”

This clear statement of feminist principle was adopted by the Socialist International at its Congress in Lima last June. It was proposed by the Socialist International Women and unanimously adopted as a part of the “Mandate of Lima,” which outlines the new Declaration of Principles to be adopted by the International during the next three years.

For members of DSA, that feminist declaration simply articulates an obvious truth. But for the mass parties of the European left, as well as the more than twenty Latin American member parties of the SI, it records a significant ideological advance. Even more to the point, one of the key SI

leaders, Gro Harlem Brundtland, acted on those principles when she became Prime Minister of Norway just before the June Congress. Noting that her party — which, like most of the European socialist organizations, mandates a percentage of seats for women in its leading committees — has 40 percent of its top posts held by women, she proceeded to form a government in which 40 percent of the cabinet were women. —

Transformation

This is only one sign of the tremendous transformation of the SI since Willy Brandt became its President in 1976. From

was held in Lima is another indication of this profound shift. Peru’s president, Alan Garcia, is the leader of APRA, an SI member party, and the man who has successfully defied the International Monetary Fund by refusing to pay more than 10 percent of his country’s export income toward its international debts. The International came to Lima to show solidarity with Garcia, formally endorsed the principle of non-payment, and adopted a wide-ranging “action program” put forward by Michael Manley, the former prime minister of Jamaica and a key SI leader on Third World issues.



President Garcia of Peru.

its constitution at Frankfurt in 1951 until 1976, the International was primarily an “old boys” reunion of European Left politicians with an ideology shaped in the coldest days of the Cold War. Under Brandt, it has become a dynamic institution in which the non-European parties are in a majority and its politics, though based on consensus, have moved steadily toward the left on issues of peace, the Third World, the environment, and social movements.

The very fact that the 1986 Congress

The SI Committee on Economic Policy, which Manley chairs, had written an important statement on North-South relations which had been previously adopted by the International. But Manley and two of the coauthors of that statement, Jan Pronk and Stuart Holland, were concerned that it was cheap and easy to adopt high flown declarations. They pointed out that when Third World socialist parties were in power — when, for instance, Manley was under attack from Washington as Prime Minister

Photo by Paul Weinberg/Impact Visuals

of Jamaica — the European socialists did little to help them. So the Lima Congress actually committed itself to trying to coordinate at least a minimal socialist solidarity on such issues."

Moreover, the Congress was preceded by a Leader's Meeting in Gabarone, Botswana, in April. Coming less than a year after the South Africans had carried out a terrorist attack against the African National Congress (ANC) in that city — and followed by another attack — it was an act of solidarity with the ANC and the Front Line States. Indeed, it was at this meeting where our conversations with African activists and the representatives of the Swedish Socialists set in motion the tour of Susan Mnumzana of the ANC sponsored by DSA last fall.

The Congress also reiterated its opposition to American intervention in Central America and re-elected Guillermo Ungo, the leader of the Salvadoran Revolutionary Democratic Front, as a Vice President of the SI. Less happily, the Congress had to deal with the fact that it was under armed attack from the guerrillas of Sendero Luminoso, a Pol Pot-type insurgency. One woman blew herself up while attempting to launch a rocket into the opening session, and there were a number of bombings in Lima. Risings of real and alleged members of Sendero Luminoso in the jails of Peru were repressed by outrageous force, including the execution of people who had surrendered. The SI leadership condemned the Peruvian army for this action and called upon Garcia to punish those responsible for it.

If the resolutions are significant as a sign of a general leftward movement among the SI parties, the frank discussions in the corridors of the Congresses and meetings are even more revealing, and enormously useful. Many liberation movements, including the ANC, see the International as an opportunity to make their case before the world. At the 1983 Congress in Portugal, Issam Sartawi, the moderate Palestinian leader, was murdered the day before he was to have a private meeting with Shimon Peres of the Israeli Labor Party. For all of its faults, Sartawi said shortly before his assassination, the International offers a forum to the oppressed of the world. And that, as Barbara Ehrenreich noted in the *Nation* at the time, is perhaps the central function of the SI.

SI member parties have also made more concrete contributions to the cause of national liberation. The Swedish Socialists, for instance, have been a major source of



Photo by Gretchen Domart

Mike Harrington and Willy Brandt at Eurosocialism conference.

financial help for the ANC. The Venezuelan member party supported the Sandinistas when they were engaged in armed struggle, and various leaders of the SI — Brandt himself, Felipe Gonzalez, and Francois Mitterrand during the period of the Socialist majority government — have acted to defend Nicaragua against American armed intervention.

DSA and the SI

The Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee (DSOC), one of the two predecessor organizations of DSA, became a member of the SI at the same Geneva Congress of 1976 where Brandt became President. Over the intervening eleven years, it has proved a tremendously rewarding relationship for us. Among the many benefits were the 1980 "Eurosocialism and America" conference, which brought Mitterrand, Gonzalez, Brandt, Tony Benn, Palme, and others to the U.S.; several campus speaking tours involving European and Latin American radical youth; the participation of Guillermo Ungo and Nicaraguan Foreign Minister Miguel d'Escoto at our last two conventions; and the recent ANC tour.

We also play a modest internal role within the International. At a recent meeting in Bonn, for example, we were able to make a small amendment clarifying the SI's opposition to Star Wars in a major document on arms control. We have been particularly vocal on such issues as gender, South Africa, and peace, where the American movement is sometimes more developed than our European comrades. We probably make our greatest impact through my participation in the Resolutions

and New Declaration Committees, although these are areas limited by the consensus style of decision-making the SI employs.

It would, however, be foolish to pretend that DSA, as one of the smallest member organizations, can play a leading role in the International. That will not happen. Nevertheless, most of the leaders of socialist mass parties — having known illegality or exile in their own lives — are sympathetic to our plight, and are thus more open to us than a purely pragmatic assessment of our power would require.

