

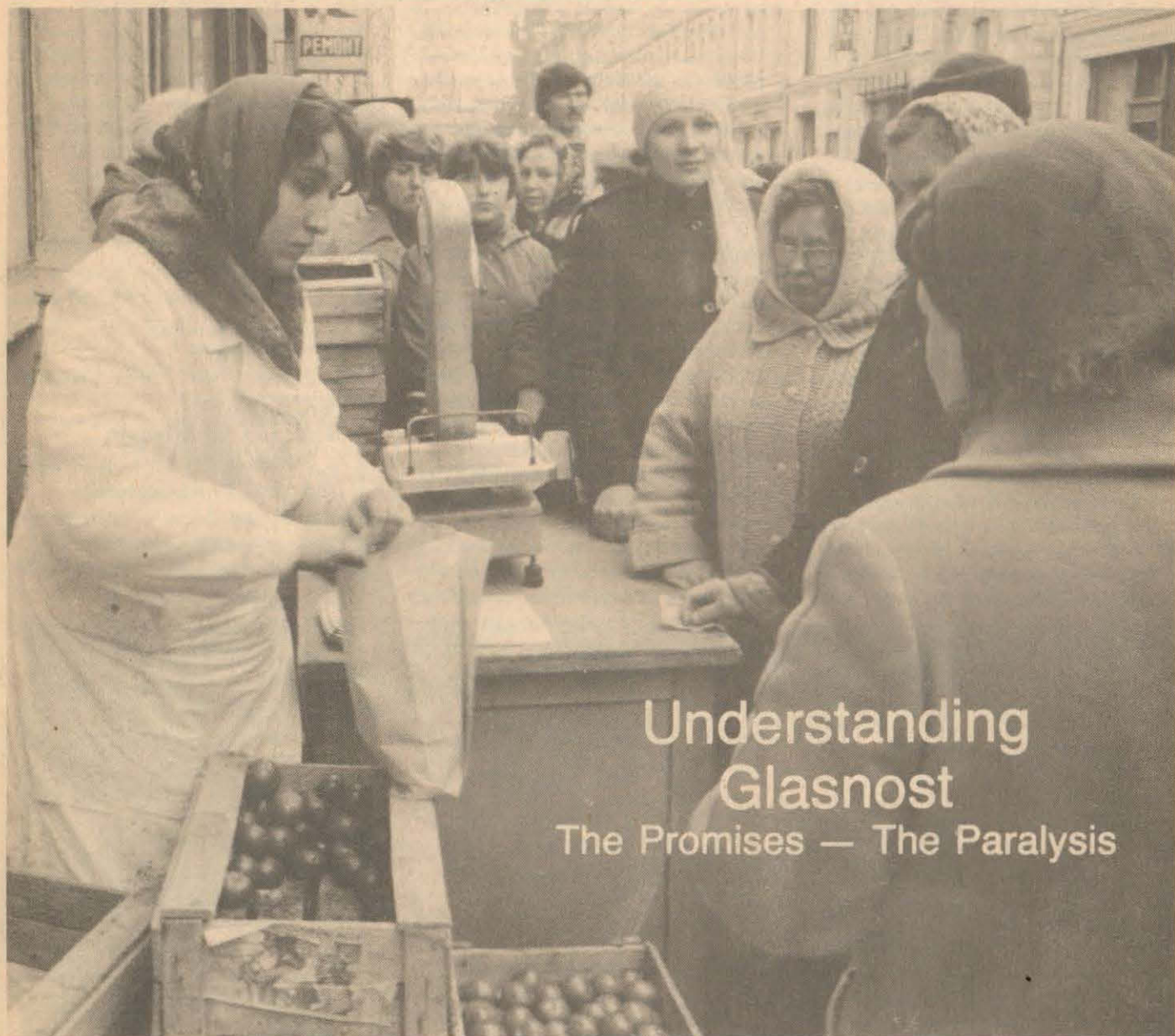
PUBLISHED BY THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISTS OF AMERICA

DEMOCRATIC Left

NOV.-DEC. 1987

VOL. XV, NO. 5

\$1.50



Understanding
Glasnost
The Promises — The Paralysis

Michael Harrington on the Crash

Also: EL SALVADOR • DSA CONVENTION • POVERTY

LETTERS

Workfare

To the Editor:

Congratulations on your generally fine May-August 1987 issue of *Democratic Left*. Steve Max's comments, for example, about recognizing and using the "essential connections spanning racial, gender . . . divisions" bring a genuinely socialist focus to the debate. So does Teresa Amott with her remark, "Child support enforcement presumes that fathers have income."

I am a twenty-year social worker who has worked for the past five years in the San Diego WIN program, working in the heart of the Black-Hispanic area. I have taken part in its entirety the experimental mandatory workshop — "workfare" — remedial education program that has attracted much attention across the country.

It is with some relief that I have noted the waning of many of the sillier arguments against requiring normal, healthy people to make some contribution in return for what they receive from society. This waning is reflected in these articles, despite a few comments like that of Lynn C. Burbridge:

"Forcing recipients to jump through work-welfare hoops to justify receipt of a grant (or to discourage applying for one) will only add to dejection and despair, and will do nothing to end dependency."

I don't know why Ms. Burbridge thinks that normal meeting of responsibility "does nothing to end dependency." (Not a few of our participants have never before in their lives been required to be somewhere on a regular basis.) I shall have to allow her her own explanations and will simply refer to the many clients who have expressed to me pride in their role.

By the way, in most cases, clients on their workfare stints have almost always worked for fewer hours, higher pay (their grants, which are relatively high in California; Medi-Cal; Food Stamps) hand more flexibility (frequent absences allowed, changes of assignment) than non-recipients in similar work. I like to think that if enough of this goes on, it can eventually create political pressure on employment in general. Why not have more remunerative,

less-rigid work situations for other people too?

The worst part of views like this remark of Ms. Burbridge is not their effect on the developing consensus — I believe they have virtually none. It is their effect on the non-leftist view of what the left has to offer. When the left (using that term broadly) persists in the notion that it is somehow pernicious to make the most ordinary requirements of people, we sound like fools and we will be regarded as such. This is a poisoning of our hopes to influence the directions our society takes.

I would like to add that I myself was a single mother of two young children for five and one-half years. I used my scant resources to obtain a university education and then go to work. One of the things I learned is that it is not always true that the life of a single mother is a constant, depressing struggle. I say this without denying the fact that sometimes there are serious difficulties. After all, I see them in work.

The article by William Julius Wilson calls for special notice. He discusses points that are otherwise nearly absent from the discussion, points that are very relevant indeed. Whatever the skin color — or the language — of the principals, it is no help to flail at straw men. Right on, Dr. Wilson! Joining you in struggle,

Eleanor Richmond
San Diego, CA

Jackson

To the Editor:

The September/October issue of *Democratic Left* mentions the possibility of a presidential endorsement at the upcoming convention. We, the undersigned members of DSA, oppose a DSA endorsement of Jesse Jackson. We agree with much of Jackson's domestic economic program — full employment, workers' rights, affirmative action, civil rights and the struggle against racism. However, Jackson's cumulative record raises fundamental questions about his attitude toward Jews and his attempts to address this issue display, at least to date, an unsettling evasiveness. We are

particularly dismayed by his refusal to disavow, without qualification, the anti-semitism of Louis Farrakhan. Therefore, we urge DSA not to support the Jackson candidacy.

Mitchell Cohen, New York, NY
David J. Garrow, New York, NY
Robert Lekachman, New York, NY
Mark Levinson, Detroit, MI
Andrei S. Markovits, Cambridge, MA
Jo-Ann Mort, Brooklyn, NY
Fred Siegel, Brooklyn, NY

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A Global Economy in Transition

by Michael Harrington

Six Republican presidential candidates, most center and right-wing Democrats, the Wall Street brokers who presided over the recent catastrophe, Margaret Thatcher, Helmut Kohl, and all other such people agree. *The problem* or so they say in the wake of the Wall Street crash is the federal deficit. Or so they say.

The democratic Left should emphatically disagree. As Reaganism disintegrates, and particularly in the wake of a financial catastrophe that has gravely weakened the ideological supports of conservatism, there are real openings for progressives. But *only* if we are clear on the problems and the alternatives.

At worst, the focus on the federal deficit is a rationale for more conservatism and social program cutting at the very moment when we may be headed for a recession. It also ignores the fact that, in the 1981 and 1986 tax laws, the Administration, with the connivance of many Democrats, structurally reduced the tax base by giving tens of billions in deductions and lower rates to the rich. This is not to mention years of throwing money at problems in the Pentagon.

Had Reaganism redeemed its promise to spur growth, productivity, and employment through a massive capital-led boom, neither the federal nor the trade deficit would exist. But, we must never forget, Reagan got the opportunity to engage in his disastrous exercise in "supply side" economics because traditional liberalism, as represented by Jimmy Carter, did not have answers to our problems either.

Do not mistake me. I am not saying that the deficit is irrelevant. Given our failure to deal with a basic transition in the world economy and given our dependence on the Japanese investing their trade surpluses in financing Reagan's failures, the deficit is an important *symptom* of a much deeper crisis. It is that crisis which must be the focus of the Left.

We are going through a radical shift in the world division of labor. It is carried out by irresponsible multinationals at the expense of workers in both the First and Third Worlds. It is pushed forward by automated, computerized changes in the production process. *That* is the problem.

The traditional liberal — Keynesian — wisdom had envisioned a national economy in which government would create the optimum conditions for private decision-

making by judicious fiscal and monetary policy. That was the theoretical basis of important gains — and it doesn't work any longer.

The Left must present a new alternative, not to the fantasy world of Wall Street, but to the reality of a global economy in furious, and often socially destructive, transition. There must be democratic and social intervention into the investment process itself if we are to respond to an unprecedented economic environment.

Democratically-determined government policies must plan for change. Above all, we must see to it that the "natural" tendency of the system to impose the costs of the transformation on the working people, the poor, and their communities is offset.

That means not simply a focus on full employment. It also means quality full employment in which America's most precious resource, our people, is creatively involved in developing new modes of work. It is certainly not a call for centralized, bureaucratic planning in Washington. Rather it involves a focus on options like federal money for the Tri-State Conference for Steel's proposal to create locally-run industrial authorities in the smokestack heart-



Photo by Anthony Varus / Impact Visuals

land engaged in new kinds of production for need. We must see to it that real worker buyouts — where the workers actually win decision-making power — become possible; we must explore the potential of cooperatives in an era in which microelectronics makes small-scale production more and more economic.

Above all, the Left solution must be international like the crisis itself. The multinationals have convinced many workers that their "enemy" is a Mexican or a Taiwanese or a South Korean willing to work for a fraction of the American wage. But that is only true so long as a General Motors hires South Koreans to make cars with an American logo to compete with American workers. But if, as the Socialist International has proposed in considerable detail, there were a massive commitment to justice in the Third World, American workers could make the high-tech machines which would allow Mexicans and Taiwanese and South Koreans workers to fight their poverty.

We will hear much in the coming period about the federal deficit rather than structural changes of the world economy as

being the cause of the deficit. Let us increase taxes and cut spending, people will say — and not *only* people on the Right and Center.

Wrong! Let us raise the taxes of the rich who were given tens of billions of welfare in the 1981 and 1986 tax acts. Let us cut the military budget by ending funds for systems, like Star Wars, which endanger our authentic national security. Let us understand that the key to the future is not in the fate of Wall Street yuppies but in the real income of the vast majority of the American people — and in the real income of the people of Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

With the exception of Jesse Jackson and Paul Simon, there is no serious discussion of anything resembling these ideas among the Democratic presidential candidates. But now, more than ever, a proposition we have asserted for some time becomes true: the only thing worse than a Republican victory in 1988 would be a Democratic victory followed by an economic crisis for which the new president would have no progressive solutions.

As long as we scapegoat the deficit, treating it as if it arrived from Mars and ignoring the fact that it is the inevitable outcome of the dramatic failure of Reaganomics, we will ignore the basic, real world. We will ignore the need for a program of international and democratic reindustrialization under the aegis of a world program for justice rather than under the control of multinational cooperations.