But above all, DSA's membership has made us part of a genuine international movement which, if it is restricted by institutional prudence and necessity, is real enough to be a meeting place of the world's left. It is there that we have created ties with the Central Americans and Southern Africans, with Butz Acquino of the left wing of the Philippine movement and with the leaders of the struggle in South Korea. International solidarity is, as Michael Manley pointedly reminds the SI on every possible occasion, easier to preach than practice. But through our work in the International we have actually practiced it to the best of our ability.

At Lima, when the choir intoned the "Internationale" at the opening session, we were nervous enough, having had a brief discussion in the DSA delegation as to exactly how to hit the floor in the case of a terrorist attack. And yet, as the anthem sounded and we looked around at men and women from every corner of the globe, dedicated to the cause of the wretched of the earth, we knew we had come to the right place. ●

Michael Harrington is co-chair of DSA.

DSACTION

Edited by Guy Molyneux

UPCOMING

● With April 25th still a month away, the Washington, DC **Mobilization of Justice and Peace in Central America and Southern Africa** has the potential to have a much larger impact on US foreign policy than anyone could have imagined when planning for the march began last Fall. In the aftermath of the Iran/contra scandal, a mass showing of popular opposition to Reagan's Central America and Southern Africa policies could finally close the door on US aid to both the Nicaraguan *contras* and UNITA, the South African-backed Angolan guerillas.

Even more importantly, a large turnout on April 25th will send a message to Congress that the American people will not be satisfied with simply an end to contra aid or the passage of partial South Africa sanctions. We will be marching for policies that promote peaceful solutions to the conflict in Central America, particularly for an end to military aid to Guatemala and El Salvador and the US military occupation of Honduras. And we will be marching for a severance of all economic ties with the apartheid regime and for meaningful US support for the efforts of black-ruled states in Southern Africa to end their economic dependence on the apartheid state.

Initial reports from the April 25th coalitions that have formed in nearly 100 cities suggest that a high turnout for the Washington and San Francisco marches is very possible. Quite simply, April 25th has the potential to be the largest national mobilization since the 1983 "Twentieth Anniversary March for Jobs, Peace, and Justice." And DSA will be there in force.

Our locals and youth chapters throughout the country are active building local coalitions and mobilizing their members to travel to Washington and San Francisco. We hope to contact every DSA member to urge them to make the trip on the 25th and march behind the DSA banners (easily identified by the fist and rose). We will

provide DSA placards to all who want to carry them. Locals are also encouraged to make their own banners (be creative!) to help maximize DSA's visibility. For more information on DSA's mobilizing efforts, contact either Matthew Countryman in the DSA National office (212-962-0390) or

lobby their representatives on Central America legislation. Meanwhile, thousands more protesters will travel to Langley, Virginia to commit acts of non-violent civil disobedience — or support those who are doing so — at CIA headquarters. Both the lobby day and the civil disobedience are

Vital Statistics

On April 25th, the fist and rose will lead DSA members and friends as they march for peace and justice in Central America and southern Africa. The National Office will provide DSA placards to marchers, but local signs and banners are also welcome. So bring all your friends and comrades to Washington or San Francisco, and look for our banner and balloons. **Gathering Points:** DSA contingents will form at 11:00 a.m. with the Peace and Justice group. In Washington you'll find us on the Ellipse, 17th Street and Constitution Avenue; and in San Francisco at Justin Herman Plaza (at the foot of Market Street).

Festivities: Following the rallies on both coasts, DSA will sponsor a reception/party for all members and friends. The Washington reception begins after the rally, 7:30 at St. Steven's Church (16th and Newton Streets, NW) and will feature welcoming remarks by DSA Co-Chair Michael Harrington, Michael Urquhart of AFGE, and a representative of the National Union of Salvadoran Workers (UNTS). We'll then have plenty of music and refreshments. The San Francisco party will be held at 55 Octavia Street, and starts at 9 p.m.

For more information: Call Matthew Countryman in DSA's New York office, (212) 962-0390, or Miriam Peskowitz in the Berkeley office, (415) 428-1354.

Miriam Peskowitz in the West Coast Office (415-428-1354).

We must also remember that the Mobilization will only be half over when the final speakers address the crowds in Washington and San Francisco. The weekend's events will conclude on Monday when, using two different tactics, we will bring Saturday's message directly to the doorsteps of Washington's foreign policy makers and operatives. On Capitol Hill, activists will invade the halls of Congress to

critical to the success of the Mobilization.

DSA members are critically needed to participate in both of Monday's events. Those who wish to lobby should make their own appointments with their congresspeople, while those who wish to participate in the civil disobedience must attend a non-violence training and logistics briefing on Sunday afternoon in Washington. If you are unable to stay in Washington, please plan to contact your congressional representatives on that Monday to

inform them of your support for both the lobbying and the civil disobedience actions.

While all of the April 25-27 events will be important, the true impact of the Mobilization may not become evident until the weekend itself is over. The historic coalition of church, labor, and progressive groups that DSA helped to pull together for April 25th truly has the potential to ignite a mass movement that could redirect the whole course of American foreign policy. Despite differences in political and strategic perspectives, these groups have been able to forge a working coalition that is producing tremendous results. The labor leaders involved have found in the coalition both support for their struggle against the AFL-CIO's narrowly anticommunist foreign policy and respect for the particular strategies they have adopted to wage that struggle; anti-apartheid, Central America, and other activists have developed the links between their particular issue concerns and organizing strategies that make those links clear. The task before DSA and the entire anti-intervention community is to continue to build this church-labor-progressive coalition right through the Mobilization and beyond.

REPORTS

● The January 16-18 National Board meeting, held in Washington, D.C., marked an important step forward for DSA. Delegates were almost unanimous in considering this one of the finest leadership gatherings in the organization's history. And, perhaps reflecting changes in the national political climate, the proceedings were permeated with a new sense of possibility and opportunity.