We socialists of the democratic Left have been saying such things for a long time. Now more and more people may decide to listen — and even to act — along these lines. ●

Michael Harrington is co-chair of DSA.

DEMOCRATIC Left

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MICHAEL HARRINGTON
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DEMOCRATIC LEFT (ISSN 0164-3207) is published six times a year at 15 Dutch St., Suite 500, New York, NY 10038. Second Class postage paid at New York, N.Y. Subscription \$8 regular; \$15 institutional.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to DEMOCRATIC LEFT, 15 Dutch St., Suite 500, New York, NY 10038.

DEMOCRATIC LEFT is published by the Democratic Socialists of America at the above address, phone (212) 962-0390. Microfilm, Wisconsin State Historical Society, 816 State St., Madison WI 53703. Indexed in the Alternative Press Index, P.O. Box 7229, Baltimore MD 21218. *Signed articles express the opinions of the authors and not necessarily those of the organization.*

Letters

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Unions and Central America

To the Editor:

In his article "Labor & Central America: Change in the Wind" in the September-October 1987 edition of *Democratic Left*, Edward W. Clark, Jr., international vice president of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union cites his union support of a strike by a "sister" union at a San Salvador factory. Apparently, it does not bother him that the Salvadoran Textile Workers Union may be part of a leftwing labor federation con-

trolled by revolutionary Marxists. It seems to bother him that the AFL-CIO leadership opposes the leftwing federation in El Salvador. If I am mistaken as to his position on the above, he should be given an opportunity to respond. It apparently did not interest him so long as they supported the strike.

In my experience as a socialist going back before World War II, socialists were always concerned about who controls trade unions. I recall many years ago, the question of who would control the new CIO unions was of prime importance to socialists. We waged open ideological warfare with the Communist Party whose members had infiltrated many of the new CIO unions. This stemmed from our difference on the question of achieving political power. Socialists believed in the use of the ballot to achieve political power. The Communist Party position was that the "capitalist class" would never allow socialists to assume political power via the ballot box. Therefore, they advocated a policy of "revolutionary struggle." One aspect of the revolutionary struggle called for the capture of control of unions for manipulation.

The Communist Party had contempt for democratic institutions and would destroy them as obstacles. Socialists had supported universal suffrage for many years and were not about to give up their support for democratic institutions. It seems that this distinction between socialists and communists over the question of democratic institutions has blurred, which I think does not help one's position in trying to cope with our Central American policy. I think socialists should not give uncritical support to the "Marxist" movement in countries like Nicaragua and El Salvador; or to divorce themselves from the ideological and strategic content of the Marxist parties in Central America. I have not read any critiques on the Marxist movements in Central America in *Democratic Left*. Maybe I am missing something.

I would support the AFL-CIO leadership's commitment to promoting democratic institutions in El Salvador and share their concern about who controls trade unions in that country. I would say unequivocally, at this point of my thinking, that if the El Salvador leftwing unions find democratic institutions incompatible with socialism then there is no basis for supporting the El Salvador leftwing.

*Irving P. Phillips,
Takoma Park, MD.*

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CONVENTION '87

Strategies for Strength

by Nancy Kleniewski

Under the slogan "Strategies for Strength," nearly 200 delegates and alternates attended the Democratic Socialists of America's fourth national convention in Washington, DC, December 4-6. Ranging in age from 18 to 80, the delegates, elected at-large and from DSA locals, represented 23 states and the District of Columbia. Highlights included an inspiring public outreach meeting, intense discussion and voting in resolutions sessions, some thought-provoking plenaries, and a hotly-contested election for National Executive Committee.

One emotional high point of the convention came Friday night when 400 delegates, alternates, guests, and observers heard an all-star international lineup of speakers expressing their solidarity with the struggle for democratic socialism in the US. The evening began with DSA Co-chair Barbara Ehrenreich's analysis of a coming resurgence of the American Left as a result of the conservatives' failure to show that they can govern. Dr. Fred Dube of the African National Congress brought greetings to the meeting and told the audience that the South African government is having many more difficulties than are reported, particularly as a result of severe military losses, widespread draft evasion, and increased international pressure against apartheid. The crowd then greeted Nicaragua's Ambassador to the United Nations, Carlos Tunnerman, and heard his plea for the international community to aid the Central American peace process. He thanked DSA in particular for its effective ongoing work against *contra* funding and its solidarity with the Nicaraguan Revolution. Swedish Member of Parliament Mai Britt Theorin, in town for a disarmament conference designed to "take the toys away from the boys," praised the upcoming INF treaty — signed by President Reagan and Secretary Gorbachev just days later. She also expressed her optimism about the prospects for a ban on chemical weapons in 1988 and urged that nuclear testing and weapons replacement programs also be eliminated.



Photo by Linnea Capps

Panel discussion on DSA and the '88 presidential elections.

Farm Labor Organizing Committee leader Baldemar Velasquez modestly described himself as "just a tomato picker from Ohio." He emphasized that the farmworker's enemy is the economic system, not the growers. He pointed to the successful Campbell's boycott that brought migrant workers contracts. "Campbell's beats on the growers, and the growers beat on us. We've got to find a way to reverse that," he said. Velasquez also stressed the necessity of international labor organizing to prevent employers from pitting the workers of one country against those of neighboring lands.

Headliner of the exuberant evening get together was none other than the senior spokesperson of the Third World, Michael Manley. Introduced as "the former and future Prime Minister of Jamaica," Manley picked up the theme of international labor organizing and tied it to international cooperation of all kinds. He lauded DSA for its opposition to apartheid and to *contra* aid and urged DSA to join in his struggle to save the United Nations and the rest of the "multilateral institutions" as the only way of solving complex global economic and development problems.

Two unscheduled events, one sad and one joyful, punctuated the proceedings. Chicago DSA delegate Carl Shier offered a moving tribute to the late Mayor Harold Washington, a close friend of DSA and the progressive movement. On a happier note, those assembled were thrilled to receive a surprise visit from Democratic Revolutionary Front President Guillermo Ungo, recently returned from his courageous visit back to El Salvador. Ungo expressed fear about his country's future but also optimism that "sooner or later there will be a political solution with peace and justice."

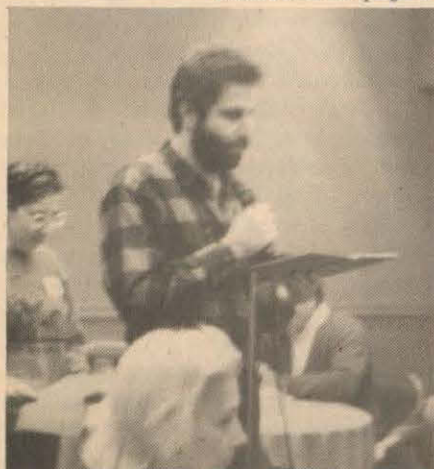
Rainbow Coalition leader Ron Daniels greeted the audience on behalf of "President" Jesse Jackson and discussed the important influence of Michael Harrington's analysis of poverty on Jackson. Alejandro Duhalde of the Chilean Radical Party also brought party greetings and told the crowd of the opposition's campaign against attempts by the Pinochet government to institutionalize the dictatorship by holding a plebiscite in 1988. The evening's program was rounded out by AFL-CIO Industrial Union Department activist and singer Joe Uehlein and a rousing chorus of "If I Had a Hammer."

Barbara Ehrenreich's keynote address to the convention on Saturday morning combined an analysis of the state of the Right (discredited) and the Left (hopeful) and an assessment of DSA's needs and opportunities over the next two years. Barbara stressed the rebirth of populism within the mainstream of American society along with the decline of neoliberalism. "The political climate of the Reagan years forced us into the position of being the liberals, but now that the liberals are re-emerging, we can do what we should be doing: being the socialist opposition."

The bulk of the daytime sessions was devoted to discussion and voting on resolutions. The Democratic Socialist Political Action Committee voted by 112-10 to endorse Jesse Jackson's Presidential bid in the Democratic primaries. The resolution also emphasized the importance of beating the Republicans in November with the most progressive Democratic candidate and platform possible. The vote followed two days of uncharacteristic interest by the *New York Times*, which printed an article on Friday headlined, "Jackson to Shun Socialist Backing," and another on Saturday saying, "Jackson Seeking Socialist Backing."

As a companion resolution to the Jackson endorsement, the convention passed a resolution condemning racism and anti-Semitism and urging DSA members to oppose the expression of those sentiments in all political and electoral work. Other resolutions included support for full employment as a central political theme of DSA work, opposition to US involvement in Central America, reiteration of DSA opposition to apartheid, promoting projects sending material aid to Nicaragua and encouragement for DSA locals to work more

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Delegates Roy Silver and Theresa Alt address the convention.

Exerpts from DSA PAC '88 Presidential Endorsement

The 1987 DSA PAC endorses Jesse Jackson for the 1988 Democratic Party presidential nomination. Jackson's strategy of building a multiracial coalition of working people, women, seniors, minorities, farmers and youth behind a progressive platform has a clear affinity with DSA's long-standing coalition strategy. The Jackson campaign has also consistently advanced a social-democratic program aimed at increasing democratic control over investment; providing meaningful jobs for all who desire to work; and expanding significantly those human services which should be part of a universal entitlement for all Americans. Supporting the Jackson candidacy will not only increase DSA's work in minority communities, as well as aid our relations with the National Rainbow Coalition and those Rainbow Coalition chapters which have a grassroots and democratic base.

DSA's goal in the 1988 elections is to advance progressive programs and to elect as progressive a president and Congress as possible. Therefore, the 1987 DSA Convention authorizes the incoming NEC to consider the endorsement of the eventual Democratic Party nominee and to map DSA strategy for national and local involvement in key Senate and House races.

To facilitate the passage of as progressive a Democratic Party candidacy and platform as possible, the 1987 DSA Convention authorizes the co-chairs and staff, to explore the possibility of the Democratic Alternatives Project functioning as a "honest broker" at the 1988 Democratic Party Convention to unite Jackson delegates and trade union, minority, feminists, and peace activists and left-liberal delegates from other campaigns behind the most progressive Democratic party platform possible.

The Rainbow Coalition and the Jackson campaign are separate but interdependent entities. While we focus our efforts in the Jackson for President campaign, we must pay attention to building the Rainbow Coalition as an on-going multi-racial, progressive coalition fighting for an economic justice program on a national, state and local level.

In expressing our support for the Jackson candidacy, the 1987 DSA convention recognizes that a significant portion of both the broad democratic left and DSA have serious reservations about the Jackson candidacy. We respect those reservations, even while a majority of DSA believes that the Jackson campaign merits our support. Many loyal, valued and committed members of DSA will support other candidates or abstain from participation in the presidential primaries. DSA will work diligently to unite them and the broad democratic left behind the most progressive Democratic Party nominees and platform as possible during and after the Democratic party convention. We look forward to working with the broad democratic left — the trade union movement, the feminist movement, the Rainbow Coalition, peace and anti-intervention groups — both to elect a progressive Democratic president and Congress and to pressure them incessantly while in office to enact those democratic reforms necessary to bring social justice to America and the World.



Singer Joe Uehlein of the AFL-CIO IUD and FLOC President Baldimar Velasquez harmonize Friday evening.

Photos by Linnea Capps

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closely with Youth Section chapters. One proposal that was defeated was a constitutional amendment that would have established a system of regional representation to the National Executive Committee.

In addition to the resolutions, several organizational proposals were adopted, setting the framework for DSA's work over the next two years. One was to initiate an Economic Justice Project as a continuation of the 1987 Poverty Project. The Economic Justice Project would tackle such issues as full employment, child care, progressive taxation, and plant closings through speaking tours and media promotion and through media and coalition training of local activists. A second resolution adopted was to mount a 1988 membership drive. In addition a socialist-feminist retreat will be held for DSA women in 1988. The convention also approved an omnibus resolution on DSA work in the labor movement. And, in a lively meeting, the DSA Labor Commission laid out an agenda of work for the coming two years and elected new officers.