Following an opening keynote address by co-chair Michael Harrington, the delegates moved right into committees to consider resolutions. This provided the opportunity for full and lively debate on the most important issues facing us as an organization, and permitted satisfactory compromises to be developed in a very comradely way. Saturday concluded with two short plenary discussions: "DSA Strategy" with Joanne Barkan, Shakoor Aljuwani, and Guy Molyneux, and "Local Building" with Mary Dunn, Joseph Schwartz, and Laila Atallah.

Sunday was devoted to final consideration of resolutions reported out of the committees. The two most hotly debated



Photo by Mary Babic

James Farmer addresses the National Board.

issues were DSA's relationship to the Rainbow Coalition and our attitude toward revolutionary movements in Central America.

Although we won't be deciding the question of a presidential endorsement for some months, there is clearly a great deal of support for Jesse Jackson and the Rainbow Coalition within DSA. After much discussion, the Board passed a major resolution calling on us to 1) develop a working relationship with the Rainbow, 2) urge full and equal consideration for Jackson in the AFL-CIO and other union presidential endorsement processes, 3) hire an experienced minority organizer to support locals' work with the Rainbow and to help develop local anti-racist activity, 4) undertake an internal educational campaign and debate

around the Rainbow, 5) have the Afro-American Commission to help coordinate our work with the Rainbow and the black community, and 6) initiate an organization-wide discussion on the form and nature of a possible presidential endorsement.

Also in the electoral field, we resolved that the Democratic Alternatives leadership and staff should explore with our various coalition partners the possibility of joint work around the 1988 Democratic platform process at the local, state, regional, and national levels with a view toward promoting a small number of major policy demands.

The debate on Central America pivoted around the extent to which DSA should express criticisms of the Nicaraguan government. It was agreed that

DSA is in solidarity with Nicaragua, however some felt that it was necessary to combine the declaration of solidarity with certain criticisms of Sandinista policy, while others felt that such criticisms were inconsistent with general solidarity. After an extended floor debate, the final resolution affirmed our support for political pluralism within Nicaragua and for a policy of non-alignment with either superpower.

Also in the international area, the Board voted to affirm our active commitment to build for the April 25 Mobilizations in Washington and San Francisco; to continue to provide resources to locals involved in campaigns to keep state National Guard units out of Central America; to endorse the CISPES-initiated referendum on U.S. policy in Central America (involving the circulation of a petition); to urge locals to join campaigns which provide material aid to Southern African liberation forces; and to suggest that locals become involved in local arms control efforts.

The most significant new project launched at the Board was a year-long anti-poverty campaign. In marking the 25th anniversary of Michael Harrington's *"The Other America"*, DSA will launch an effort to delineate and attack myths about the poor and poverty in the United States. For the campaign, and for a related *"Day of Action and Reflection"* on November 17th, DSA will raise funds to hire staff, produce a video, and coordinate local actions and education around issues of poverty.

All in all, the National Board meeting was quite a success, both in its content and in the manner in which debate was conducted. And there was a sense among those present that with the Reagan administration beginning to crumble, the U.S. political pendulum may again be heading toward the left.

(All resolutions passed by the Board can be obtained from the New York office.)

● The first regional Democratic Alternatives conference was held in Albany, NY, on Feb. 27-28. Over 225 people from across New York State and New England came together. The response was so good that we ran out of both chairs and registration packets!

Speakers included Bob Lekachman, AFSCME DC 37's Stanley Hill, Steve Max, William Julius Wilson, Mark Green,



"You're fleeing a communist takeover of your native Transylvania? In that case, welcome to America!"

Ann Lewis, Mike Harrington, Barbara Ehrenreich, New York State NOW president Noreen Connell, Assemblyman Arthur Eve — head of the NYS Rainbow Coalition civil rights attorney Laura Blackburne, political scientist Ethel Klein, and many others.

The theme of the conference was "Social Needs and a Changing Economy." Major plenary sessions addressed the current state of the nation, a progressive strategy for tackling social issues and the economy, and future strategies for the left as we approach 1988. Among the issues discussed in more depth were national family policy, health policy, education, welfare, and affirmative action and social policy.

In June, Kansas City will host a Midwest regional conference, "The Great Plains Democratic Alternatives Conference," where issues of farm and rural policy will be addressed. Plans are also in the works for conferences to be held in Detroit, Chicago, and perhaps Boston as the

year progresses.

● More than 250 students from 50 campuses attended the DSA Youth Section's annual winter education/outreach conference at Columbia University over the Presidents Day weekend. Large delegations came from as far as Michigan, Ohio, and North Carolina. Both the organizers and participants felt that the conference was one of the best ever.

At Friday evening's opening panel, Nomazizi Sokudela of the ANC, Sofia Clarke from the Nicaraguan Embassy, and former Congresswoman Bella Abzug helped give the students both an international and historical perspective on Reaganism and its current decline. Michael Harrington, speaking last, argued for understanding political issues as "part of a structure of injustice and not discrete, individual problems."

Two plenaries were held on Saturday. The morning session focused on the crucial need for, and some of the problems of, campus organizing around foreign policy issues. Participating were Bogdan Denitch of DSA's International Affairs Committee, military analyst Sara Miles, and Jerry Herman of AFSC's Southern Africa Program. Classism, sexism, and racism in post-secondary educational institutions were discussed in the afternoon by Reginald Wilson of the American Council on Higher Education, Richard Hendrick of the Bank Street College of Education, and Youth Section activist Eva Bertram. The speakers emphasized the radicalizing po-



Roger Wilkins, Bogdan Denitch, Ruth Jordon, and John Judis at the Board meeting.

Photo by Mary Babic



Bella Abzug opens the Winter youth conference.

tential of exposing contradictions between what the university teaches and what its practices, especially its inability to grant young people power over their own institutions.