In the election for DSA's Executive Committee, two slates of candidates and several independents squared off in contesting 26 seats. One group, the Socialist Unity slate, emphasized building the national organization and locals simultaneously in the manner carried out in the past. In addition, they urged greater focus on the labor movement, while lending support for the Jackson campaign. A second group, the Socialist Agenda slate, promoted more exclusive emphasis on the Rainbow Coalition, urged that the organization adopt a material aid project for Nicaragua as the priority for international work, and wanted more resources devoted to strengthening and developing locals. In balloting by the

delegates, Socialist Unity swept 17 of the 26 seats. Socialist Agenda won one seat and the other eight went to independents. Co-chairs Michael Harrington and Barbara Ehrenreich and Youth Section Chair Neil McLaughlin also sit as members of the NEC.

Cognizant of DSA's ongoing problem of a shortage of resources, delegates and alternates pledged over \$22,000 for the coming year. This shattered the previous convention pledge record by nearly \$10,000.

One factor that made this convention different from past gatherings was the absence of Co-Chair Michael Harrington. Although his illness kept him away, Mike wrote to the delegates expressing optimism and urging them to strive for unity. "We are," he wrote, "on the eve of the greatest opportunity for the socialist movement since the nineteen-sixties."

DSA Vice-chair Irving Howe followed up on those thoughts in a moving historical and personal tribute to Mike, stressing the need for cooperation within the organization. In the closing plenary, Cornel West again picked up the theme of unity, saying that it is "... as much a process as a principle." West's speech was a sober assessment of DSA's strengths and weaknesses but ended in an inspirational vein. "Democratic socialism is still the best hope for a better society," he declared. "The struggle continues." As the strains of "Solidarity Forever" and "The International" faded away, DSAers headed back to their communities to turn that vision into reality. ●

Nancy Kleniewski is a professor of Sociology at Rochester University and a member of DSA's Executive Committee.

Convention Election Results

Co-Chairs:

Re-elected by acclamation: Barbara Ehrenreich and Michael Harrington

Vice-Chairs:

Re-elected by acclamation: Harry Britt, Ronald Dellums, James Farmer, Dorothy Healey, Irving Howe, Frances Moore Lappe, Hilda Mason, Marjorie Phylfe, Christine Riddiough, Rosemary Ruether, Edwin Vargas, Jr., William Winpisinger


National Executive Committee: Lailah Atallah (Baltimore), Joanne Barkan (New York), Patricia Belcon (New York), Bogdan Denitch (New York), Mary Dunn (Lexington, KY), Angie Fa (San Francisco), Gerry Hudson (New York), Nancy Kleniewski (Rochester, NY), Mark Levinson (Detroit), Joan Mandel (Philadelphia), Marshall Mayer (Helena, MT), Harold Meyerson (Los Angeles), Guy Molyneux (Boston), Jo-Ann Mort (Brooklyn, NY), Marjorie Phylfe (Peaks Island, ME), Frances Fox Piven (Millerton, NY), Skip Roberts (Rockville, MD), Jan Rosenberg (Brooklyn, NY), Joe Schwartz (Cambridge, MA), Sylvia Sepulveda (San Antonio, TX), Jim Shoch (Cambridge, MA), Bill Spencer (Washington, D.C.), Ed Vargas (Hartford, CT), Cornel West (Hamden, CT)

Recent Books By DSA Members

- John R. Salter, Jr., Jackson, Mississippi: **An American Chronicle of Struggle and Schism**, by Robert E. Krieger Publ., \$12.50.
- Ingolf Vogeler, **The Myth of the Family Farm**, Westview Special Studies, \$23.25.
- David and Eva Gil, **The Future of Work**, Schenkman Books \$9.95.
- Alvin Schorr, **Common Decency: Domestic Policies After Reagan**, Yale University Press.
- Linda Nicholson, **Gender and History: The Limits of Social Theory in the Age of the Family**, Columbia University Press.
- Leland Stauber, **A New Program for Democratic Socialism**, Four Willows Press, Carbondale, IL.
- Lucia Chiavola, **Liberazione della donna — Feminism in Italy**, Wesleyan University Press.
- H. Larry Ingle, **Quakers in Conflict: The Hicksite Reformation**, University of Tennessee Press.
- J.R. Stanfield, **The Economic Thought of Karl Polanyi: Lives and Livelihood**, St. Martin's and MacMillan.
- G. Clarke Chapman, Jr., **Facing the Nuclearist Heresy: A Call For Reformation**, Brethren Press.
- Gertrude Ezorsky, **Moral Rights in the Workplace**, SUNY Press, \$10.95.
- Philip Seranton* and Walter Licht, **Work Sights: Industrial Philadelphia 1890-1950**, Temple University Press.
- Marc Blecher, **China: Politics, Economics, and Society — Iconoclasm and Innovation in a Revolutionary Society**.
- Mary Babic, **Rocking the Boat: Stories of Elder Activists**.
- Marvin Gettleman, Patrick Lacefield*, Louis Menashe, and David Mermelstein*, **El Salvador: Central America in the New Cold War**, New Revised Edition, Grove Press.
- Bucky Halker, **Steppin' Blue** (the second album of folk, blues, and rock originals) Revolting Records, PO Box 291, Ashland, WI 54806.
- *DSA member among co-authors.
- Apologies to anyone whose book we've omitted. We'll be updating this list regularly, so please send us titles of books by DSA authors you know.*

\$1.00

A Socialist Perspective on
THE POLITICS OF POVERTY




by
Michael Harrington

with contributions by
Barbara Ehrenreich
William Julius Wilson
and
Mark Levinson

Published by The Democratic Socialists of America

**REMAKING
LOVE**



THE FEMINIZATION OF SEX
BARBARA EHRENREICH,
ELIZABETH HESS,
GLORIA JACOBS

**THE
NEXT
LEFT**

**THE HISTORY OF
A FUTURE**

**Michael
Harrington**

AUTHOR OF
The New American Poverty

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Eurosocialism & America , edited by Nancy Lieber. Articles by Harrington, Palme, Brandt, & Mitterand. Published at \$17.95.	\$3.50 _____

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Labor Voice. The publication of the DSA Labor Commission. Most recent issue available.	\$.50 _____
Religious Socialism. The publication of the DSA Religion and Socialism Commission. One Year Subscription.	\$5.00 _____
Socialist Forum. DSA Discussion Bulletin. Published 4 times per year. Subscription.	\$10.00 _____
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Understanding Glasnost

The Promises – The Paralysis

By Louis Menashe

The changes taking place in the USSR shape up as an exciting and promising, but troubled process. Yes, we should all raise a glass to glasnost, but let's not get tipsy about it. That is the counsel I would give any traveller to Moscow, or to the Moscow watcher.

Gorbachev's trip to Washington is news, but traffic is heavier in the other direction. These days, everyone travels to Moscow. Mario Cuomo just returned from Moscow. Yoko Ono was in Moscow; so was Gary Hart, Kris Kristofferson, and Mother Theresa. This sudden crush on *Intourist's* resources reflects the international response to glasnost. Gorbachev has made the USSR appealing in Western eyes. Significantly, glasnost is the first Russian word since gulag to enter our vocabulary; it no longer needs translation.

Glasnost is real, not cosmetic; it makes for good public relations, but it is not just a public relations stunt. When I was in Moscow last year, I half-seriously asked Gennady Gerasimov, the Foreign Ministry press spokesman, if Gorbachev, like US politicians, had been picked as leader for his superior telegenic qualities and his skill as a communicator. He bristled and brushed aside the question as a silly American preoccupation. That Gorbachev is vigorous and articulate certainly helps his campaign, but the reality is that reforms are a fact, the promise of more reform is in the air, and Moscow is a politically exciting place to visit.

The political traveller needs some framework for understanding the present changes. Who or what do we turn to? Soviet watchers — right, left, and otherwise — have been consistently shortsighted in assessing developments, not to mention predicting their course. Isaac Deutscher was virtually alone in suggesting that at Stalin's death his heirs would overturn the idol and blow away the incense. But he was right for the wrong reasons, overestimating the system's ca-

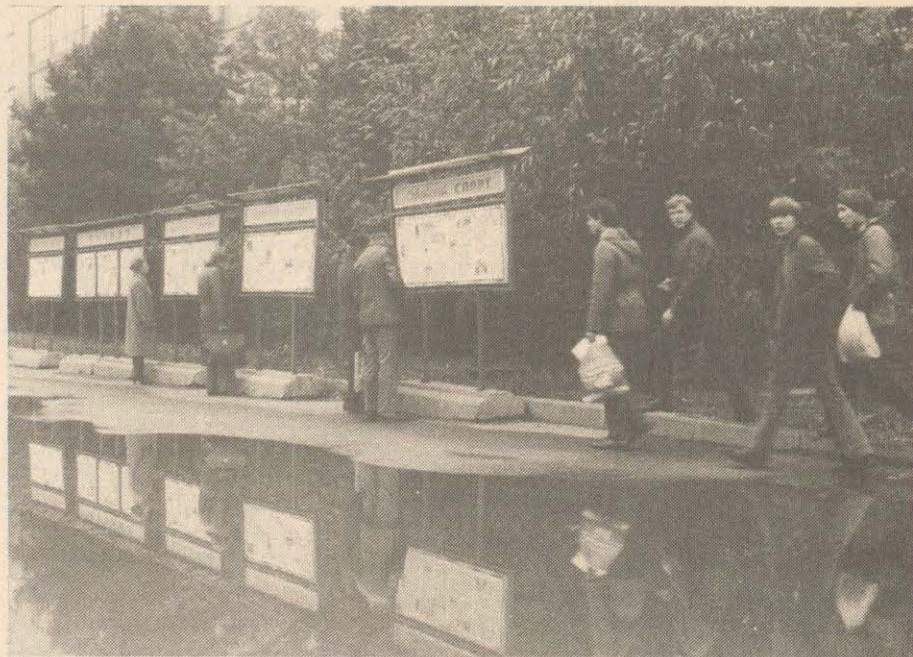


Photo by Judy Janda / Impact Visuals

Stopping to read publicly posted Soviet newspapers in Moscow.

capacity for deepening socialist democracy. Deutscher failed to see that de-Stalinization was a substantial, but limited, reform decreed from the top, in great part to restore the standing and vitality of the Soviet Communist Party. Similarly, at the end of the Brezhnev epoch everybody was convinced of the need for reforms, if only to shake up a torpid economy. But who predicted Gorbachev and the speed with which he inaugurated the climate of change? I remember a melancholy Roy Medvedev in Moscow in the Spring of 1984 (1984!), not long after the death of Andropov, who aroused hope for reform, and the accession of Chernenko, who did not. I asked him about Gorbachev. "An intelligent man," he replied, "but powerless."

Awareness of precedents and the rhythms of Soviet history is helpful. It is useful to know that the Soviets have always operated in spasms, that the party-state machinery gears up periodically for mass mobilizations structured around a single idea or cluster of ideas. Yet, looking at prior reform-minded

mobilizations is not altogether valuable for understanding the current campaign. Lenin's New Economic Policy of the 1920s was a market-oriented reform aimed at the peasantry and designed to restore a ravaged economy in a peasant society. Khrushchev's de-Stalinization of the 1950s dismantled the leader cult and the terror system associated with the dead dictator against a social background in which the main features of industrialization were in place. And Khrushchev was not a reformer or liberal in the ordinary sense; he was a maverick with lots of bees in his bonnet. In the cultural area, to take one example, he tolerated, even championed Solzhenitsyn, but hounded Pasternak; the "thaw" he activated cooled off well before his fall. Nor was his fall the result, as in current journalistic convention, a simple "conservative" reaction against his "liberal" tendencies. I see no reason to question *Pravda's* charge that his "hair-brained schemes" were the main reason for his demise.

The successor Brezhnev regime launched a systematic campaign against

Creating a Climate of Change

Gorbachev's historical survey marking the 70th anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, together with the ouster of Moscow party boss Boris Yeltsin a week later, underlines the ambivalences of the reform process. A Soviet dignitary visiting New York at the time told me how disappointed he was at Yeltsin's removal, and implied it was a setback for Gorbachev. For many Muscovites, Yeltsin's direct and unconventional style in service of reform typified the new look of the Gorbachev era. But the ouster and the way it was handled also reveal the conflicting patterns of the era. Official information about a high-level political operation was, despite some holes, unusually forthcoming by Soviet standards. Chalk one up for glasnost. But Yeltsin's summary dismissal for daring to speak out and his abject public confession evoked unpleasant memories. Chalk one up for the old rituals and the iron laws of the party's hierarchy. "Hey, which side is Gorbachev on?" a confounded Western press asked.