Sunday featured a morning session with sociologist Joan Mandel, economist David Kotz, and the Midwest Academy's Steve Max. From different vantage points, each delivered an analysis of contemporary US economic and social policy, and discussed strategies for progressive political change. Conference participants also met in smaller groups throughout the weekend for educational and organizing workshops, many led by students, on such topics as the labor movement, disarmament, politics and sexuality, Central America, Southern Africa, environmentalism, socialist economics, and art and social issues.

Bill Spencer and Barbara Ehrenreich gave inspiring presentations for the Sunday afternoon closing. Bill, who is finishing two years as DSA's Youth Organizer in June, summarized the goals of the conference in three words: "Educate, Agitate, and Organize." Barbara spoke of challenging the cynicism and apathy student activists face in the 1980s, and of making a lifetime commitment to activism.

Some 40 activists stayed for a special Monday session, kicked off by a discussion with Michael Harrington and Guy Molyneux on current national DSA work. Presentations by DSA Youth Section chair Paul Kumar and Executive Committee member Sherri Levine on issues of racism and sexism on campus provoked an excellent and lengthy discussion. Most of the day was then devoted to discussing chapter development and organizing strategies, with particular attention to feminist work, community organizing, student-labor solidarity, combatting rightwing activists, building coalitions, and media — issues that had also been covered in the weekend's workshops.

● DSA's Anti-Racism Commission held a very successful mini-conference in Washington prior to the National Board. The Commission is working to build the April 25th mobilization and is producing an internal guide for an anti-racism workshop.

Contributors to DSACTION: Jane Weina, Miriam Peskowitz, Matthew Countryman, and Jim Shoch.

RESOURCES

● Latin American leaders stressed grassroots participation as the key to democracy throughout the hemisphere and the importance of regional unity in a series of interviews just published by the North American Congress on Latin America (NACLA). The interviews appear in a special issue of NACLA's bimonthly magazine, *Report on the Americas*, marking the organization's twentieth anniversary.

Among the ten prominent figures interviewed are former Jamaican Prime Minister Michael Manley; Sandinista leader Dora Maria Tellez, currently Nicaragua's Minister of Health; Schafik Handal of El Salvador's insurgent Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN); and Uruguayan author Eduardo Galeano. These and other political and religious leaders, human rights activists and artists tell of their personal experiences and analyze major events in recent Latin American history, often addressing themes of democracy and regional unity.

Michael Manley, interviewed by *Report on the Americas* editor Martha Doggett, argues democracy must be conceived broadly, "as something far deeper than parliamentary work" having "more to do with how people develop their capacity to act in self-reliant terms through collective action."



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ON THE LEFT



by HARRY FLEISCHMAN

California

Sacramento DSA is working on the West Coast April 25th Mobilization of Jobs, Peace, and Justice . . . They are arranging a reception for Jesse Jackson at an April 6 rally against state cuts in education . . . Members are assisting in the defense of undocumented immigrant workers in their area in cooperation with the DSA Latino Commission . . . Los Angeles DSA co-sponsored an event for Oliver Tambo recognizing the 75th anniversary of the African National Congress . . . Members demonstrated in San Fernando Valley against the use of the National Guard in Central America . . . As part of the April 25th Mobilization they are organizing a week of Central America demonstrations in late March.

District of Columbia/Maryland

DC/Maryland DSA is organizing a Mid-Atlantic DSA Retreat June 26-28, 1987 . . . The local recently endorsed a CISPES campaign to make DC a sanctuary city and a Citizen Action campaign to democratize Maryland's banking system . . . Baltimore DSA is fundraising for 1987 projects including a Fall anti-poverty event.

Missouri

Kansas City DSA is organizing the "Great Plains Democratic Alternatives Conference" scheduled for June 19-21 at the University of Kansas City; speakers will include IAM president William Winpisinger, economist Jeff Faux, Mike Harrington and Barbara Ehrenreich; organizers are planning to draw people from all the surrounding states to discuss a democratic left response to the crisis in rural America.

Kentucky

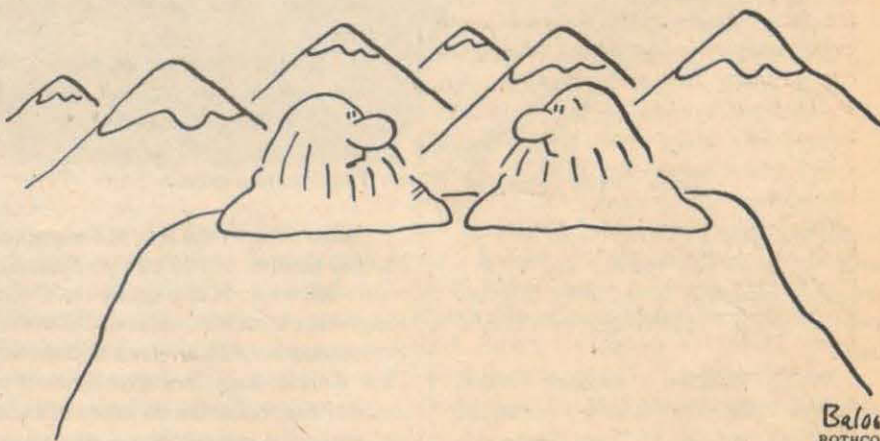
Central Kentucky will sponsor a community conference "Oppression in our Midst: Racism/Sexism Today" March 28th, featuring racial justice organizer Anne Branden and DSA Afro-American Commission member Paulette Pierce . . . The local sponsors a monthly video series

and feminist-socialist brunches . . . They are maintaining close involvement with the Rainbow Coalition and hope to send several buses to Washington April 25th.