Gorbachev's eagerly awaited anniversary address also had its "on the one hand" and "on the others." Tactically, at least, and perhaps even strategically and ideologically, Gorbachev must be ranked as a man of the center, an articulate champion of reform, but a wary protector of moderation. Another way to look at the man and the movement he represents is to call off either/or categories altogether — Gorbachev the reformer will con-

stantly bump into Gorbachev the moderate. In his speech, Gorbachev honored the Soviet tradition of history as present politics. Thus, Lenin's market-oriented New Economic Policy of the 1920s came in for much praise. This is consistent with perestroika. As a Soviet economist put it recently, "Our economy has been command-based rather than ruble-based for too long . . ." But Gorbachev also dashed the hopes of those looking for a full-scale rehabilitation of Bukharin and a no-holds barred attack on Stalin. Instead, he praised Stalin more than he condemned him, and condemned Bukharin more than he praised him. Khrushchev at long last was thrown a small bouquet for his role in combatting "the personality cult and its consequences," and for attempting to explore new paths. Gorbachev reiterated, however, the old charges of "subjectivist errors" and "voluntaristic methods." As for Trostky, forget it; he is still villain Numero Uno. In this and much else, Gorbachev was more the conventional than the revisionist historian.

Still, given the careful calibrations of Soviet public rituals, and the very sensitive domain of official history, every small revisionist step forward is an important one. More clues about the scope and direction of these steps will come from the new party history that has just been commissioned, and from the work of a special body looking into "the process of restoring justice" for the past victims of repression. — L.M.

the dissidents, and enthroned corruption and complacency at all levels. But there was a steady growth in the standard of living, and an expansion, not contraction, of general freedoms in daily life. (The most dramatic freedom generated during the Brezhnev years was the freedom to emigrate for large numbers of Jews, Armenians, and ethnic Germans.) The absence of any new thinking, not hare-brained schemes, characterized the Brezhnev epoch, especially in the economy where growth rates declined to about 2% per annum, with certain sectors seeing no growth at all, or even retardation. Meanwhile a new technological revolution driven by computers and sophis-

ticated electronics erupted in the West and Japan.

The Gorbachev era is not a revival of the Khrushchev reform period, but a logical successor to the developments of the two Brezhnev decades, both their achievements and failures. The USSR is now a better educated, more urbanized society, with greater contact with the West and more of its working population in modernized service and white-collar sectors than ever before. Glasnost is a natural for this new Soviet society — and for its leader and most energetic spokesman, an intellectual trained in law, with wide personal contacts among the cultural and scientific intelligentsia.

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION

(Act of August 12, 1970; Section 3685, title 39, United States Code)

- Title of Publication: DEMOCRATIC LEFT
- Date of Filing: September 30, 1987.
- Frequency of Issue: Bi-monthly.
 - No. of issues published annually: 6.
 - Annual Subscriptions price: \$8.
- Location of known office of publication: 15 Dutch St., Suite 500, New York, NY, 10038-3705.
- Location of the headquarters or general business office of the Publisher: 15 Dutch St., Suite 500, New York, NY, 10038-3705.
- Names and addresses of Publishers, Editors, and Managing Editor: Democratic Socialists of America, Inc.; Barbara Ehrenreich and Michael Harrington; Sherril Levine, all of 15 Dutch St., Suite 500, New York, NY, 10038-3705.
- Owner: Democratic Socialists of America, Inc., 15 Dutch St., Suite 500, New York, NY 10038-3705.
- Known bondholders, mortgages, and other security holders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages or other securities: None.
- The purpose, function and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for Federal income tax purposes have not changed during preceding 12 months.
- Extent and Nature of Circulation

	Average no. copies each issue during preceding 12 months.	Single issue published nearest to filing date.
A. Total no. copies printed	9,400	11,500
B. Paid Circulation	777	840
1. Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors and counter sales.		
2. Mail subscriptions	5,488	5,441
C. Total Paid Circulation	6,265	6,281
D. Free distribution by mail, carrier or other means. Samples, complimentary, and other free copies.	985	1,025
E. Total distribution	7,833	7,200
F. 1. Office Use, left-over, unaccounted, spoiled after printing.	2,200	4,194
Returns from news agents.	0	0
G. Total	9,400	11,500

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(Everyone in the Soviet intellectual community, from Sakharov to film directors, is pleased by this side of Gorbachev.)

The most striking developments have come precisely in the realms of cultural politics and information practices: periodicals and newspapers are more interesting, television has ceased being a soporific, and movie screens are alive with controversial new features and past productions that have been brought off the shelves. Officials and laypersons alike speak more freely and openly, engage in dialogue, pronounce formerly taboo things in public. The avant-garde émigré filmmaker Slava Tsukerman (*Liquid Sky*) said recently that the most exciting evidence he can cite in favor of the new developments is in-the-street interviews on Soviet television. People look relaxed, outgoing, and easy about their discourse, he said. I noticed the same thing with a few exceptions, when I conducted such interviews for ABC's *Nightline* last year. The same Tsukerman, however, also cited a current Soviet joke: A Muscovite calls a friend to tell him about the incredible stuff he just read in *Pravda*. "Hush,"



A large state-operated department store in Moscow.

says the friend, "we shouldn't talk about it on the phone."

This brings us to the darker patches of glasnost. It may be alright to have Stalin to kick around (as in Tengiz Abuladze's *Repentance*, a film soon to be released in the US) but certain matters remain sensitive and arouse the anger of the bosses. Politburo member and Central Committee Secretary Ligachev, sometimes described as the number-two man in the USSR, recently complained that "Some people abroad — and in our country too, for that matter — are trying to discredit the entire path of the construction of socialism in the USSR, to present it as an unrelieved chain of mistakes, and to use the facts of unjustified repressions to push into the background the exploits of the people that have created a mighty socialist power." Yet it was none other than Gorbachev himself who, in an earlier address, had said emotionally, "I think we must never forgive or justify what happened in 1937 and 1938. Never! Those who were in office at the time are to blame for it." In fact, Gorbachev has also said things similar to Ligachev's pronouncements, and vice-versa. Glasnost thus has its very active proponents (in general, its Gorbachevs), as well as its more cautious, temperate followers (in general, its Ligachevs). These ambivalences exist in every sector of Soviet political culture, and even within individual leaders.

For ordinary Soviet citizens, glasnost has yet to put more food on the table,

and well might they ask, Where's the beef? Quite apart from the fact that the rhetoric about perestroika ("reconstruction") in the economy has exceeded actual practice, even from the beginning there hasn't been any *mass* enthusiasm for the Gorbachev exhortations. The bosses at the top telling workers below that it is all their fault — alcoholism, absenteeism, goofing off — is an old story in the USSR. Gorbachev has certainly modified this line to include the managerial elite and systemic problems in the indictment. But what the worker now experiences are longer lines at the liquor establishments, additional shifts at the factory, and much talk of increasing wage differentials, with the probability of unemployment as an accepted part of the socialist economy.

This singular lack of enthusiasm among workers for perestroika is matched by the indifference, even cynicism, of the young. Hostility to political life and to the privileges and swagger of the chiefs is commonplace among the young people. Overcoming their alienation and energizing socialist ideas among them is essential for a genuinely democratic *pereglasnost*, if I may coin a term, in the USSR.

And what helps this kind of socialism in the USSR helps it elsewhere, Eastern Europe most especially. And, who knows? perhaps here too. ●

Louis Menashe is professor of Russian history at Polytechnic University and writes frequently on Soviet affairs.

Report on Detained Labor Union Leader

Vladimir Klebanov was a foreman in a coal mine in the Donbas region of the Ukrainian SSR. On November 25, 1977, he announced in Moscow the formation of an independent trade union called the "Association of Free Trade Unions of Workers in the Soviet Union" (AFTU). Within a few weeks, the leading activists of the union were imprisoned, and Klebanov was committed to a psychiatric hospital.

For ten years Klebanov has been confined against his will in a Soviet psychiatric hospital, where he suffered from the forced injection of behavior-modifying drugs, isolated from other patients. Recently, he was transferred to a regular hospital.

Klebanov's group coalesced as an organization of some 110 members and candidates. It issued an appeal for recognition to the International Labor Organization and adopted statutes. There is no question that the AFTU was a bona fide trade union, and Klebanov's first arrest in 1977 triggered worldwide protests that compelled the Soviets to release him. But as AFTU grew, he could no longer be allowed to remain at liberty and was jailed again in February, 1978.

Over the years, Klebanov's case has attracted attention in the trade union and socialist movements. The British Labour Party's National Executive Committee passed a resolution supporting the AFTU. The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions has denounced Soviet harassment of AFTU members. Numerous individual trade unions and social democratic groups have adopted Klebanov's case, and have demanded his release.

Messages of protest may be sent to Mikhail Gorbachov, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Soviet Union, The Kremlin, Moscow, RSFSR, USSR.

Messages of support may be sent to Klebanov's wife, Zinaida Trofimovna Chetverikova, at the following address:

U.S.S.R., Ukrainian SSR
Donetskaya oblast
g. Makeevka
Ul. Makarova 67, kv. 12

DSAers Promote *Justice For All*

Events in over one hundred cities across the country marked Tuesday, November 17th as Justice For All Day, the National Day of Awareness on Poverty. The formation of a national Justice For All coalition, more than fifty organizations strong, was inspired by the 25th anniversary of Michael Harrington's *The Other America*. Events that took place in cities and communities throughout the US incorporated the Justice For All themes "Poverty isn't a Private Affair," and "Listen to the Voices of the Poor." DSA locals, youth section chapters and key activists were integrally involved in planning many of the events, and in some areas were the initiators of their communities' Justice For All coalitions. The National Day of Awareness on Poverty gave DSA activists an opportunity to work in coalitions and to demonstrate to broad audiences how the causes of poverty are structural in nature.



The Nashville local, in conjunction with the Tennessee Hunger Coalition helped to organize a breakfast for local Legislators. Testimony came from representatives from more than a dozen local anti-poverty groups. Although activists were frustrated by the lack of media coverage, the testimony did help inform some of those involved in Nashville's legislative process.

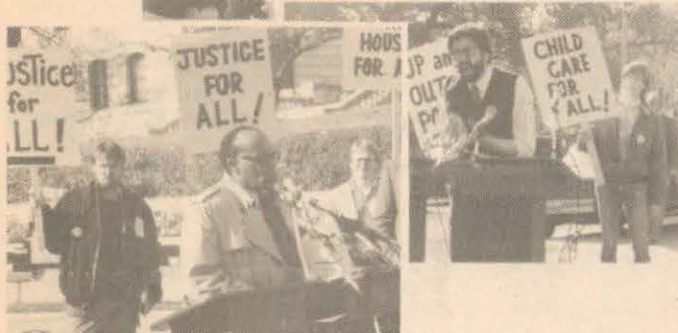


In New York, at the same time people were demanding Housing Justice For All at a vigil organized with the assistance of Congressman Major Owens, a day-long teach-in on poverty was taking place at the Brooklyn branch of Long Island University. Speakers at the teach-in included city councilwoman Ruth Messinger and expert on the elderly poor Richard Margolis (both members of DSA), and Irene Natividad, Director of the National Women's Political Caucus.

DSA's involvement was significant and successful in many additional areas not pictured here: Albany's speak-out organized by a coalition sixty groups strong; Los Angeles' press conference at Ronald Reagan's church; Washington, DC's speak-out held on the eve of Justice For All; Portland, Oregon's Poverty "UN-fair"; Princeton's forum, organized by a coalition of twenty organizations and attended by over two hundred people who heard Frances Fox Piven as one of several panelists; Portland, Maine's event, which proved to be so successful that a new local has scheduled its first meeting for mid-January; Oberlin College, San Diego State University, SUNY-Binghamton, and Cleveland State University all organized well-attended, day-long, teach-ins on poverty; and the list goes on and on and on.

The National Day of Awareness on Poverty gave local activists an opportunity to dispel misperceptions about poverty. Information to help local activists dispel these myths was made available in a comprehensive and hard-hitting booklet written by Harrington entitled, "Who are the Poor? A Profile of the Changing Faces of Poverty in the United States in 1987." Additional copies are available from the DSA national office.

"Poverty is not a result of inadequacies with the poor, overspending by big-government or 'temporary' downturns in the economy. Poverty is an inevitable by-product of our economic system, exacerbated by government policies that bow to corporate priorities," asserts Michael Harrington. "Justice For All Day," concludes Harrington, "helped to raise consciousness and heighten awareness which, in a democratic society, is the precondition of all legislative change."



The Boston local, working in coalition with such groups as Women for Economic Justice, Project Bread, and Massachusetts Tenants Organization, organized a noon-hour rally at the steps of the State House. 300 people crowded the steps to hear a range of speakers and to make known their outrage at the unaddressed poverty in Boston. Local TV and radio coverage helped to ensure that thousands of citizens throughout the city heard their message.



Over 60 people from Carbondale, Illinois packed into the Good Samaritan House to listen to the voices of the poor during an afternoon service. One farm woman shared the story of her family's fight to keep their farm, and another told of her anger at having to rely on food stamps while her farm provides enough milk for 300 families a year. E. G. Hughes, a DSAer, was the coordinator of the Carbondale Justice For All Coalition. The Carbondale local's efforts were rewarded with several new recruits.



An Ann Arbor candlelight vigil calling for political action against homelessness was attended by over 50 people. Held on the steps of the Federal Building, the rally speakers included city council members as well as the homeless themselves. The vigil had been preceded by an all day conference on poverty, with Frances Fox Piven as the keynote speaker.



A Hearing before the Human Resources Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature was organized by a broad Justice For All Coalition, of which DSA was an active participant. Moving and effective testimony, significant press coverage and a packed hearing room made for a tremendously successful event.



The Detroit local spearheaded an effort to organize a city council hearing, which drew more than 100 people. Testimony was provided by representatives of various anti-poverty organizations, as well as people living in poverty. Detroit DSA activist Marc Baldwin's closing testimony was met by applause, and all those involved in the event were inspired by their ability to help shift the terms of debate on Detroit's economic policy.

A Socialist Perspective on
THE POLITICS OF POVERTY



by
Michael Harrington

with contributions by
Barbara Ehrenreich
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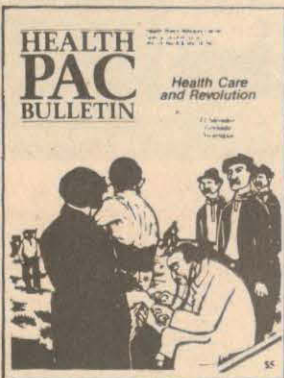
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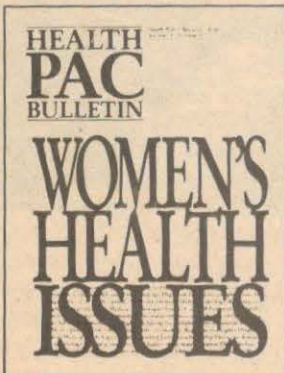
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Embattled El Salvador

No Way Out?

by Patrick Laceyfield

“**D**esgaste.” In Spanish it means “wear and tear” and, despite the bright hopes for regional peace summoned up by the Arias peace plan, it seems the best term among many to apply to El Salvador as the civil war there slips into its eighth year. Though the glare of publicity in the United States remains fixed on the Sandinistas and Nicaragua, the smart money has El Salvador, not Nicaragua, as the most difficult and intractable situation.

It wasn't always that way. When I first sent dispatches to *Democratic Left* from Salvador in the heady days of a humid August of 1979, few North Americans knew anything more than that it was “down there” somewhere. No matter. The gleeful anticipation (among the popular organizations battling the civilian president who happened to be a general) and fear (among the oligarchy, the military that served it, and the US embassy) was that El Salvador was next in line for revolution. Youthful guerrillas, headquartered at the National University with stacks of ready-made Molotov cocktails piled halfway up the quonset hut ceiling, regarded it as a scientific certainty. Archbishop Oscar Romero, as simple, self-effacing, and courageous a man as I've ever met, talked with me for four hours one evening about the just demands of the people and how the Church recognized the legitimate right of an oppressed people to take up arms.

Easier said than done. The young military officers who overthrew General Carlos Humberto Romero in October of 1979 and introduced a reformist junta showed little talent for in-fighting within the military. Ultimately, they lost out to their business-as-usual colleagues with their death squads, fealty to US policy dictates, and massive abuse of the public till. The reformists, lacking a helping hand from the US and unable to control security forces determined to “decapitate” (both politically

and, at times, literally) the Left leadership, jumped ship in January. Jose Napoleon Duarte returned from exile and his Christian Democratic Party (PDC) joined with the military for what became a keystone of the US strategy to build a reformist, center regime. Archbishop Romero was assassinated by a rightist sniper as he said Mass in the same chapel where he and I had spoken. The Left, overplaying its hands, mostly rejected the reformist junta and then pulled off a spectacularly unsuccessful “final offensive” in January of 1981. The rest is (more recent) history.

Today, hopes for a solution seem as far away as ever. The Arias plan was signed by Duarte, who saw in it further legitimacy for his government. His negotiating with the rebels also provided a certain symmetry for demands that the Sandinistas talk directly with the *contras*. (Note the paradoxes. With lavish US aid the *contras* had made little headway. Without it, they'd be nothing. The Salvadoran rebels have survived mostly without foreign aid.) The rebel mili-

tary Farabundo Marti Liberation Front (FMLN) and their civilian allies in the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR) initially opposed the accord as a dead end since it offered only the possibility of incorporation into the present structure, a structure viewed rightfully as basically little changed from the years 1980-83 when Salvador was the killing fields of the Western Hemisphere. Later the FMLN-FDR agreed to the plan. But a third round of the dialogue between the government and the rebels in San Salvador was inconclusive and a cease-fire broke down under recriminations from both sides. Death squad killings inched upwards, highlighted by the assassination of non-governmental human rights committee head Heberto Anaya as he was preparing to take his children to school.

President Duarte — in many ways a man in the middle though not of the center — visits the United States and, during a ceremony at the White House, kisses the Stars and Stripes. “There wasn't a dry eye in the house,” noted the White House protocol officer. Maybe. Still, the reaction of Salvadoran nationalists — from right to left — was outrage. Duarte took the amnesty provisions of the Arias plan one step further. In addition to releasing all political prisoners, he took the Uruguayan tack and amnestied all military personnel for whatever crimes they may have committed in Salvador's “dirty war.” An exception was made for the on-again, off-again investigation into the slaying of Archbishop Romero, as well as for Anaya's killers. With the At-



Limited political space has brought about renewed street demonstrations by union and student groups.

Photo by Patrick Laceyfield



Rothco

torney General's office now back in Christian Democratic hands, Duarte moved to accuse right-wing ARENA party leader Roberto D'Aubuisson of complicity in Romero's killing. Like Perry Mason, Duarte has a witness — the hit man. Though everyone knows the truth of the matter, it's doubtful D'Aubuisson will pay. The Salvadoran judicial system, despite millions of US bucks and lots of verbiage, still operates on the buddy system. And in an investigation last year of a kidnapping ring headed by a leading field commander, several witnesses died mysteriously in custody before they could spill the beans.

The economy is the real Achilles heel of El Salvador. Coffee prices are down from last year's heights. Under austerity programs forced on Duarte by US policymakers, inflation on basic commodities and transportation have skyrocketed. Unemployment and underemployment together reach 70 percent. Salaries for workers of Salvador's three main crops — coffee, sugar cane, and cotton — have declined by two-thirds since 1979. The agrarian reform sector, much touted by US policymakers as evidence of progressive intent, is way over its head in debt, short of credit and technical assistance, and overall an unmitigated disaster. The oligarchy continues to ship cash out of the country rather than invest. To them Duarte and Ortega are birds of a feather with the chunkier Salvadoran leader determined to take Salvador down the Nicaraguan road. Duarte's communitarianism, they say, is communism on the installment plan. They want a denationalization of the banks and foreign trade and a cut in the national budget that

fuels the Christian Democratic party's propaganda machine. Eighty thousand remain homeless from last year's earthquake. Some funds for relief were skimmed. Many hires to clear rubble were PDC members or had to join the party. Much of the assistance went in the form of credits to businesspeople to rebuild in the center city rather than to the *marginales* in the cardboard shanties that line the thoroughfares of the capital.

And that's not all. For the first time in the history of US foreign aid, the US contribution to a country's budget exceeded that own country's offerings. In fiscal year 1987 the US chipped in \$608 million to El Salvador's \$582 million. Meanwhile the gross national product showed zero growth and per capita income has declined 38 percent in the last seven years. Despite much talk of funding for reform and development, three of every four US dollars go to war and war-related items.

On the military front only a few months ago the US embassy was predicting confidently that the conflict was being won by their "low-intensity warfare" strategy and would be over in 3-5 years. Increased army mobility — courtesy of US copters — was one reason for such optimism. So too was the continuing transformation of the Salvadoran army out of a "nine-to-five" mode and into a somewhat more effective fighting force. It doesn't hurt any that the army now numbers over 50,000 compared with 8000 only six years ago.

The capture in March of the El Paraiso garrison in Chalatenago province, as part of simultaneous rebel attacks throughout the country, stung the embassy and the High Command. It was the second time in four years that El Paraiso, a heavily fortified garrison I knew all too well from my work in the area, had been overrun. The guerrillas, though reduced in numbers to perhaps 5000 effectives, have become increasingly effective and, recently, have paralyzed up to 95 percent of travel in El Salvador, affecting even the capital with their *paros* (or decreed transportation stoppages). By the army's own account, the most recent *paro* tied up every available man the army had in guarding the highways and byways of this land where the sun shines 360 days a year. Though guerrilla-controlled zones, strictly speaking, have been reduced to the eastern portion of the country, the rebels are active in all Salvador's fourteen departments. The embassy prediction for victory has dropped back to 8-10 years.

"President Duarte has never been stronger," US Ambassador Edwin Corr

was recently heard to say. This kind of optimism hearkens back to Colonel George Armstrong Custer's apocryphal comments just prior to attacking the Indians at the Little Big Horn. "Don't take any prisoners," he reportedly told his columns.

In fact, Duarte is in the midst of the most serious crisis of his presidency. With economic austerity and in the absence of any real possibility of an impending negotiated settlement, the Christian Democratic base has shrunk considerably. Though the PDC and Duarte won the presidency with 54 percent of the vote in 1984 and captured 33 of the 60 National Assembly seats a year later, party prospects aren't good for next Spring's Assembly balloting. "The PDC will remain the largest party," FDR president Guillermo Ungo told me, "but will not retain a majority." With Duarte legally barred from a second term as president and those elections coming up in 1989, the PDC is engaged in a fratricidal struggle between Planning

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Minister Fidel Chavez Mena (the embassy preference) and propaganda minister Julio Rey Prendes, a founder of the party and the early favorite. Many of the unions that signed a "social pact" to support Duarte in 1984 are off the reservation and have signed on with the National Union of Salvadoran Workers (UNTS). Duarte and the PDC have counterattacked, linking up with the AFL-CIO's American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD) to establish a pro-government union federation — the National Union of Farmers and Workers (UNOC). Recently released confidential cables between the embassy and the State Department disclosed "jubilation" at the success of attacks on opposition unions. Reportedly bribery has been used to split some unions. So have charges that the UNTS is just a front for the FMLN. On the other hand, some UNTS affiliates have jumped ship in discomfort over an upsurge in less economic, seemingly more pro-FMLN activities. Affiliating non-union groups to the UNTS, like the radical university students and committees of displaced people, is likewise a sign of weakness in the current context.