Massachusetts

Boston has a DSA car on a train reserved for demonstrators in the Washington DC April 25th March on Washington . . . Recently they held a forum on socialism and sexuality . . . The local was part of a coalition to protest the showing of "America" and to promote alternative events and coverage during the broadcast; a two hour video "Americans respond to the mini-series America" will be sent to the Soviet embassy and the White House. . . Upcoming events include a fundraiser for DSA vice-chair and San Francisco Supervisor Harry Britt who is running for congress in California.

socialist discussion group continues . . . They are working with the Rainbow Coalition, and are organizing to bring people to the April 25th Mobilization . . . Suffolk County DSA is active in their local Democratic party and with the Rainbow Coalition. They helped to elect a liberal Democrat — George Hochbrueckner — to the U.S. Congress; now there are several DSAers on his staff . . . The local is involved in a lawsuit against discriminatory zoning . . . New York City DSA honored Congressperson Major Owens and UAW 259 President Sam Myers at their Debs-Thomas dinner . . . Members are phonebanking to bring a large group to the April 25th Mobilization in Washington DC . . . Ithaca DSA sponsored a video showing of the Monoragon cooperatives — an extensive network of prosperous, worker owned and operated collectives in



"Of course, non-violence works best on mountaintops."

Michigan

Ann Arbor DSA is gearing up for the spring city elections and assessing their relation to the city government; they have initiated an attempt to force the city government to do an in-house study on pay-equity . . . Mobilizing an anti-intervention coalition to focus on the national April 25th march in Washington and a local March 29th rally has been a top priority for the Detroit and Ann Arbor locals.

New York

Albany DSA hosted the Democratic Alternatives Conference in February (see separate report) . . . Nassau County DSA raised money through a benefit party for NEST — New El Salvador Today. Their

the Basque country.

Ohio

Cleveland DSA is working on the sanctuary city campaign. They are building support for the idea in the city council, and are making it a public issue . . . The local is sponsoring educational forums with Barbara Ehrenreich and Frances Fox Piven . . . Students at Cleveland State University have arranged for Michael Harrington to serve as visiting professor in May . . . DSAers are predicting a thousand people from Ohio at the April 25th Mobilization.

Pennsylvania

Central Pennsylvania DSA organized a

regional demonstration against U.S. policy in Central America and Southern Africa . . . sponsored a program called "More than Homeless" . . . they organized around the showing of CBS melodrama "Amerika" . . . Barbara Ehrenreich will speak for the Red Rose School on socialist feminism in March . . . Jack Spooner, a DSA member and representative to the International League of Religious Socialists in Managua, Nicaragua this fall, recently spoke in opposition to a *contra* spokesperson . . . Reading Pennsylvania DSA honored Barbara Ehrenreich and Ted Bricker at their 1986 Maurer-Stump Award Dinner. They joined a protest at the GE factory in Valley Forge against the warhead components produced there. A talk on the current situation in Chile was also held. Platform on Sexuality" at the University of Pennsylvania featuring writer and Bryn Mawr professor of social research Carole Joffe. Their Peace Committee is holding a telethon to generate opinion-grams on the National Guard issue. A key issue now is the Philadelphia city primary election campaign . . . Bucknell University organized for the International Paperworkers lockout rally in Lewisburg which drew 800 people from the area . . . Pittsburgh helped collect some 16,000 signatures for a petition to have City Council members elected by district rather than at-large; the issue will be on the ballot in May . . . 10 buses are reserved for the April 25th march in Washington, DC.

Tennessee

Nashville DSA met in February with Rainbow Coalition members for a roundtable on Jesse Jackson and the Rainbow Coalition.

Texas

The Houston and Austin DSA locals brought Paul Baer, Youth Section activist and former Texas resident, for an 18-day visit to the University of Houston, the University of Texas at Austin and San Antonio, and the College of the Mainland . . . The tour of Nicaraguan students will be visiting these campuses in April.

Utah

Utah DSA recently sponsored a forum "Is Free Speech for Everyone?" to discuss how red-baiting is used to repress progressive social movements . . . They are planning to join the San Francisco Mobilization April 25th.

Editorials

continued from page 2

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

Five years ago, the Democratic Socialists of America was created by a merger of the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee and the New American Movement. The result has been an enormous plus for the American left.

In the first phase of socialist unity, DSA grew rapidly because many activists were heartened by the fact that the movement was coming together, not splitting. That mood was reinforced by the anti-Reagan militancy of the recession year of 1982 and by the fact that the predictions of the critics of the merger turned out to be false.

Within a year or so, however, DSA encountered some difficult times. There was a debilitating financial crisis, a shift in the national mood as Reagan benefited from an uneven and contradictory "recovery" which was strong enough to push him to a landslide reelection and a generational shift within DSA which saw many of the sixties activists, who were the soul of the organization, become parents and necessarily more involved in their personal and professional lives than before.

Yet DSA weathered this period, which afflicted all of the social and political movements of the left, better than most organizations. And during the last year or so we have felt the wind in our sails. To cite just a few reasons for optimism: the Youth Section meeting this February was large and vital; the Democratic Alternatives Coalition, in which we have played a significant role, has reinvigorated the entire democratic left on programmatic issues; our tour of a spokesperson of the African National Congress last fall was a success; DSA played a catalytic role in helping get the April 25th Mobilization against intervention in Central America and apartheid in southern Africa off the ground; and we are currently involved in a major initiative to build a broad based coalition which will carry out a national day of action and awareness on poverty on November 17th.

We have done better than mere survival. And in the years just ahead, we see the opportunity for an even more important

socialist role in the mass democratic left of the United States. Not bad for a five year old.

— MICHAEL HARRINGTON

BE THERE

The April 25th Mobilization marks the first time that leaders of major unions have participated in a national action for peace and justice in Central America or southern Africa. The official call to the march was signed by a coalition of trade union and religious leaders, including the presidents of 19 international unions. This unprecedented action presents the labor movement with a major challenge and opportunity.

Many of these labor officials have been organizing inside the AFL-CIO for a foreign policy based on a real international solidarity and a commitment to peace, democracy, and respect for human and trade union rights. Until now, their activity has been confined to organizing fact-finding trips, publishing reports, and intervening in discussions at AFL-CIO conventions and meetings. While their focus has been on Central America, the principles they have been developing have obvious relevance throughout the world, especially in southern Africa.

These labor leaders have now taken their campaign public, calling on their members and supporters to join them in Washington on April 25th. The AFL-CIO leadership will be paying close attention and a poor turnout will be interpreted as proof that the endorsing unions do not really have rank-and-file support. A large turnout is therefore crucial to the campaign to change the AFL-CIO's foreign policy.

April 25th is also an unparalleled opportunity for the peace, anti-apartheid, and anti-intervention forces in the labor movement. We can organize support around these issues as never before, through passage of resolutions, solicitation of endorsements, and mobilization of our members. We can help build a far broader movement than has been accomplished so far by the various anti-apartheid and anti-intervention organizations. And we can demonstrate that international labor solidarity is based upon support for the legitimate struggles of working people throughout the world, independent of their particular organizational affiliations or political orientation. Labor's fundamental principle should apply throughout the world: An injury to one is an injury to all.

— MIKE URQUHART

"Our Nicaragua"

The Democratic Left and Central America

Editors' Note: In the following "Roundtable" discussion, John Beverly and Bogdan Denitch take up the question of a proper democratic socialist perspective on the Sandinistas and the Nicaraguan revolution.

by John Beverly

The Cuban writer and patriot José Martí used to speak of 'nuestra América' (our America), by which he meant 'Latin' America, as opposed to 'their' America, i.e., the United States of. If we ask about the America the US socialist movement addresses today, however, it is clear that in several important ways it's an America that includes Martí's. When we take into account that Hispanics will be the largest ethnic minority in the United States by 1990 (numbering some 30 million), that the United States is the fifth largest Hispanic nation in the world today, and that because of the crisis in that country, nearly one out of ten Salvadorans is currently in the United States, then Central America is not simply a foreign policy issue. It has to do with the present and future shape of the United States itself.

The Reagan years have brought a profound vulgarization of political sensibility. In terms of Central America this means that Reagan will continue to press for support for the *contras*, as he did in his State of the Union Message. Secondly, even if Congress cuts off such support, the *contras* will still have indirect backing via US allies and the huge US military presence in the region, which will not be reduced. And third, Irangate has damaged, but by no means defeated, Reagan policy in Central America.

While it's true that current US Central America policy is only one part of the Reagan Doctrine and its concomitant low intensity warfare (others are Afghanistan and southern Africa), ideologically, it has been a crucial one. It's worth recalling that Reagan launched himself as a national political figure in 1976 with a campaign opposing ratification of the Panama Canal Tre-



Photo by Steve Cagan/Impact Visuals

Nicaraguans celebrating the signing of the new constitution.

aty. And that his coalition of Sun Belt entrepreneurial capital (historically built on the repression of Hispanic and black and indigenous peoples) and multinational finance capital (represented by Secretary of State George Shultz) is involved in a massive new world division of labor markets. Focus on Nicaragua and the *contras* conceals the fact that US imperialism has always dealt with Central America and the Caribbean as a whole. Seen in this light, Reagan policy has been relatively successful in 'containing' pressure on Nicaragua, certainly limiting its appeal as a regional model; it has seriously set back, if not completely marginalized, what at the start of

the 1980s were very strong and broad-based movements in El Salvador and Guatemala. It has destroyed the Grenadian revolution; it has converted Honduras into a military neocolony; it has realigned traditionally neutral Costa Rica to a more US-dependent role; etc. Moreover, in doing this, Reagan has had the support not only of his party but also of a key, pro-imperialist group in the Democratic party which extends from Pentagon pimps like Sam Nunn to neoliberals a lá Bill Bradley.

This rather gloomy picture brings us to the question of where the democratic left, and DSA in particular, stands in relation to the Central America issue. On the agenda

appear to be two interrelated discussions: one on what position to take on the Nicaraguan revolution itself ("enthusiastic support"/"critical support"/"non-support but opposition to U.S. intervention" are the options debated in a recent issue of *New Politics*, for example); the second on legislative nonintervention vs. "solidarity" work as a focus for the movement. Let me take up the "support" issue first, with particular attention to the "critical support" position — articulated by Bogdan Denitch and others — which is bidding to become the dominant one on the democratic left.

I think 'critical support' is the wrong approach. It is an "old left" approach to the problem: both the Nicaraguan Communist Party and the Socialist International have a position of "critical support" for the Sandinistas (though for very different reasons). My objection is not to the substance of the critique — I know few people active in Central America work who don't have serious criticisms of many aspects of the Nicaraguan revolution. Rather, the problem has to do with the kind of attitude projected.

"Critical support" discussions always have had for me a kind of self-congratulatory, holier-than-thou tone. When it's applied as in this case to Third World movements it often carries with it a paternalistic eurocentrism (bound up with Marxism's historical origins) which sees the First World — and First World socialist discussion and theory — as the place where the ultimate "truth" of socialism is located. From this vantage point one looks with a kind of Olympian sympathy but also detachment at the repeated "failures" of Third World revolutions. And one rarely hears the "critical" perspective applied the other way. What it is about First World socialist and communist parties, with their histories of racism and complicity with imperialism, that presumably entitles them to support from Third World people?

There are perhaps 80 to 100 thousand people in this country actively involved in Central America work. A good number of them have visited Nicaragua. Most of them share the politics of the democratic left. But the "critical support" approach doesn't reach them — even where they might agree with many of the criticisms — because it presents Nicaragua as an "other", whereas they feel they are implicated in what is going on in Central America, that it is a crucial part of their own lives and work. "Enthusiastic support" isn't exactly the alternative; you don't have to see Nicaragua through rose-colored lenses to feel involved with it (the same goes for DSA, no?) This

means understanding that the Sandinistas, as well as the Salvadoran FMLN-FDR as a whole (not just its social democratic component), and liberation theology activists, etc., are the "new left" of Central America. They come out of the same history of radicalization and struggle many of us went through in the 1960s and 1970s, and share a common historical project, a common antagonist, and a common need to overcome the dead ends of "old left" models. They are our *compañeros*, our brothers and sisters, and we should feel involved with them in the same way we feel involved with one another in the US movement — in a way that doesn't exclude debate and criticism.