Though observers give Duarte some credit for wooing the Salvadoran military away from previously instinctual alliance with the Right and the oligarchy, some see things a little differently. "Duarte gives the military everything they want — an amnesty for past sins, the benefit of the doubt on current transgressions ranging from bribery to kidnapping, and all the US equipment they can use," one retired high-ranking military officer told me. "In return they let him be head of state and support his positions on non-security issues. But they know the country's in turmoil. And there's been no change of heart on democracy and human rights. They'd still like to take power."

"All we have here is from the US," lamented the officer. "If the military ousts Duarte, they lose military aid. They believe that without that aid the war is lost."

Though US aid to the military is touted as advancing professionalism and democratic values, that assertion bears close examination. By channeling aid directly to the military, the US is giving the militaries in Salvador (and Honduras) more autonomy than civilian political institutions, of what little genuine democratic fabric that exists. This leads to a weakening development plan designed to win hearts and minds is dubbed *Unidos para Reconstruir* — "United to Reconstruct." The plan is a

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Photo by Patrick LaneField

Protesting US-imposed austerity, a banner of the National Union of Salvadoran Workers (UNTS) reads "New taxes will not solve the way."

AFL-CIO Opposes Renewed Contra Aid

by Ed Clark

At its 17th Biennial Convention held in Miami, Florida last week, the AFL-CIO finally caught up with the leaders of most of its largest unions and with its own membership by adopting a policy opposing military aid to the contras in Nicaragua.

During intense and often bitter behind-the-scenes bargaining, the neo-conservative staffers of the AFL-CIO's International Department insisted on linking an end to contra aid to an end to Soviet-Cuban aid to the Nicaraguan government. The final wording of the Resolution, however, puts the organization on record as opposing aid to the contras "as well as" Soviet-Cuban aid to the Sandinistas. The Resolution adopted by the AFL-CIO's Convention in Anaheim, California two years ago, after a bitter floor debate, did not specifically call for an end to contra aid, but favored "a negotiated settlement rather than a military victory. . ."

Although at first blush this change may seem only incremental, it represents the first clear cut AFL-CIO break with a conservative Cold War consen-

sus since the 1950's. It will also be of immeasurable assistance to those labor unions now lobbying against contra aid in Washington and will put those AFL-CIO operatives who are now lobbying for contra aid in direct violation of AFL-CIO policy.

President Lane Kirkland allowed only one anti-contra speech from the floor — that of Jack Sheinkman, President of Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union and a DSA member. Speaker after speaker attempted to put "spin" on the meaning of the resolution. Al Shanker, a pro-contra, and president of the American Federation of Teachers tried to link communists, fascists, and "some" opponents of contra aid as allies in the fight against free trade unions. But in the end the anti-contra forces won the day. In the words of ACTWU's President Jack Sheinkman, "This federation is taking an unequivocal stand — no military aid to the contras — and telling that to our friends in Congress." ●

Ed Clark is New England regional vice-president of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union and a DSA member.

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retread of a similar scheme that was tried and failed in San Vicente province in 1983: Clear out the guerrillas; rebuild roads, schools, etc.; then organize civilian defense units to keep the rebels out. More often the units are an excuse for banditry where they exist. And even many pro-rebel villagers decide to take the food, the installation of electricity, etc. without changing their attitudes one bit. In this "partnership" between the army, the government, and the private sector, it is Army Chief of Staff Adolfo Blandon who calls the shots.

While the Salvadoran Right and the oligarchy continue to control the media (no brave talk from the US about the need for opposition media a la *La Prensa* here), the relative autonomy of the Army and the continued control by the state of banking and export marketing have deprived them of much of their steam. The Right is split into six parties — with D'Aubuisson's Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA) the largest by far. While the Right snipes increasingly at the army for its failure to win the war, shadowy paramilitary groups train on the outskirts of the capital. With the increased political space to operate in the capital for Left and labor groups comes an upsurge in detentions by security forces and murders by the death squads.

Despite the warm and enthusiastic welcome he received upon his return to El Salvador with FDR vice-president Ruben Zamora, Guillermo Ungo was not optimistic about using that political space in the near future. Looking tired and tense after his death-defying visit there, Ungo doubted that any serious opposition political activities could be attempted in the face of increased death squad activity — activity tied, now as always, to elements in the military. "There is simply too much fear to carry out a serious campaign," he explained in countering Duarte's demand that the FDR break with the Marxist-Leninist-led armies of the FMLN. In April, in Managua, Ruben Zamora, president of the Popular Social Christian party and former PDC leader, signalled to me that the FDR was sending their people back into El Salvador from exile to work for a genuine dialogue with the government, and rebuild its base inside the country. Ungo's National Revolutionary Movement (MNR — an affiliate of the Socialist International) and Zamora's Social Christians signed, in October, a pact with the fledgling, legally-inscribed Social Democratic Party of El Salvador for joint work and close cooperation.

The demand of the FMLN-FDR al-

Michael Harrington, DSA Co-chair was diagnosed as having cancer of the esophagus in mid-October. The first week of November the cancer was discovered to be inoperable. Mike is out of the hospital and hoping to control this thing — and I quote — "through chemotherapy, radiation, and DSA work." Leading DSA activists like Co-chair Barbara Ehrenreich, Fran Piven, and Jim Chapin to name a few are responding to the crisis by playing a larger role in public speaking, coalition meetings, and in organizational matters. So too are activists in the union movement, on campuses, and in the Democratic Party. It's up to *all* of us — on the staff, in the voluntary leadership, and in the rank-and-file to pitch in and lend a hand. Cards and letters to Mike should come via the DSA office, 15 Dutch Street, Suite 500, New York, New York 10038.

liance in Salvador is for a dialogue with the Duarte government resulting in power-sharing on an interim basis. Such an arrangement would lay the basis for a genuinely free and untainted election and probably, all other things being equal, result in a center-left coalition government. That, however, seems far away despite the continuing efforts of the Salvadoran Church to get the two sides to split the difference. In the meantime what we have is a stalemate. Though the Reagan Administration has thwarted a rebel takeover, the economy is a basket case, the US-favored Christian Democrats are slipping, and the Armed Forces and the right wing opposition are less than convincing practitioners of Jeffersonian democracy — or any other kind. And the conditions that prompted the rebels to take up arms eight years ago — the maldistribution of power and wealth and lack of safety to engage in opposition politics — continue.

The Reagan Administration, with its consistent misreading of Central American political realities, thinks it can win. Some triumphalists in the FMLN think *they* can win and that the majority of the Salvadoran people support them, despite evidence to the contrary. As the FDR seeks to expand political space within the existing system and the FMLN-FDR pursue a strategy of "prolonged people's war" to force the government back to the bargaining table, the war continues. Barring drastic policy changes coming out of the 1988 elections in the US and/or El Salvador, more *desgaste* would seem to be the order of the day. ●

Patrick Laceyfield is organizational director of DSA and co-author of El Salvador: Central America in the New Cold War.

Letters

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Rustin's Deeds

To the Editor:

I was shocked to find in the obituary of Bayard Rustin (Democratic Left September/October) the claim that Rustin struggled "for democratic peace in the Middle East." A quick reference to his activities on Middle East affairs demonstrated, on the contrary, strong opposition to a democratic peace. He opposed the Palestinians' right to self-determination in the occupied territories, defending Israel's continued brutal military occupation. He attacked democratic socialist organizations and peace groups advocating for a two-state solution, which would recognize both Israeli and Palestinian rights to national self-determination. He defended Israel's murderous invasion of Lebanon at a time when many of our socialist comrades in Israel were refusing military service and protesting on the streets of Tel Aviv. Rustin consistently allied himself with the Reagan Administration on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict against those of us in the Middle East peace movement who have been working towards demilitarization of the region, negotiations between the parties, and the right of national self-determination for both peoples.

As an obituary, I can understand the tendency to emphasize Rustin's great deeds of the past while politely avoiding mention of his dramatic shift to the right during his later years. But to falsely claim that Rustin supported a "democratic peace in the Middle East" is totally irresponsible.

Stephen Zunes
Ithaca, NY

DSA ACTION

REPORTS

- Sherri Levine will take on new duties as she leaves her position as director of the poverty project to become DSA's Publications and Political Education Director. Sherri came to New York eight months ago from Cleveland, Ohio where she worked with the Cleveland Abortion Rights Action League. She began her new work December 1, 1987.
- Megan Kashner, of Scarsdale Alternative High School, New York, will be joining staff as intern through the month of January. Ben Vivante from Bennington College will be working with us through the months of January and February. Welcome Megan and Ben!
- DSA Field Director and Anti-Racism Coordinator Shakoor Aljuwani will be traveling. Youth Organizer Elissa McBride will be visiting campuses on the West Coast this Spring. If you're interested in hosting either Shakoor or Elissa in your community, contact the national office.
- The Latino and Anti-Racism Commissions recently elected new officers. Each have openings for regional organizers. Contact Duane Campbell at (916) 361-9072.

• **New locals** are springing to life. In San Bernardino, CA, activists have met several times and have organized a public forum on poverty. Currently, they are in the midst of countering a city-wide campaign encouraging citizen's to assist in arresting "panhandlers." By using information produced by DSA's Poverty Project, San Bernardino DSA activists have produced their own poster. The counter-poster stresses that poverty is structural and that arresting "panhandlers" won't make them less poor.

In Portland, Maine, a new local is also in birth. A successful November 17th anti-poverty event, initiated and coordinated by key DSA activists, helped to generate the interest needed to revive a Portland, DSA local. Their first meeting is scheduled for early January, and we'll keep you posted on their growth.

And in Youngstown, Ohio, several DSA activists are collecting signatures to change their status from organizing committee to local. With over 12 signa-

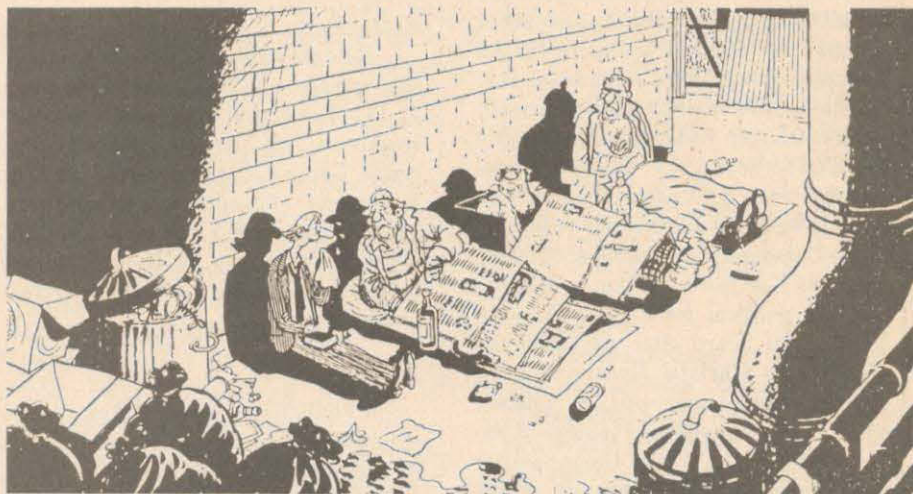
tures collected already, they don't have much further to go before they will qualify. They hope to secure the remaining signatures at their DSA holiday outreach party on December 13, 1987.

- Chicago hosted a very successful **Democratic Alternatives for Illinois** conference October 31. The late Mayor Harold Washington greeted over 250 Democratic and community activists who came together to formulate points of ac-

and Kansas City, Missouri to date.

RESOURCES

- The summer issue of **Religious Socialism** features articles on "Fidel and Religion" by Dorothee Solle, nine letters on "Sex and Socialism," a review of Rene Coste's "Marxist Analysis and Christian Faith" by Ralph DelColle, and "Prayer for Socialists" by Gabriel Grasberg. Subs



"Not wishing to be unsympathetic, sonny, but one more bleat about having to sell your porsche and guess where we'll shove your filofax?"

tion for new progressive leadership in a post-Reagan era. In addition to DSA, co-sponsors — including Citizen Action, Americans for Democratic Action, International Association of Machinists (IAM), and the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) — urged the formation of a progressive coalition aimed at redefining America's economic needs and siezing control of a Democratic Party gone adrift. After addresses by several panelists, including Congressman Charlie Hays and Alderman Jesus Garcia, Citizen Action co-director Heather Booth commended those gathered: "In the barrage of attacks during the Reagan era, it is hard to appreciate how vital the progressive forces are. This meeting was a way to reinforce the people who are doing the work. These people are effective organizers, involved citizens." Chicago's event is part of larger DSA-initiated Democratic Alternatives program which began in Washington, DC and has travelled to Albany, New York,

for RS are available at \$5 per year. Write to RS, 45 Thornton St., Roxbury, MA 02119.