It follows that the nonintervention vs. solidarity dichotomy is a false one, related to the problems of the 'support' issue ("enthusiasts" tend to be prosolidarity; "critical" and "non" supporters tend to be for nonintervention work). No one disputes that there is a larger constituency against intervention (than for the Sandinistas) that can and should be mobilized in this country, or that in a given situation the best tactic to express solidarity is to work for nonintervention. But realpolitik can be overdone. My impression is that some of the best legislative results are achieved when people are able to give some kind of positive, personal "witness" about Nicaragua, rather than just talk about *contra* atrocities. In Pittsburgh, for example, I've been involved with a group of church-based solidarity people who have launched a campaign to make Pittsburgh a sister city with a town in Nicaragua. This has attracted the support of the mayor, sections of the local political establishment and church and community groups. As it happens, a key *contra* supporter in Congress, Senator John Heinz, lives in Pittsburgh and relies on it as part of his political base. We want to pose to Heinz the following problem: How can he justify funding the *contras* to kill people in a Nicaraguan town his own city is using its money and resources to help?

But I also think the democratic left has to have a strategic perspective on Central America that goes beyond immediate legislative issues, if only because it's clear the struggle in Central America will be protracted. It's not just a question of organizing against intervention; it's also a question of organizing around this issue, among many others, a 'small mass' constituency — to borrow Stanley Aronowitz's phrase — for socialism in the United States. That constituency includes the thousands of people involved in Central America work as well as sectors of the US Hispanic commu-

nity. In other words, to return to the concern I started with, the character of our involvement with Central America has to do with the relevance of the socialist project to the evolving nature of US society and to broad masses of its current and future population. ●

John Beverly was born and raised in Latin America, currently teaches at the University of Pittsburgh, and has been active in solidarity work since 1978.

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Socialist Principles — Not Guilt

by Bogdan Denitch

There are many useless debates on the American left. However, the debate about Nicaragua is, in addition to not being very useful to building a mass anti-intervention movement in this country, misleading about the political issues raised by Third World revolutions.

The debate in DSA on Nicaragua does not center on the degree of opposition to the present criminal US policy against that country, or the degree of solidarity one has for the people of Nicaragua in their present travails. Rather, the issue is should socialists, *democratic* socialists, single out the Sandinista Party and government from all other progressive and socialist movements as the one which may not be criticized at all? To put it more bluntly, what Beverly and others demand is *unconditional* support, not of Nicaragua's right to independence but of the Nicaraguan *government* and its *ruling party*.

Why is this? After all, we've never been criticized for disagreeing with our other comrades. That is, no one has yet argued that we have no right to — or should not — disagree with the French, British, Canadian, or any other socialists in the developed countries. And it is considered not only acceptable but essential that we criticize those bureaucratic states usurping the name of socialism in the Soviet bloc. Apparently the real problem is criticism of a Third World revolution or movement.

Why? Is it because we believe that Third World movements are so much purer and wiser than the others that no criticism is conceivable? Is it perhaps that we think the leadership of those movements is so sensitive that it will break down on hearing that US socialists, struggling in solidarity with their revolution, may also have a criticism or two? Is it that despite all the protestations that these are our "compañeros," we really don't believe a fraternal debate between us is possible?

The Sandinista activists with whom I

have spoken share none of these assumptions. They take criticism and support to be the normal modality of the relationship between our movements. In fact, they do not believe they need protection from the normal debates about means and ends, or strategies and tactics, which have occurred throughout history.

What then are my specific criticisms of the Sandinistas? First, I think there are serious weaknesses in the Sandinista approach towards socialist strategy in the Third World, weaknesses deeply rooted in the very nature of their movement, in what Beverly points to as their "New Left character." I have in mind particularly their middle-class, intellectual makeup, their absence of roots in the working class move-

ments, and their consequent contempt for ordinary people's material needs and aspirations. This is not a fatal disease in a student movement or an oppositional grouping; it is, however, very dangerous in a group which controls the military and state apparatuses of a country.

The danger is particularly great when that country faces persistent hostility from the United States. The margins of error permitted to such a government are smaller, because the CIA and its allies will seize upon every opportunity to widen the gap between the government and other groupings in society. I therefore consider it immensely dangerous — for the revolution itself — for the Sandinistas to be still enthralled by the romantic visions of "Marxist-Leninism" which they have received from Cuba and the guerilla communist movements of Latin America. It is dangerous because it narrows the government's base of support, because it leads to revolutionary posturing, and because it always holds within it the potential of building an authoritarian society.

We must make other criticisms as well. When Cardenal, the Jesuit poet and Minister of Culture, says that he knows of



Nicaraguan militia in training.

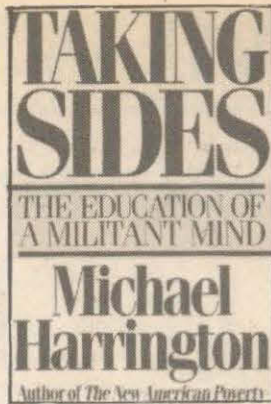
Photo by Larry Boyd/Impact Visuals

nothing to criticize in Cuba, I wonder how he feels about a government which jails poets and intellectuals — jails them, note well, with sentences which are severe even by Soviet standards. When the Sandinista representatives in the UN back the Soviets on Afghanistan, are they setting up a precedent which they really wish to argue for, i.e., that a superpower may intervene against an obnoxious movement in "its own backyard"? When the Sandinistas regard the plurality of trade unions as a problem which needs administrative solutions, do we really agree with them, given the performance of trade unions subordinate to ruling parties in the Third World? I mention these things not because they are central to what the left should be discussing about Nicaragua, but because they are something we should be discussing with our Nicaraguan comrades.

We who are active in the anti-intervention movement cannot permit ourselves the luxury of ignoring history. One of the reasons for the tens of thousands of disillusioned anti-war activists is that they were told — and they believed — nonsense about North Vietnam and the Vietcong. In those days, I and those like me were criticized for not believing that the North Vietnamese would build a just democratic and social order. We concentrated on demanding the unconditional withdrawal of US troops from the imperialist war. We were right then, as I believe we are right today.

There is an additional strand in this debate which needs to be mentioned. The proposition is this: Even we who oppose the US government bear a burden of guilt for its monstrous crimes and therefore have no moral right to criticize the victims of those crimes. I do not believe that movements can be built on guilt. My fundamental argument has been, and continues to be, that US intervention in Central America is also bad for the American people. It is not therefore out of a feeling of guilt, but out of a commitment to a decent and democratic foreign policy that the majority of our fellow citizens should oppose US intervention in Central America. A politics based on guilt might, just might, be appropriate for a religious order or sect, but not for serious socialists who must relate to the world with their hearts and their brains and memories. ●

Bogdan Denitch chairs DSA's International Affairs committee and teaches sociology at the City University of New York.



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REVIEWS

Redefining "National Interest"

by Paul Garver

CONFRONTING REVOLUTION: SECURITY THROUGH DIPLOMACY IN CENTRAL AMERICA. Edited by Morris Blachman, William Leo Grande, and Kenneth Sharpe. New York: Pantheon Books, 1986.

Last November I attended a peace conference in San Salvador sponsored by Salvadoran labor unions. In his keynote speech the rector of the host University of Central America, Father Ignacio Ello-curia, made an eloquent plea for an end to US efforts to determine the destiny of Central America. Such intervention, carried out under the pretext of democracy, helps perpetuate underdevelopment and structural oppression and prevents the democratization of the isthmus. He criticized the underlying "hegemonic assumption" that the US had the right to dictate to the small nations in its "backyard."

Now, writing from a North American perspective, the 15 authors and editors of *Confronting Revolution* conclude that the US foreign policy in Central America injures the national security of the US itself. The illusion that the US still has the power to impose its will unilaterally on Central America blinds us to our genuine national interest. Our national interest would be better served by an alternative policy of "principled realism" that would use multilateral diplomatic efforts to encourage peace, broadly shared economic development with social justice, and democratization in the region. Such a policy would enhance our national security by reducing the potential for endless turmoil and war caused by social injustice and militarism.

Part I of the book contains essays on the individual nations of Central America, plus an excellent discussion of the economic upheavals that changed the social structures of the region. The chapters on El Salvador and Nicaragua are especially rich. Part II analyzes the other major diplomatic players in the region: Cuba, the Soviet Union, Mexico, and Venezuela. I learned most from the chapter on Contadora, which shows how the rise of Latin American multilateralism limits absolute US power. Part III contains a superb historical summary of US policy and the editors' policy proposals. The nonspecialist reader should begin with Part III in order to put the chapters on the individual nations into a broader context.

Confronting Revolution is a valuable resource for anyone who wants to participate in the discussion of US policy in Central America. One can subscribe to its analysis without making a commitment to revolutionary solutions, or expressing confidence in Sandinista Nicaragua or its Cuban or Soviet allies, a fact that could make it palatable as a basis for the Democratic platform of 1988. On the other hand, its thesis is coherent and consistent enough to provide an alternative to the weak and vacillating

policies of the Democratic party. For example, it demonstrates how Carter's well intentioned diplomacy, which began so promisingly with the Panama Canal Treaty, ultimately came to grief when it opted for "reform with repression" in El Salvador, rather than permit the left a share of political power.

The multiple authors make a persuasive case that our "true" national interest would be served by abandoning US striving for hegemonial control and by encouraging reform in cooperation with left-center political coalitions in the region. Their arguments are good, their conclusion reasonable. My reservations lie primarily in the area of practical political application.

First, they do not deal directly with the important domestic capitalist interests that have historically influenced US policy in the region, by equating their class interests with the "national" interest. Guatemala still suffers the consequences of the CIA-sponsored overthrow of the Arbenz regime, instigated by its dispute with the United Fruit Company. The head of the American Chamber of Commerce in El Salvador boasted to us last November of the attraction of cheap and docile Salvadoran labor. It is true that Central America is neither a crucial supplier of raw material to the US nor a major market for our exports, but powerful interests do stand in the way of a policy based on *real* national interest.

Second, although the book is obviously intended to influence public policy, any analysis of the domestic forces capable of promoting its policies lies outside its scope. In this fifth decade of US superpower status, both political parties are controlled by forces committed to the very hegemonist assumptions criticized in the book. Even the ambiguous "reformism" of Carter's human-rights diplomacy has been supplanted within the Democratic party leadership by a neoconservative move toward hard-line concepts of national security. For instance, the AFL-CIO, a progressive force within the party on most domestic issues, exerts a rightward influence on issues of foreign policy, since labor's own international apparatus is dominated by neoconservative hardliners obsessed with "Soviet expansionism."

Perhaps the current debacle of Reagan's foreign policy will open up new opportunities to push for fundamental alternatives in Central American policy. Our minimum program should be to reverse the most negative features of US policy (aid to the *contras* and to the Salvadoran military, the military occupation of Honduras, etc.). Even though the US no longer can simply impose its will on Central America, it retains enormous destructive power to block positive change and thwart popular social movements. We have the obligation, at the very least, to get our booted feet off the necks of our Central American neighbors. Perhaps, in the process of struggling against US imperial policies, we can also begin to reclaim our own republican traditions now so deformed under the smothering weight of the imperial state. ●

Paul Garver is contract director of Service Employees International Union (SEIU) local 585 in Pittsburgh.

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