• **Roll the Union On — A Pictorial History of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union** has just been published by Charles H. Kerr Co. of Chicago, a 100-year-old labor and socialist cooperative. This marvelous illustrated book about a Socialist-inspired and led union can be bought for \$7.95 postpaid from the STFU Association Inc., P.O. Box 2617, Montgomery, AL 36105.

• **Everyone's Backyard** is the regular newsletter of Citizen's Clearinghouse for Hazardous Waste and a cornucopia of information on toxics, incinerators, etc. with reports from local efforts all over. Contact them at P.O. Box 926, Arlington, VA 22216.

• The very best selection of quality political posters and cards are available from the **Syracuse Cultural Workers**, Box 6367, Syracuse, NY 13217. Ask for their colorful fall catalog.

ON THE LEFT

by HARRY FLEISCHMAN

California

Los Angeles DSA elected delegates to the national convention at its October 17 meeting. A dozen DSA members and supporters took part in successful guerilla theater skits against Robert Bork's nomination to the Supreme Court . . . The Los Angeles Interfaith Hunger Coalition and other groups met to create a Justice for All Committee to promote Awareness Day November 17 and dramatize the need to work to abolish widespread poverty in the United States . . . The L.A. local also urged the DSA national convention to endorse Jesse Jackson for president in the Democratic primaries and to help build the Rainbow Coalition as an independent political force . . . The San Diego local heard Attorney Sheehan discuss the Christic Institute's case against a secret team of U.S. military and CIA officials working to subvert the Constitution, the will of Congress and the American people through secret wars, trafficking in drugs, assassinating political enemies and toppling governments . . . The local, at its August meeting, discussed personal leftist histories to explore what makes a durable, constructive member of the humane side of global society . . . Members participated in the "Hiroshima-Nagasaki Never Again" candlelight walk in August.

Indiana

A conference on "What Future for Democratic Socialism?" was held at Indiana State University Oct. 16-18, with Frank Zeidler, former Socialist mayor of Milwaukee, as convenor. DSAer Ed Asner was the recipient of the annual Eugene V. Debs Award, at the annual dinner attended by 300 persons in Terre Haute and sponsored by the Eugene V. Debs Foundation.

Iowa

The September issue of *The Prairie Progressive*, published by Iowa

City DSA, highlighted an anti-sales tax issue urging voters to vote no on the October 6th sales tax referendum.

Louisiana

A showing of "Our Land Too — The Legacy of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union," was held at the annual meeting of the Southern Historical Association November 12 at the Clarion Hotel in New Orleans. The film features DSA member H.L. Mitchell and Dr. John Kenneth Galbraith introducing the movie, which is narrated by actor Eddie Albert.

Kentucky

Central Kentucky DSA held its annual garage sale and party September 11-13 in Lexington . . . Plans are afoot to reactivate IDEAS (Institute for Democratic Economic Alternatives) at the University of Kentucky. In previous years, it sponsored a day-long conference on tax policy in Kentucky and helped publicize the Kentucky Fair Tax Coalition agenda.

Maryland

Baltimore DSA and the Johns Hopkins University Chaplain's office co-sponsored a dance featuring the Rhumba Club in September. . . . The local also joined the Baltimore Labor Council in backing the successful candidacy of Kurt Schmoke for mayor and of Mary Pat Clarke for city council president . . . DSA joined the Central America Solidarity Committee in a vigil at the *Sun* papers to draw attention to the lack of media coverage of public forums the organization has held.

Massachusetts

Dave Barrett, the former New Democratic Party premier of British Columbia, is a fellow at the John F. Kennedy Institute of Politics at Harvard University. He is conducting a series of seminars on "The Social Democratic Movement in North America: The Canadian Experience with a focus on a case study of Socialized Medicine." In October, he invited Harry Fleischman to discuss U.S. socialist attempts to set a health care agenda and socialist influences in winning social security, medicare and medicaid and the current drive for national health insurance.

Michigan

Sherry Levine of the national DSA staff, spoke on the Justice for All project at Ann Arbor DSA's annual open house Sept. 17 . . . The local elected convention delegates at its October meeting . . . Ron Radosh and Penn Kemble, both anti-Sandinistas, debated Bill Davies and Sarah Nelson of the Christic Institute on Central America Sept. 21 at the University of Michigan . . . Prof. Jeff Paige spoke on "Contradictions in American Foreign Policy: the case of El Salvador," at the DSA meeting Oct. 15. There are now over one hundred dues-paying DSA members in Washtenaw County . . . The bleachers in Tiger Stadium hummed on a July night, said the *Detroit Free Press*, as 1,500 free kazooes were handed out to Tiger fans when Detroit played the Seattle Mariners. It was the sixth annual Eugene V. Debs Memorial Night, coordinated by Jeff Ellison, Scott Brooks and Reuben Stein, and fans kazooed such songs as "Look for the Union Label," "Union Maid," "I've Been Working on the Railroad," "Joe Hill," and "Solidarity Forever." Debs rose to fame as leader of the American Railway Union and was jailed in 1894 as leader of the Pullman strike. He was Socialist candidate for President five times and polled nearly a million votes in 1920 while in prison for an anti-World War I speech. The kazoo concert apparently shows that unionism and socialism fare well with Detroit baseball fans.

Missouri

DSA organizational director Patrick Lacefield had a six-day speaking tour in Missouri that included meetings in Columbia, St. Louis and Kansas City, plus university classes at Washington and Webster Universities in St. Louis. The October trip also featured two TV interviews, three radio programs and a meeting with the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* editorial board . . . The premier showing of the film, "Our Land Too: The Legacy of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union," was held Sept. 24th at the Mid-America Conference on History in Springfield.

New York

DSAers at the State University of New York at Albany played a leading role

in the struggle to ban CIA recruitment on campus. Local co-chairs Eric Silver and Laura Piramo presented the coalition's demands at a forum with the university's officials and DSAer David Finz served as the forum's moderator. SUNY Albany's vice-president recently announced a temporary moratorium on campus CIA recruitment . . . DSA's Field Director/Anti-Racism Organizer Shakoor Aljuwani spoke on "The Rainbow Coalition: What's in it for Blacks, Labor and Leftists?" at Ithaca DSA's fall campus outreach meeting Sept. 8th. The next day he met with downtown community leaders, had dinner with DSA activists and then met with Rainbow Coalition activists . . . "More Than the News," Ithaca's weekly alternative news show on Cable 13, the public access channel, included a DSA-inspired piece on poverty in Ithaca . . . The Long Island Progressive Coalition, led by Nassau County DSA, now mails its bulletin to some 4,000 individuals and organizations. It formed the Long Island Fuel Energy (LIFE) group to provide consumers with reliable service at significantly lower costs. It also created a Contragate Action group, revitalized a Labor Solidarity network, developed plans for a Workers' Rights Center and helped expand the Labor-Religion Coalition. A convocation on Nov. 23 will be held at the Electricians' Hall in Melville and will feature Catholic Bishop McGann, New York State AFL-CIO President Ed Cleary, and James LaRocca, head of the Long Island Association. KIPC is actively supporting the national Justice for All campaign . . . New York City's DSA brought out 75 people to its forum on "Should Courts Take Over Unions?" Speakers were Herman Benson, head of the Association for Union Democracy; Joel Jacobson, former UAW official, who spoke of his experiences as trustee of a Teamster local in New Jersey; a unionist who spoke against takeovers; and a member of Teamsters for a Democratic Union . . . The School for Democratic Socialism is preparing two fall series of classes. One will be a discussion series on poverty with invited speakers Bill Kornblum, Saskia Sassen-Koob, Liz Durban and Jan Rosenberg. The other class is being prepared by the Housing Task Force . . . SAVE THE DATES: The DSA Winter Youth Conference will be held February 13-15, 1988 at Columbia Uni-

versity; and the Socialist Scholars Conference will be held in New York City April 8-10, 1988.

Oregon

DSAer Beverly Stein is running for State Representative in the Democratic primary in Portland in May . . . The AIDS epidemic will be discussed at the next DSA membership meeting . . . Portland DSA's Economic Literacy Task Force held a workshop on Poverty and the Economy Oct. 4th at the Central NE Neighborhood Facility.

Pennsylvania

Following Election Day, the Central Pennsylvania DSA will hold a forum November 8 on "Are We Democrats or Socialists?" Chuck Barone, professor of political economy and DSA education director will join Curt Sanders, DSA secretary and local candidate, in considering DSA involvement in the Democratic Party . . . Barone organized an all-day symposium on "The United States in the World Economy: Can We Compete?" on November 7 at Dickinson College, Carlisle. Speakers included Robert Kuttner, *Business Week* columnist; Seymour Melman, co-chair of SANE; Patricia Fernandez-Kelly on Third World issues and Women; and Harry Magdoff, co-editor of *Monthly Review* . . . Jack Spooner, former chair of Central Pennsylvania DSA, was elected to the Board for Church in Society of the newly merged Evangelical Lutheran Church in America . . . The Norman Thomas Society of Central Pennsylvania will hold a banquet and "warm conversation" at Rusty's Restaurant in Lewisburg Nov. 20, the 103rd anniversary of the birth of Norman Thomas. During 1901, Thomas lived in Lewisburg and attended Bucknell College . . . Philadelphia DSA's Steering Committee voted to support the reelection of Mayor Wilson Goode over reactionary Frank Rizzo. The local is enthusiastically backing David Cohen's re-election to the city council as well as an election of Angel Ortiz and Augusta Clark. In addition to these Democrats, DSA is backing Max Weiner and Joyce Brooks, Consumer Party candidates for City Council as well as Catherine Blunt for County Commissioner . . . Paul Buhle, author of "*Marxism in the USA*", spoke on

"Yiddish-Language Radicalism in the U.S." Oct. 24 at a forum sponsored by the Eugene V. Debs Forum Series in Philadelphia . . . Pittsburgh's Democratic Socialist Political Action Committee has endorsed two black women, Cynthia Baldwin and Doris Smith for court posts — Baldwin for Commonwealth Court and Smith for Commonwealth Court . . . DSPAC also backs Jim Ferlo and Tom Flaherty for City Council . . . Political folksinger Fred Small and his bass player Randy Austill gave a concert sponsored by Pittsburgh DSA October 30th . . . The Justice for All Coalition has planned a series of events for November 17 on poverty in America. Tom Chapin will give a concert that evening to benefit Just Harvest and the Pittsburgh Peace Institute . . . Patrick Lacefield spoke in Reading to the DSA group and college classes on October 29 . . . The local there also sponsored a Ben Linder Peace Tour meeting at Reading Area Community College October 10th.

Tennessee

Political Solutions, the newsletter of Nashville DSA, features "The Columnist Manifesto," an entertaining collection of bureaucratic foibles. It noted that in 1983, the Army spent \$20,000 for pamphlets to teach GIs how to play "King of the Hill." On November there was a rally at the War Memorial sponsored by Jobs With Justice. Speakers included union and civil rights leaders as well as the victims of plant closings, homelessness and union-busting . . . On Nov. 17th, the Tennessee Hunger Coalition sponsored a breakfast at the Legislative Plaza to give grassroots groups, clergy, activists and the poor a chance to talk with members of legislative committees dealing with jobs, taxes, human services and the like.

Utah

Dr. Pat Albers, Professor of Anthropology at the University of Utah, spoke to Utah DSA in Salt Lake City Oct. 15th on "Housework: Feminist and Socialist Views" . . . Plans were made for a DSA meeting Nov. 17th on Justice for All . . . DSAer Chris Brown was elected president of the Gay and Lesbian Student Union at the University of Utah.

Labor Showdown in Maine

by Michael Cavanaugh

As the strike by twelve hundred paperworkers against the International Paper Co. (IP) in Jay, Maine enters its 24th week here with no end in sight, three important issues emerge for the labor and progressive movement. The first is to understand and build upon the lessons about unity, solidarity, and organization that the strikers and their community have taught us. The second is to come to grips with the legalized destruction of the collective bargaining process through the company's use of "permanent replacements". And the third, most challenging, is how to develop a working strategy to compel a multi-national corporation to bargain in good faith with its workers.

When the 1200 workers struck the IP plant in tiny Jay, Maine (pop. 5,000) on June 16th the issues were clear: the largest paper company in the world with 1986 profits of \$305 million and 3 percent wage and bonus increases to corporate management, had presented a "take it or leave it" offer to the Union of concessions and givebacks. In conjunction with the locked-out members in Mobile, Alabama, the workers in Jay, Maine, DePere, Wisconsin, and Lock Haven, Pennsylvania decided to make a stand and fight for an extension of their existing contract. Having been forced to strike by the corporate demands, the workers were made to suffer the indignity of having their jobs taken over by the imported strikebreakers of B.E.&K. Construction and of having their mill guarded by the storm troopers of Wackenhut Security.

Even prior to the strike, the company made its intentions clear by advertising and taking applications for "permanent replacements". When the strike began, IP unleashed a high-powered high-cost campaign in the press and on radio and television to encourage resentment against the \$30,000 per year "fat cat" paperworkers. With the assistance of a court injunction limiting picketing, IP recruited hundreds of "permanent replacements" to steal the jobs of the striking workers. Legislative efforts to restrict the company's use of permanent replacements and to require good faith bargaining met with a series of vetoes from Republican governor John (McVeto) McKernan. When the town of Jay called an emergency town meeting to adopt local ordinances against the housing of "permanent replacements" in trailers on mill property, and other anti-strikebreaker bills, they were immediately challenged in court as unconstitutional.

The sad fact of the matter is that under current law the corporate giant IP is within its legal rights to present a "take it or leave it" contract offer, and then permanently replace the jobs of those workers who refuse to accept their offer. The IP strike in Maine provides a stark example of the brutal collective bargaining strategy of a powerful corporation intent on forcing its will down the throats of its workers.

By the same token, however, the fight of the paperworkers in Jay, Maine and the other IP locations is an inspiration and a model to much of the Maine labor movement of what organization, discipline, and commitment are all about. The leaders of UPIU Local 14

and Firemen and Oilers Local 246 learned from the bitter experiences of a number of recent labor struggles in Maine, and spent months preparing the membership, developing a strategy and a structure to maintain their unity during this long fight. Through creative use of the media, community outreach, and efficient food bank and job placement service, and with the active support and material aid of many other locals as well as the apparatus and personnel of the Maine AFL-CIO, the mood of the strikers and their families remains high.

One particularly effective tactic has been the regular Wednesday night community meetings at the local high school gym, held every week since the strike began. Part union meeting, part sing-along and revival, the spirit of solidarity generated at these mass meetings has provided an important emotional lift — not only for the strikers, but importantly for the hundreds of union members from other unions who regularly join the community meetings in Jay. For many members of my own union who have travelled the two hours to Jay, the spirit of unionism takes on new meaning after a union meeting of 1500 strikers and their supporters in the shadow of the scab mill. The night we were joined by Jesse Jackson stands out as a singular event, when a crowd of 3,000 shook the rafters with chants of "Scabs Out, Union In" and "Reagan Out, Jesse In!"

"How we respond organizationally and politically to the legalized union busting is our challenge."

The struggle of the paperworkers against IP is an uphill fight. Spirit and solidarity among workers in Maine and the other 3 mills is not enough when the opponent is a multinational with over 50 facilities and staggering resources to commit to the effort to destroy the union and roll back the advances its workers have made. Even with the commitment of the full resources of the International Union, its not easy to see how the strike will be won. The deck is stacked heavily against the strikers, and the issue now is certainly the company's use of "permanent replacement" scabs to defeat the strike and destroy the concept of collective bargaining.

The challenge to all of us in the progressive movement is a difficult and an important one, and the Jay strikers are standing on the front line today. How we respond organizationally and politically to the legalized union busting that is represented by Jay is our challenge. While the battle in Maine is far from over, one legacy is sure to remain . . . we have been taught once again what union pride means. Win, lose, or draw, there will be a lot of Maine unionists who will hold their heads up a little higher and feel a little stronger for being part of a labor movement that fights back. ●

Mike Cavanaugh is a member of DSA. He is the Assistant Manager of Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU) for the New England Regional Joint Board, and a member of the Executive Board of the Maine AFL-CIO.

REVIEW

Class Warfare on the Big Screen

by Joanne Barkan

MATEWAN. Written and directed by John Sayles; a Red Dog Films production; released by Cinecom Entertainment Group.

A half-hour after the opening titles, it looks as though "Matewan," John Sayles' feature-length work on labor strife in the coal fields of West Virginia in 1920, is going to be another cliché-ridden film about striking workers.

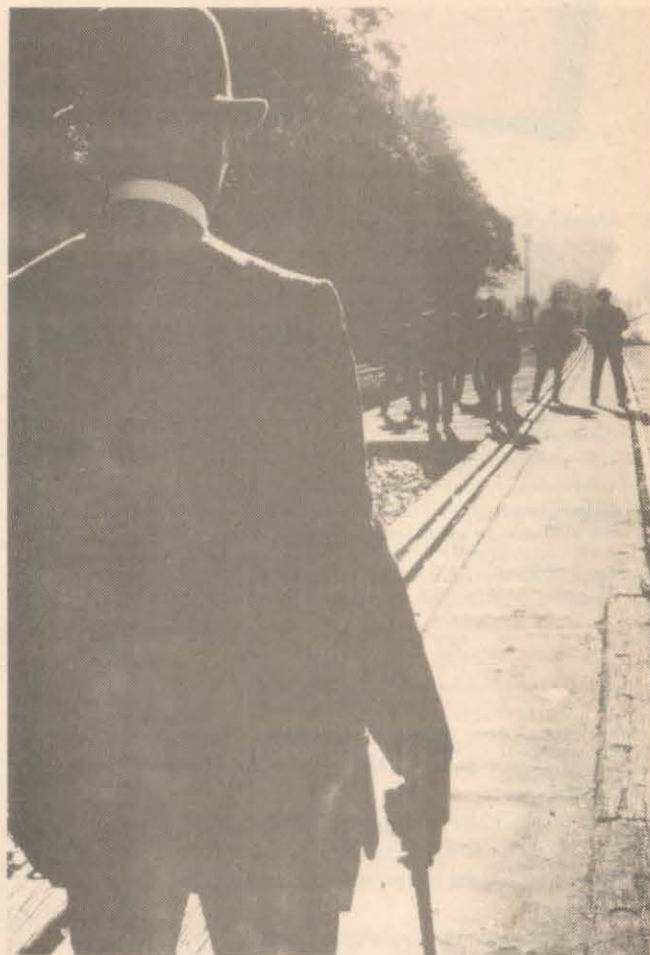
The rhythm of the entire narrative seems predictable: Dedicated union organizer has trouble pulling together divided work force; then comes conflict over tactics; then a moment of elation as initial hurdles are cleared; this quickly followed by a new and more serious crisis; next the climactic confrontation with the bosses; then the workers' victory; and, finally, resolution of the romantic subplot (in this case, union organizer will probably declare love for miner's lonely widow). Moreover, the plot is unfolding through a set of stock characters, each representing a virtue, an evil, or a forgivable human weakness.

It comes as something of a shock, then, when Sayles subverts the predictable narrative and pulls together a film that is more open-ended, ambiguous, and genuinely moving than the usual *worthy* union saga. "Matewan" has to rise above some substantial weaknesses (the first half-hour is slow and sometimes awkwardly pieced together, and almost every depiction of worker unity is excruciatingly sentimental). But rise it does.

More than any other factor, the structure of the narrative probably saves "Matewan." There is no happy ending, no neat packaging of the narrative strands. The final shoot-out gives no cause for rejoicing. Although the audience can't help but cheer when a loathsome company goon is finally shot down, the hero, too, lies dead in the streets, and we know that the company will retaliate — again and again and again.

In fact, the conclusion of "Matewan" is no conclusion at all. As the voice-over narration tells us during the final scene, the massacre in this West Virginia town signaled the start of years of warfare in the coal fields. That Sayles has chosen to relate just the beginning of a long story gives the film its strength. If the violence and tragedy of the final ten minutes are just the spark that ignite the fire, then we can comprehend the force of the coming conflagration.

Production designer Nora Chavooshian, and costume designer Cynthia Flynt have successfully re-created the "look" of Matewan 1920, and yet the film is not realistic. Presumably Sayles (who has worked effectively in a realistic mode in the past) didn't mean it to be. It's impossible to forget that you're

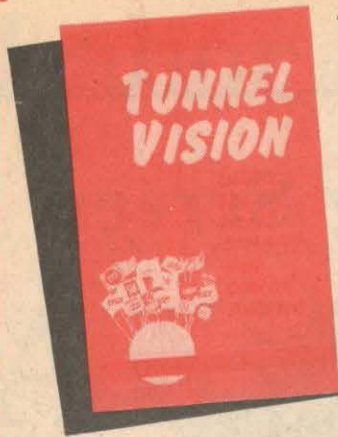


watching a film. The acting — which is generally fine — always feels like acting. This remains the case whether the performance is restrained (David Strathairn is especially good as Matewan's sheriff) or pushed to the limit (as a pair of company-hired "detectives," Kevin Tighe and Gordon Clapp set new standards for depicting the cruelty of capitalist relations).

In addition, none of the characters reveals any depth or complexity. Each individual stands for a point of view and acts accordingly in order to move the plot forward.

Combining stock characterizations with performers who never disappear into their roles usually adds up to forgettable melodrama. But once again "Matewan" saves itself. The film opens and closes with the "present-time" voice of one character, Danny Radnor, now an elderly miner-preacher. He recounts the story of the Matewan massacre in which he played a

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Daniel Cantor is a labor organizer and educator in New York. Juliet Schor is assistant professor of economics at Harvard, and a staff economist at the Center for Popular Economics. Both have spoken widely to union audiences throughout the U.S. and Canada.

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Matewan

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significant role at the age of fourteen. The voice-over device sets up the narrative as oral history, as a tale that, in memory, looms larger than life.

Within this format, the film's theatricality works. We watch the re-creation of history. When we end up caring less about individual personalities and more about the history they are making, the experience is not a diminished one.

If the substance of "Matewan" is not its characters, the film is even less concerned with the daily plight of miners. This is not *Germinal* or *The Road to Wigan Pier*. We witness no graphic depictions of backbreaking labor in the underground tunnels, no detailed portrayals of steady burial under debt to the company store.

"Matewan" opens with the decision to strike, and from that moment on, ordinary life comes to a halt. We're told briefly and unequivocally that the company pays starvation wages and that the mines are death traps that can collapse or explode at any moment — but no more. "Matewan" has almost nothing to do with the specific grievances of a single category of workers and everything to do with class warfare. It is the story of how one battle was fought.

Like most war stories, "Matewan" has its heroes (and many fewer heroines). Of them all, Hillard, a young boy-miner, stands out. Company thugs catch him stealing coal for the strikers and threaten to slit his throat if he doesn't give them the names of five strike leaders. Hillard, his neck slashed once to reinforce the threat, trembles, terrified, and finally stammers the names. That he couldn't hold out is painfully understandable. Gloating over the confession, his assailants slit his throat anyway. Only then does a company spy reveal that Hillard betrayed no one. In the moment before his death, he uttered the names of miners killed in a shaft fire years before — Matewan's early martyrs.

Sayles has created a moment of heroism to remember and a compelling film about striking workers. In a period that produces dozens of celluloid superheroes each year as despicable as Rambo and as insipid as the reincarnated James Bond; in a period that has been anything but glorious for the US labor movement, this is no small feat.

Joanne Barkan is a freelance writer. She serves on the National Executive Committee of DSA.